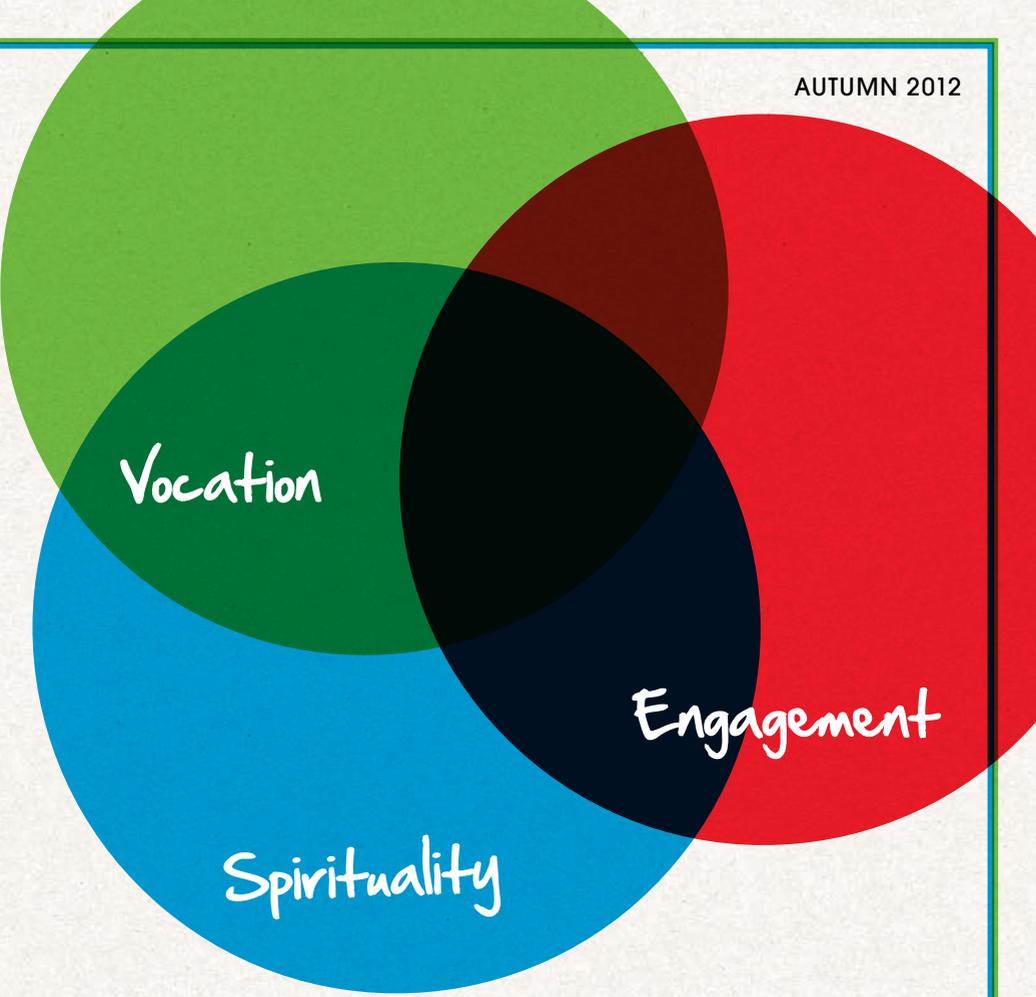


AUTUMN 2012



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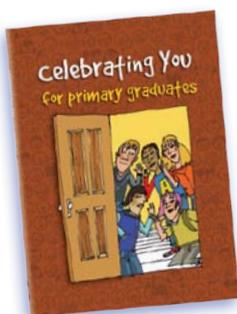


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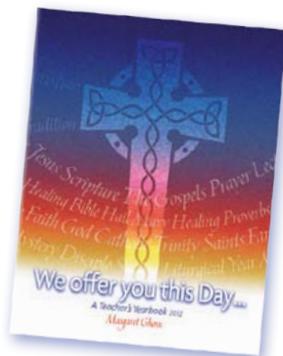
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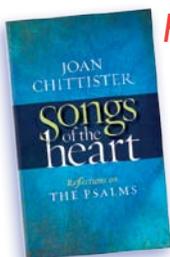
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Volume 14 Number 1

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Champagnat: An International Marist Journal of Charism in Education aims to assist its readers to integrate charism into education in a way that gives great life and hope. Marists provide one example of this mission.

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*in my
view...*

From the Editor

The word *hospitality* derives from the Latin *hospes*, which is formed from *hostis*, which originally meant “to have power”. Today, hospitality is rarely a matter of protection and survival; it is more associated with etiquette and entertainment. However, it still involves showing respect for one’s guests, providing for their needs, and treating them as equals. Cultures and subcultures vary in the extent to which one is expected to show hospitality to strangers or to people who are not well-known to us. I recently read, for example, a report on the Jewish Christian Muslim Association Conference in Melbourne¹. One of the speakers indicated that in Muslim teaching the guest is welcome for three days, but after that it becomes charity, and the onus is on the guest not to impose on the host². Another story is to give the guest beef on the first day, lamb on the second, chicken on the third day, but after that beans³.

As hosts and guests there are sensitivities to observe. My point is that while we may not have beef, or lamb or chicken or even beans to hand out, we acknowledge

with gratitude the hard work that our ‘guests’ have undertaken in writing for this edition of the *Champagnat Journal*. Their opinions can challenge us to think and act differently, and perhaps to respond to their viewpoint through this journal. Host and guest always stand to learn a great deal from the interchange from those gathered around the same table with them. This is an important form of hospitality – to use the gifts or ‘power’ that we have to help others.

On another note, I recently read a book titled: *In the Heart of the Desert* by John Chryssavgis⁴. The book provides a number of meditative insights into the spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. Such meditation can help us to be creative and imaginative people. Chryssavgis writes that the ‘education system’ in the desert was transformational and not merely informational. He tells the story:

A brother came to Abba Theodore and spent three days begging him to say a word to him, but without getting a single reply. So, he went away aggrieved. Then the old man’s disciple asked him: “Abba, why did you not say a word to him? See how he has gone away grieved?” The old man said: “I did not speak to him because he is a trafficker who seeks to glorify himself through the words of others”⁵

In other words, we have to 'do some of it ourselves'. We cannot always leave it to others; our words, our responses to all that we hear and read through this journal can have the potential to generate further authentic dialogue. This is in a real sense a form of hospitality; and a three-way process where the host (editor and editorial committee), the writers and the readers are in a good position to dialogue on the things that really matter and where something more than a plate of beans is offered.

Consequently, we are of the opinion that the contents of this first edition of the *Champagnat Journal* for 2012 will be of interest to readers and generate the dialogue suggested in the earlier comments in this editorial. Brendan Geary provides a short but in-depth reflection on the life and contribution of Brother Charles Howard, our former Superior General who passed away in January of this year. It is what we learn from the example and witness of someone like Charles that not only enhances our worldview, but further helps us to understand our heritage and the way forward as Marists.

Gabrielle McMullen is well-known to those involved in Catholic tertiary education in Australia and beyond. Her contribution to the development of the Australian Catholic University is one that future generations will

continue to acknowledge, like us, with genuine gratitude. Her paper on Catholic identity and mission in Catholic schools reminds us that such a focus is the cornerstone of our existence. Her practical suggestions are important reading for all school principals and senior staff in the Catholic network in this country and overseas. Coupled with Gabrielle's important paper are papers by Joel Hodge and Michael Green that consider certain aspects of our educational work in schools or in ministries associated with them. Joel Hodge provides an interesting reflection on issues tied to faith and religious education. Both of his short articles would have merit as reflection papers for a school staff, university faculty, youth workers who conduct programs in schools, or a religious community. Michael Green continues to provide further insights into our Marist history and charism. The suggestion that we cannot be satisfied with only the achievements of yesterday is put to us by Michael when he asks whether or not we have actually started to design our new Marist tent in light of the Marist international document "Gathered Around the Same Table".

The implications of this are enormous for the Church of tomorrow, and it is one that most religious congregations are grappling with. The enthusiastic

response to the invitation to write for this edition of the journal is further demonstrated with the article from Charles Gay on Vatican II, and the unrelated reflection by Catherine McCahill acknowledging that it is fifty years since the Council commenced. Yes, it is time for us to stop, reflect, and to take stock of what has happened in the Church (and to us) over the past half-century.

At this time when many religious congregations are restructuring, or amalgamating, or forming new provinces or administrative units from 'the old', the article by Paul Michalenko reports on this experience in the United States of America. This would be of interest to all Marists – Brothers and Lay – in Oceania. There are some lessons in the report for us. Likewise, the reflections on 'The Brother Vocation' provide a contemporary interpretation of how three brothers from three different communities see their call and vocation in the context of their God and the world around them. My sincere gratitude to the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) in the United States for assisting us to obtain permission to print the article.

Michael Elligate continues to reflect on the relationship between Scripture and evangelisation. He reminds us that it is Scripture that keeps us honest and on track with the

evangelisation process. This article is good reading for all teachers.

Finally, Matt Hoven, a Canadian from the University of Alberta, reflects on the ethic of creation, and provides a good account of the eschatology of hope as an important dimension to the ethic. This is an excellent resource for those involved in the educative process. Redemptorist Bruce Duncan, and Gerard Webster, a Counsellor and Forensic Psychologist have reviewed two recently published books that would be of interest to all readers and both are important professional development resources for all educational organisations.

The acceptance of these writers to be part of this edition of the journal is a serious effort on their part to offer both an academic and spiritual dimension to our lives; to nourish and renew us, and to assist us to take the next step in our lives confidently as we seek to be People of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

Br Tony Paterson
Editor

ENDNOTES

- 1 C.Ling, (2011). "Learning from other Faiths", in Gesher, Volume 4, Number 2, November 2011, 26.
- 2 Ibid., 26.
- 3 Ibid., 26
- 4 J. Chryssavgis, (2008). *In the Heart of the Desert*, Bloomington, Indiana: Worldwisdom Press.
- 5 Ibid., 75.

Contributors

BROTHER CHARLES GAY FMS is a Marist Brother from Scotland. He has worked in the United Kingdom for many years and spent five years as a lecturer in Religious Education at a university college in Nairobi in Kenya. Brother Charles is a graduate in Economics and German from the University of Glasgow, in Religious Education from the mater DEI Institute in Dublin; and he has a Master of Theology degree in Christian Ethics and a Master of Arts degree in Canon Law from Heythrop College at the University of London.

BROTHER BRENDAN GEARY FMS is the Provincial of the West-Central European Province of the Marist Brothers of the Schools. Brendan resides in Holland and he has worked extensively in recent years in the areas of human development, professional standards as well as a facilitator for many groups. He is originally from Scotland and recently edited with Joanne Marie Greer the book “The dark Night of the Catholic Church: Examining the child sexual abuse scandal” (2011). This book is reviewed in this edition.

BROTHER MICHAEL GREEN FMS is the National Director of Marist Schools Australia, Executive Director of Marist Ministries Australia, and a member of the Provincial Council of the Sydney Province. He is based at the Montagne Centre in Melbourne. Michael is a former Principal of Marist High School Parramatta, and St Augustine’s College in Cairns. His academic interests are focused primarily on Marist pedagogy, charism, organisational culture and spirituality.

DR JOEL HODGE grew up in Brisbane and he works at the St Patrick’s Campus of the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne. Joel is a Lecturer in Theology and he has an active interest in East Timor. He speaks the main local language, Tetun.

DR MATT HOVEN works closely with Professor Richard Rymarz at St Joseph’s College which is affiliated to the University of Alberta in Edmonton in Canada. The philosophy of St Joseph’s is firmly pinned to the respect of all human beings and for the environment in the world around us. Matt has an interest in the ethics of creation and the eschatology of hope.

Contributors

SISTER CATHERINE McCAHILL is a Good Samaritan Sister and a member of her congregation's Leadership Team. She works from their administration centre in Sydney. Catherine reflects on what has happened in the Church over the fifty years since Vatican II and we are grateful for her contribution that is printed with permission from her congregation's newsletter "The Good Oil".

EMERITUS PROFESSOR GABRIELLE McMULLEN has held senior positions at Monash University at Clayton in Melbourne and at the Australian Catholic University. She was Rector of the Ballarat Campus 1995-2000 and Pro and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at the university until 2011. Gabrielle is currently a Trustee of the Mary Aitkenhead Ministries and she continues to support Marist ministries in Australia.

BROTHER PAUL MICHALENKO, BROTHER JOHN KLEIN, BROTHER JOHN-JOSEPH DOLAN (RIP) and BROTHER LARRY Schatz have written for the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) in the United States of America. We acknowledge and thank the Conference and these Brothers (or delegates) for giving us permission to print their short papers. Further biographical details for these authors are contained in the respective papers. Likewise, further biographical details for the two book review contributors, **GERARD WEBSTER** and **BRUCE DUNCAN**, are contained in the reviews.

MICHAEL ELLIGATE is the Parish Priest of St. Carthage's Church in Parkeville, Melbourne. He regularly contributes to the *Champagnat Journal* and he chairs various committees in Human Ethics at the University of Melbourne and at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research

Brother Charles Howard, RIP

SUPERIOR GENERAL
1985-1993

Brother Charles had a remarkable gift of being present to Brothers, particularly those in difficulty. His pastoral sensitivity was one of the hallmarks of his leadership. Charles was a warm person and Brothers and Lay Marists found they could speak to him with ease. He was an outstanding teacher, and had a wonderful gift for weaving his ideas around memorable anecdotes and stories. Many will remember his particular style of line drawing, as he sought to illustrate points he was making.

I remember on one occasion he was giving a retreat conference to the Brothers in Scotland and he told a story about his election as Provincial in Sydney. He asked a group of friends to meet him and to tell him honestly what strengths he brought to the job, and what limitations he had to be aware of. He teased the Brothers in Scotland by saying, "I am not going to share the limitations, but the one point they were all agreed on was when they said, "You love the monks (Brothers)." No one can doubt the

truth of that statement, nor indeed his love for the Institute of the Marist Brothers.

Many people have commented on his commitment to social justice, solidarity, support for our Brothers in the developing world, and his desire to increase awareness among the Brothers of the social teaching of the Church. One example of this was the energy and imagination he brought to the Brothers in Africa, who at that time were present in around 18 countries on the African continent and Madagascar. Prior to Brother Charles' time in office, Marist Africa was, to use Metternich's famous phrase, "a geographic expression." There was little or no contact between different countries, whose principal relationships were with the Provinces that founded them. Brother Charles called a meeting in Zimbabwe of the Superiors of Provinces and missions in Africa within a year of his election. The main outcome of that meeting was the decision to set up Marist International Centre (MIC) in Nairobi as a Scholasticate for African Marist Brothers. I remember him sharing on one occasion: "I considered asking Brother Basilio to lead this new and important foundation, but I turned instead to the young novice master in Zambia". The Brother he

chose was Brother Luis Sobrado, who went on to become the first Rector of MIC, Councillor General (1983 – 2001) then Vicar General (2001 – 2009), and who is currently the Superior of Mission *Ad Gentes* in Asia.

I remember visiting Cameroon in July 1990 with Brother P.J. McGowan, and seeing the struggles of the young Brothers to achieve professional training. I could not see how we could make progress in this situation. When I returned to Cameroon in 1993 it was already evident that the Brothers who returned from MIC were not only excellent teachers, but also that they were recognised as leaders in the local church. They were qualified, competent and confident. This would not have happened without Brother Charles' drive and vision. Another outcome of the meeting in Zimbabwe and the foundation of MIC (with the subsequent meetings of superiors of Africa and Madagascar) is that the African Brothers have a strong identity as African, Marist, and Brothers. These are significant and important legacies of Charles' leadership.

Brother Charles also had a great sense of appreciation for the older Brothers. When he wrote his letter of thanks to the Institute at the end of his term of office (April,

1993) the first section was devoted to the older Brothers, whom he thanked "in a special way, for all that you are and for all that you have been for our Institute." When he visited Scotland to lead a retreat on the new Constitutions I remember that he added up the number of years of service given by Brothers to the schools in Scotland. It was a wonderful and simple way to acknowledge the contribution of the Brothers in the room to the education of young people. Also, before completing his term as Superior General he made a special trip to France to visit the retirement homes of the French Brothers, to thank them for their fidelity to their vocation and to the Institute.

Many Brothers have read and commented on Brother Charles' circulars. I remember being asked to assist the General Council with retreats in 2003 and 2004. As I prepared the talks, I became aware of the number of times I found myself reaching for one of his circulars to refer to something he had written. I wrote to tell him this and received a surprised, but grateful, reply.

You may remember a small booklet that was produced during his time as Superior General on the Vocation of the Brother. The Superiors General of a number

of congregations of Brothers produced this booklet as a result of a suggestion made by Charles. I remember, in particular, his use of the striking phrase, “The sacrament of being a Brother (*Le sacrement d’être frère*),” which he found in the writings of St. John Chrysostom. This phrase expresses simply and profoundly Brother Charles’ vision of what it means to be a Brother in the Church.

At the conclusion of his mandate as Superior General, Charles described the ending of the film, “Monsieur Vincent,” a film about St Vincent DePaul. St. Vincent, an old man nearing the end of his life, is talking with Anne of Austria, Queen of France. The Queen detects a certain sadness, and asks St. Vincent, “Do you have any regrets?” St. Vincent replies, “No, Your majesty, I have no regrets, and I thank God for allowing me to work in His service during my long life, but I would like to have done more.” Brother Charles knew himself well. To quote Brother Seán Sammon, our former Superior General, Charles

had energy and passion for more than one life. We were privileged to share part of his passion, and our Institute of Marist Brothers is the better for it.

Likewise, our present Superior General, Br Emili Turu, recently wrote that ‘the best way to cancel out someone’s prophetic witness is to canonize them...this makes it easier for us to say that they were exceptional. In the process we excuse our own mediocrity by over exalting those persons we are afraid to imitate. This is not what we want to do with our Charles, whose memory we wish to last among us, because we recognise in him the authenticity of values we cannot afford to lose¹.’

May Charles, our brother, rest in peace. ■

**Brother Brendan Geary FMS
Provincial,
Marist Brothers Province of
West-Central Europe.**

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Br Emili Turu, Letter to the Australian Brothers at the National Gathering in Sydney, 14th January, 2012.

GABRIELLE McMULLEN

Leading Identity and Mission in Catholic Schooling

Participating in the Teaching Ministry of Jesus

Catholic education systems like Marist Schools Australia must ensure that their schools are characterised by a distinct and embedded Catholic identity and mission – in the case of Marist schools, the identity and mission are founded on the spirituality and educational philosophy of St Marcellin Champagnat. This is a challenging and ongoing responsibility for both the sponsoring body and individual schools and their staff.

As a contribution to fostering Catholic education, this paper considers leadership in Catholic identity and mission in Catholic schools. It has three foci – defining Catholic identity and mission, identifying the marks of Catholic schooling, and considering challenges and issues for schools in relation to Catholic identity and mission.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MISSION?

I will start with the simpler question, What do we mean by mission? Mission is a particular work or works undertaken by a Catholic agency as a ministry of the Church. Significantly, agency “implies some notion of identity” (Quinlan 2008).

The Church has a long and distinguished history in the ministry of education, encompassing primary, secondary and tertiary education and making education accessible to the disadvantaged, across the centuries and across the globe. In so doing, it continues the teaching ministry of Jesus – “Christ is *the* Teacher in Catholic schools” (Miller 2006, p. 3); those serving there are his co-teachers.

The education ministry was highlighted by Pope Benedict XVI in his recent statement to the Church in Africa given in Benin, when he called for:

quality education that embraces the whole person. Throughout her history, the Catholic Church has shown particular concern for education. She has always raised awareness among parents, providing them with encouragement and assistance in carrying out their responsibility as the first educators of their children in life and in faith (Pope Benedict XVI 2011).

WHAT IS CATHOLIC IDENTITY?

Now let me move to the more complex question, What is Catholic identity? Significantly, Bishop Michael Putney of Townsville has highlighted that “the question of Catholic identity is a far more complex and profound question than sometimes is realised” (Putney 2008).

At the heart of Catholic identity is Jesus Christ and the salvation of the world, and his communion with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Catholic schools and other agencies, which authentically manifest Catholic identity, will have Christ at the heart of their ministry. Those who work in Catholic schools represent Christ’s presence to students and their families, as they continue his ministry of teaching. Thus, the Catholic school:

demands, from all the members of the educational community, the awareness that educators, as persons and as a community, have an unavoidable responsibility to create an original Christian style. They are required to be witnesses of Jesus Christ and to demonstrate Christian life as bearing light and meaning for everyone (C.E.C. 2007, Section 15).

In an exploration of Catholic identity at a 2009 seminar organised by Catholic Social Services Victoria for leaders from education, health care and welfare agencies, Bishop Timothy Costelloe S.D.B., Chair of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, provided the following insight:

Catholic identity is first and foremost about Christ and then about the nature and quality of our response to Christ ...

this is an enormous and in many ways complex and daunting challenge (Costelloe 2009, p. 3).

A leading Australian theologian, Professor Neil Ormerod of Australian Catholic University, published a theological analysis of Catholic identity and mission in 2010 (Ormerod 2010). He makes a significant distinction in relation to identity and mission, highlighting that “mission is inherently inclusive, since anyone can take part in [a Catholic school’s] transformative work” while identity is “inherently exclusive ... [and] establishes boundaries of belonging” – for example, a commitment to Catholic values and schooling (Ormerod 2010, p. 438). Significantly, Ormerod also argues that:

part of the Church’s deepest ‘identity’ includes principles of growth and development ... This transformed identity becomes the new base from which all further developments will occur ... options taken in relation to the Church’s mission over the centuries have shaped forever its emerging identity ... [Further,] that identity will change over time as the Church is transformed by its fidelity to its mission (Ormerod 2010, pp. 431-432).

MARKS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLING

Catholic schools represent a major commitment of resources to ministry by the Church and, at their best, can have a profound influence on the development of individuals and culture. In this context the Church and especially Catholic school systems have invested in a very significant manner in exploration and enrichment of their Catholic identity and mission.²

What then are the marks of authentic Catholic schooling? I now summarise significant analyses from two relevant authorities of the principal features of Catholic schools, prior to considering particular challenges and initiatives for Catholic schools in relation to their Catholic identity and mission.

Congregation for Catholic Education

Archbishop Michael Miller C.S.B. of Vancouver, who was previously Secretary of the Vatican’s Congregation for Catholic Education, has identified five marks of Catholic schools (Miller 2006). Thus, schools conducted “according to the mind of the Church” must be:

- inspired by a supernatural vision – human beings are created in the image of God and are of inalienable dignity. Catholic education seeks to form each student holistically, nurturing intellectual, emotional, physical, religious, social and spiritual growth, and to challenge “students to find, through God, meaning and value in their lives” (N.C.E.C. undated);
- founded on Christian anthropology – “a Catholic school must be founded on Jesus Christ ... who, through his Incarnation, is united with each student”. For teachers, Archbishop Miller highlights that “emphasis on the supernatural destiny of students brings with it a profound appreciation of the need to perfect children in all their dimensions as images of God”;
- animated by communion and community – the third mark of Catholic schooling “is the emphasis on the school as a community – a community of persons and ... ‘a genuine community of faith’”. The Church identifies four aspects of community in the context of Catholic schools: “the teamwork among those involved; the cooperation between educators and bishops; the interaction of students with teachers; and the school’s physical environment”;
- imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout the curriculum – Catholic education which “is ‘intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person’ (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1977) ... aims to develop gradually every capability of every student”. Beyond its religious education and pastoral care, “the Catholic school must embody its genuine catholicity ... in content and methodology across the entire program of studies ... If a Catholic school is to deliver on its promise to provide students with an integral education, it must foster love for wisdom and truth, and must integrate faith, culture, and life”;
- sustained by Gospel witness – the fifth “indicator of a school’s authentic catholicity is the vital witness of its teachers and administrators. With them lies the primary responsibility for creating a Christian school climate as individuals and as a community ... they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behavior” (Miller 2006).

The five elements “belong to a school’s Catholic identity ... Moreover, they are measurable benchmarks, forming the backbone and inspiring the mission of every Catholic school” (Miller 2006, p. 1).

National Catholic Education Commission

The National Catholic Education Commission (N.C.E.C.) has identified the following principles as “essential elements in any basic document constituting the board of a Catholic school” in Australia and thus they present a more specific statement of the marks of a Catholic school:

The Love of Christ, which is the fundamental recognition that Catholic education is animated by and based upon the love of Christ for all people.

The Role of Parents, as the primary educators of their children, in whose place and with whose collaboration, Catholic schools fulfil their mission.

Faithfulness to the Mission of the Church, which is the mission of Christ, to preach the Good News, including fidelity to the teachings of the Church.

Church Solidarity, which is the obligation of members and agencies of the Church to support those other individuals and agencies of the Church in need, and to work for the good of the whole Church community.

Support for the Common Good, which is the general obligation on members of the Church not only to support the Church, its agencies and members, but also to ensure that the work of the Church and its agencies contribute to the benefit of society as a whole.

Embracing the Poor, which is the obligation on the Church community to continually assess its actions and policies to ensure that they empower the most disadvantaged and marginalised.

Educational Quality, which is the obligation upon all those involved in Catholic education to strive to provide the highest possible quality of education to those attending Catholic schools.

Participation, which is the principle that powers and functions in any community are exercised, wherever possible, by the persons and bodies closest to and most accountable to those affected.

Inclusiveness, which is the principle that Catholic education should be open to all those who wish to receive a Catholic education, and that all those engaged in Catholic education in whatever capacity will be welcomed and valued in the pursuit of the educational mission of the Church, to the extent that they support that mission.

Unity in Diversity, which is the recognition that the Holy Spirit inspires different communities in different ways, bestowing upon them diverse charisms which provide inspiration for action, all for the same purpose of promoting the Kingdom.

Stewardship of Resources, which is the obligation of all agencies of the Church to use financial and other resources responsibly, particularly with a view to ensuring the well-being of future generations.

Rule of Canon Law, whereby every agency of the Church is constituted and operates in accordance with Canon Law (N.C.E.C. 2002, pp. 10-11).

CHALLENGES AND INITIATIVES IN RELATION TO CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND MISSION

I will now consider some challenges for schools in relation to their Catholic identity and mission and suggest potential initiatives to address them. Catholic schools face such challenges as they seek to realise their mission of providing excellent and holistic education in the Catholic tradition.

Critical Balance

The critical balance between identity and mission represents a tension for Catholic schools. If the focus is too narrowly on Catholic identity, a Catholic school is likely to be seen as exclusive and its mission will be compromised. On the other hand, an over-emphasis on mission

risks reducing the agency to a “generalised form of humanism ... and it [then] loses its specific contribution to the transformation of the world” (Ormerod 2010, p. 439).

Remaining Christ-focused is vital to realising this balance – what is required of those in Catholic education (and other ministries) was articulated incisively by Bishop Costelloe in his above-mentioned 2009 address:

if Catholic identity is about witnessing to the compassion, mercy and selflessness of Christ, about being the living sign of Christ’s ongoing presence in our world, and it certainly is, then if we wish to strengthen our Catholic identity, we have to strengthen the quality, genuineness and inclusiveness of our outreach to all those who seek the enhancement of their lives through our ministry and presence (Costelloe 2009, p. 3).

Constant Re-engagement

Identity and mission are never static – there must be constant re-engagement with identity and mission as circumstances change, and this is a time of significant change for education, the Church and wider society. Ormerod notes in his above-mentioned study that “identity will change over time as the Church is transformed by its fidelity to its mission” (Ormerod 2010, p. 432). Rev Dr David Ranson of the Catholic Institute of Sydney, who has also undertaken a theological analysis of Catholic identity and mission, highlights that identity “is not something ‘possessed’, but rather a dimension that is both constant and unfolding” (Ranson 2007 and 2008). Each Catholic school will craft its “Catholic identity in ways that specifically fit its local internal and external environments” and this is:

a creative process that is an ongoing, never-ending challenge as the conditions around us change ... the process is not an academic exercise by a few theological experts, but a process in which people in creating Catholic identity are themselves at the same time transforming both their lives and the world around them (Arbuckle 2007, p. 27).

Mission as the Senior Partner

Our Catholic schools operate in an environment experiencing great change, where there are often tensions between maintaining both Catholic

identity and viability, as well as between mission and business, whereby “the mission is to be the senior partner driving or permeating *all* decisions in the business side” (Arbuckle 2007, pp. 7 and 84).

Importantly, for Catholic schools to achieve their ‘full identity’ they must realise both a high standard of education and unequivocal Catholicity. Thus, business implies excellence rather than viability and, for their leaders, this requires great professionalism as well as “accepting, and being transformed by, the values and truths of Catholic identity” (Arbuckle 2007, p. 83). The excellence will encompass both a quality educational experience and inclusiveness in relation to access to Catholic schooling.

Catholic schools are significantly funded by government and need to meet the considerable demands of public accountability and associated reporting. There are additional requirements with respect to participation in Catholic school systems conducted by Catholic Education Offices, religious institutes and/or public juridical persons.³ As a work of the Church a Catholic school involves partnership between the bishop of the diocese, the relevant Catholic education authority, the school itself, parents and the local parish priest(s). While this partnership presents constraints for a Catholic school, it underpins faithful continuation of the teaching ministry of Jesus and realises the animation “by communion and community” (Miller 2006, p. 3) emphasised by Archbishop Miller. A key element here is “support for the common good” whereby some redistribution by the Catholic education authority of Government funding and other resources supports disadvantaged schools to provide quality education and to “empower the most disadvantaged and marginalised” (N.C.E.C. 2002, p. 10).

Some Australian dioceses and/or education authorities have issued documents in relation to the conduct of their Catholic schools – for example, Archdiocese of Sydney: *Archbishop’s Charter for Catholic Schools*; Catholic Education Western Australia: *Code of Ethical Conduct*; Catholic Education South Australia: *Charter for Teachers in Catholic Schools*; Edmund Rice Education Australia: *Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition*.⁴ These indicate the commitments required of Catholic schools and their staff in the relevant school system.

Employment

The school board, principal, responsible authority [the sponsoring religious institute/public juridical person canonical stewards/Catholic

Education Office], parents, parish priest and bishop have shared responsibility for recruitment for mission. With respect to teachers and administrators for Catholic schools, the employment process should ensure that appointees have a commitment to the values and mission of Catholic schooling. This will require clear articulation of the school's identity and mission in the advertisement, interview and contract for a given role.

A Catholic school requires a critical mass of committed Catholics:

who can understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the gospel, and who can contribute to the achievement of the school's Catholic identity and apostolic goals" (Miller 2006, p. 9).

Further, those working in Catholic schools, whether or not they are Catholic, need "to have an operative willingness to accept, and be transformed by, the truths and values of Catholic identity" (Arbuckle 2007, p. 83).

Induction and Formation

Leaders and staff need induction into and ongoing formation in relation to their school's Catholic identity and mission and, in many instances, this will also involve gaining an understanding of the charism or spirit of the founding religious institute. Further, "Catholic educators are expected to be models for their students by bearing transparent witness to Christ and the beauty of the gospel" (Miller 2006, p. 10). Thus, for their induction into and ongoing professional development for Catholic schooling:

Catholic educators need a 'formation of the heart': they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others ... It is only in this way that they can make their teaching a school of faith, that is to say, a transmission of the Gospel, as required by the educational project of the Catholic school (C.E.C. 2007, Section 25).

As noted above, professionalism in all aspects of the conduct of a Catholic school and faithfulness to Catholic values are both essential characteristics of authentic Church ministry. Ensuring holistic professional competence and developing leadership capability are therefore also critical elements for the realisation of Catholic identity and mission. This is especially

important if our leaders are to be change agents in enhancing Catholic schooling and the Church's Christian presence in the world.

Succession Planning

Succession planning is a key strategy for our Catholic schools in relation to their identity and mission, in what I might describe as phase three in a progression. We have passed from the era when many Catholic schools and other ministries were conducted by priests and religious, like the Marist Brothers, whose vocation and formation had ensured they were prepared for ministry, to a subsequent period during which many former priests, religious and seminarians bring or brought the fruits of their formation to serve our agencies, to a time when the laity will be largely responsible for Catholic schools. Thus, human resources planning, employment processes, induction and professional development all need to align with this evolution, as do governance and the preparation for and ongoing formation of those in governance and trustee roles. The richness of the Church's educational resources and social teaching can underpin these endeavours. In relation to the third phase, Ranson expresses hopefulness concerning the "imagination" of the laity "with their own sense of professional vocation, passion and spirituality" (Ranson 2007, p. 3). Pope John Paul II was similarly optimistic:

The reduced number of religious and new forms of ownership and management should not lead to a loss of a spiritual atmosphere, or to a loss of a sense of vocation ... This is an area in which the Catholic laity ... have an opportunity to manifest the depth of their faith and to play their own specific part in the Church's mission of evangelization and service (Pope John Paul II 1987).

The importance of a critical mass of committed Catholic staff was noted above and these challenges for the laity are predicated on achieving that goal, while working in partnership "with many other men and women of good will" (Pope Benedict XVI 2010).

The transition to the laity has profound implications in relation to formation for Catholic schooling. While the laity's professional education is likely to be superior to that of many religious principals and teachers in previous generations, the latter had intense and ongoing formation during their preparation for and daily living of religious life that is outside the realm of most lay people. Catholic education authorities, like

Catholic Education Offices and Marist Schools Australia, need to provide appropriate and in-depth formation for lay school leaders and teachers which will equip them “to be bearers of the Catholic tradition in its best and richest sense” (Costelloe 2011).

Culture

Where Catholic identity and mission permeate a school, they will be evident in all its aspects – its governance, leadership, organisation, programs, administration and overall culture. The relationships between leaders, staff and students, and the nature of the education, pastoral care and community life will reflect the Christian inspiration of the schooling. Thus, Archbishop Miller has stated that:

the gospel of Jesus Christ and his very person are to inspire and guide the Catholic school in every dimension of its life and activity – its philosophy of education, its curriculum, its community life, its selection of teachers, and even its physical environment (Miller 2006, p. 3).

It is a particular challenge for a Catholic school to ensure that its Catholic ethos is a shared commitment of all members of the school community and unfailingly “visible and embodied in the concrete decisions of its daily choices and life” (Miller 2005). Bishop Costelloe emphasised in his 2009 seminar:

We live, of course, not in the world of perfection or ideals but in the world of reality. As individuals we struggle with many things and these struggles can impact on our lives as people working in Catholic [schools]. We have to acknowledge the obvious fact of the gap between the ideal and the reality ... I can only maintain a sense of integrity if I am prepared to acknowledge the ideal, if I am prepared to acknowledge the areas where I personally and where the [school] to which I belong fail to reach the ideal, and if I am prepared to take whatever steps I can at this particular stage to do something to bridge the gap (Costelloe 2009, p. 5).

Branding and Religious Imagery

Those who come to a Catholic school should be unambiguously aware that it is a Catholic institution by the badging and religious imagery they

encounter. Subsequently, their experience of the holistic nature of the education and pastoral care experienced would also reflect the essence of Catholic schooling (and be in harmony with the imagery). Archbishop Miller has emphasised that:

If Catholic schools are to be true to their identity, they will suffuse their environment with a delight in the sacramental. Therefore they should express physically and visibly the external signs of Catholic culture through images, symbols, icons, and other objects of traditional devotion. A chapel, classroom crucifixes and statues, liturgical celebrations, and other sacramental reminders of Catholic life, including good art that is not explicitly religious in its subject matter, should be evident (Miller 2006, p. 6).

In 1999-2000 I was part of the team designing the new Melbourne campus of Australian Catholic University. The building purchased was able to be gutted and then facilities purpose-built for higher education were constructed. Apart from incorporating contemporary teaching and student and staff spaces and religious works of art, we worked with the architect to design a very large graphic for the foyer area of each the seven levels, which was placed directly opposite the bank of lifts. In terms of the images and the text utilised, much consultation occurred over many months with staff, particularly theologians and artists, to arrive at seven quite different graphics but a coherent package. This project required an investment of considerable time and modest resources but proved a most powerful way to signal to the visitor to the University and the student and staff member regularly on campus something of what is different about a Catholic university (but, of course, much more is required for authentic Catholicity and academic excellence).

As highlighted above by Archbishop Miller art has a special place in our schools, both as an academic discipline and as higher order imagery, “rendering accessible and comprehensible to the minds and hearts of our people the things of the spirit ... the things of God” (Pope Benedict XVI 2009). In his address of May 2009 to artists gathered in the richly-adorned Sistine Chapel, Pope Benedict XVI reminded the participants of the importance of “not reducing the horizons of existence to mere material realities”:

Christianity from its earliest days has recognized the value of the arts and has made wise use of their varied language to express her unvarying message of salvation ... we need your collaboration in order to carry out our ministry ... in this activity ... you are masters. It is your task, your mission and your art consists in grasping treasures from the heavenly realm of the spirit and clothing them in words, colours, forms – making them accessible (Pope Benedict XVI 2009).

Best Practice

Best practice in relation to fostering Catholic identity and mission should be shared across each sector and with other Catholic sectors as appropriate – by way of example, in the United States a book has been published jointly by university presidents and their local bishop recording effective practices of collaboration between a given university and its diocese. It is powerfully titled *Promising Practices: Collaboration among Catholic Bishops and University Presidents* (Galligan-Stierle 2005). Regular opportunities should be provided for the Catholic school systems across Australia and in a number of other countries, which operate similarly but in diverse contexts, to share best practice in this ministry.

Quality Assurance and Improvement

Realising “the living presence” of Christ and “his understanding of the human person” in a Catholic school, Archbishop Miller states, is “the measure of a school’s catholicity” (Miller 2006, p. 3). Apart from assessing the quality of their academic endeavours (e.g. literacy and numeracy through NAPLAN), Catholic schools should evaluate their efforts to foster Catholicity. Catholic Education Offices have developed relevant processes; Archbishop Miller has suggested that such evaluation might “involve an internal review of the five benchmark indicators” outlined above, as well as others related to an individual’s school situation, history and charism. With input from a wide range of stakeholders “this collaborative and systematic exercise of assessing a school’s catholicity would serve to identify, clarify, and strengthen its effectiveness in the service of Christ and the Church” (Miller 2006, p. 10).

In striving for ongoing enhancement of Catholic education and the necessary partnerships within the staff team and between teachers and students:

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) helps us to understand how each one is called to make his or her gifts bear fruit and to welcome the riches of others within the shared educational mission (C.E.C. 2007, Section 35).

Thus, Pope Benedict XVI said of Catholic education in *Africae Munus*, *highlighting the part played by religious orders like the Marist Brothers*:

The Church makes her own contribution by recognizing and making fruitful the talents that God has placed in the heart of each person. Many religious congregations were founded with this end in view. Countless holy men and women understood that leading people to holiness first entailed promoting their dignity through education (Pope Benedict XVI 2011).

Catholic education authorities should foster research in Catholic schools and disseminate the results as a contribution to enhancing the educational enterprise. This is fruitful area for collaboration with universities and, in the case of Australian Catholic schools, especially with Australian Catholic University and the University of Notre Dame Australia.

Addressing Disadvantage

The National Catholic Education Commission has highlighted inclusivity of Catholic education, which “should be open to all those who wish to receive a Catholic education” (N.C.E.C. 2002, p. 11). This was also emphasised by Pope Benedict XVI in his 2011 statement on the Church in Africa:

the Church’s teaching establishments – her schools, colleges, high schools, professional schools, universities and so forth – place tools for learning at people’s disposal without discrimination on the basis of origin, financial means or religion (Pope Benedict XVI 2011).

In the Australian context and with limited resources, Catholic schools face particular challenges in relation to promoting the dignity, equality and participation of Indigenous Australians, refugees, asylum seekers and other disadvantaged groups. In particular, Catholic schools need to commit resources for some scholarships to open up educational

opportunities to disadvantaged students and, upon admission, for their adequate academic and pastoral support. In addressing disadvantage more widely, the involvement of members of the school community in social justice programs, like a conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society, REMAR – the school-based Marist youth ministry which includes a focus on social justice and service to others, or volunteering, also manifests Catholic identity and should be actively fostered.

EXERCISING THE MINISTRY OF CHARITY

In his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI identifies the Church's "three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God ..., celebrating the sacraments ..., and exercising the ministry of charity" (Pope Benedict XVI 2005). Critically there is interdependence of the three responsibilities which support and foster one another.

The conduct of Catholic schools is one of the Church's ministries of charity. Significantly, Catholic schools also have the responsibilities of "proclaiming the word of God" and "celebrating the sacraments". These responsibilities are realised through religious education, the school's prayer life, regular Mass and other liturgical celebrations, and the presence of a chapel and religious imagery throughout the school:

Prayer should be a normal part of the school day, so that students learn to pray in times of sorrow and joy, of disappointment and celebration, of difficulty and success ... The sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation in particular should mark the rhythm of a Catholic school's life. Mass should be celebrated regularly, with the students and teachers participating appropriately (Miller 2006, p. 6).

Members of the school can also witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by their approach to building a school community and by the integrity with which they undertake their studies or, in the case of staff, teach or deliver a service to the school. For the present Holy Father, "the measure of an institution's Catholic identity can be judged by the integrity of its Gospel witness to the church and the world" (Miller 2005).

CONCLUSION

In his 2009 seminar for leaders from education, health care and welfare agencies, Bishop Costelloe summed up what it means for such an institution to be Catholic:

An institution is Catholic if it is, in reality, a ‘sacrament’, that is a sign and an instrument, of the ongoing presence of Christ in the world and as the place of encounter with this Christ (Costelloe 2009, p. 4).

This faithfulness is, and must continue to be, fundamental to Catholic schools.

In conclusion, in his apostolic letter to mark the close of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, Pope John Paul II, in Jesus’ words, invited us to:

‘put out into the deep’ ... [and] to remember the past with gratitude, to live the present with enthusiasm and to look forward to the future with confidence: ‘Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever’ (Heb 13:8) (Pope John Paul II 2000).

This represents a message of hope for Catholic schools, which are a “priceless treasure” as they “build up the community of believers, evangelize the culture, and serve the common good of society” (Miller 2006, p. 10). ■

ENDNOTES

- 1 Following postdoctoral research in Germany Emeritus Professor Gabrielle McMullen joined Monash University and also became Dean of its Catholic residence, Mannix College in 1981. She was then Rector of Australian Catholic University’s (ACU) Ballarat campus from 1995-2000 and its Pro- and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) until 2011. She is currently a Trustee of Mary Aikenhead Ministries. She has a long-standing interest in the identity and mission of Catholic agencies and convened the four cross-sectoral colloquia on identity and mission in Church-based organisations which were hosted by ACU in 2007-2010 – see, for example, McMullen, G. (2011).
- 2 For example, see the major *Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project* initiated by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria with the Catholic University of Leuven. Accessed on 18 November 2011 at http://www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au/Enhancing_Catholic_School_Identity/.
- 3 Established under Church law (Canon Law), “public juridic persons are aggregates of persons or of things which are constituted by competent ecclesiastical authority so that, within the purposes set out for them, they fulfill in the name of the Church ... the proper function entrusted to them in view of the public good” [Canon 116, § 1]. The most familiar public juridical persons are dioceses, parishes and religious institutes. In recent years many religious institutes, in preparation for future leadership, have established public juridical persons as a new model of sponsorship for their ministries to ensure their continuation as works of the Catholic Church. These public juridical persons are “aggregate of things”, namely the ministries transferred to the canon law steward. The establishing “competent ecclesiastical authority” varies and some

public juridical persons have been established by the Holy See (Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life) and others have been granted juridical personality by a diocesan bishop, bishops of a province or a national bishops' conference.

- 4 See pre-release version provided by Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (NSW); http://cms.ceo.wa.edu.au/home/employment/working_in_catholic_education.jsp; <http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/sites/CatholicEducationOfficesSA/employment/teaching-positions>, http://www.erea.edu.au/_uploads/_ckpg/files/erea_charter_09_Lowres.pdf, respectively. Accessed on 19 November 2011.

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JOEL HODGE

Agendas and Smokescreens

Secularism, Tolerance and Religious Education

Religious education remains a vexed question for a society that in general no longer knows what to believe. Nevertheless, certain sections of the population, demonstrating more activist forms of agnosticism and atheism, do not hesitate to express strong views on the subject. For example, some groups in Victoria, including *The Age* newspaper, continue to protest against the present form of religious education in schools.

These secular or atheist groups take a stand against religious education for various reasons. Some of them coalesce around arguments to do with tolerance and secularism in particular. Generally the protagonists rarely define tolerance and secularism in any depth, so it might be worth reflecting on the use and meaning of these terms in the current debate. I will give a succinct rendition of the arguments, and analyse the problems with them.

Firstly, *tolerance*: It is argued that Australia is a multi-religious, multicultural society that should not impose particular religious beliefs on people, but should be tolerant of a variety of beliefs. The implication is that different religions should be studied alongside each other. The first point that one should note about this argument is that it is not so much a matter of solidly based conviction or principle as one of conditional approval. In that sense tolerance is a belief and a value that structures how we see and behave toward each other. No-one can scientifically prove tolerance to be a valid or fool-proof way of running a society. Certain facts can be argued in its favour, but in the end, it can only be accepted as a seemingly good and fruitful way of relating and acting. This is a view generally endorsed in the West, though not necessarily in other places. I personally believe that tolerance can be a positive force in some circumstances, though a successful society requires far more. As I see it, in many of its manifestations tolerance resembles forbearance rather than real acceptance of and engagement with the other.

The second point that one can notice about modern tolerance is that it is a *belief* that subjects other beliefs to it. In other words, it equalises different beliefs or social forces by subjecting them to its form of belief. In the case of religion it subjects to itself the more prevalent forms (such as Christianity) in order to control them, and then, equalise them with smaller forms. It may well be just to give smaller belief systems a chance to profess what they believe. This is not what modern tolerance is on about, however. Rather it involves a power-play by the dominant elite to subject those social movements and beliefs to itself.

This second point, then, leads to my third point: the tolerance commonly evident in our society is often not genuine, and because of this we apply it selectively for particular gain. Consider the realm of sport in Australia. We allow many different sporting expressions. However, we do not reduce the more dominant forms, such as Australian Rules Football, to the level of the less popular forms, such as bowling or synchronised swimming.

Tolerance does not impel us to give such ‘lesser’ sports the same media exposure, or to compel children to learn to play them. If we were to act in that way, we would probably have widespread social protest. Real or genuine tolerance does not subject everything to the same ‘playing field’, but allows different religious and cultural forms to exist in their own way. Do we really do this in Australian society? Do we really allow different religio-cultural forms, such as New Guinea or Hindu or Arabic cultures, to exist in their own form? No, because there is an existing culture, language, belief system, and way of life in Australia to which other cultural forms adapt themselves.

Therefore, for the religious education debate, the argument about tolerance can be seen as a ruse to subject a certain dominant belief system (Christianity) to another, namely, atheistic secularism. Modern secularism has no great respect for different religious forms, but wishes to equalise and subject all of them to its agenda. This does not mean that ‘religion’ can’t be studied in some form in schools. I think it should. But we should be clear what religion is: it is not just Christianity or Islam, but involves studying all belief systems that structure how we think about ourselves and how we act toward each other. It could include forms of modern secularism, nationalism and sport.

Now to the second term that is used widely in the religious education debate: *secularism*. We are repeatedly told that we live in a secular society and that our education system is secular. Yet, the term secular is rarely defined. Often it is used to mean ‘anti-sectarianism’ or ‘anti-religion’ (which in practice targets particular forms such as the Christian religion). On the ABC *Religion and Ethics* page, on the topic of Christian education and secularism in the schools of Victoria, Professor Peter Sherlock has given a short and insightful *history of the debate* that might help some to have a better appreciation of the complex history of this subject.

The way that *secular* is used in modern Australia usually entails the exclusion of religion, specifically Christianity. Yet, the problem with this argument is that there is no way to properly define religion to the exclusion of other belief systems, such as nationalism, capitalism or sport. Furthermore, secular has not always meant ‘anti-religion’. In some usage, it has meant the carving out of a space in which politics and religion are separate. To achieve this end, some modern States have taken on particular powers resulting over time in other incipient belief systems such as nationalism taking over education and culture.

The final point to make with regard to this 'secular' push is that it sees itself as defending a certain secular legacy against forms of religious 'aggressiveness' which should not be allowed in the public realm. In such a context Christian educators in schools are portrayed by certain media agencies as radical proselytisers imposing their beliefs on children. Undoubtedly this can happen. But the charge is unjust to others who are trying to contribute positively to Australian society by affirming that children are loved, not just by imperfect humans but by their maker, God. Furthermore, it is a straw argument constructed to depict religious people as aggressors and secular people as righteous defenders. This kind of conflictual dualism is unhelpful to the debate and should be abandoned.

The defensiveness of various parties in the religious education debate seems ultimately to do with the beliefs and values underlying much of Australian society. Each side has beliefs and values they wish to put forward, and we should be honest about this. Though it is not always the case, one of the problems with the state education system, as John Howard intimated, can be the lack of coherent and consistent beliefs and values that provide a foundation for children and society. People often ignore this element in the debate, and it can contribute to the defensiveness that some express. Christian churches among others present specific values to which many parents are increasingly attracted, as is shown by the growth in Christian schools and support for religious education. Incidentally, that development casts doubt on media claims about moderate Christians turning against religion. Nevertheless, some of the fear of Christian beliefs could be more readily dispelled if Christians were explicit in their acceptance that while Christianity does provide an over-arching framework for understanding our lives, it is not (and should not be) a closed system. God is often taken as the final answer, but God is just the beginning of a journey into the mystery of existence; one, as Christians profess, that has to do with an open and affirming love which can orient us, but not control or overwhelm our freedom.

We need to examine much more deeply the beliefs that undergird our participation in this debate, and not use smokescreens to cover our real intentions and agendas. In this way, we might be able to find common ground. ■

MATT HOVEN

How Catholic Schools Can Better Support an Ethic for Creation

In his World Day of Peace 2010 homily, Pope Benedict XVI declared that peace in our times would only be possible if people accept common responsibility for both neglecting and threatening to destroy the earth and its natural resources. In calling for an “education for peace,” Pope Benedict emphasized learning about the responsibility that everyone bears “for the protection and care of the environment” (no. 11). The announcement supported a seemingly unending list of bishops, theologians and educators throughout the world who highlight *care for creation* as a moral imperative for Christians (e.g., Christiansen and Grazer 1996; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace 2005). Catholic schools, as educational centres of the church, have a substantial part to play in this endeavor. These schools, in the message of *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1998), are at the core of the church’s mission in the service of society (nos. 16-17) and thus educators would be wise to engage the best knowledge of our times for an informed stance on the environment.

Despite the overwhelming support for a care for creation ethic, there are those who question this emphasis. Most notable is a controversial lecture delivered by Cardinal George Pell (Archdiocese of Sydney) in October 2011 in London. In the address reproduced in full by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Cardinal Pell challenged mainstream scientific evidence and presented his suspicions about the role of humans in global climate change (Pell 2011). The speech was strongly refuted by many in the scientific community for its imprecise use — even misuse — of scientific data (see Stephens 2011). This counterpoint amidst the church’s

flood of support for an environmental ethic should not slow efforts among educational leaders in Catholic schools. In fact, further theological support for an ethical stance toward the earth is necessary. As many writers claim, a spiritual and religious dimension can better enable an environmental ethic and thus engage a new way forward (see Bartholomew I, 2003; Delio 2008; Edwards 2006; Hart 2004, 2006; Santmire 1985).

For Catholic schools, how can religious insights and practices establish a richer context supportive of an environmental ethic? Two areas of theology are particularly helpful for the educator: sacramental theology and eschatology. Examination of these topics with an emphasis on the importance of the physical world in Christian belief has great potential to inspire better care of the planet. Re-introducing religious practices with an eye toward creation actualizes these beliefs and offers inspiration for spurring greater consideration of the earth.

SACRAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

Low levels of youth participation in the liturgical life of the church in general fosters apathy toward the sacraments. Many Catholic schoolteachers face this reality in the classroom. Despite this, an understanding of the sacraments is foundational to a Catholic worldview. In fact, teaching about the sacraments and their rich meaning can draw students into a greater appreciation of the environment.

In order to do so, the sacramental principle can be given primary importance when teaching about the sacraments. American sacramental theologian Kevin Irwin describes the principle as “naming and using things from this world and discovered in human life that reveal and disclose the presence and action of God among us. . . . Things in this world reveal God to us; matter is never divorced or separated from the God who made all things.”¹ The *HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* defines the sacramental principle in the following way: “The notion that all reality, both animate and inanimate, is potentially or in fact the bearer of God’s presence and the instrument of God’s saving activity on humanity’s behalf.”² The sacramental principle gives first emphasis to the fact that God works through created things — like mountains, trees, deer, snow, etc. — to achieve a divine end. God mediates his presence through the material world. In this way, all things have an inherent value. Human beings are part of and set within a larger tapestry called creation. This form of revelation of God also underlines the Creator’s desire to be known and have union with human beings. God speaks through physical things. It is

most explicitly shown in the mystery of the incarnation, when the Divine Word took on human flesh (John 1:14). In that moment, God fully embraced the material world. This is highlighted every time Christians celebrate sacraments — where water, bread, oil, etc. reveal God’s coming into creation in a privileged way.

The sacramental principle underlines the value of creation in Christian belief: God works in and through the material world. Creation is not merely an account of the origins of the world, but is the very place of existence in which human beings interact with God. Creation is everything around us (material or spiritual) that finds its ultimate source in the Creator. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (second edition, 1994) — called the “sure norm for teaching the [Catholic] faith” and an important “reference text” for educators by Pope John Paul II (*Fidei Depositum*, no. 3) — highlights belief in creation as “the beginning and the foundation of all God’s works” (no. 198). Thus, using physical means (e.g., water, wheat, etc.) as the basis for revealing God’s plan of salvation points to the belief that the material world has great significance for Christians. The *Catechism* explains that the “material cosmos” symbolizes “spiritual realities” and allows for communication among humans and with God (nos. 1146 and 1147; see commentary in Power 2008). It speaks of the sacraments as “*signs of the human world*,” revealing that they are “rooted in the work of creation and in human culture” (nos. 1146 and 1145; see also nos. 1147-490). The “signs and symbols of the cosmos and of social life” affirm the goodness of creation (no. 1152).

Approaching the sacraments with this emphasis enables a better appreciation of creation. The sacramental principle challenges the common misconception that religious teachings are strictly spiritual teachings. Giving proper emphasis to the value of physical reality in Christian belief expands horizons and prompts consideration of how one might address concerns of our day. It stresses an underpinning in Christian teaching. By doing so, there is a much greater awareness of the importance of the physical world. A care for creation ethic is not a meeting between the Church and political correctness, but a reawakening to an ancient Christian belief. Impressing upon youth this dimension, an education about an environmental ethic is realized as being part of the very foundation of Christian living. Instead of youth seeing the sacraments as a passing tradition, the sacramental principle calls for a reconsideration of this passed-on tradition: how Christians approach the earth and how sacraments are privileged expressions of God’s saving activity on earth.

An example may illustrate the point. On Ash Wednesday, Christians mark the beginning of the penitential season of Lent. This involves the liturgical action of the minister signing the cross upon the foreheads of participants with ashes. The minister signs the cross and traditionally says, “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return” (as found in Genesis 3:19 and Job 10:8-9; as commented by Adam 1981). The ritual action symbolizes repentance, a reminder of one’s frailty and need for healing from God. This sacramental awakens recipients to the belief that they are symbolically from the ground (i.e., *humus*). Scientifically speaking, it acts as a reminder that humans share a common origin with all carbon-based organisms — all shall return to the earth. Understanding more fully the significance of the ashes only heightens the call to repent and believe the Good News while considering the human being’s relationship to the earth.

ESCHATOLOGY AND HOPE

The blockbuster movie *2012* depicts an escape from an impending day of reckoning for the earth (Kloser and Emmerich 2009). It details the safe passage of a select population on specially prepared arks built in preparation of a Mayan calendar prediction of the end of the world. In so doing, the film exemplified the popularity of wondering about the final destiny of the earth when it generated over three-quarters of a billion dollars (US) in theatres worldwide (Box Office Mojo 2011). Eschatological questions posed by students are far from unfamiliar to the religious educator in a Catholic school. Instead of sheepishly avoiding claims about the earth’s future based on Christian belief, greater knowledge about Christian eschatology provides a lens to increase an appreciation for the earth and all creation today.

Irish theologian and educator Dermot Lane offers a clear and helpful means of engaging eschatological thinking in this way for educators. Literally, eschatology means the study (*logos*) of the last things (*eschata*). In many catechisms leading up to Vatican II, like the U.S. Baltimore Catechism or Australian Red Catechism, the last things were considered on an individualized basis: death, judgment, heaven and hell. Lane explains that contemporary theologians have rediscovered an interpretation of eschatology that gives primacy to the advent of the end (*eschaton*).³ That is, the beginning of the fulfillment of all things is realized in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. Envisioning the end of the world in terms of the paschal mystery is much different from what films like *2012* have to offer

young people. Based upon symbolic and analogical language, there is an awareness that anything said about the future is limited and veiled. Thus, eschatology is not about futuristic predictions. Lane explains,

Eschatology is about hope seeking understanding, more specifically about a particular hope-filled interpretation of human experience in the light of the Christ event. Eschatology seeks to explore, analyze and interpret the potential within human experience insofar as that experience points us towards the future. [It] looks at present experience against the background of the salvation offered by Christ to see what it promises for the future.⁴

Lane's phrase "hope seeking understanding" mirrors St. Anselm's "faith seeking understanding." In this case, Lane views Christ's death and resurrection as the paradigm for viewing the future. He explains, "The resurrection of Jesus is therefore a re-ordering and restructuring of life in such a way that we can now believe that out of death comes life, darkness yields to light and self-surrender leads to transformation."⁵ In the cross, then, Christians place their hope in what is possible by God's grace. Hope is not wishful thinking, but grounded in the crucified Christ who defeats death and sin.⁶ It becomes the norm for viewing all of life. Christians (i.e., *little Christs*) are in a mode of fulfillment toward Christ; they are on a journey of becoming more like Christ. Despite challenges and defeats, the image of the crucified Christ offers hope that in the end all things will receive new life through Christ's resurrection.

Eschatology, then, is not limited to individuals but instead has a cosmic dimension. Unlike the film *2012*, however, Christian belief understands the cosmic dimension in light of Christ. In the final subsection of its examination of the creedal article, "I believe in life everlasting," the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* affirms that the universe and human beings together will attain a destiny "perfectly re-established in Christ" (no. 1042; see commentary by Lane, "Eschatology: Hope Seeking Understanding," 147-9). The *Catechism* appeals to biblical teaching dealing with the transformation of humans and the entire cosmos and asserts the eternal plan of God as a "new heaven and a new earth" (no. 1043; see 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1). Further, based on Romans 8, it reiterates the biblical teaching about the "profound common destiny" of the material world and human beings while confirming its hope that the entire cosmos

will undergo a final renewal (no. 1046). Thus, for the moment, Christians trust that God's providence continues to lead "everything towards its final end" (no. 1040). On the future of physical reality, the *Catechism* claims that the "visible universe" is "destined to be transformed" and share in the glorification of the just with the risen Christ (no. 1047). In its teaching about "life everlasting," the *Catechism* incorporates a cosmic dimension into its hopeful depiction of the final destination of humankind's life in creation. This, of course, is a veiled revelation in which one does not know how God will achieve this end. Yet, this final vision does indicate that the earth and all living things have eternal importance for the Creator.

The *Catechism's* teaching, which might catch some people off guard for its emphasis on the renewal of the physical world at the end of time, is thoroughly Christological and supports a care for creation ethic by reminding Christians about the inherent value of the earth. This is exemplified by the writings of a Roman Catholic bishop in Western Canada. Bishop Luc Bouchard of St. Paul, Alberta,⁷ wrote about his concerns relating to the oil sands project located in his diocese (Bouchard 2009). (The oil sands, also termed "tar sands," is the largest industrial project in the world, spread over a land mass the size of Florida where some hundred oil companies unearth bitumen in order to refine it into petroleum products (Levant 2010).) Bishop Bouchard, in raising questions about the long-term growth of the oil sands project, reflected theologically about creation. He declared,

The earth has intrinsic value. Its future is still unfolding and has been part of the universe from the beginning in the form of a promise; one that Catholics believe will be completed when all of creation shares in the fulfillment of Christ's redemption. . . . **To abuse creation, therefore, constitutes a lack of faith, a type of despair, or even a blasphemy** [emphasis his].⁸

Belief in the final eschaton has real world consequences. The world is not only a gift from God, but also a gift waiting to be fully realized in Christ. It comes to Christians in the form of a promise that the visible universe is destined to share in the glorification of the just with the risen Christ. The physical world does matter for Christians and care for creation is a logical consequence of Christian belief.

INTEGRATION INTO THE LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Arguably, the most difficult task for a Catholic educator is the integration of religious teaching and practice into the life of the school. Placing greater emphasis on the sacramental principle and eschatological teaching in the religious education classroom and other teachable moments within the school offers a richer understanding of the importance of creation for youth. The next step then is to consider how these teachings can be incorporated into the life of the school — in its students, teachers, and staff — in support of an ethic toward creation. Below are four paragraphs each explaining one such instance.

The annual celebration of Earth Day on April 22nd provides an opportunity to enhance a care for creation ethic in Catholic schools. It is a day when people try to become *greener* — increased awareness about and some form of positive action for the environment. Educators typically explain a care for creation ethic in support of Earth Day based on two biblical insights: human beings made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and creation as a gift to be tended to (Genesis 1:32). As a result, this highlights a moral stance that confirms human solidarity, affirms a way to honour human dignity, and supports human development. This is well reasoned and in accord with the Christian tradition. However, underlining the sacramental principle offers a distinctive standpoint for a Christ-centered view that considers all creation. Teaching about the sacramental principle can better integrate a specific Christian ethic into a celebration of Earth Day. That is, there is a foundational religious reason why Christians must work to protect ecological systems: the physical world is the means by which God reveals himself. Whether it is through the sacraments, in our daily lives, or most dramatically in the incarnation, the material world acts as the means by which God communicates to humanity. Destroying creation rejects both the gift and the very means by which God communicates to us. Liturgical practices connected to Ash Wednesday point to that feast day's potential of becoming somewhat of a Christian Earth Day. While themes of repentance and conversion are often taken for private reflection (see Adam 1981), the marking of foreheads with ashes also supports greater care for creation. In an Ash Wednesday Mass/service, the school community realizes its connection to the earth — all persons share a common origin and end with all known life forms. All are physically made up of carbon and will return to the earth at death. Repentance takes on a larger paradigm of seeking forgiveness for damaging God's green earth. Conversion calls for

seeing oneself as part of an ecological system — a more relational way to view oneself within creation.

Closer attention to events of loss and death provide another avenue for appreciating creation and care for it. The youthfulness of a school community does not shield it from tragedy. Instead of focusing only on an individual *eschata* in these moments, a creation-inclusive perspective fosters a sense of hope that includes the cosmic dimension. Hope holds out for that final vision of God's creation, as described by Lane and the *Catechism*. Grounded in the cross of Christ, hope strives to endure challenges and to wait for the promise of fulfillment. Educators would be helped by including the promise of the glorification of creation by Christ. This opens the heart and mind to a larger vision of what God has in store for all things. Dealing with loss in this way enables and supports an attitude of care for creation. It moves individuals outside of themselves and enables the virtue of hope. It thus compels persons to consider more richly the inherent value of the earth and its creatures. Creation is seen as part of a solution for dealing with loss and stirs deeper consideration of a care for creation ethic — rather than viewing creation as an insignificant element in life and death questions.

There are other possibilities for enhancing awareness for creation in the school community. The season of Advent and its use of the Jesse Tree is quite prominent in (northern hemisphere) Catholic elementary schools. Beginning at the end of November, schools or individual classrooms add a decoration daily to a bare tree in remembrance of different events of salvation throughout the Old Testament. This prepares students for the arrival of Christmas Day. The first decoration usually placed on a branch is a symbol of the earth, marking the creation of the world. In support of a care for creation ethos, however, more can be accomplished. Obviously, a tree symbolizes the environmental movement. The plant replenishes the atmosphere with oxygen after consuming carbon dioxide, all the while supporting numerous ecological habitats in countless ways. In relation to salvation history, a Jesse Tree acts like creation — the very foundation of all the events of salvation history. Not only this, but creation carries on today. We continue to live as part of God's creation and seek to care for it so that God may continue to act in human history. In this way, a tree carries both religious and environmental meaning in its branches.

Finally, a figure worth emulating for a more environmentally-concerned church is St. Francis of Assisi. Declared the patron saint of the environment

by Pope John Paul II, Saint Francis models a great love for creation that leads theologian Ilia Delio to call him an “ecological brother.”⁹ After experiencing God’s love in his life (specifically, when Christ asked him to “go rebuild my house”), Francis began to reach out to the poor and all creatures on the earth. Delio explains that when the saint realized that God came to dwell with humankind in the flesh, “he discovered the all-powerful goodness of God hidden in the disfigured flesh of the leper, in the sick and the poor, in earthworms and tiny creatures.”¹⁰ Reflecting the essence of the sacramental principle, the saintly life of Francis — as celebrated on his feast day of October 4th — offers a further opportunity to integrate a care for creation ethic into the life of the school. This date could act as another specific time to raise consciousness about Christian concern for the earth, to provide an occasion to protect the environment, or, at least, to contemplate creation in light of his *Canticle of the Creatures* (*Catechism*, n. 344).

CONCLUSION

Enormous support by Catholic leadership for an education that promotes the protection of the earth requires renewed consideration by educators. As a service to society, Catholic schools would be wise to reconsider the basis for and offer enhancement of an ethic for creation through teachings on the sacramental principle and Christian eschatology. Affirming ancient teaching and striving to protect the earth, a creation-oriented perspective provides hope to our students. The time to engage students in related religious and moral practices is now. ■

ENDNOTES

- 1 Kevin Irwin, *Models of the Eucharist* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005), 43.
- 2 *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, ed. Richard McBrien (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), s.v. “Principle of Sacramentality.”
- 3 Lane, “Eschatology: Hope Seeking Understanding,” In *Exploring Theology: Making Sense of the Catholic Tradition*, edited by Anne Hession and Patricia Kieran, 146-58 (Dublin: Veritas, 2007), 146.
- 4 Dermot Lane, “Eschatology (in theology),” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2003 ed., Berard L. Marthaler, ed., 342-52 (Detroit, MI: Thompson/Gale Group, 2003), 347.
- 5 Dermot Lane, *Keeping Hope Alive: Stirrings in Christian Theology* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1996), 114.
- 6 Lane, *Keeping Hope Alive*, 112-31.
- 7 On February 1, 2012, Bishop Bouchard was nominated **Bishop of Trois-Rivières, Québec**.

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- 8 Bishop Luc Bouchard, "The Integrity of Creation & the Athabasca Oilsands," *Western Catholic Reporter*, Feb. 2, 2009, <http://wcr.ab.ca/old-site/bishops/bouchard/2009/bouchard020209.shtml> (accessed November 16, 2011).
- 9 Ilia Delio, Keith Warner, and Pamela Wood, *Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2008), 8-9.
- 10 Delio, Warner, and Wood, 49.

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MICHAEL GREEN

Have we started yet to design our new Marist tent?

The discussion document *Gathered Around the Same Table* has been with us for almost three years now. It is timely to reflect on how its proposals are percolating through our Marist world, and what changes they are eliciting. To some extent this significant text, published at the time of the last General Chapter in 2009 but independently of it, has been overshadowed by the more effectively disseminated messages of the Chapter. It is regrettable, in hindsight, that the timing of its publication did not allow the Capitulants to give the document closer attention. Had they done so, they may well have been more radical in their imagining of how Marist life and Marist spirituality could be lived out in the Church's mission in the future.

The document is novel from a number of points of view. First among them is that it was not authored by Brothers, but by people who none the less understood themselves to fully Marist. The introduction captures something of the spirit of the genesis of the document:

This document is a product of lived experience. The force behind it and the initiative that it has grown out of, is the experience of many lay men and lay women throughout the world who sense that God is calling them to a vocation: to be lay Marists. It is the fruit of a long path of listening and reflection that the Marist world has been following over decades. The concerns of associations of former students searching for their identity within a renewed Church, courses in spirituality for teachers and parents, the processes of youth ministry and of solidarity, the appearance of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family, the deepening of shared mission, the canonization

of the Founder – a gift for the entire Church –, the process of the international assembly on Marist mission leading up to the meeting in Mendes (Brazil), these have been some of the more important happenings that have helped us to understand more clearly what the Spirit was raising up in the hearts of many lay men and women.¹

The authors of were *Lay Marists*. Working admittedly in collaboration with Brothers and to some extent as a result of the initiative of the Institute, they gave the Marist world a document that was very much ground-up in its generating and sourced in one of the freshest buds of the Marist tree. Peppered throughout with direct quotations from Lay Marists from all parts of the Marist world, it certainly reflects the “lived experience” that gave it birth.

The document places itself in an unfolding story, one which began with the charism of Marcellin Champagnat, evolved through the Institute of Brothers which he founded, and which now has “new heirs” not only in Lay Marists, but also in nascent groups of religious sisters and some clergy who seek to satisfy their spiritual hunger, to share their lives, and to take part in the mission of the Church, in a Marist way. It builds on the tri-dimensional understanding of Marist life which it names as “spirituality”, “shared life” and “mission”. Interestingly, it begins with the last of these, because it is in and for mission that all of today’s Marists gather. The argument is cogently put that it is insufficient to explore shared mission, and even co-responsibility for this mission, without being able to have a concurrent consideration of how Marist spirituality and Marist life is also shared, and indeed how co-responsibility is exercised for these.

For the first time in an official document, “Marist mission” is proposed as something bigger than the mission of the Institute. So, also, are Marist spirituality and shared Marist life proposed as dimensions of the Marist way that may have outgrown their old paradigms:

The experience of sharing the charism directs us to rethink the institutional model that until now has embodied the Marist charism in the Church. Experience seems to indicate that we not only need “to widen the tent” of the Institute, but also to build together a new tent where everyone, Brothers and Lay people, may find our place.²

These are proposals with radical implications which will be discussed below.³ Of central concern in *Gathered Around the same Table* is the bringing of the concept of the Lay Marist into centre stage, and the consideration of it in a vocational context. The vocation of the Lay Marist is not proposed either as a quasi-religious one or as one that is auxiliary to the religious vocation, but as one understood on its own terms. The challenge of the present time is to imagine a way of structuring this, a way of belonging, and a way of exercising co-responsibility, that respects the inherent differences of the lay and the consecrated states, but recognises and fosters their mutuality and sharing. This is *communio*, albeit without ordained members. By the eve of the XXI General Chapter, the Marist project was taking place in a milieu of deep reflection on who Marists were and how all of them might be able to share co-responsibly for the vitality and integrity of Marist spirituality, shared life, and mission.

In their message to the Institute before the General Chapter, the outgoing General Council reflected on how partnership between Brothers and Lay had progressed over the previous eight years. The Councillors pointed to the Bureau of the Laity that had been established, the two international joint-formation programmes that had taken place, the Assembly of Mendes, the publication of *Gathered Around the Same Table*, and the fact the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family had grown to over three thousand six hundred members in over three hundred fraternities. On the specific task the Council had been given by the previous Chapter, however, to examine possible new structures for including lay people, it admitted that little had been accomplished. An emerging need, and one that had hampered the development of new structures, was a better definition of the respective identities of Brother and Lay Marists. In considering this question, it drew wisdom from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life:

Communion and mutuality in the Church are never one way streets. In this new climate of ecclesial communion, priests, religious and laity, far from ignoring each other or coming together only for a common activity, can once again find the just relationships of communion and a renewed experience of evangelical communion and charismatic esteem resulting in a complementarity which respects difference.⁴

In many ways, the documents of Mendes and *Gathered Around the Same Table* are founded on more radical thinking than those of the XXI Chapter which followed them. Whether the Chapter became too caught up in its own processes to allow for sufficient sharpness of debate and focus of outcome, are things that can be discussed in another forum. It may have been supposed that, given the richness and profundity of the discourse and developments of the intervening eight years, the official messages of the XXI Chapter might have been a major advance on those of the XX Chapter. If, however, the messages are read together, such a quantum advance is not immediately apparent.

One major difference, though, between the official communications at the end of the two Chapters is that the 2009 Capitulants addressed their Letter to all Marists,⁵ and that the calls of the Chapter are described in the Letter as impacting on all Marists. The decision to write the Letter in this way came so naturally to its drafters that not a single member of the Chapter thought to remark on it. Yet, this was the first time that such a letter had been so addressed and targeted. It reflected the change that had taken place in how Marist life and mission were being understood.

While there was certainly a spirit of openness at the Chapter to whatever God was asking and a belief expressed that Marists were at a “kairos moment”, even on the threshold of a “new epoch”⁶, the final documents of the Chapter are more reflective of a call to greater intensity and authenticity of existing Marist life, than they are of innovation or fundamental change. The three calls of the Chapter are linked to the three areas of Marist life, the first concerned with a renewed sense of consecration, the second with the relationship between Brothers and Lay, and the third with mission. While nothing in them was especially new of itself, there are emerging edges of emphasis. Among these are:

- The use of the word “communion” when defining the relationship of all Marists
- A conclusive acceptance of the concept of “co-responsibility” for “shared life, spirituality and mission”
- The distinctiveness of the consecrated and lay Marist vocations
- Formation for mission
- Internationality and interculturality
- Increased presence among the poor
- Marists being known for their expertise in evangelisation of youth
- Advocacy as a mainstream aspect of Marist mission
- A central place for Mary and for acting as and with her.

Nonetheless, the brief with which the incoming General Council was charged was an open and challenging one, sourced in the Capitulants' conviction that today's Marists were being called "to facilitate the birth of a new epoch for the Marist charism".⁷ It is a mandate that allows them to tap not only into the documents of the Chapter but into all that preceded it and, arguably, was often more radical in its imagination.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

As Marists approach the bicentenary of the gathering of the first disciples of Marcellin Champagnat in a small cottage in Lavalla, they do so in a context that is ecclesially, socially, culturally, economically and technologically quite different from that of rural France in 1817. From 2nd January of that year until the present day they have been involved in a continual process of reflecting on and re-shaping their identity and their mission, and their way of living, in response to the circumstances in which they find themselves. As the modern-day Marists engage in that same process, three major questions for their discernment present themselves. They are the essentially the same three that were identified by the Capitulants of 2009:

- i. How is the consecrated life to be lived out, particularly in its distinctiveness from other forms of Marist life?
- ii. How is communion of Marists to be understood, expressed and fostered?
- iii. What are to be the imperatives of their evangelising and educating of the young, especially in the context of the poor and marginalised of today's world.

The answers Marists choose, for the second and third questions particularly, will not only determine the shape of Marist education into the future, but also its capacity for vitality and growth. Each of these three interrelated questions is crucially important. The outcome chosen for each will impact markedly on the other two.

While, unquestionably, both the starting point and the end point for any discernment on Marist life will always be mission, it is the second question – concerning communion – that is arguably the one most pressing for further resolution in the years immediately ahead of us. It is on this question that the most radical options have been canvassed, but perhaps the least progress made. Resolving it, may help for an easier progress on the other two issues.

Gathered Around the Same Table uses the metaphor of a “new tent” to suggest what might be needed for accommodating and fostering the Lay Marist vocation.⁸ In doing so it challenges the image presented by the XX General Chapter which advocated to “widen the space” of the present tent, that is the Institute, to include lay people.⁹ This figurative device of tents is an interesting one to use.¹⁰ The imagery of tents in Scripture is a rich one, culminating in the Johannine metaphor for the incarnation: Jesus pitching his tent in our midst. Tents are symbolic of the presence of God among us, places of grace and holiness, where people assemble to encounter God. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the tent is at once the place of meeting, of gathering, of praying, of hospitality, of refuge and safety in desert journeying, and the house of the symbol of the covenant between God and humanity. For generations of Marist Brothers, their beloved Institute has also been all these things for them: their tent.

The call for Marists to widen the space of their tent was made with the backdrop of the post-Conciliar call of the Church for all the baptised to assume their full and rightful role in its mission. Twenty-two years after the end of the Council, the Synod on the Laity (1987) gave further definition to this call, and Pope John Paul II wrote powerfully of it in his apostolic exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, the following year. The moves within the Institute in the subsequent decade fell very much in tune with this will of the Magisterium of the Church. By the time of the issue of *Vita Consecrata* in 1996, the Church was explicitly supporting the integration of the mission and spirituality of lay people with religious institutes.¹¹ The lived reality in different parts of the Marist world, as so vividly evident in *Gathered Around the Same Table*, is the case for Marist laity. They are attracted by this distinctive way of the Gospel; they have encountered God in it. They are seeking to develop their own spirituality within it, and shape their own professional practice as educators and apostles to youth around it. Australia is typical of those Marist Provinces where Marist ministries are almost entirely in the hands of people who are not Marist Brothers. While there has been much written, and promised, about the emerging vocation of Lay Marists, what is the relationship of these people, and the ministries they direct, with the Institute in day-to-day practice? What guarantees their connection to the corporate and deliberative mission of the Institute? What are the lines of accountability and responsibility? How are the family bonds maintained and strengthened? How is the Marist spirituality of these people enriched? What are their means for

sharing ownership for the future development of the Marist way in the world? How do they participate in shaping this future and taking part in discernment and decision-making about it? How might they formalise their membership in some way? In this new world where there is a deeper appreciation of the Church as *communio*, what are the structures that will shape, protect and enhance such ecclesiology among Marcellin's disciples?

Perhaps it is becoming clearer that the essential issue is not that the tent-space is too small, but, as *Gathered Around the Same Table* suggests, that it is the wrong tent. Perhaps we need to design, all of us together, a new tent. Perhaps, several tents, pitched together. Who is it who wants to be in the Marist tent? Marist Brothers, obviously. Who else? Prominent among the others are, of course, those who are involved professionally or directly in the Marist mission: teachers, youth workers, campus ministers, catechists, administrators, and others working in various capacities in Marist schools and ministries. They are people who have been attracted by the opportunities that have been offered to them, especially during the last twenty years or so, to be formed in Marist spirituality and mission. In those Provinces where there has been opportunity and freedom to recruit staff members who are likely to be open to the Marist way, and strategies offered to them which foster their own development of Marist spirituality and professional practice, then it has flowered within them and among them. At the same time, it must be recognised that it is not everyone in Marist ministries who has felt this attraction to the underpinning spirituality of our mission: there will always be those who will only ever want to be employees or fellow-travellers. It would be an empty claim to pretend otherwise. That is not to say, however, that they are outside the tent or want to be.

It is of the very nature of St Marcellin's spirituality that the hook which has caught such people is *mission*. The Marist spirituality of Marcellin cannot be understood or lived apart from a context of mission, specifically the Christian education and evangelisation of the young. People who embrace the particular strand of Marist spirituality that was introduced into the life of the Church by Marcellin and the first Brothers need to connect themselves, either directly or vicariously, to this mission. For Marcellin, as for all those who seek to be his disciples, first comes mission. Ours is not a spiritual way that would work for the members of a private prayer group or an individual whose principal concerns do not include the work of evangelisation of youth. It is only natural, then, that there

is so much interest in Marcellin's spirituality from those people who collaborate in and support the Institute's mission of Christian education of youth, in all its many forms.

Beyond those directly in Marist ministries there are others who seek to identify as Marist in their spirituality, if not also in their mission. Among this group are the many fraternities of the *Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family*. There are also people such as retired or former faculty, parents, former students, and friends, all of whom may see themselves supporting the mission in some way or other, but who may not be formally connected to a Marist ministry or group.

It needs also to be pointed out that all of these people are not "lay"; there are those who fall outside the dichotomous categorising of the Marist world into "brothers" and "lay". Too often we forget the priests and the female religious. What of our chaplains and priest colleagues? Can they also have a place in our Marist tent, even though they are neither lay nor brother, just like Jean-Marie Vianney who was a pre-eminent member of the Third Order of Mary in the founding time? And how could female religious be accommodated? Must they belong to another religious institute because there is no way to live the consecrated life as a woman in the Champagnat tent?¹² To answer that, it is helpful to revisit the intervention of Marcellin to his fellow seminarians at the seminary of St Irenée: "We must have brothers!" Marcellin expressed this view in the context of a broader project; he assumed the inclusion of priests, sisters and lay people. The reason for his intervention was primarily missionary: that rural and neglected children needed good Christian teachers. Now that Marcellin's foundation – and his specific mission of Christian education of young people – has developed its own Marist spirituality, we need to add to Marcellin's words of 1814, "... but not brothers alone!" Indeed, to have brothers alone would not be faithful to the broader Marist view that Marcellin carried to his deathbed.¹³

In this, Marcellin's intuitions were not only aligned with the original Marist dream, but consistent with most of the major spiritual traditions of the Church which for centuries have typically had structural as well as spiritual ways to include women and men, lay and religious, secular and clerical. Without such structures, it is impossible for them to exercise their functions in the institutional life of the Church as fully as they might otherwise do. Charism alone is not enough to sustain a movement; juridical structures must be built around a charismatic intuition to safeguard it, and

to regulate its canonical interconnection with other ecclesial entities. An example of the importance of this point can be seen in the problematic or ambiguous relationship that exists between dioceses and the Marist Brothers in some countries when the presence of professed members of the Institute becomes small or ceases altogether in a particular ministry: a particular diocese may recognise the right of the Institute to appoint a Brother as principal of a diocesan school entrusted to the Institute, but it would not recognise our right to appoint a someone who considers himself or herself to be a “Lay Marist” because such a person, it may argue, has no status in Canon Law, and the Institute no juridical right of appointment of a lay person.

Similarly, the Institute has no right of appointment of a priest who may self-identify with Marcellin’s spirituality. This raises questions concerning limitations in the Institutes Constitutions and Statutes, and more fundamentally about the possible need for new categories of membership or association, or new tents.

As the full vision of Vatican II continues to unfold in the Church – despite some recidivist pressures for it not to do so – exploring new juridical possibilities opens ways to engage the calls of Vatican II for all the baptised to be on mission. It also ignites ways for the founding charism to continue to grow and develop. In the present canonical structures of the Institute the fact of person’s being “lay” means he or she can only ever have “associate” status. Such a situation presents itself increasingly as a rather skewed and anachronistic expression of Church. It is worth noting that the great majority of the new ecclesial movements that are currently experiencing growth and momentum are largely lay. But rarely are they exclusively lay. This is a key point. They are more inclusive in their membership: (a) welcoming a broad embrace of lay people, but (b) usually having some means for deeper and permanent commitment for a few, and (c) being served sacramentally and pastorally by priests. This is the contemporary spirit of *communio*: not one state of life, but all together, each living out its appropriate role in service of the spiritual life and evangelising mission of the universal Church, in interconnection with one with another.

A family of Marists, to use the model advocated in *Gathered Around the Same Table*, that somehow associates brothers, priests, sisters and lay people, in a non-hierarchical, interdependent, complementary relationship with one another? How could that possibly work? The instinctive reaction

of some people may be to recoil in a “Castracane response”. In rejecting Father Colin’s proposal in 1833, Cardinal Castracane laughed at the idea that all these states of life – priests, male and female religious, and lay people – could be governed together in what he saw as a multi-wheeled cart. Not workable, he said.¹⁴ The Marists, however, knew otherwise because they had a different intuition about Church, one that was fundamentally Marian: non-hierarchical, inclusive, unpretentious, complementary, simple, and shaped by a family spirit.¹⁵ So, again today, the challenge presents itself.

Would there be significant issues and hurdles to be addressed? Of course. But that should not preclude our trying to wrestle with them and to think creatively and innovatively about ways to bring this vision to reality. Are there the same degrees of readiness or need in all parts of the Marist world? No, there are not. For example, the exercise of priesthood – its status and its culture – varies enormously among the different cultures in which the mission of Champagnat is carried out today. So, also, do the levels and styles of engagement of lay people in the Marist mission, especially in the range of ways in which lay people identify with the spiritual core of Marcellin’s mission, and their sense of shared ownership of it. In another example, female religious life has all but died out in some places, but in others there is a relative plenitude of vocations. Indeed, in this present age there are, also, quite different roles for religious, both female and male, depending on which part of the Church they are situated. The ways in which religious are needed to contribute in some of the younger churches, for instance, are not the same needs and openings they have in the older ones.

In whichever part of the Church it occurs, nonetheless, the question of structurally including different states of life within the Marist tent, in some way, would bring into focus the first of the questions proposed above: that of the identity of the Brother within the broader Marist mission. With the advent of lay people in large numbers into Marist ministries, and more especially since they have been empowered to consider themselves as fully “Marist”, the old *identity* conundrum has taken on a new twist for many Brothers, as has been reflected, for example, in the writings of Brother Seán Sammon and the discussions of the XXI Chapter. The issue has been further opened up by the initiatives of some Provinces in which lay people and Brothers have undertaken not only to share in ministry together, but to live in community together. In such situations, some are

asking, “Where is the integrity of a Brother’s life?” and “Where is his distinctive identity in mission?”

For each of the Marist states of life, *communio* does not imply amorphous uniformity of lifestyle. *Communio* is a theological and ecclesiological concept, not a sociological one.¹⁶ For each state of life there needs to be a honouring of its distinctiveness.¹⁷ Only then can its real contribution to the whole occur with greatest effect and witness. For lay, religious and ordained Marists to be working together in mission is one thing; for them to attempt also to have the same patterns of life, and to live in community with the same level of mutual expectation on each other, is something else entirely. The great American poet Robert Frost in *Mending Wall* insightfully explored ironic relationship between “good fences” and “good neighbours”. The poem recognises the good will, and even the forces, that would “have a wall down”, that would want to demolish the things that divide.¹⁸ At the same time, however, he observes that people re-erect the fences, re-insert boundaries, almost by instinct. Although there are downsides to doing so, there are also issues of self-preservation and integrity that come into play. Frost leaves us with the irony: “good fences make good neighbours.” In imagining how a new tent might be designed, the Marcellin’s Marist companions of today would do well to take heed.

The particular strand of the Marist dream that took seed in Marcellin’s mind at the seminary, began to be realised at Lavalla, and then to develop at The Hermitage, has moved through various incarnations. The present time calls for another. The mission remains as urgent and as important: the Christian education of the young. All of the people who are answering the call to take part in that mission today need both charismatic and structural ways to live out their Marist spirituality as Marcellin has inspired them to do, and to do it together. Their “tent”, as it was for the ancient Israelites, must be a place of grace and holiness for them, a place of gathering and security, where all of them can encounter the God who dwells among them, and with which they can journey on together. A new tent. The twist in the modern tale is that, of all of the groups under the canvas, the largest will be the lay group. The resolution to this matter forms a significant part of the unfinished business in the run-in to the Marist bicentenary. It will determine how Marist educators understand themselves and their contribution to the Marist mission, so it will therefore define the future of the Marist project itself.

FINDING THE BEST NAMES FOR ALL THE MARISTS IN THE TENT

So what could be a name for these Marists who will continue to form the main constituent group, these so-called “Lay Marists”? Can we choose a name that is more respectful of their identity and does not have the unfortunate connotations that attend the term “lay”, at least in English? One name that may achieve this is: the *Marist Companions of Marcellin*. There are conceptual, strategic and pragmatic reasons for proposing this name. Let us briefly consider each in turn.

i. A name reflecting a deep sense of identity

The term *companion* is an everyday word, but it is also one that has a rich theological sense. For this reason it finds itself in the names of many ecclesial groups. Its Latin roots are the words *cum panis*, the sense being that a companion is someone with whom you share bread (cf. the French *copain*). The Eucharistic connection is obvious; the Marist allusion to gathering around the same table is wonderfully apposite. What better word to capture the hopes of the document. The word *companion* goes to the essence of what it means to be a Christian community. All of us are called as disciples of Jesus to be companions of one another. In the proposed title, the word companion is qualified by the adjective *Marist*. It is this distinctive strand of Christian spirituality that has attracted us personally and that brings us together as spiritual companions of each other – Marist Companions, gathered around the same table. The second qualifier, *of Marcellin*, offers a further identity marker, one that we intuitively associate with mission, and his particular way of engaging in the mission of the Gospel. That is to say, we are companions, sharing a Marian spirituality, taking up the invitation of Marcellin to make Jesus Christ known and loved, through the Christian education of the young. We are the spiritual and apostolic companions of one another. Thus, the three dimensions of the Christian life – spirituality, community, mission – are captured in the name.

Over the next two decades, Marist Brothers will become increasingly rare in almost all of the fifty or so Marist school communities and other ministries around Australia, and also in the leadership structures that support these ministries. As in the wider Church, almost all of Marist life and mission will be in the hands of Marists other than Brothers. It is they who will have carriage of Marist life and mission for the most part. It is absolutely crucial that we develop a clear identity for these Marists, one that is not defined as some kind of adjunct to the Brothers.

At the same time, if Marist consecrated life is to have integrity and visibility and vitality, it needs also to be clear in its own identity, and be able to deliver the kind of Marist living that is described in the Brothers' Constitutions. It is a misunderstanding of the legitimate calls for co-responsibility in mission, and shared life, to mesh consecrated and secular Marist life together as if they were not essentially different states of ecclesial life. Let us neither compromise the way the Marist Brother is called to live out his consecrated life in community, nor ask Marists who are not Brothers to live or to work as a quasi-religious. Let us come together, and commit ourselves one to another, in *communio*.

ii. Losing the awkwardness of "lay"

For a long time now, people who have been attracted to Marist life and mission, but not to the consecrated life, have struggled with being labelled "lay". They have wanted to see themselves simply as *Marists*. They have resisted being described as "lay Marists" because of the possible implication that they are second-class, or that their knowledge or appreciation are somehow less than full. Whether these people have been dedicated Marist educators in our schools, or whether they have felt a deeper vocational call to some kind of commitment as a Marist, they have been inevitably been relegated to a kind of "associate" status by use of the descriptor "lay". It is an awkward term. We are probably stuck with it in the wider Church, but we don't need to be among us Marists. It is better for us to have a sense of ourselves as *communio*, one where all of the states of life in the Church are in unity, where each has its own integrity. It does not confuse unity with uniformity.

There is, therefore, a strong argument for a distinct name for lay Marist association, and a distinct grouping, but one that does not employ the word "lay". This is not for a moment to suggest that Marist Companions and Marist Brothers do not come together to be co-responsible for their shared Marist mission, or that they do not have a sense of community in undertaking that mission together, and some practical ways of sharing Marist life and spirituality. This should happen *ipso facto* from their being together in mission, most usually as part of a Marist school community, but also in other Marist ministries. It is to recognise, however, that Marist Brothers should not need to join something else or make some other kind of commitment in addition to their perpetual profession, their vowed life commitment, as Marists. It is also to recognise that Marist Companions have an integrity as Marists in their own right, and not as lay associates.

iii. *A simple and usable name*

From a practical point of view, it is useful to have a name that (a) explains itself and (b) rolls easily off the tongue. This is already the case for the Marist Brothers. Their full title is *Marist Brothers of the Schools* – again a three-part name that captures the three aspects of the Christian life: their spirituality (Marist), the way of living community (Brothers), and a sense of mission (of the Schools). It is a name that can be shortened to “Brothers” alone, or to “Marist Brothers”, or to “Marists”. Similarly, in the proposed name, there can be shortening: to “Companions”, to “Marist Companions”, or to “Marists”. People could say, for example, “We have a Companions’ meeting this afternoon” or “I am a Marist Companion” or “I am a Marist”.

Having a name is important. It gives a sense of belonging and a claim on identity. The way of belonging for the majority of Marists does not, however, need to parallel the structures of religious life. Let us learn from the example of some of the more successful ecclesial movements in today’s Church, for example the San Egidio Community. Membership of the community is open, inclusive, and not tied up by books of rules and categories. People come to it as they are, and as they can. Even priests can be part of it. For some members it has become a major commitment of their life; they have, for example, through their involvement taken on responsibilities for leadership and sustenance of the community. Others may be associated for a time, or less intensively. But all are welcome at prayer, at social gatherings, and all can take part in the work/ministries of the community, as they are able and attracted to do so. Ultimately, it will be important to have a canonical identity, but this is not the starting point or the driving priority. The main thing is having a way of being part of a particular spiritual family.

A NEW TENT

The Marist tent of the future could have within it Marist Brothers and Marist Companions. It may also, please God, have religious sisters and ordained ministers. And fellow travellers and friends. Yes, it will be one tent. The main group in the tent will be the Companions. The role of the Brothers, with their life vows and consecration, will be the same as for religious more generally in the Church, as it has been described in *Vita Consecrata*: to be at the heart as spiritual guides, as a leaven of community, and as exemplars of ministerial service. Thus, the Marist “tent” becomes an expression of ecclesial life that is consistent with post-Conciliar ideals, recognising the primary place of the *Christifideles laici* in its membership. ■

ENDNOTES

- 1 Bureau of the Laity (2009) *Gathered Around the Same Table, the Vocation of Champagnat's Marist Laity*, Rome: Institute of the Marist Brothers, p.14.
- 2 *Ibid.* #145.
- 3 See 3.3.2 and 4.4
- 4 Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (2002) *Starting Afresh in Christ*, #31. www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccsclife/documents/rc_con_ccsclife_doc_20020614_ripartire-da-cristo_en.html
- 5 Marist Brothers (2009) *Acts of the XXI General Chapter*. Rome: Marist Brothers
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 *Ibid.*, p.58
- 8 #145
- 9 *Choose Life, Message of the XX General Chapter*, #26. Cf. Isaiah 54:2.
- 10 For an extensive treatment of this imagery and the imperatives that it implies, see an article by the author: Green, M. (2009) *And New Tents, Too, Marist Notebooks*, 26, 25-46. www.champagnat.org/en/260702600.htm. The argument of the following paragraphs is drawn from that article.
- 11 See VC, #54
- 12 One example of how this has happened has been the foundation of the small group of Hermanitas in Central America, as female religious who see themselves sharing in the charism of St Marcellin, but different from the two existing Marist institutes of sisters. Yet their connection to the Marist Brothers is only by informal association and personal relationship.
- 13 The disproportionate amount of attention in Marcellin's *Spiritual Testament* that is given to unity of the Little Brothers of Mary with the larger Society of Mary attests to his views on this matter. Already, however, Colin and other priests of the Society were hardening in the view that the 'Marist Brothers of the Hermitage' were a dispensable arm of their future plans for the Society of Mary. Colin had encouraged Marcellin to consider making arrangements for his Brothers to pass over to diocesan control on Marcellin's death. The Marist priests' retreat of 1839 when, against the wishes of Marcellin, a formal separation was made between the coadjutor brothers and the teaching brothers, can be seen in hindsight as a watershed moment in the development of Marist mission and spirituality.
- 14 See *Rapport du Cardinal Castracane sur le projet de Société de Marie*, 31 January 1834. *Origines Maristes*, Doc.304.
- 15 The original nineteenth century Marist intuition aligns remarkably with the late twentieth century concept of the "Marian Church" developed by Hans Urs von Balthasar— a notion so much favoured by the late Pope, John Paul II and already discussed in this text. Mary is proposed as archetype of the Church. Craig Larkin SM has developed von Balthasar's ideas by considering them in a modern Marist context, taking as his motif the traditional icon of The Ascension with its Patristic ecclesiology. It is important to point out, as

does Father Larkin, that the “Marian Church” is not conceptually opposed to the institutional/hierarchical “Petrine Church” but, indeed, points to it. Nor is it exclusive from the evangelising “Pauline” dimension of the Church, or the mystical “Johannine” dimension. These four poles of the Church that are represented in the Ascension icon are all indispensable for a complete ecclesiology. The Marist contribution, argues Larkin, is to play the role of Mary.

- ¹⁶ An instructive synopsis of this view was provided by the then Cardinal Ratzinger in his keynote address on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of *Communio*, the international theology digest he helped to found with Hans Urs von Balthasar and Henri de Lubac in 1972. See Ratzinger, *J Communio: A Program*, in *Communio*, Fall 1992 (American edition).
- ¹⁷ The final statement of the Marist Mission Assembly held in Mendes, Brazil (12 September 2007) identifies this shared but distinctive call: We wish to promote forms of association and ways of belonging to the Marist charism, so lay and brothers may hear the call to live their identity (#2.3).
- ¹⁸ Frost, R. *Mending Wall*, in Untermeyer, L (Ed.) (1919) *Modern American Poetry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe.

JOHN-JOSEPH DOLAN,
LARRY SCHATZ AND JOHN KLEIN

The Brother Vocation

A Vocation of Bonding and Reconciliation

When Friar John-Joseph Dolan, OFM Conv. died recently he was in his second term as the General Assistant for the Conventual Franciscan Friars. He had responsibility for USA, Canada, Jamaica, Great Britain, and Ireland. In 2001 he had become the first Religious Brother on the Conventual General Definitory since the time of Francis of Assisi. Shortly before his untimely death in 2010 he expressed his appreciation of the Brother Vocation in the following terms. The reflection is reprinted with permission from his Superiors.

Frequently in literature the road beginning at our door and front steps and ending ‘God only knows where’ is a metaphor for the adventures, dangers, discoveries and relationships in our journey through life. Be it a pilgrimage (sacred or secular), a coming-of-age story, a flight, or an epic quest of the ever-popular Tolkien or Merlin-Arthurian genre — all journeys take us away from the comfortable and ordinary of our every-day life, to places and horizons beyond our immediate vision, experience and control, and ultimately lead us to the goal of our search, the Grail — ourselves. All roads — in all directions — are ultimately ‘roads back’ to where we began; all journeys are ultimately journeys of self-discovery — discovery of the person whom God has called us to be.

This year is my 40th in Religious life and fraternity. When I left home in 1969, I could not have imagined the ‘twists and turns’ that led me from college to the inner city to rural farmland to a non-canonical community of Brothers, to the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, and eventually here to Rome, the banks of the Tiber — or Tevere as the locals would have it.

I spent the first decades getting my hands dirty working with the poor and underprivileged, community organizing around housing issues, nursing the sick, teaching, and promoting social justice on a parish, diocesan, and Order-wide level. I have spent the last two in globetrotting and internal ministries: formation and administration/leadership (provincial, national, and general level). On this road (which has brought me to every continent save Antarctica) in addition to the blessing of family and true friends, there has been one constant, the joy of my vocation—of serving God and the Church, living the Franciscan charism with my brothers and sisters, and doing this as a Religious Brother.

In the contemporary Church, there are many ways of expressing this vocation – monastic, apostolic, conventual, with a myriad of choices of apostolates, an almost endless array of charisms to direct it, and lifestyles to support it (hermit, communities of all Brothers, so-called mixed communities where the institute's charism is lived out in either a lay or clerical manner, or as we Franciscans prefer, fraternal institutes of monks or friars in which one also happens to be a priest, a deacon, or a Brother). The common thread is a relationship — the vocation to be a Brother to all, to stand with all in the Church and Society as equals in ministry and the thirst for salvation, holiness, justice and dignity for all human beings 'made in the image and likeness of God'. Each of the choices above brings its own set of rewards and challenges. The vocation of a Religious Brother today is often hidden from the public view (either confined to the particular schools, hospitals, charitable foundations of all-Brother institutes or internal services and ministries of the mixed institutes) and is almost universally misunderstood. If I had a penny for every time I was asked why I did not become a priest, I would be a very rich man. Often — unfortunately — it has been priests, deacons, Religious Sisters and even confrères who have posed the question.

I did not choose **not to be** a priest in the same way that I did not choose not to be a medical doctor, a rocket scientist, or a married man with children. I **chose to be** a Religious, to be a Franciscan, to be a friar, to be a Conventual, to be a Religious Brother. I believe that I was called — to turn on its head a common phrase — to 'go all the way' and embrace fully the consecrated life in the evangelical manner of the Franciscan Family without any other predetermined choices, conditions or ministries. I believe that Religious life — in and of itself — is a full vocation and needs nothing else joined to it to be lived fully as a prophetic sign in

the world and a means of sanctification. In fact, I believe that both the very profession of vows (promises, oaths, etc) and the life in community (defined and lived in various ways) is ministry, is evangelisation, is the preaching of the Gospel. The active apostolates are further expressions of this love of God and neighbour.

The vocation of the Religious Brother is the oldest form of consecrated life for men in the Church, and it was the predominant form of Religious life for the first millennium of Christianity. Unfortunately, it seems to be declining, and is often not appreciated or promoted sufficiently by the hierarchical Church — despite what her teachings and pronouncements say. Even today, the vocation and charism of the members of mixed and fraternal institutes is injured by the Church's position on clerical jurisdiction and its subsequent legislation. If Anthony of Egypt, Francis of Assisi and Benedict of Nursia lived in this third millennium, not being ordained they could not exercise formal authority in the movements they founded. Imagine that! This is highly unfortunate, especially given today's stratification of power, privilege and authority exercised both 'in the world' and in the Church — and the widespread concomitant alienation. On the other hand, authority is not limited to institutional positions or mandates. One can exercise moral authority without the other and vice versa.

The Brother's vocation is one of bonding and reconciliation — with lay men and women, his ministry is deemed lay and he frequently can enter arenas on behalf of the Church where clerics are not able to penetrate; with religious sisters and nuns, he is a fellow religious giving witness to the priority of God through the evangelical counsels lived simply and without the added benefit of Orders; with priests and deacons, he is a co-worker and can often more easily enter into an all male world. His is the only vocation that so clearly attests to the fullness of Religious life separate from ordained ministry and hierarchy and freely chosen — and in the mixed and fraternal institutes, he has the added privilege and duty of witnessing to the primacy and integrity of the institute's charism and vocation to his confrères.

The journey home should be a journey back to ourselves — changed and converted. I cannot say that I have enjoyed every passage of mine, but each moment was grace-filled and invigorating. Forty years later, I would without hesitation choose again to be a Religious Brother (I cannot envision being friar any other way) and would encourage others to do so. In fact, it is advice I commonly give.

THE BLESSING OF BEING A BROTHER

Brother Larry Schatz, FSC, has served as Assistant Provincial of the Midwest Province of the (De La Salle) Christian Brothers in the USA. His experience includes teaching and campus ministry at the high school and college level. For St. Mary's Press he has authored Brothers: An Inside Look and Walking With the Word. He is a contributing writer to SMP's The Catholic Youth Bible and BreakThrough! The Bible for Young Catholics.

I recently returned from Nairobi, Kenya, where I had the privilege to spend a week with our scholastics or student brothers from the Lwanga District. This district includes Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, all English-speaking countries. This was an opportunity for me to share with those young Brothers a bit about what is going on in the rest of our global Institute known as The Brothers of the Christian Schools or the De La Salle Brothers, after our Founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle.

My experience in Kenya reminded me once again what a blessing it is to be a Brother and at the same time a member of a worldwide congregation. Brothers are certainly a distinct minority in the Roman Catholic Church. Our particular community was founded to be educators, and we have remained true to that charism for more than 300 years. As a De La Salle Brother I have taught at high school, college, and middle school levels, have served in campus ministry, helped to found a tuition-free San Miguel school, and now serve in provincial administration for our Midwest District. Each of these varied experiences has called out the best of me and has reminded me over and over again how blessed I am in being a Brother.

I love the title "Brother," because it so clearly spells out the nature of our relationship to the young people that we serve as well as to our Lasallian colleagues. I often get asked the question, 'So why did you become a Brother?' It is a vocation with which not a lot of people are familiar. The easiest starting point is to differentiate the Brothers' vocation from that of priesthood. The Brothers' life is centred on community life and educational ministry. We take the traditional religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, along with a special vow of association for the educational service of the poor. This last vow is a constant challenge to us to keep focused on the under-served in our world. Because Brothers do not do sacramental ministry or serve as parish pastors, we are free to meet the varied educational needs of young people. And because we are part of

a congregation present in over 80 countries, we are always reminded of the necessity to think bigger than our school or province or country. As I look back on my life as a Brother, I am amazed at all the places I have been and experiences I have had. I definitely took 'the road less travelled'. And it has opened so many blessings.

Brothers enrich the life of the church primarily through the quality of their presence. We see ourselves walking with our lay brothers and sisters as well as the young people entrusted to our care. We are available to them in a variety of ways, and we do that without the inevitable distractions that our married and ordained colleagues have. Our primary commitment is to the young people we serve and to our fellow Brothers. One of the Brothers once said, 'Brotherhood is my pathway to God'. That really sums it up for me as well: by being a Brother, I feel that I am responding in the best way I can to God's call deep within me. I am constantly challenged to keep my eyes wide open and to not get too settled. There are fewer Brothers than there used to be, but more Lasallian ministries than ever. Our lay partners share our mission and do so enthusiastically.

This is a great life, and one filled with opportunities to grow. I really can't imagine who I'd be had I not said a very tentative 'yes' to checking out the Brothers so many years ago. Spending time with the young Brothers in Kenya, sharing in their joys and struggles, praying the same invocations used by Brothers and Lasallians all over the world, have enriched me beyond measure. It is so good to know that halfway around the world, I am linked in prayer and e-mail to Brothers who have touched my heart, a phrase often used by our Founder. Followers of De La Salle always begin prayer by remembering that we are in the holy presence of God, and in so many ways that sums up my spirituality. I am truly blessed to have found a life that is so rewarding and so challenging as well. I pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to call other young men to this special life.

Live Jesus in our hearts---forever!

A COMPELLING ALTERNATIVE TO SOCIETAL VALUES

Brother John Klein, FMS, is currently a member of the General Council of the Marist Brothers and a former Provincial of the Order in the United States. He is past president of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) and has served as a member of CMSM/LCWR's Committee for the Study of Religious Life. In January 2005 he was appointed as a member of the National Advisory Council for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

‘God chooses individual men and women and calls each one personally into the desert where he speaks to their heart. He sets apart those who listen to him, and through his spirit, leads them into a continuous process of conversion and growth in his love, to send them forth on Mission.’ (Constitutions of the Marist Brothers of the Schools) Religious brothers are clearly men personally chosen by God, set apart to listen to his word and then sent forth to serve his people as brother to each of them.

As religious men, Brothers live lives of stewardship and loving. We are prayerful guardians of God’s gifts, and we have the responsibility to guarantee that they are utilised for the common good. As Brothers, we have no interest in amassing great wealth or power or influence or in achieving fame or status in the Church or society. Our genuine focus is on being one with the people who enter our lives. Our challenge is to accept them as they are and to let them know that is good enough for us.

The opening lines of *Gaudium et Spes* speak loudly to this reality: ‘the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ, as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts’. Religious Brothers hear that echo in the lives of their students in their high school classrooms, in the pain and suffering of those afflicted with AIDS, in the families in the parishes in which they minister, in their retreat work and counselling programs. Nothing and no one is foreign to their care and concern.

Fundamentally, the mission of the Brother is rooted in his prayer and community life. This mission is by its very nature a communal one animated by living as part of explicitly *intentional communities*. These communities, similar to the one Jesus formed with His disciples, have mission at their centre and heart. Mission, as a result, operates as their chief source of connectedness and energy. Members of an intentional community of Brothers realise that they cannot minister to others unless they live in a community founded on interdependence and mutuality, informed by faith. This faith life sensitively balances the needs of the individual and those of the community and finds sharing of faith to be indispensable to its life. This inevitably leads to a high level of trust that allows members to challenge one another’s behaviour in light of a commonly accepted vision and goal. While this approach to community life meets some of the emotional, social and intellectual needs of its members, communities are in no way therapeutic support centres.

On the contrary, an intentional community of Brothers is ‘...a group of religious men living together who feel the need to be supported in their work and willingly commit themselves to develop a gospel-centred intimacy to be expressed in shared faith, ongoing conversion and shared action’. (Gerald Arbuckle, S.M., *From Chaos to Mission: Refounding Religious Life*, p. 11). In short, this type of community life is one that has a clear and visible and easily identifiable way of life. Such a group offers the world what it does not find elsewhere: a community of faith, friendships, and mutual support engaged in an adventure larger than itself. Perhaps, this is the unique contribution that Religious Brothers offer to the Church and society today.

Several years ago, former New York City Mayor Ed Koch bemoaned that ‘...there are so few people who are fierce about anything’. Today, Religious Brothers are challenged to be on fire, fierce for the Mission of Christ, for that is our call as religious. No longer can we afford a choice between maintenance and mission. Mission, rooted in prayer and community life, is the only option, for in mission we discover the key to renewal and new life. It is the mission that must frame and inform all our decisions. Everything is really mission, for we are called not to maintain ourselves and guarantee our survival, but rather to serve the mission of Christ, a mission to proclaim the unconditional and compassionate love of God. This mission will direct our energy outward rather than inward and give us new life.

Religious Brothers possess the potential to demonstrate an approach to life that can offer others a compelling alternative to societal values that have proven empty and hallow and void of meaning. Brothers through their community life and commitment to mission can truly offer that passion, faith, friendship, and mutual support for which each of us longs. ■

PAUL MICHALENKO

Lessons from the Re-structuring of Provinces

In the Spring of 2000, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) Forum published the first article on restructuring men's religious communities. Three provincials who were engaged in or recently completed the process shared their experience and opinions about restructuring. In the following nine years many religious communities embarked on the same path. After facilitating seven restructuring processes, I used the opportunity of my doctoral dissertation to explore the topic, "What makes the restructuring of Men's Religious Provinces successful?" This qualitative study of eight restructured religious communities analyzes and assesses the various activities and functions that go into a restructuring process, as well as the possible results of such a process.

THE RESEARCH

With the assistance of CMSM and prior clients, eight congregations were identified that had completed the merger process or were well on their way towards restructuring. The congregations were all in North America. They involved the bringing together of anywhere from two to four provinces into a new province entity. The provinces shared the same charism. Some had been parts of the same province forty plus years ago and split. Others were founded by different European provinces here in the U.S. The congregations that were part of the study agreed to share archival materials on the restructuring process and identified members in their organizations for interviews. These interviews included members from the different original provinces and past leadership, as well as current leadership and those who may have been on a restructuring committee. The researcher also attended at least one province assembly/meeting for all but one of the cases.

The interviews began with a protocol inquiring into the purpose, motivation and story that led to the decision to restructure. Interviewees were asked to draw a time line of key events, turning points and highs and lows of the process. Their personal awareness and feelings experienced during the restructuring process were noted. They were asked to outline specific processes and events. Each was also asked about the result of the merger/restructuring — in their opinion what their organization gained or lost. Finally, they were asked if the intended purpose of the restructuring was accomplished. Did the stated reasons for entering into a restructuring process match the outcome?

As in all qualitative studies the interviews were transcribed and coded by two researchers. The results were analyzed within each case and then across the eight cases to identify categories relevant to the process and results of restructuring. This comparative case study identified four main categories and numerous sub-categories of events, processes and attitudes that are part and parcel of the restructuring process.

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

Three factors emerged from the research regarding successful restructuring processes. First, the restructuring had to be based on a “mission-driven purpose,” a vision commonly held by all parties for a preferred future. Even when the restructuring was imposed from international leadership, focusing on a compelling reason for restructuring made a significant difference in the process. Those who focused primarily on pragmatic reorganization in the absence of a commonly held purpose/vision were unhappy with the results and therefore less successful.

Secondly, leadership involvement impacted the restructuring process. Inter-provincial leadership and past leaders, as well as restructuring committees, influenced the outcome in positive and negative ways. When leaders acted “authentically,” focusing on the future of the congregation in line with their common vision, they modeled hope, renewal and excitement. When leadership forced the issue, failed to manage conflict or enable capable members to facilitate the process the provinces became “stuck.”

Lastly, “inclusive engagement” of all the members was essential. The more successful communities engaged their members a number of times throughout the process. These encounters built relationships by engaging the members in conversations of shared values and vision. The use of prayer and ritual built common bonds. Information was shared transparently

easing suspicion and rumors. Cultural differences were addressed, often humorously lessening the fear of change. Through these whole group events members began to see themselves as one.

These three areas when accomplished well, built a growing trust among the different organizations that convinced them not only to risk but perceive the possibility of a congregational renewal through the restructuring process. Some in fact testified to a sort of congregational conversion. This was explained as a re-appropriation of their charisma for a new time and in a new way for the US or North America. Members felt free to risk trying new ministries in different geographic areas. Some who had been perceived as on the fringe of the congregation found a new place in the community.

The processes that the various congregations described were more circular than linear. The conversations often began with the provincial council and widened to a designated steering committee. Effective steering committees attempted to involve as many as possible in the conversation through specific work groups, major assemblies or peer/regional gatherings. Involvement grew gradually and at members own interest and pace. Periodic straw ballots monitored member's opinions and need for more information or contact.

Transition management began in the discernment process or early deliberations of restructuring but came into full play once the decision was made. Reconciling cultural practices and policies extended for years after the decision to merge. It became the primary task of leadership in the newly established province to build a new culture and organizational identity. When an agreed upon mission driven purpose, authentic leadership and inclusive engagement were elements of the process leading to a new felt trust the transition was less chaotic.

MISSION-DRIVEN PURPOSE

The origin of the restructuring process varied across the congregations. For some it was a call from a General Chapter to look at reorganization. For others it was the General Administration that was concerned with the number of province members, province finances or leadership potential. Others were initiated by province leadership into dialogue with other province leaders. For most this followed on an awareness of extensive province collaboration over the years in formation, elder care, retreats and cross-province placement of members in ministry. In one restructuring process it was the members themselves who pushed for the restructuring of their provinces. Each

restructuring organization had to struggle with a compelling reason to enter into the restructuring process. For most the decision was a vote of all the members or at least a consultation by leadership. Members needed to be convinced that this was the right direction for the congregation and for them personally. Most engaged in a discernment process focused on how this action of reconfiguration would enhance or change their life for the better. Gathering to dialogue about the charism, how it could unfold into the future and what values needed to be maintained created a mission-driven purpose. Across province lines and experiences members could see what they held in common from the past and into the future. Ministry experiences were shared that cross-pollinated ideas in similar apostolates. Shared dreams for the future emerged with a sense that something new could happen. Some liken these experiences to a second novitiate experience.

Not all chose this path. Some focused on the pragmatic details of restructuring. Finances, properties, Presidium accreditation and leadership structures, among others, dominated their conversation. These topics created anxiety about inequalities and dissimilar practices resulting in negotiations for self-protection and setting conditions. These conversations did little to foster trust. In the absence of a shared vision for the future, self-preservation took over. This spirit continued until the final decision and after. The result was an ongoing suspicion of the other province(s), resulting in a sense of a takeover, rather than a restructuring. In the absence of a shared mission some focused on the shared past. Old memories, histories and perceptions returned to the forefront. Perceived ethnic prejudices, financial incompetence or theological ideology became the focus, yet they were never able to publicly explore these perceptions. Focusing on differences rather than commonalities, hurts rather than hopes, impacted the process and its results.

A focus on a future mission along with an awareness of province realities allowed some to re-imagine models and structures of leadership. Some of the groups recognized lay leadership as essential to their future and created structures to include professional and committed laity. Others reorganized their structures to represent a now-broadened geography or diversity of membership. Others created unique positions for the care of the elderly, apostolic renewal, vocations etc. The restructuring process allowed for new structures that could more successfully lead the new province toward its shared mission-driven purpose, while not neglecting the needs of unique aspects and members of the province.

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

Leadership played a pivotal role in the success of restructuring efforts. It was not always about how they led the process, but rather knowing when to come forth and when to get out of the way. All eight cases reported some conflict among leaders or between leadership and members. In the successful restructuring efforts leadership addressed and managed the conflict. The opposite was also true. When the conflicts or differences were not addressed, the process became tedious, and new leadership is still trying to manage the conflict years after the restructuring. Conflict certainly arose around personalities, but also about differing philosophies or cultures, speed of the process, inequalities of finances or resources or size of membership, leadership models, perceived differing theologies or spiritualities, etc.

Authentic leadership did not let their own issues get in the way of what was best for their members. They continued the dialogue by using facilitators. They stepped away and empowered a restructuring manager or a restructuring steering committee to lead the process. One group realized that members perceived them as pushing restructuring. They empowered a respected steering committee composed of members from all the provinces to lead the process and create an attitude of discernment. One group used technology to make readily available all the information from working committees. This transparency created an open spirit of communication. Everyone knew what was going on.

In some cases provincial council members were opposed to restructuring. When the provincial engaged them in the process, members realized that all voices could be heard. When they were bypassed or ignored, these councillors sabotaged the process. Some groups reported that their greatest obstacles were past leaders. These latter sensed that their work over the years of building up their provinces was being ignored or diminished. They had difficulty letting go of their experience and opting for a new province. These men were well respected and their voices demanded to be heard. Allowing multiple forums to hear these voices put them in perspective and prevented them from becoming a pervasive negative influence.

Those congregations who were once a single province and had split had elderly men who knew each other from early formation days and younger men who were being formed in inter-provincial programs. It was the men in the middle who had less of a relationship with men in the other provinces. Authentic leadership identified the unique groupings of their

members who needed attention during this change process and provided opportunities both to listen to and inform them. These groupings differed in their make-up: the elderly, younger members, the smaller provinces or those serving in foreign missions. Knowing the members and their concerns was pivotal to moving the process forward.

A primary task of leadership, including the restructuring steering committee, was communication. Besides knowing that there was a common mission and values, members were interested in the financial implications, projected demographics, mission priorities and of course pending litigation. More than the details, the members wanted to know if this would work on a practical level. Leadership used websites, newsletters and periodic reports at gatherings to inform members. Leadership educated members on the canonical restructuring issues (the specific requirements of their own constitutions) as well as the legal restructuring issues (bringing together corporations). The decision to restructure is a canonical issue first and foremost. The legal issues continue after the decision, and depending on the complexity of the organization's institutions, for an extended time.

Leadership that was authentic focused on the charism, mission and future of the congregation in the U.S. or North America. When they were derailed by province inequalities such as difference in stipends or budgeting they lost sight of their future. As religious men they were having the wrong conversation and suffered the results. For others, incorporating a bankrupt province was a non-issue: how else, they asked, would we keep our charism and presence in that part of the country?

INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT

All of the congregations studied held assemblies or retreats for all the members of the provinces during their restructuring processes. The only regret for some is that they should have had more assemblies. One congregation, whose members cited numerous success stories of the restructuring held four assemblies of the members over a six year period. These whole-group events put a face to what a new province could look like. Some felt the need for outside input at these events to broaden their perspective. Most valued the opportunity to meet and engage in substantive conversation with members of the other provinces. It was at these events that conversations about mission and future vision were articulated and celebrated. Some chose appreciative and positive-focused processes, which highlighted what gifts, resources, and attitudes each province was bringing to the new reality, not ignoring the differences

in culture and practice, but put them into perspective. Others discussed cultural differences in humorous ways, assigning provocative metaphors to the various provinces, thereby addressing the differences but taking the fear out of them.

Ritual played an important role in these events. Elements of a common spirituality were highlighted through prayer and worship. Those interviewed still held mental images of processing to the cross or celebrating deceased members or jubilarians. For some it was the recognition through dialogic processes that the older and younger members valued the same things. A sense of pride and hope for the future were enkindled. These events lasted between three and five days. At some of the assemblies a straw vote was taken to poll the will of the members in the discernment to restructure. These votes were taken by standing, moving to a place along a continuum, or by secret ballot.

International Leadership played an important role in the assemblies. Members wanted to know the opinion of the General Superior or his delegate. The international perspective was informative and valued since all of the congregations were a part of a larger reality and their decision would impact the rest of the congregation. Many of the provinces sponsored missionary endeavors in other countries with finances and personnel. Some welcomed members from provinces in other parts of the world as part-time or full-time members. All these things had to be factored in to the consideration for restructuring.

Besides assemblies, many congregations developed other opportunities to involve members across province boundaries. Some chose to convene cross-province regional gatherings to prepare them for an assembly, or to continue the conversation after the assembly. Others gathered members in “under fifty” groups across provinces to hear the voices of the younger members. Particular ministry groups were gathered by yet other congregations to discuss the future of parish, retreat or other particular ministries. Most of the congregations had working committees on particular areas of the restructuring. Appropriate and informed members reviewed finances and properties; others looked at government models, community structures, ministry planning, communication, vocations and formation, and senior members. Their primary task was to align policies and practices across provinces and suggest initial procedures for the new entity. All were approached as temporary, a living into a new model after the decision to restructure took place. Keeping policies flexible allowed for

the changing realities of the organization and reassured the members that their lives were not going to change radically overnight.

Negotiating a time line for the restructuring process varied for each congregation. Some depended upon the date of the General Chapter, which alone was able to suspend and erect provinces. Others were geared to the readiness of the members, monitored by straw ballots and in accord with provincial chapters. For the cases interviewed the range was between 3 and 6 years. One of the cases made the decision quickly (one year) and empowered a temporary council to bring the provinces together over the next three years. For others an ongoing dialogue with general administration arrived at the appropriate time for a consultation for new provincial leadership and the appointment of the new administration. In the more successful cases there was a clear consensus among the members that it was time to make the decision to restructure. Members felt comfortable, knew members from the other provinces, had a sense of a future vision and most of all were trusting and hopeful.

T R U S T

A major insight that emerged from the research data was the role that trust played in the merger process. At every step of the process trust or the lack of trust was mentioned. It became clear that there was a correlation between the elements of the process and trust. Trust was defined as confidence, distrust as suspicion. Some defined trust as a willingness to be vulnerable in expectation of positive outcomes from others' behavior and responses. Essential to trust was the willingness to risk in expectation of some greater good. Past experiences contributed to the ability to trust. When there had been positive relationships, trust came easily. When past negative experiences were never broached and healed, suspicion continued.

In reviewing the data, positive and negative indications of trust were discovered at various stages of the merger process. In two of the cases trust was experienced throughout. This doesn't mean that there were not differences among members, but that the differences did not dominate or stop the process. In others it was experienced initially as a negative, but actions by authentic leadership or the inclusive engagement process were able to build trust. Leadership of three of the mergers all experienced or created conflict and confusion either among themselves or with members. Two of the organizational leaders solved the issue by getting out of the way. They either created another committee to steer the process or secured a project director to lead the process. In another organization the leaders

did the opposite: they finally got involved and secured competent resources in a consultant and a better working committee. These interventions impacted the perceived results of the merger. They moved a mistrusting atmosphere to a more trusting one. In another case where trust was not present at any level of the merger process, the decision to move forward was made. The memory of the last assembly was of a shouting match of “What more do you want from us?” indicating a tremendous amount of frustration. In another case unarticulated concern about a theological perception and use of monies by one of the provinces led to a last minute stalemate that then had to be negotiated by the General Superior. Earlier conversations never allowed for the surfacing of these core suspicions. Building trust from the first conversations was important. Two provincials embarking on a restructuring process began by saying to each other, “There are no non-negotiables for us in this process.” They were open to creating a new life together without holding back conditions or ministries. This trust permeated the process.

RENEWAL AND CONVERSION

For those who experienced trust, it was often a result of a re-examination of their founding values and charism. They engaged in a re-founding of sorts where members asked the question, “What would the founder(s) do or want in this situation?” Retelling the founding stories for a new time facilitated a renewal, awareness that just as in the founding or expansion days of the congregation or provinces, restructuring challenges were operative. The challenge for this generation was to embrace the charism for a new context and environment and lead the congregation into the future, given the challenges of today.

Renewal happened among individual members. The consistent sharing of stories and building of relationships within the context of the charism created a new energy, camaraderie and vision. It did not happen for all, but when enough felt the spirit there was a change in the organization as a whole. Members began to imagine new ministries, in new locations with different constellations of members. They began to feel that they could create their future and not just be victims of a vocation crisis. Restructuring provided enough of a transition to disrupt the current equilibrium and jar members from their status quo. For some this freedom led to new life for themselves and their organizations.

The congregations that were interviewed cited various elements of renewal. Some felt they had clearer priorities and focus as a province.

Even in their traditional ministries there was a new sense of how to be present differently. For those who had a significant number of lay members collaborating in their ministries there was an intensification and new respect for the mission ahead together. Many felt a renewed sense of hope for the future. Despite an increase in age and a diminishment in numbers there was a renewed conviction that they still had something significant to offer to the Church and the world. Certainly a streamlined administration and new governmental structures was a result. This often required more local member and community responsibility. Personnel and property resources were better utilized. With fewer in administration more personnel were available for external ministry. The integration of finance, development, health care and other offices across province boundaries freed up additional personnel and properties. Some recognized a greater acceptance of diversity among ethnic, age, philosophical and other categories. Provinces that had new ethnic members began to enjoy the possibilities they brought. Many were also intentional about creating new ministerial thrusts with new models of community in new geographic areas. This opened up the window for new possibilities among members.

Others reported that they could not wait until the process was finished and they could go back to normal. They attempted to isolate themselves as much as possible from change. One group reported that they had missed an opportunity to re-found themselves. They had restructured but had not used the opportunity to renew themselves. As a result these groups experience continual tension among members of the original provinces. Their new leadership reported that they felt they are leading multiple provinces under the guise of a new province.

TRANSITION ISSUES

Entertaining a restructuring process puts an organization into a state of transition. Along with any transition are a letting go and the ability to walk in chaos on the journey toward a new beginning. Everyone is affected by this transition, members and non-members alike. Issues of loss/grieving are triggered in even the most stalwart. Not only is the loss of province identity, leadership, sacred locations etc... stirred up but members unfinished personal losses and grieving is also surfaced. This can make for interesting meetings and dialogues. Some of the congregations have been intentional about grieving the transitions and change through ritual and conversation. Others have trained local superiors to become aware of transition issues that could emerge in their local communities. Powerful

images of the Pascal mystery, wandering in the desert or founders own transition stories played a role in putting the transitions in a comforting spiritual context.

Transitions also provided unexpected opportunities. Members who were firmly planted in particular missions took the opportunity to retire. Some members who had been marginalized in provinces for all sorts of reasons found an opportunity to re-enter the new province and take up a different relationship. Others found it as a time of creativity and were excited about starting a new ministry with new people. Interestingly, not one of the congregations mentions losing members because of the restructuring. Some may have already been in the process of laicization and kept moving in that direction. No members left over the decision to restructure.

Transitions also impact others that are associated with the restructured provinces. Employees become concerned about their job security. Parishes become concerned about their staffing. Associates re-think their relationships to a new province entity. There is need to communicate with these and other populations that will be effected by the decision. They have the right to know the status of the discernment and projected timelines. Some of the groups have intentionally sought their council, helping them to imagine how they would fit into a new restructured province.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

Peripheral to the research study were several observations that emerged, though they were not studied to any extent. One observation is that the Brother congregations approached the process differently than clerical (with brothers) congregations. Leadership was more egalitarian. They were committed to utilizing professional resources to facilitate the restructuring process. Their perceived outcomes were also self-described as more successful. Brother congregations also had more institutions to consider in the restructuring process. The focus on the preservation of their ministries into the future along with a strong commitment to community may have been factors that caused the change in approach and ensuing results. More research would be needed.

Only one of the congregations was engaged in a second restructuring. Having completed the process ten years earlier they were once again incorporating yet another province. It was difficult for them to return to a discussion of a mission-driven purpose. They had already claimed a direction for themselves and felt they could not go backwards. Many felt that this

second restructuring process was stealing energy from their mission. Their focus was primarily on the pragmatic issues of restructuring so as to get on with their life. The result of their success is yet to be determined.

Some of the provinces had been one province and split around forty years ago at a time of expansion. They had maintained significant relationships and collaborated in a variety of areas, especially in the last twenty years. Others were established from a European province and had created histories that stretched back over a hundred years with rich ethnic traditions and a ministerial presence since their founding. Those with a long-standing province identity seemed to have a more difficult time with restructuring conversations even with provinces that shared their charism. Cultural differences had a greater importance and concern despite many commonalities.

Are there alternatives to restructuring existing provinces into a new province? Some have explored the possibility of creating a federation that intensifies collaboration but maintains independent province leadership. When there are significant leadership talent and resources this does postpone the inevitable merger. Some question what is next after restructuring, especially if a renewal and re-founding has not happened. For international congregations the province model is giving way to greater inter-congregational organizing. Some are experimenting with regional configurations of government incorporating a variety of cultures and languages. General administrations are taking a more active role in the internal life of former provinces. Some congregations exist without provinces. They face a unique challenge of either collaborating with another congregation with a similar charism or risk going out of existence.

Whatever path is chosen, there is no bypassing the need to embrace renewal and manage the change that is inevitable in Religious life today. What seems to facilitate that change is a clear mission-driven purpose, leadership that leads authentically and inclusive engagement processes of members that build trust for the future. ■

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JOEL HODGE

Making Sense of Life Through Faith

Religious faith is often accused of an unjustified measure of certainty¹. For example, the former Premier of Western Australia and current Professor at Sydney University's Graduate School of Government, Geoff Gallop, argued that faith provides too much certainty about life, thereby bringing 'the destructive temptations all too often associated with certainty'². While certainty can have negative consequences, I argue that faith is necessary to human life and can effectively deal with the mystery and ambiguity of life. Furthermore, a balanced faith can not only avoid violence but help to resist violence and build peaceful relationships. In supporting this view, I will critique certain currently popular arguments that display common misconceptions about faith.

Supposedly catering to the human longing for certainty, religious faith is often accused of not being able to function in an ambiguous world. Why? Because, so it is affirmed, faith imposes black-and-white worldviews that can lead to active intolerance of 'the other'. Though some can get a different impression, the Catholic Church does not pretend to know everything about God, the world and our lives; nor does the Church argue that faith provides all the answers. The central mystery of the Church is God himself who is ultimately unknowable in his own nature because God is infinite, while the minds and bodies we bring to understanding God are finite.

This does not mean we 'cannot know anything' about God. In fact, Gallop sums up the position well: 'To say we cannot know everything is not to say we cannot know anything'³. In making this statement, Gallop may not realise that he has more in common with 'religious' people, at least with Catholics, than he thinks. What the Church adds to Gallop's argument is this: we can know and experience enough about

the world (with the help of God, others and our reason) to understand its fundamental purpose and meaning (though never to exhaust the mystery of God and everything, because God is an infinite being of love). For example, through Jesus, we are given the definitive presence and image of God as a human, and in this, we can experience what we essentially need to know about God: that he exists in relationship with creation in love.

However, some people, Gallop among them, contend that faith gives too much certainty; accordingly, we need to step back from religion and ideology in a postmodern, relativist pose evaluating all the options but without committing to any. For postmodern relativism, too much certainty must be automatically distrusted, and so we must believe all options to be equal or relative. The problem with this kind of argument is that it ignores the reality of our lives: every day and every hour, we are making choices about what we believe is a better way to act or behave⁴. In other words, we are making choices about what is good; choices which our society influences and which we recommend to others by our living. Therefore, we are always expressing preferences for the truth: about what we believe life is about in this moment, and how we can reach some kind of fulfilment or happiness.

FAITH SUPPORTING LIFE

Some will argue that God or religion should not be used to justify the choices or actions we make. For example, Gallop argues that: 'By adding God to the equation, humans simply underline their beliefs with faith. With such faith, however, there comes the destructive temptations all too often associated with certainty'⁵. There is, of course, a problem that some will use God to justify irrational beliefs or arguments. Yet, this mistake should not exclude God, faith or religion from public discourse. The problem is not with faith as such, but with irrational faith, that is, faith not honestly subjected to reason. We all underline our lives with faith, not just 'religious' or 'ideological' people. Not only do we do it; we must do this in order to live.

The postmodern relativism which is now dominating Western secularism and which Gallop is expressing is itself a faith system, but it is not honest about it. For example, the postmodern suspicion of certainty comes from an underlying faith that certainty can't be trusted and that truth does not exist. This is clearly a faith statement that informs a certain way of life. For this system, truth and certainty must be denied. But is this really rational? Our everyday lives rely on certainty and truth: e.g., that

there will be a floor on the other-side of the door; that I will be paid for work; that my partner or family or friends love me. Therefore, can this postmodern faith be trusted? Postmodern secularism is likewise a faith system with ideological constructs, some of which can be useful and some of which are problematic. The proponents of this postmodern faith system usually won't admit its nature as such because that would entail giving up in public debate and faith the 'neutral' stance through which they can direct and control debate.

Why then must we all hold to faith (in some form)? Faith is needed for all of us to make sense of life, that is, to know what it means to be human, especially in relationship with others (and with the Other who is responsible for all life, and who answers that fundamental question 'why is there anything rather than nothing?')⁶. Faith is the trust and belief that life is worth living; that I can fit my life into a sensible framework of relationship, meaning and purpose which give direction and motivation to my life. One doesn't need to be 'religious' or 'ideological' to have such faith. It is this faith that gets us up in the morning to answer the yearnings for fulfilment we all have. Benedict XVI says: '...believing constitutes the fundamental orientation of our life'⁷. It is our faith that is fundamentally expressed and witnessed in how we act and live with others.

No scientific theory can tell us what it means to be human. No one can empirically verify what it means to be human. Humans have that unique existential challenge to discover the purpose and meaning of their lives. Other animals are given clear directions about the purpose and meaning of their lives through their instincts and group dynamics. For humans, however, there are no clear or easy answers to the questions of life. This existential question can only be answered by the underlying convictions we have about our life, convictions that are developed through our relationships and experiences. These faith convictions are not inherently irrational but, at their best, are rationally-informed ways of living to which we commit ourselves through belief. Belief is the way in which we commit our lives to a certain way of living, enacting what we hold so dearly in order that it will structure our lives and lead to fulfilment. In the early Church, Christianity was actually called 'the Way' which has affinities with what we are discussing. This 'way' is something we must each discern, individually and culturally, in faith, with the help of reason. For Christians, 'the Way' has always been fundamentally concerned with love: the perfect and infinite love of God that moves us into new relationships with each other.

FAITH AND DOUBT

The opposite of faith is neither reason nor science. One of the most rational activities that one can engage in is in believing. This is so because believing is fundamental to who we are and how we react to the world around us. Believing forms ways of living and acting which gives a base for viewing the world and undertaking the business of living. Furthermore, science can help us know the world better, and so ground our faith properly in the world. The opposite of faith, by the way, is despair, that is, to lose meaning and conclude that life has no purpose or hope or love (as Judas did). Despair can lead to dark paths, and sometimes we experience it. Jesus himself experienced abandonment and alienation on the Cross. Through his experience, we can know that God himself accompanies us in these moments and can help us back into relationship, even if it is just to cry out to others (as Jesus did to his Father).

Faith does not necessarily eliminate doubt. Doubt can be a common and rational response, questioning our faith and world to see if our beliefs are sensible and can improve our lives and understanding. In a recent book about the nature of doubt, the ABC journalist, Leigh Sales, established it as an almost existential stance, that is, as a kind of faith-stance out of which one can engage with the world⁸. The problem with her view is that doubt cannot be made into an absolute, as if we could live constantly questioning and doubting the world, without any beliefs. This kind of view forgets that doubt itself rests on an already-existing faith: we can doubt because we have some underlying certainty about life, which can question and develop through new questions and encounters⁹. Excessive doubt, though, leads to paralysis in our identities and actions.

The post-Enlightenment rejection of metaphysics and faith has led to a reductionist approach to the questions of human life, as we become only thinking (Cartesian) or acting (utilitarian) beings. We can no longer own or question our faith-stances, unless they are the stances of the non-secular, religious 'other' on which we place the blame for certainty¹⁰. This reduction has led to the attempt through human effort alone to make life or society perfect as quickly as possible without reference to the larger mystery of creation and its logos. In this utopian picture, the question of God is left out, as Gallop seems to recommend. The rejection of God, and of the belief that humanity is purposefully moving toward some end-point with God (such as a unity of love), did lead to real-life effects like the utopian ideologies (e.g., Communism) that sought to re-make the world, and caused much destruction.

While the appeal to God does not necessarily need to be made in the first instance when discussing questions of conscience (as Gallop and others argue), excluding beliefs or questions about God completely is problematic.

A real humanism that befits human nature should be open to transcendence and mystery beyond the confines of any social practice, ideology or dogma. A worldview that refuses to engage with the very basic mystery of life – where do we come from and where are we going – is one that closes itself off. Atheist postmodernism, relativism and secularism bracket these questions off as unaskable, yet in most human cultures historically (and intuitively for many people) the questions of where everything comes from and where it is going seem legitimate and necessary¹¹. Positing a God who answers that fundamental question ‘why is there anything rather than nothing?’ has helped us to come to terms with our existence, not in an irrational sense but as a starting point to grapple with the mystery of life.

God is often taken as the final answer, but he is just the beginning of a journey into the mystery of existence. A faith system that is open to mystery – not just the mystery of the natural world, but to the mystery of life itself – helps us to recognise that none of us creates ourselves, that none of us can determine the truth on our own, and that none of us can give a complete and perfect picture of the nature, origin and telos (ends) of our humanity.

Postmodern secularism sees no forces in the public realm that can tell us about what it means to be human and what the true purpose and end of our lives are. We are led to believe that the public space is free and we can believe and do as we wish. Yet, the power of secular nationalism and capitalism, for example, is that they do seek to give us an absolute sense of our nature, direction and telos in the consumer market or in service to the nation. Yet, neither the state nor the market actually exist¹². They are constructs of the human imagination in which we believe in order to structure our interactions with each other, give us a sense of identity, and unite us together. Both the state and the market are constructed in such a way that they propose absolute foundations for our identity – the nation or materialism – that influence our relationships, priorities, morality, and what we believe it is to be a human. Under the illusion of choice and the banner of sacrifice, the market and state structure the public imagination. Without the protection of a belief in God, there is no clear way of relativising these forces and preventing them from dominating our

lives (whether in nationalistic wars or the brutal exploitations of profit). To rely solely on secular humanistic beliefs and practices to protect us is naive to say the least. Thus, Western secularism (which does not have to be opposed to 'religion' or Christianity) has unfortunately been influenced by an ill-conceived negative: not a rational refusal of God, but an existential refusal to engage with the deepest mystery of life and to recognise our own dependence on that which is greater than us. This refusal prevents us from receiving the protection of explicit religious belief: that is, belief in a loving God can help to relativise, moderate and re-direct the other forces (like materialistic capitalism or religious nationalism) that seek to dominate the public realm.

The existence of 'religious' faith in the public realm does not mean we have to limit or confine our freedom. Faith – whether it be postmodernism, relativism, capitalism, nationalism or Christianity – is always operative in the public realm and in our lives: we should have a rational and open discussion about what kind of faith we should live by. Faith does not preclude rational discussion. In fact, on the bedrock of faith (given as we mature in our lives and relationships), we can open our lives to others and enter into rational dialogue. The content of one's faith and its openness to reason will determine one's positions and ability to dialogue. Faith – for all of us – operates in the background. However, even with different faith stances, we can still rationally debate issues and dialogue with each other.

Thus, God does not need to be added to 'the equation' to determine an outcome (as Gallop argues), because faith – in what it is to be human and what this universe is about – is always operating in our lives, decisions and worldviews. To be honest and make good decisions, faith and reason need to operate together to seek the truth. The Church has always argued that faith and reason must work together. Why? Because both faith and reason have the purpose of helping us to discern the truth about our lives and our world: faith gives us existential direction and motivation (according to the true nature of things); and reason gives us the ability to know, question and understand in order to deepen our understanding and faith. One of the dangers of the modern era, as Pope Benedict XVI warns, is that faith and reason are becoming separated, rather than explicitly working together¹³. In the postmodern world, we ignore faith. We fail to recognise how faith structures our lives and how reason can deepen faith.

Finally, faith is a relational phenomenon: we need others for us to know and experience the meaning of life. For Christians, this meaning is

fundamentally located in love: in the love of God and the love of others. It is in the deepening of this love that reason and faith work together optimally to enable our human flourishing so that we can understand and live well. ■

ENDNOTES

- 1 Truth and God pivotal to education – cardinal’, *The Catholic Weekly*, December 5, 2010; J.Maley, ‘Faithless are coarse, uncaring and without purpose, says Cardinal Pell’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 29, 2010.
- 2 G.Gallop, ‘Does God Matter?’ *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 30, 2010.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 H. McCabe, (2003), *Law, Love and Language*, London and New York, Continuum.
- 5 Gallop, *op.cit.*,
- 6 H.McCabe,(2005), *God Matters*, London and New York: Continuum, 2-6.
- 7 Benedict XVI, ‘Mass on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary’, August 15, 2006.
- 8 L.Sales, (2009). *On Doubt*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.
- 9 J.Alison, (1998). *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin through Easter Eyes*. New York:Crossroad Publishing. 56-57.
- 10 See W.T.Cavanaugh. (2009). *The Myth of Religious Violence: secular ideology and the roots of modern conflict*. New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- 11 R.Williams. (2007). *Tokens of Trust*. Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press. 32.
- 12 Cavanaugh. *op.cit.*
- 13 Benedict XVI, ‘Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections’, September 12, 2006.

CATHERINE MCCAHILL

Vatican II: Does it still matter?

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"The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community of men and women who, united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onwards towards the kingdom of the Father and are bearers of a message of salvation intended for all people."

So begins the *Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*. This is the Church that I love, this is the Church in which I choose to live out that commitment of love in and through Jesus who has shown us the way.

Let me begin at the beginning. Some 50 years ago (October 11, 1962), Pope John XXIII declared open the Second Vatican Council, the four sessions of which lasted more than three years and produced 16 documents. It was his intent and remained the intent of his successor, Paul VI (who

assumed presidency from the second session) that this council “would be a demonstration of the vitality of the Church, a means of rebuilding Christian unity, and a catalyst for world peace”.

This council was different to the preceding 20 ecumenical councils of the Church. Firstly, the bishops were greater in number (2,600) and more diverse in culture and nationhood than ever before, coming not only from Europe but also indigenous to the Americas, Asia and the Pacific. Secondly, representation from non-Catholics and lay persons (including 23 women by the fourth session) was visibly noticeable. Thirdly, its purpose was to promote study and exposition of the teaching and doctrines of the Church “through the methods of research and...literary forms of *modern* thought” (Opening address of John XXIII). Dialogue and engagement with the world was essential for the authentic promotion of the Gospel message.

So for the first time we had a “pastoral” constitution (quoted above), proclaiming that the Church exists “within” and not “apart from” or “alongside” the world, requiring serious engagement of all the faithful in the promotion of the dignity, well-being and freedom of all persons. For the first time too, the Church is presented as “the People of God”, a community of laity, religious and clergy, all sharing in the “priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ” (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 30, 31). For the first time in hundreds of years, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, promoted the active participation of all God’s people, requiring that it be celebrated in the language of the people and that its “signs” be “understandable”.

Numerous other determinations could be noted if we were to work our way through the various documents on divine revelation, ecumenism, non-Christian religions, religious freedom, and the Church’s missionary activity, to name but some. New emphasis was placed on the accessibility of sacred scripture, on the promotion of understanding amongst all Christians, on the “ray of truth” that is found in all religions, on requiring that the Church never participate in any form of religious coercion or prejudice any persons on the basis of their religious faith, and on promoting missionary activity that recognises and preserves the gifts of all cultures.

Reading these documents 50 years later, significant questions arise. How comprehensible are they for the postmodern person, for persons from Europe, Asia, the Pacific, or the Americas, impoverished or not, educated or not, seekers of truth or consumed with human survival for themselves

or their families? In recent times in English-speaking countries, the language of the liturgy has been re-visited, and many are left wondering about the gap between the language chosen and contemporary English. I am saddened by the divisions that this is causing and the energy being consumed, whilst all the time sacramental participation is decreasing.

We are, unfortunately, all too aware of division and disharmony in this Church that 50 years ago promoted unity and freedom of conscience. We live in times when some theologians are “silenced” for their attempt to give contemporary expression to the ancient Christian truths. We are aware too, of so much critical energy, an energy that leads to anonymous reporting to Roman curia and seemingly harsh censure.

When I read the conciliar documents with lay, educated Catholics many are unimpressed. Certainly, they are not as excited as many were in the late 1960s and 1970s. Is it time for the Church to look once again at its relationship to the contemporary world? I am very aware of so many places in the world where the Church is engaged with the world but that is not the experience of many Australian Catholics. They experience a Church no longer connected with the reality of their lives, with the “joy and hope, the grief and anguish” of all humanity. It is time for all of us to reconsider the call of John XXIII for “Christian charity”, to work for unity, to engage with the people of our times. We will be unable to proclaim the Good News unless we do.

Many of my peers have “given up” on the Church. I refuse to make a compact with the forces that demoralise. I still believe in the unmined treasures of the conciliar documents. I hope and pray for dialogue, for serious and committed dialogue amongst all members of the Church – the People of God – those who actively participate and those who have become disillusioned, apathetic or ostracised. I believe it will only be possible if we focus more clearly on the teaching, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Then the Church will truly serve his mission not its own; his commandment of love and compassion will take precedence.

Let us once more throw open the windows of this ancient institution so that the fresh winds of Jesus’ teachings and our contemporary world might collide and enliven us. ■

CHARLES GAY

Do We Need Vatican III?

Given that we are approaching the 50th anniversary of the opening of Vatican II it is not an unreasonable question. Let me respond immediately in three short words – No, No, No! When I was asked to talk on Vatican II the title which I chose myself was ‘A New Pentecost’. I chose this title because it is in those words that Pope John XXIII expressed his hopes for the outcome of the Second Vatican Council and, of course, it is Pentecost Sunday in a few days time. As I see it, to understand the Second Vatican Council we must see it in its context. The Second Vatican Council did not appear suddenly out of a vacuum – theological, historical, political or social. Certainly, when John XXIII, on 25th January 1959 announced at the end of Vespers to mark the end of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity that he was going to call an Ecumenical Council, the Cardinals and other Curia officials present were stunned – in Glasgow we would say they were gobsmacked! The difference between John XXIII (Pope for 3 months at the time) and the officials around him was that John was reading the signs of the time.

THE COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH:

The Second Vatican Council is the 21st Council of the Church. The councils are broken into three periods. The early period is from Nicea in 325 to Constantinople IV in 869-70. The second period, the medieval period is from Lateran I (1123) to Lateran V in 1512-17, and the final three belong to the modern period i.e. Trent (1545-63), Vatican I (1869-70) and Vatican II (1962-65). The dates are important: we see that the first period was before the 11th Century Schism between East and West and therefore is a Council of the whole Church as it was then: so, if you like, it was an Ecumenical Council, from the Greek ‘oike’ meaning inhabited – in terms of Christianity it was the world inhabited by Christians a geographical expression, not a theological one referring to Christian Unity: that comes much later. These early Councils took place in the East

and were generally called by the emperor and presided over by the emperor. The Pope was generally not present – he sent a few delegates – so perhaps it is not as ecumenical as some say. The medieval period on the other hand is after the East-West Schism and before the Reformation in the West and so these medieval councils would be more accurately described as General Councils of the Western Church since the Orthodox Churches of the East are not involved. And finally the three in the modern period, since they are after the Reformation and do not include Eastern Orthodox Churches and Reformed Churches of the West with voting rights, they should perhaps more accurately be called General Councils of the Church of Rome or of the Catholic Church including of course the 22 Churches in communion with Rome.

PURPOSE OF THE COUNCILS

From the beginning, Councils were usually convened for a dual purpose, doctrinal and disciplinary and the canons and decrees coming from Councils are a mixture of these two. In the early Church, Councils were called to deal with conflicts regarding mainly christological doctrine. The councils were like arbitration sittings and generally unanimous votes or close consensus was the aim. That was how Rome or the See of Peter was seen to be – arbiter - not dictator. The result would be a decree indicating the official position agreed by consensus. That's important: consensus has always been the aim of Councils – so the documents arising from them can be ambiguous or the result of compromise. And when we talk about documents, it is extremely difficult to get to the source or original document for councils before the time of the printing presses. Also, the idea of Popes writing numbers of encyclicals is really a 19th century innovation, particularly late 19th century onward. The early councils dealt with a number of articles which came into the Creeds, mainly Christological and rejected things like Arianism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism and other heresies. The dual purpose of the Councils, doctrine and discipline could be expressed as faith and morals or doctrine and governance. Morals from the Latin “*mores*” refers to customs and as we know customs, once in place, often acquire the power of law and obligation and this transfers easily into sin! But originally the customs referred to liturgical rubrics and gradually the meaning spread. Discipline referred then to how the Church conducted her affairs, anything and everything from the conduct of the clergy to matters of liturgical rubrics, election of Bishops, relations with governments (European Princes) and so on.

That is a general outline of what Councils were and are all about. As regards a more detailed context of Vatican II, we have to go back to the Council of Trent.

FROM TRENT TO VATICAN II

The first thing to be said about the Council of Trent was that it must be seen in its immediate context, namely the Reformation. It was a reforming Council whose purpose was to respond to the Reformers, many of whose 'grievances' were totally justified and Trent recognized that. But there was also the negative side of anathemas, (condemnations) for which Trent is much better known in history. So the decrees and canons of Trent take a particular literary form where the actual words or teaching of the Reformers were quoted and condemned e.g. Should anyone say that there are either more or less than seven sacraments of the Church...anathema sit: let him be condemned or excommunicated. In other words we can distinguish between the form and content of Council documents. This was how Trent dealt with the doctrinal differences, using the language of condemnation or anathema. The result in the Church of the Reformation in Europe, beginning with the Council of Trent and the Counter-Reformation movement and which then continued through the Enlightenment period and through Modernism up to the middle of the 20th Century, can perhaps be best described as a 'pulling in of the drawbridge'. The Church became inward-looking and defensive, suspicious of anything emanating from the reformed Churches and the outside world. She developed what many commentators refer to as 'a siege or ghetto mentality'. The way the Church defined herself at this time was strictly in terms of external structures and institution. The stress on authority is found in all pre-Vatican II Catechisms (and many would suggest post Vatican II Catechisms as well) and the stress leads to centralism of power and control. This reaches its climax in the Vatican I Council definition of Papal Infallibility – a Council which had to be abruptly abandoned because of the Franco-Prussian war two days after the Decree on Papal Infallibility had been forced through by Pius IX – so a Council which left serious unfinished business, for example, the relationship of the Pope to the other Bishops in the Church.

This siege mentality or fortress mentality, the suspicion of everything Protestant and modern (Enlightenment and Modernism), finds expression in the Index of Forbidden Books which was instituted at Trent and only officially abolished in 1978. This mentality also finds expression in the

Syllabus of Errors (1864) in which Pius IX listed 84 errors, number 80 being the most well known in which Pius IX condemned the notion that the Church should have anything to do with ‘progress, liberalism and modern civilisation’. There is extreme caution about organisations not fully approved by the Holy See. C.684 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law speaks of those ‘secret, condemned, seditious or suspect associations that seek to distance themselves from the legitimate vigilance of the Church’ The phrase most associated with this self-understanding of Church is, ‘Extra ecclesia nulla salus’ – outside of the Church there is no salvation. The result of the Index of Forbidden Books and the Syllabus of Errors was that the Church cut herself off from the intellectual life of Europe (it was a Eurocentric Church at the time). She cut herself off from the world and from History- it was a tight little cocoon in which she lived her own life and talked to herself. Bishop De Smedt of Bruges at Vatican II summed up this self-understanding in three words ‘clericalism, juridicism and triumphalism’.

In the light of the above, we can recognise a sea-change in the Church’s self-understanding when we look at the documents of Vatican II. The Church’s Vatican II Ecclesiology or self-understanding stands in stark contrast to that of Trent and the post-Tridentine Church. It is summed up by the Dominican Sister Maureen Sullivan as:

a shift from a hierarchical model of Church to a Communion model; a shift from a Church suspicious of those outside the faith to a Church eager to explore the path of Christian unity; a shift in the Church’s view of the outside world from a Church that viewed the world as alien to herself, in dire need of salvation, to a Church that saw the world as a partner in dialogue, recognizing the incarnational mystery at work in that world; a Church humbled by the reality that it is but an instrument of the kingdom and hence always in need of renewal and reform¹

This is an interesting use of words by Sullivan – renewal and reform. I don’t think the word ‘reform’ is used in the Council documents – one example of the compromise I mentioned early on in passing in relation to reaching consensus. A Church always in need of reform: the Council deliberately chose not to use that phrase because it was the Reformers phrase of the Reformation. Rather, they used the phrase ‘ecclesia semper renovanda’ – a Church always in need of renewal.

So how did we move from the Tridentine understanding of Church which prevailed into the late 1950s to the understanding of the Church of Vatican II as summarised by Sullivan? It is something which did not happen overnight: there was a long period of gestation and bringing to birth. It was called 'The New Theology'. Some of the names associated with this new theology are – Yves Congar, Marie Dominique Chenu, Romano Guardini, John Henry Newman, Karl Rahner, Henri de Lubac, Edward Schillebeeckx, John Courtney Murray, Johan Adam Mohler and the whole Tübingen School (rather interestingly the University where Joseph Ratzinger was to take up a chair at the invitation of Hans Küng!) These scholars and their successors had two things in common: one was they almost all fell foul of the Roman Curia and so were refused permission to publish their works or lost their teaching posts at Catholic University Faculties. The other thing they had in common (those who were still alive) was that their names read like a list of 'who's who?' among the periti or expert advisers at Vatican II.

So I am suggesting that the work and influence of the 'New Theologians' is an essential aspect of the context of Vatican II and a key to the interpretation of its documents. The new theologians moved away from the rigidity and biblical fundamentalism of neo-scholasticism which was generally ignorant of historical method and did not engage with the findings of modern science. 'The New Theology' is based on a method which is greatly influenced by three paradigm shifts:

1. The shift from the static classicist world view to that of a dynamic historically conscious world view. For these new theologians history became a tool which recognised that the way we express our faith is a product of the time and culture in which it is expressed. John XXIII reminded the Fathers of the Council of this in his opening address on 11th October 1962. The Church is seen as part of History and not outside of it as it was seen before.
2. The second shift is a move from a deductive to an inductive methodology. The latter is a method which has the human condition as its starting point, the concrete reality of the lives of contemporary people in the world – this is seen clearly in the opening sentence of the Council Constitution 'Gaudium et Spes' (The Church in the modern world): *The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope and grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.*

3. The third shift was also one of method – in the approach to teaching the faith: it was a shift away from apologetics to the meaning of what was being stated; a method which saw and acted upon the gap between what was taught and what was experienced.

How are the effects of ‘The New Theology’ seen in the Council documents? ‘The New Theology’ was responsible for a number of movements going on in the Church between the two World Wars and which reached a certain maturity or full flowering during the Council and are clearly influential in the writing of the documents themselves. It is enough to name these movements:

1. The Liturgical Movement which stressed Liturgy as an act of the community and finds its fullest expression in §14 of the document on the Liturgy, ‘Sacrosanctum Concilium’, in the phrase ‘the full conscious and active participation of the people’ and 13 other references in the text to participation.
2. The Biblical Movement culminating in Pius XII’s ‘Divino afflante Spiritu’ of 1943 which gave the green light to Catholic biblical scholars to get on with a study of Scripture which scholars from the reformed Churches in Europe had been at for roughly the previous 100 years and set the scene for the Council document on Revelation, ‘Dei Verbum’.
3. Social Action, the clear precursor of much of the Document on the Church in the Modern World “Gaudium et Spes”
4. The Lay Apostolate movement, the precursor of the Document on the Laity ‘Apostolicam actuositatem’.
5. The Ecumenical Movement, not encouraged in the Vatican, but it did attract the attention of some major theologians of ‘The New Theology’ e.g. Yves Congar and is the precursor to the Decree on Ecumenism.
6. The Missionary movement: this of course had been going on for a long time, hand in hand with colonisation but led to Benedict XV’s encyclical letter of 1919 stressing the importance of a native clergy, which in turn led to the consecration of the first indigenous Bishops in missionary lands: so, for example there were 296 Bishops from Africa eligible to participate in the Council. (A number of these were of course European born e.g. Lefebvre). When we read the documents then, the influence of ‘The New Theology’ and the new theologians is clear for all to see.

INTERPRETING VATICAN II

A major issue which has been facing the Church since the end of Vatican II in 1965 is how the documents of the Council are to be interpreted – how is the work of the Council to be interpreted. There has been a conflict between the balance that should exist between continuity and development or between continuity and discontinuity. Some have interpreted the discontinuity as ‘rupture’ and so are often to be heard using the phrases Pre-Vatican II and Post-Vatican II and those involved have been labelled conservatives or traditionalists and progressives. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Council, the debate between these parties continues, sometimes acrimoniously as insults go flying across the articles or correspondence columns of the Catholic press or on twitter and other blogs. One side is referred to as heretics and the other as dinosaurs and so on. It is often said that the scandal of Christianity is the lack of Christian unity: the scandal of Catholicism in my view is that the Eucharistic Liturgy, the source and summit of the Christian life, the sign, sacrament and instrument of the unity of the faithful is the source of the greatest conflict and disunity among the faithful. It is the Liturgy particularly which is used as the litmus test of one’s position in the debate on the interpretation of Vatican II.

In relation to the documents of the council we can talk of form and content – they are of course connected. An American Church Historian, Jesuit Fr John W. O’Malley looks at the interpretation debate from the perspective of form rather than content. He gave a public lecture at Yale Divinity School in 2005 and gave much the same content at a lecture at Marchette University later in 2005. Then he prepared the same material for publication in March 2006 in an article in the Jesuit journal ‘Theological Studies’ under the title, ‘Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?’²

O’Malley concentrates on the style of writing found in the Vatican II documents, their literary genre and type of language used. He concludes that from the study of the language of the documents we can arrive at “The Spirit of the Council” or the orientation or basic thrust of the Council. The literary style that governed previous councils derived from the understanding that the Councils were legislative bodies that issued laws and decrees and ordinances regarding doctrinal formulations and behaviour – faith and morals. The most common literary form in this context is the Canon and the language or vocabulary of the Canon was appropriate to it. i.e.: the language ‘of threat and intimidation, words of

surveillance and punishment, words of a superior speaking to inferiors or just as often, to an enemy. It consisted in power words³. The Decrees of the Council of Trent for example ‘reinforced social disciplining as an ecclesiastical style and promoted an image of the Church as a stern, exigent and suspicious parent---behave thus...or else. The language projected the image and the image promoted the reality and helped it to self-fulfil⁴.

The language and vocabulary of Vatican II are quite different. They hold up ideals and then often draw conclusions from them and spell out the consequences such as the responsibilities of the Bishops: but these are laid out not as a code of conduct to be enforced but as an ideal to be striven for with the understanding that they are to be adapted to times and circumstances⁵. The Second Vatican Council was about persuading and inviting.

O’Malley sums up: ‘I will summarize in a simple litany, some of the elements in the change in style of the Church indicated by the Council’s vocabulary⁶ (the emphases in the litany are mine).

From commands **to invitations**

From laws **to ideals**

From threats **to persuasion**

From coercion **to conscience**

From monologue **to conversation**

From ruling **to serving**

From withdrawn **to integrated**

From vertical **to horizontal**

From exclusion **to inclusion**

From hostility **to friendship**

From static **to changing**

From passive acceptance **to active engagement**

From prescriptions **to principles**

From defined **to open-ended**

From behaviour-modification **to conversion of heart**

From the dictates of law **to the dictates of conscience**

From external conformity **to the joyful pursuit of holiness**

When these elements are taken in aggregate they indicate a model of spirituality. This is what Catholics should look like and how they should behave which means this is what the Church should look like and how the Church should behave. This ‘Spirit of the Council’ expresses what should be the Spirit of the Church – is this how we experience Church?

Is this the spirit we ourselves try to adopt in our relationships so as to promote Church?

O'Malley ends his chapter by asking the question did anything happen at Vatican II? The answer 40 years ago would have been a strong affirmative, while today, learned, thoughtful and informed people are responding in the negative⁷. We must surely with O'Malley be in full agreement with their affirmation of the profound continuity of the Council with the Catholic tradition but we cannot be blind to the discontinuities. To be so blind is to take the Council and the Church with it out of history and make us wonder why the Council was ever called in the first place. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Council the debate needs to stop being acrimonious and polarized and for the language of the council itself to inform the debate.

To return to the original question, 'Do we need Vatican III?' I repeat my threefold 'No'. Rather, what we need is to look afresh at Vatican II and implement it. ■

ENDNOTES

- 1 M.Sullivan. 2007. *The Road to Vatican II: Key Changes in Theology*, New York: Paulist Press. 4.
- 2 D. Schultenover, (ed); 2007. *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?* New York: Continuum.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 70.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 71.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 76.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 80.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 84.



MICHAEL ELLIGATE

Evangelisation and Scripture

Being ordained just on forty years means that our seminary formation was enriched by a set of then young scripture scholars who brought us the fruits of their own doctoral studies. Names like Bill Dalton, John Scullion, Frank Moloney and later Brendan Byrne stand out in my memory.

International scholars visited, led by Raymond Brown, John Meir, Jerome Neyrey Donald Senior and Eugene Le Verdiere and they all extended our biblical appreciation even further. Emerging also were woman scholars such as Sandra Schneiders together with our own Mary Coloe and Elaine Wainwright.

Each and everyone of these scholars drew on amazing specialist depths in language, hermeneutics and theology and they all insisted that their scholarship be grounded in nurturing the faith of ordinary people. As seminarians we were constantly reminded of the strategic value of well researched and effectively presented preaching.

One remark that stands out was Frank Moloney clearly stating the relationship between Church and Scripture –

“The Church is where Scripture is formed and carried, but it is Scripture that keeps the Church honest!”

So it’s the foundational texts of the Gospels, the Epistles and the Jewish Scriptures that play a vital part in how we evangelise – how we teach and preach.

As I write this reflection I have just prepared the Sunday homily where the Marken narrative is about the paralytic being lowered through the roof in order to have access to Jesus.

What paralyses people in our day and age? Anyone who has experienced depression or lived with people who suffer severe depression know what the experience can be.

Not wanting to get out of bed is an emblematic symptom of the illness. And in Australia Professor Patrick McGory has documented the epidemic of depression that hits young adults in particular.

To evangelise, is to open up experience, to offer the possibility of glimpsing a way to hope and healing.

The occupational hazard in preaching and teaching is to moralise after presenting a Gospel narrative. The Gospel stories are so rich that we short change ourselves if they are reduced to narrow lessons about being nice, even good.

A key to a creative exploration of Gospel stories is to understand the overall context of the Gospel.

Read Luke remembering he is writing a Gospel that includes fringe dwellers and the stranger. Gentiles were the “blow ins” the new comers to the people of God. They lacked the great heritage of the Jewish people.

The apostle Peter struggled to see where they should be placed in the new Christian communities. Notice now outsiders become insiders in Lukes Gospel. The marginalized are invited in and given a place at table.

Now we still have the marginalized and the fringe dwellers. The stories of inclusion have much to offer when we work with people who feel outside the circle of worthy disciples. Worse still when they are often told they are not worthy disciples!

Again read Mark and see the constant struggle of the disciples to stay with Jesus. The road to Jerusalem has too many unanswered questions. As we say these days “They just don’t get it!”

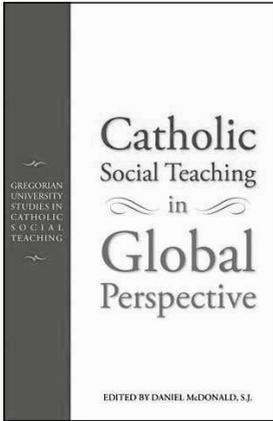
Jesus himself struggles with issues about his God and what it means to be faithful. Life can be bleak at times, but the faithful ones cry out to their God for help.

Matthew presents Jesus preaching the popular beatitudes. Jesus speaks with authority, but notice the bridge building. The values are all about being pure of heart, about mourning, peacemaking and searching for justice. These human values are noble and shared by many people of goodwill. Yet here Jesus is inviting more as we come to faith. To live in His Spirit is to enter into life with him, the Father Son. Here we help bring about the new Kingdom that facilitates the presence of our God. We have crossed the bridge from good human values to a life in Christ. We take our humanity and let it be blessed by the grace of our God.

The context of Matthew’s Gospel is at work here. Matthew is presenting a Good News through the terms of bridge building. The Jewish converts to the way of Jesus brought their heritage with them to the new realm of life in the Crucified and the Risen Lord.

To evangelise is to announce or to proclaim. As we explore Gospel texts we may see the insights these narratives contain. Knowing the context both in which the various Gospels were written, enables us to apply these insights and values to the context in which we live. Here is the strategic link between evangelisation and scripture. ■

Books



**Struggling to be global:
Catholic Social Thought
Catholic Social Teaching in
Global Perspective, (Gregorian
University Studies in Catholic
Social Teaching).**

McDonald, D. SJ ed. (2010)

Maryknoll: Orbis.

pp. xxii +218. US\$26.00.

This is an important book about how Catholic Social Teaching (CST) could or should adapt to the vastly different cultural and social situations in diverse parts of the world. Though not entirely new, the current processes of globalisation have pressed this adaptation urgently. While the book focuses

on Catholic social thought, and especially the formally articulated papal stream of commentary, its implications apply equally well to other churches and forms of Christian social thinking in attempting to develop a coherent moral worldview relevant for differing contexts.

In this book, some leading Catholic scholars identify resources and difficulties in the formal Catholic social traditions, while other writers explore how Catholic thought has been interpreted or needs to develop in different regions, including Africa, Australia, East Asia, Europe and India.

**VIEWS FROM NORTH AMERICA
AND EUROPE**

Thomas Hughson SJ from Marquette University, in 'Social Justice and the Common Good', argues that Church teaching needs to situate the concepts of social justice and the common good in a wider perspective of culture, particularly what he terms 'reflexive culture', which involves active participation and creativity in how groups promote their human wellbeing and develop

their symbolic world, along with a sense of meaning as individuals and societies.

John Coleman SJ in 'North American culture's receptivity to Catholic Social Teaching' considers the tensions between Catholic Social Teaching, with its communitarian emphasis, and the dominant US culture built on individualism, utilitarianism and a culture of consumer capitalism with its free-market 'myth' and sense of Puritan 'exceptionalism'. Coleman cautions that it 'would be fairly farfetched to claim that CST has made or left any major imprint on American larger culture and political philosophy' (p. 204).

Nevertheless, he particularly notes the US bishops' involvement in the 1970s and 1980s in the debates over nuclear issues and the US economy, along with the wide range of other organisations and educational avenues used to inculcate Church social thinking.

Coleman compares the US experience with that of Canada with its very different cultural background, and where the Catholic bishops engaged more closely with their economists and political scientists in a more communitarian social culture and society. The Canadian bishops were able to be more critical of failures of capitalism, and draw more

strongly from communitarian cultural values of social justice.

Johan Verstraeten examines 'Catholic Social Teaching and the European project'" noting how the Church has moved from a deductive method based on social principles to a more inductive approach involving closer attention to the voices and context of local churches. He traces from the late 19th century the development of Catholic social teaching in its European context, and the move to more contextual approaches, especially utilising the 'See, Judge, Act' methods of Canon Cardijn. In Europe, the history and cultures favoured a more communitarian approach to social wellbeing, though laissez-faire capitalism remained as a constant and powerful foe.

This emphasis was qualified in 1991 by Pope John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus*, which Verstraeten considers gave too much away to the US free-market proponents (presumably Michael Novak and his allies). Verstraeten sketches the impact of Catholic social thinking on the development of the European Union, and especially with its principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, balancing care for the disadvantaged with a conscious dispersal of decision-making and economic power. He outlines

the carriers of Catholic social thought in movements of workers, NGOs and church organisations. He recognises the importance of religious orders in sponsoring and supporting social initiatives, along with some of the new lay movements, including the Focolare and the Sant'Egidio community. Catholic influence has also been strong in many secular movements and education. He regrets that the social thinking of the episcopal conferences is not better reflected in the papal documents, and calls for more collaboration in the preparation of Vatican thinking so that the experience and insights 'from below' can better inform statements 'from above'.

SITUATION IN AFRICA AND IN EAST ASIA

David Kaulemu writes out of his experience as a co-ordinator of the African Forum for Catholic Social Teaching. In 'Building society for social transformation through the Church's Social Teaching' Kaulemu surveys the difficult situation of many African countries, with many problems linked to crises in spiritual, cultural and moral values. He acknowledges the more communitarian nature of African cultures, but also the impact of colonial periods which undermined people's sense of identity and how they saw themselves in their

environment and world. While acknowledging that some African countries are moving positively socially and economically, Kaulemu focuses on the need for renewed social 'imaginaries' drawing more directly from African social values that can augment the full range of values around human wellbeing today. He argues that 'CST can be a fantastic facility for inspiring the necessary transformation in Africa. But [CST does not] provide cookbook solutions' (p. 59-60). He then outlines how the African Forum for Catholic Social Teaching is developing practical programs to nurture the cultural change for social transformation.

Agnes M Brazal, president of DaKaTeo (Catholic Theological Society of the Philippines), considers an Asian context in 'East Asian discourses on harmony', stressing that work for justice and peace requires close collaboration with the other great religious traditions in Asia. She notes that Catholic Social Teaching lacks such an inter-religious perspective, and is still heavily influenced by Western thought and culture. She outlines notions of 'harmony' in East Asian religions, and then relates them to key Catholic social concepts, particularly in light of environmental issues and efforts to reduce severe poverty.

Joseph (Jeeendra) Jadhav SJ, in 'Catholic Social Teaching and its application in rural India', is conscious of 'the economic, environmental and social crises' in India, which he also considers 'moral crises' (p. 175). He outlines how he has been involved with the Watershed Development Programme, part of a Jesuit development effort to apply Catholic social principles in Ahmednagar District in the State of Maharashtra, employing the participatory methods embraced in the See-Judge-Act process. It is a community development project requiring extensive involvement of local people and communities, the key to its success in mobilising local resources, preserving the environment, creating employment and raising living standards. He writes that it is now 'one of the model programs' of the Indian government which, along with NGOs, helps support it financially.

THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Sandie Cornish and David Freeman offer a more descriptive account of efforts to inculcate Catholic Social Teaching in Australia. Cornish has had long experience in Church agencies, especially as executive officer of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council and later as coordinator of the Asian Centre for the Progress of Peoples in

Hong Kong. Freeman is currently director of the Edmund Rice Institute for Social Justice in Fremantle, Western Australia, and has been a Fulbright Scholar and visiting fellow at Harvard University. The authors give an historical context, noting how significant Catholic Social Teaching, especially Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, has been for Australian labour politics and society.

They jump quickly to the post-Cold War period and the decline of the Jocist movements but without mentioning the Catholic Action movements and disputes of the 1940s-1950s, particularly over the role of the anti-communist organisations and the role of Mr B A Santamaria who was head both of Catholic Action and the secret anti-communist movement working in the unions and extending its influence into the Australia Labor Party.

Perhaps this part of the history was omitted for reasons of space, but without understanding Santamaria's role it is difficult to explain later opposition to Australian Catholic Relief (later Caritas Australia) and to the Justice and Peace organisation of the Australian bishops.

Cornish and Freeman sketch the work of the Catholic

Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the disputes which led to its reconstitution in 1987 as the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council and the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace. The new organisations adopted the process of extensive consultation developed by the US bishops, and in 1988 undertook the Catholic Bishops' Enquiry into the Distribution of Wealth in Australia. Though it took four and a half years to conclude, it was a landmark document, which was followed by other enquires into young people, and a later one on the participation of women in the Catholic Church. A very significant initiative was the establishment of Catholic Earthcare, which with Caritas has had a major role in schools and parishes.

In Australia various organisations and networks are involved in the carriage of Catholic Social Teaching. The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council itself is very thinly resourced and lacks a high public profile. Caritas has its own funding sources and has expanded significantly with its educational role and aid projects overseas and in Australia. It has extensive connections with government agencies, as does Catholic Social Services Australia

with his 66 member organisations in the welfare sector.

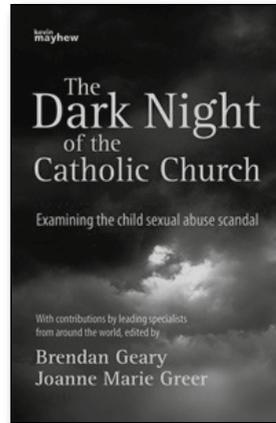
Most of the smaller dioceses can do very little to fund activities for justice and peace, and are dependent largely on volunteers or religious orders. Cornish and Freeman diplomatically do not mention the fact that the largest dioceses of Sydney and Melbourne make only token efforts with one or two personnel in their Justice and Peace offices. The authors do not explore why these wealthy dioceses do so little in this area. Our authors note Catholic universities and theological colleges pay attention to some social justice concerns, though in my view far too little. Cornish and Freeman rightly acknowledge the role of the Jesuits and the Christian Brothers in promoting experience and education in social justice issues. Both Jesuit Social Services and the Edmund Rice network have made innovative social interventions, especially in relation to refugees and asylum seekers. Many other religious orders of men and women are also committed to promoting Catholic Social Teaching, especially in the schools and the social service organisations.

In conclusion, the authors note how meagre are resources supporting work for justice and peace, and that Australia still

struggles to develop structures that allow lay people to play a more significant role in this work. These chapters demonstrate how difficult it is for a central organ like the Vatican to articulate social principles or policies readily applicable in quite different circumstances. However, it is clear that if Catholic Social Teaching is to find deeper resonance in the hearts and minds of people, including the other churches and religious traditions, it must engage more closely with the social experience and initiatives of Christians in their immediate local situations. ■

Dr Bruce Duncan CSsR

Dr. Bruce Duncan is a priest of the Redemptorist order. Some of his writing and talks are posted on his homepage at www.frbruceduncan.com. Since 1986 he has lectured in history and social ethics at Yarra Theological Union at Box Hill in Melbourne where he currently co-ordinates the programme of social justice studies. He is one of the founders of Social Policy Connections (www.socialpolicyconnections.com.au) and of the Yarra Institute for Religion and Social Policy based at the Yarra Theological Union.



The Dark Night of the Catholic Church: Examining the child sexual abuse scandal.

Brendan Geary and Joanne Marie Greer eds., (2011). London: Kevin Mayhew. 620 pp. RP. £35.

ISBN 9781848673854

Order direct from the website:

www.kevinmayhew.com

The recently published Dark Night of the Catholic Church brings together the scholarship and experience of 19 clinicians from Scotland, America, Australia, England, and Ireland who have expertise in sexual abuse as survivors, researchers, academics, canon lawyers, therapists, bishops and religious leaders. This four part text seeks to identify key issues that lead to understanding the context of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church by exploring

cases, listening to the stories of survivors and those who have been working toward solutions, thereby shedding light on the pathway forward.

The 617 page volume is intended to be read by “administrative clerics such as bishops and pastors, principals (head teachers) and counsellors at Catholic schools, lay volunteers in the parish and professionals who organise initiatives to help abused children or adult survivors”. While it is not an academic text with substantial referencing, on the whole *Dark Night* offers a well-founded and comprehensive consideration of the topic in a way that makes the complexity of issues accessible to the novice reader and offers a solid update to those who already have a grasp of the existing literature. Reading lists at the end of each chapter guide interested readers to other publications on the topic.

There are many qualities to recommend this book. Collectively, the authors address an exhaustive list of issues that need to be constantly considered by the Church community as a whole. It will come as no surprise that it is the voices of survivors who speak with the greatest clarity, simplicity, and hope.

Insights are offered about the aetiology and phenomenon of child abuse within the Church,

its impact, the human failings that have resulted from deficient reasoning and the process of recovery and healing that have been occurring concurrently. The authors name a range of appropriate and just responses that have become increasingly obvious from the painful experience of the dark night of the Catholic Church. These comprise treatment for known survivors and abusers, investigatory and disciplinary procedures for those who have caused harm, and abuse prevention strategies for religious institutions and the Church community.

Readers may find themselves thrown about with feelings of anger, disgust, disbelief, confusion, and hopelessness as they read this book. This is no coincidence, of course. It is a reflection of the book’s capacity to offer more than scholarship on child abuse as it relates to the Catholic Church. It takes the reader on a journey that parallels the abuse experience. Facing the truth of what has happened - and will most surely continue to happen - it takes us into the darkest of thoughts and feelings. But, as the book demonstrates, there is cause for hope when communities unite around loving and effective responses.

While much is said in this book about what has been learned and

what can and should be done, one is left wondering what has happened to all those who seem to have slipped through the cracks. I refer here to those who were twice abused within the Church context: initially as victims of sexual abuse and then as victims of systems abuse – where those who courageously approached Church authorities in good faith were left feeling foolish and angry when the Church’s legal representatives most effectively pushed them further into their dark and lonely night. One wonders what attempts have been made to go back to such survivors in order to accept responsibility for both forms of abuse, and offer a hand of healing?

It is not surprising that a book of this quality and type raises questions that call for a response.

Clearly, the magisterium has a special responsibility to protect children and respond adequately to the complexity of sexual abuse. But this book goes beyond begging the powerful to act in accordance with Gospel values; it calls on each of us to play a role in the protection of children and the healing of survivors and abusers within the Church community. ■

Gerard Webster

(Counselling & Forensic Psychologist in private practice, Sydney; President, Australian and New Zealand Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abuse; Lecturer, Child Protection and Abuse Prevention, Australian Catholic University, Strathfield ; currently undertaking PhD and PsyD studies at the Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis, LA .USA).





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The aim of the journal is to help promote a comprehensive understanding of the teaching and values of Christ and of the diverse ways in which Marists can bring the graced intuitions of Marcellin Champagnat to the work of Christian education of today's youth.

Accordingly the journal is a forum for writings on things Marist, on broader topics in areas such as education, theology, and philosophy, and on ways in which modern studies of these kinds relate to Marist life and mission.

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Drummoyne, N.S.W.: Marist Brothers.

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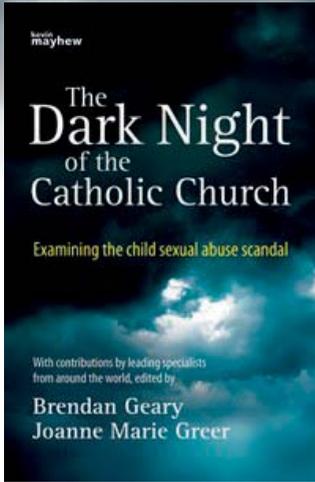
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