

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

A Submission by Donald Tynan, parishioner, St. Kevin's Parish, Templestowe Lower, Australia

INTRODUCTION:

There is one topic and one only screaming out for resolution. Anything other has lots in common with the deck chairs and the Titanic. Our Church is giving solace to the whole world over which males hold sway. Given its claim to custody of Divine truth this needs re-evaluation from time to time in the course of genuine leadership. Catholic thinkers predict that by 2100 half the world will be Islamic and the other half remnants of Western civilisation. Will womens' lot have changed?

(1)To begin on common ground, a reading of Rosalind Miles, The Women's History of the World is a popular choice.(1)

The rationality of women is displayed through feminist theological re-interpretation of Revelation in tertiary studies, from leaders in several forms of caring, as teachers, in the professions and social justice. The famous names in secular literature aside, there is listed by Wikipedia in breathtaking quantity, a 'List of Feminist Literature' which are a sample only of a Christian academic cohort, including Rosemary Reuther, Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza and local voices such as Denise Desmarchelier available to any student. **It is not for lack of thought that women are disqualified.**

(2)Suffice to say that a man's introduction to the sublime is orchestrated by a woman. Even a religious vocation has been attributed to a prayerful mother and a seminarian's psychological development receives images of the powerful feminine from her. Alain de Botton(2) traces the origin of **caring** to one's infantile exposure to it from one's mother, thence comes an awareness of an 'other' and relation-ship in adolescence which predisposes to the caring role. Catholic priesthood is a **caring** role and to leap ahead, the Bishopric has decided that the way of a **servant** is the way to go! For such roles, women are well prepared

(3) The People of God have decided that it is absurd to exclude women from the decision-making echelon in the Catholic Church. Here in the Antipodes, in the Land of the Holy Spirit, the Australian Church can champion the rights of women. Male prerogative has stood watch over its decline and historians will qualify its conspicuous successes. Nor can it be any longer justified that near half of the world's population, being women, are not equal partners in solving the world's problems. Simple assertion is not sufficient to bring this to an end. **The Spirit of a living God surely must be active in giving the Sacrament of Confirmation a meaning in the domains of adulthood and leadership.**

(4)Numerically, logically, **Catholic women are a majority in church attenders** and in the several

forms of lay ministries which contribute to Australian parish life. Their representation in the decision making structures of the Church is at issue, both to salvage and to rebuild a modern base for the bearers of the Gospel. Were this to come about in 2020, is this shared participation **consultative** or **deliberative** in nature and if neither, are women confined to ancillary services, handmaids? In the life of the Church, the observer looks for the way that decisions are to be made, **transparency**, not by force of numbers but by **consensus** amongst equals.(3)

Consensus has been played with in Australian Dioceses, even in Diocesan Pastoral Councils, but their fortunes are subject to change when the See is vacant and successors disagree. (4) **Hidden away in Canon Law there is already provision for women's sharing in governance at parish and diocesan levels, theoretically, equally prophetic and princely with men.**(5)

(5) **As individuals, women participate in academic Theology and education, spiritual writing, and lay ministries, but uncommonly, invited to preach.** This is an important omission from the Liturgy of the Word. The Ritual homily is a major element in parish communication and the feminine view of reality is often a surprise; there are elements of fairness justice, decency, honesty to be fulfilled in any decision.

(6) If there is to be **dialogue prior to consensus**, who is to participate from amongst the People of God, valid representatives of those who are not ordained. A parish priest speaks as amongst equals. In parish life, there is a pool of charismatic individuals to be discerned originally by him from amongst candidates acceptable to parishioners. There are adequate guidelines to the process of discerning community approval. It is less desirable that parish councillors be simply self nominated or chosen. Having ruled that parish councils exist the Catholic hierarchy infiltrates in the form of obedience expected of Bishops in certain matters. The facts are that not every parish has a parish council, nor every Diocese, although some are exemplary. What is the policy here? **If there is to be change is it not so that the visible avenues of diffusion are, Diocesan pastoral councils, Parish pastoral councils, the Bishops' new seminar and, preaching, media, and Catholic Education...and socialisation.**

(7) And so, Canon Law allows a window of participation of women either nominated within parishes by a process of discernment or *ex officio* in relation to special qualifications. There is an extensive literature on the possibilities. The accumulation of failures under male dominated governance is the signal that fresh resources are required. These have caused the people to speak more freely of the qualities of their incumbent priests, their selection and training together with other evidence of their prudence. There is a cultural shock potential for immigrant priests discovering vociferous parishioners.

(8) Justice and inclusion of women is the foundation of a future for our Church. **Positive discrimination on behalf of women seems the only option to achieve it.** It will begin with a statement of intention which sets time frames. The process of 'positive discrimination' seems basic, taking perhaps five years because of the historic inertia, each year of which is marked by the exodus of more young women. Concurrently a female Diaconate can begin. There will be

no rush to Holy Orders. It is considered realistic that positive discrimination answers the historical failure of evolutionary initiatives under predominately male governance. **In ACBC Minutes the motions towards desirable ends are well enunciated but uncertain in execution. Multiple projects are assigned to each Bishop so it seems that much is happening. The People of God have been ill informed of proceedings calendared once or twice a year.** Canon Law implicitly acknowledges that women have a voice in the Church; **the question is, has that amounted to meeting their needs?**

(9) COMMISSION OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC WOMEN

The question has been addressed; the rather general inauguration of "People of God" in the sixties was paraphrased in Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) in 2000 in a dedicated Social Justice Statement, "Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus". (6) One resultant was a "Commission of Australian Catholic Women" of which little is heard and whose licence was modest. A noteworthy extract regarding the composition of this Commission is, it shall be appointed by the ACBC, consist of a Chair and eight members. The activities of the Commission of 2000 are not well known today. Equally it must be said that what women want to contribute is unclear, and who and where do we hear their voice, is complaint addressed about lay ministry, Holy Orders, decision-making generally? A reading of the relevant submissions of the Uniting Church is both scholarly and commonsensical.

ACBC resolutions are not necessarily binding and Bishops are free to make their own adaptations in isolation at home in his own Diocese. The individual voting is not revealed to the parishioners as for instance by way of Diocesan Pastoral Council. The procedural outline for the Plenary presents a stumbling block in the processing of resolutions in that Bishops have a free hand. We the People are interested in the voting of our Bishop. What Rome does is still a big question. Observers should include knowledgeable *periti* and parish auditors.

(10) FIRST THINGS FIRST

Broadly, the individual human Rights of women are to be defended as a matter of urgency, and the Rights of the Child, and hunger and thirst and loss of freedom. From day to day new concerns arise so a form of triage is called for, priorities. The aftermath of sexual scandals is overlain by the three or four hundred calls for police on account of domestic violence. On the other hand, beware that religion not be subsumed into just another social justice agency. The utmost skill is demanded to strike priorities between faith and works.

(11) Questions of **balance between faith and works** are regulated by the judgement called conscience, for Catholics the **Informed conscience of which we must be aware:**

Authentic social life begins in each one's conscience. Given that a well formed conscience leads to fulfilling the true good of mankind, the Church, specifying what this good is, enlightens men and women, and throughout the whole Christian life tries to educate the conscience. (Benedict XV.TPS.209)

Is there agreement on what this phrase means? Is 'an informed freedom of conscience' accepted by every Catholic Bishop in Australia or is there still an inference that moral competence in the People of God is lacking and one should listen to Father? What definition of 'moral' prevails today to qualify free, deliberate and rational human action? Bioethical decisions are complicated by more and more science and the criticism from cumulative observation of consequences and 'a good intention' is not sufficient anymore. In starving nations we try to feed the poor and the birth rate increases in response, more babies dying at a shrunken breast? Pastoral care is not a simple matter. One of Mother Teresa's nuns, Colleen Livermore, in a vocational crisis recalls:

I had dreamed of living in a barrio with a small group of sisters close to the people rather than in a walled compound. I thought that if we there with them facing the same obstacles, we would learn how to respond. The problem was that because we had resources, we had power. Then we needed gates, locks, walls and distribution timetables to protect our resources. There had to be rules as to who was eligible and when. Before we knew it the barriers were up and the really poor were outside the gate again, in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

In the fifties, religious orders were flourishing, the workforce of the Church soon to be decimated in response to Vatican II with the loss of their omnipresent witness to the presence of God in our streets, churches, hospitals and prisons. As Schneider (7) recalls:

If the fifties were the zenith of triumphalism, then Vatican II let off a bombshell by obscuring the special place of dedicated religious now shared with a new vision of 'laity'. The rule of conscience, questions of choice subtly reinforced the attraction of individualism and the unveiling of a new vision of Church based in individual charism. In the 60's no less, freedom of conscience exercised possibly for the first time in this serious matter, whether or not to accept 'Humanae vitae' "The vast majority of Catholic married couples use contraception according to their well formed consciences to regulate the role of reproduction in their families and most pastors make no effort to stop this practice or punish it."

The Church is committed to a sexual ethic which refers to Christian marriage between heterosexual couples. Throughout Australia, 80% of married couples cohabited beforehand. (7). Catholics, like society around them, take things for granted after a while, thence the Pill, pre-marital sex, masturbation, divorce, tubal ligation, vasectomy, RU486, therapeutic abortion, have become conversational issues. Is this the "*sensus fidei*" at work? Loneragan (8) proposes a fundamental insight into human love, "to be in love is to love transcendently". The decision to love is a crisis in spirituality. The People of God ought be famous for their marriages.

"The Church always arrives on the scene a little breathless and a little late. Total surrender to the demands of the human spirit: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be in love".

www.azquotes.com.

Much of the religious commentary on human sexuality is naive. The condemnation of homosexuality *per se* is one embarrassment. There is a gulf between a "real world" (increasingly re-interpreted as 'a young persons' world') and Church teachings on this and related gender issues, celibacy, marriage annulments, pastoral care of divorcees and remarriage, laicised priests and sexuality of the aged. It is easy to see that women are significant bearers of truth in these matters, and potent critics. The writer David Lodge amused and titillated with his insight into

the Catholic mind of the 50's, 60's and 70's with, "How Far Can You Go"? (9). One comment arises:

"The relative uniformity and order of their Catholic identity of the early fifties has given way to a remarkable plurality (or even chaos) of alternative ways of being Catholic." Cited.
Gerald Parsons. Jnl. Lit. and Theology, Vol 6, No 2, June 1992 (Harmony)

Council of Bishops might very well feel that the Keepers of the Bond have other things to do. The tendency of the faithful is to permissiveness. Sexual morality has been a minefield for the Church, a ground littered with the cumulative knowledge of human development according to Masters and Johnston. **A mass of information has not much helped the selection of candidates for influential roles in the Church nor helped understand the perpetrators of sexual scandals.** Does celibacy create a lot of "wounded healers"?

(12) BUILDING COMMUNITY

Questions of inclusion and exclusion put to the emerging Church. At different times in church history various instances of exclusion have been noted, and some have persisted, even intruded on my own life. Catholics may have been good at this but are now forgetting, "Outside the Church there is no salvation" or, if not forgetting have taken opportunity to find out what it means. (10)

Exclusion by gender, by ethnicity, by cognitive capacity, by mental health, by age, by sexual orientation, by marital status and history, by geographic isolation, by deficiencies in sight and hearing, by inhospitality, for revenge, out of cruelty, by anathemata and excommunication, on the basis of class, for unacceptable ideas, for excess curiosity.

The present century then confronts exaggerated individualism and a plethora of modernist interpretations of the meaning of life. Preparing to die is not fashionable, nor is advance care planning against the intermediate steps. To offer Faith as an invitation is now simplistic for Faith is a decision, a threshold which the seeker comes to and has to cross. Such decisions are for the prime of life, before dementia hits home.

Alternative models of human moral development have influenced the relics of First Confession and Confirmation, 'the sacrament without a theology' conceived in time of plague and still imposed on these littlies with life expectancies of 84. In contrast we barely note the insidious arrival of old age which finds so many unprepared, saying, "Is this all there is". Ministry to the end of life largely becomes palliative. (11)

(13) CAN WE DO WITHOUT PRIESTS

Is the priestly prerogative threatened? Supposing that a Liturgy of the Word, and music in praise of God has adopted other forms, perhaps Quaker-like meditation and silence and inspired witness, is the priestly caste imperilled? Is mindfulness good for us? The priesthood has come to tolerate Liturgies of The Word with Communion. The beautiful prayers of the Proper are denied in this other form, which is a pity. Revisit the cultural roots of Judaeo-Christian society to find that there has been a regression to regular small group meetings with the Divine Being

simply by offering quiet space and stillness in the invitation. Now combine these incendiary celebrations with a passion for social justice and caring! Look for convergence with the avenues of silence in other world religions: Could it be that the Christian centuries have lifted our sights to the back paddocks of the Kingdom of God- typified by the sharing of love and embodied in the model of the archetype-mother as a fitting image of our God.

O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvellous for me.

But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a child quieted at its mother's breast; like a child that is quieted is my soul.

O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forward and forevermore.(Ps.131.RSV)

It would seem that a commitment to "community" is catching on. **It was easy for Catholics to abrogate "koinonia" to the mark of sharing in the Eucharist.** In fact, Faith in the Real Presence grows by reiteration. Being Christian and adult means that life in Faith cannot just be tacked on to a more interesting life elsewhere. From Aquinas we find that an adult is a stable mode of existence, a moral agent whose actions are identified as "Free, deliberate and rational". Descartes pre-empts the meaning of life in his famous aphorism, "*cogito sum, ergo sum*". I would argue that the Christian life is not reserved for thinkers but doers, but cautiously. As every theology student knows, God is all act, there is no potential in God. Right reason, prudence, is the badge of the '*bonum honestum*' for Aquinas, active in the management of justice, temperance and fortitude. Australian parishioners are practical people prone to action on behalf of others even at some cost. The Liturgy addresses our motivation to do so and shows us Jesus as moral exemplar and Ultimate Meaning.

(14) The caring acts of believers and non-believers are often indistinguishable. We share with others the responsibility of dealing with the environment. The Catholic blossoms by social interaction, shared values, periodic remembrances and especially with hospitality based on a meal, indelibly amongst this, by the Eucharist in the company of the other People of God. **The spiritual leaders in such a community therefore, need to be sociable, approachable and questioning people to exemplify the unity in Faith in the Christ.**(Paul to Titus 1:5ff). **The physical surroundings of all our churches must include gathering space.**

A sign of the times is the realisation that those with privileges must share with those who lack, a pre-condition for happiness. Social justice takes precedence over mission for it initiates healing. In witness, even the effects of the sexual scandals might be healed. To that extent, **the preferential option for the poor has been taken by Catholic parishes and enabled with generosity in the post-millennial church.**

(15) For our Bishops, the system of management must be capable and professional. Is it not at least questionable that a simple parish priest can be nominated for a vacant bishopric by methods unknown or can it be that a careerist can make it to the top by defined steps? **In 2017, the ACBC conceived of a seminar of and for future Bishops and Administrators analogous to**

a MBA is full of merit and in May 2017 the ACBC set out to make this a reality.

(The underlining assumption had been that a humble parish priest after some years acquires the charism of a Bishop. The priest-poet John O'Brien (Mons.Hartigan) presents the cycle from Curate to Bishop, in 'My Curate Father Con'. Unfortunately such budding is harder now. What makes a good Bishop, muses the ancient priest?

"But ,faith,here was another game in which he beat me bad-
The vital game in which I could not pace it with the lad;
"You'll teach him many things "says he " and, ah, the soothing tongue,
"For parish priests are wise", says he," and every curate's young".
I made a game and gallant show but soon I learnt in truth
And not perhaps without a pang that age can learn from youth,
I saw in him so many things which brought again to mind
Ideals and hopes and outlooks,too, which I had left behind.

O'Brien, John."Around the Boree Log"Angus Roberston 1921)

The Diocese then is more than a parish with a larger church.Australia is a big country, and the autonomy granted to isolated Bishops is prone to eccentricity. The late Bishop of Wagga decided to cultivate his own seminarians along conservative lines for instance. The rise of Opus Dei at another point is noteworthy. The Council of Priests might be the restraint we need. **The grouping of households of clerics in regional houses has merit, especially in the format I suggest. The solitary way of life is suspect.**

I foresee that at perhaps five points on the periphery of a metropolis sufficient land purchases be made to house or cosite activities. In the manner of monasteries, projects that affect each other can be grouped. These could be, schools, aged care residences, homes for retired priests, shared priests accommodation, childcare centres with common walls to aged care residences, meeting place and church, social welfare agencies, library, transport hub, coffee shop. Forward planning of land purchases can begin.Allow 25 years.

(16) Governance in the Church.

Parish priests and bishops have a degree of autonomy shared ostensibly with their Council of Priests. Somewhere in there are the seeds of our present dilemmas. Is there accountability to us the People of God and/or to Roman Authority. Given recent events, it has been bruited that the way forward would be captured by a self definition as "servant" for the role of bishops, but to which master? 'Consultative', and 'deliberative' are questions in reaction to this. The good servant responds to perceived and legitimate needs, which is currently under discussion. Being alert is a cardinal virtue. Delegation and modern management methods are presupposed. The management of educational resources must suggest similar disciplines in parish management. Up until now, interpretative decisions , what is good for people, have been imposed as being right. This pattern is now being contested. This Plenary is trying to ascertain what the needs

are, for all the stakeholders who seek to be One. Still, the People of God must be grateful for those who give us their lives for the Gospel.

So if a servant role prevails and the trust of the Catholic community in the hierarchy revived, Gaillardetz(12) offers the following expansion of four conciliar statements:

*becoming a servant church(leaders as servants, the art of accompaniment, empowerer)

*becoming a listening church(*sensus fidei*, ordinary believers receiving the Word)

*becoming a missionary church (keywords:be where people are, the field hospital)

*becoming a church of holy conversation(entering into dialogue,accepting challenges)

from Gaillardetz, Richard.2018. <https://gaillardetz.com/publications/dvds-and-cds/vatican-ii-and-the-church-of-the-third-millennium>

Of matching importance is the stimulus to faithful people to take up the privilege of mission which has been implied in Canon Law for sixty years, only partly realised as their mandate. Every related action now stirs suspicion because recent events will never be erased from the media archives.

(17)THE PEOPLE OF GOD AS SERVANTS

Meaningful representation is a start to effectiveness of lay participation in parish management, and this is carried forward to the diocese. **Can it be predicted that parish and diocesan councils will be the most practical forum for reform?**There is substantial literature and experience but also criticism. Some clerics are awkward and discourteous of their parishioners. There is not much publicity about the success of certain pastoral councils although those in the Diocese of Broken Bay have been mentioned. Of key importance in their constitution is that they are an avenue of holiness for those participating. Involvement of particular priests in these councils does not seem to attract any supervision from a diocese because of exaggerated respect for his autonomy. Cultural rigidity may occur in immigrant priests.

It has been frequently adverted to that theological literacy is more common amongst the people, and graduates from various academies numerous. It is a truism that academic study does not automatically mean personal conversion. In the case of seminarians, longer periods of assesment in the field, in contact with 'their' people are formative.

The literature of parish councils is voluminous. Works by Loughlan Sofield and associates are seminal but in the Australian context, Fr Frank Devoy's paper was foundational.(Devoy 2006) (Sofield 2000)

"Collaboration(that is working with others to achieve a harmonious outcome)requires consensus (that is, thinking with others to reach a thoughtful and full agreement).Consensus comes first. Every step towards a successful collaborative outcome is always preceded by a process of thinking with others about the nature of the organisation and consenting to the nature of the task to be undertaken... "

(18) THEOLOGICAL LITERACY

It is relevant to attachment of lay people to decision making roles in parish and diocese to quantify basic theological knowledge and spiritual development yet this a most subtle and challenging task for both priests and chosen advisors. Possible candidates must have been exposed to the People of God, discerned through meetings that they can address. Charismatic. Self nominating is less desirable. Much else can be said, but the longevity of a council depends on developing a functional unity and the familiarity with consensus. It is a spiritual work. The key positions of Chairman and Secretary begin a team.

As a level of literacy I would place, as a level of understanding, "Towards Healing" and "National Guidelines for Spiritual Care in Aged Care" and the Brisbane Liturgical Commission's publications on parish councils and sacramentology, plus a selection of Social Justice Statements, amongst the resources. (13) Familiarity with the logistical function of the Archbishop's Office of Evangelisation is a bonus. A reading of The Australian or the ABC newspapers is basic to keeping in touch with a real world. The fact is that there are many parishioners with formal qualifications who have not exploited their opportunity. People of simple faith are examples for us all just the same.

(19) THE FUTURE BURDEN ON CHRISTIAN CARING

The Social Justice agenda has implications for time budgeting:

"There is a reckoning due in this nation. Our aged-care system is broken. It has been eroded by moral and political failures aided by a collective delusion that the network of care could withstand the forces of demographic change without substantial intervention.

Right now more than 3.8 million Australians are older than 65. That's fifteen percent of the country. In less than a decade that figure breaks through five million, or 18% of the entire population. In less than twenty years we are talking about 6.5 million people over 65, a fifth of the population. This is the story of most Western nations, but these are the raw numbers. What living longer does to the tail-end of those figures is just as important. Forty-three percent of those older than 65 are aged 75 and over. In three decades this proportion rises to 55 percent. The group aged 85 and older balloons from 13% of all over 65's to 20%. The absolute numbers are in the many millions.

Ken Wyatt Aged-Care Minister: "I have heard that up to 40% of people in residential aged care have no visitors 365 days of the year."

Rick Morton. Social Affairs Writer *The Weekend Australian* September 22-23 2018.

Representation of the aged sector is poor presently, connected with widespread denial. (14) realising of the ageing population, dementia and spiritual needs is lying in wait, and disproportionately, workers are few. Prolonged care within one's home ties up many relatives. **In the design of future Church this issue must be factored in to parish initiatives in care.**

(20) CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Catholic School system captures much of the energy in the church. It is a field where women predominate and their caring is both formative of themselves and parents in practical skills and the embryonic spiritual journeys of their pupils. The image of male teachers has been unjustly tarnished. Schools constantly seek greater involvement of parents in the process. The criticism is laid that children educated in this system do not become active parishioners although there is a wide variation in that outcome. **It appears to me that the evangelisation of children cannot proceed any faster than the re-evangelisation of parents and older siblings.** Children are impressed by the lived example of their parent models, when they are fortunate enough to be in a nuclear family, which many are not.

The *raison d'être* has to be respected, and whilst the involvement of parish priests is restricted, the spiritual charter of a school demands spiritual care of a special kind. **A dedicated chaplain and spiritual directors of professional status has to be a necessary expense in each school.** The financial arguments are impressive but the Catholic school is not just an alternative to a secular system but a pillar of faith in the Australian church.

At the same time, **significant provision has to be made for excellence and recognition.** A College of peers arises in any profession, let alone in teaching. There are capable administrators, hopefully in frequent dialogue with their Bishop and their Parish Pastoral Councils. The burden of counter-acting sexual abuse falls heavily on the teaching profession.

The siting of schools and colleges in the future might be better as a co-siting with aged care facilities, group homes for remaining clergy, study and crisis housing on the forth coming ring roads circumferential to Melbourne as example and treated elsewhere.

(21) THE SHADOW OF MODERNISM.

Intense unrest occurs when meeting the term, 'Modernism'. Critics of Vatican II condemn its influence there. In defence the explosion of knowledge and psychological insights into the nature of human beings has set off a turmoil of clear and unclear thinking. What can be said of 'modernism'?

"What modernism basically does is to harness religious belief and practice to the culture modes and whims of civilisation in any given era by asserting that *there is no permanent datum of faith, no dogma, and no fixed belief in Catholicism.* This means that, *due to new developments in society and science, the Church can deny in one age what she had affirmed in a previous age as essential dogma.* Modernism is the preservation of the formula of doctrine emptied of its meaning, in order to *adapt the Faith of the Church to the alleged requirements of modern society.*

Implicit in this quandary, is certainty ever available to the human person and is Divine Truth at the mercy of human exegesis? Not surprisingly, Modernism and Catholicism cannot possibly live in the same religious house. Catholicism acknowledges that what was true in Church doctrine yesterday cannot be false today, and what was immoral yesterday cannot be moral today. Modernists, in contrast, seem to have lost faith in their Faith and its orthodoxy; Charles Peguy called them people who no longer believe what they believe. Popular conversation touches on

these questions, without conclusions, consistent with the problem.

"A great philosophy is not one that passes final judgements and establishes ultimate truth. It is one that causes uneasiness and starts commotion". Peguy, Charles. 1873-1914.

The chance of reform after this Plenary is causing such a commotion in other places.

(22) Welcome back to priests who have "left" and priests who have returned when circumstances change. There is a lamentable statistic of 3000 priests awaiting resolution of their status but a trickle of priests returning when life changes allow. The People of God have their success and our multifarious needs in mind.

In conclusion, Teilhard de Chardin, in "The Phenomenon of Man", 1959 said:

"If the love of God is extinguished in the souls of the faithful, the enormous edifice of rites, of hierarchy, and of doctrines would instantly revert to the dust from which they rose."

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SUBMISSION: ADDENDUM: TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENT

Introduction. Freedom and equality for women in the Australian Church a pressing need.

1. Cognitively, women are well qualified to participate in the resolution of questions
2. The maternal instincts of women qualifies for service and creates a paradigm of caring in her child
3. The fulfilment of the Sacrament of Confirmation is in service of current needs
4. The strength of the Australian Church is in its women who are impatient of their exclusion from broader consultation and decision making.
5. Canon Law adequately empowers the participation of women in governance. Have Bishops used their power to co-opt sufficiently in the past? If not, why not?
6. Failures of male dominated governance raise legitimate questions of competency and vision especially evident in the genesis of the sexual abuse crisis.
7. Women are limited agents of the Word not encouraged nor empowered to preach
8. There are only a few points of contact and dialogue available between People of God and the hierarchy. A proposed seminar or college for future bishops shows potential, leaders of both sexes may attend. ACU seems a logical choice of agency.
9. Positive discrimination seems the only practical way to change the status of women in these activities. Precedents in other Christian denominations are ignored.
10. The ACBC is not staffed to pursue its stated plans. Report to the people is deficient.
11. The Commission of Australian Catholic Women has a low profile akin to window dressing
12. The Social Justice Programs of the Church must prioritise the safety of women, the unborn, disabled, aged and uneducated
13. Theologically, is there difficulty for certain bishops in the definition of "informed conscience"?
14. There is discrepancy or unreality between popular ideas of sexual morality and the Catholic Bishops, opening a gulf between their expectations and the actions of youth, divorced-remarried people. Basic facts re ignored, for instance, 80% of marrying couples cohabit, the condom issue, the 'morning after pill'.
15. The Church attempts to counter individualism by creating parish based community around

the Eucharist

16. The plight of the aged is a major Christian concern ; attitudes reflect on our respect for life and any shortfall in ministry is a shame.

17. The exact role of a priest needs fresh review. Acculturation of immigrant priests is essential and those who do not acculturate are an embarrassment. Less common forms of prayer and worship are to be encouraged

18. Social justice programs should be undertaken in common with other caring entities and the State and not duplicated. Priorities must be sensibly established, organisational costs constrained.

19. A gathering place is essential in places of worship and the seat of community activities and services

20. Group housing and a buddy system is required for priests and parish workers and living singly discouraged. Adequate supervision is required to detect alcohol and substance abuse.

21. The isolation of bishops must be addressed by modern transport, aerial if necessary, and electronic media whilst a simple lifestyle is salutary. Retirement age for bishops needs review.

22. Future church might benefit by five aggregations of services at points on the periphery of major cities from which transport hub, services can be delivered inwardly into developing suburbs, aged care, aged priests, school , child care, library, meeting place or chapel,gym,but especially designed for co-siting for mutual support and known benefits. This would mean eight suburban subdivisional blocks at each site, perhaps \$2 million each site reserved ahead of need. Timeframe 25 years. A monastery.

23. The suggestions of Richard Gaillardetz to be noted, a servant church, listening, missionary, of holy conversation.

24. Refining the concept of collaboration with service and consensus in the necessary decision making. In common parlance, pastoral care is not rocket science.(Lk6:27-36)

25. The cultivation of theological literacy is a prelude to awareness of issues and their possible solutions. Prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude are still relevant.

26. A major part of the social justice programs of Catholic parishes is care of the aged. "Charity begins at home" is worth considering. Identification and focus on priorities is required and cooperation sought with secular and other agencies in parallel. Proper budgets apportion resources accordingly between near and far.

27. The behemoth of Catholic education requires the services of a specialist chaplain at each point necessarily not optionally, meeting the needs of staff, children and parent/guardians.

28. Catholic teachers should have access to peer review and colleges of excellence as in other professions and financial benefits from awards based in merit

29. Individualism is a fact of life, but it is not impossible to show the benefits to self from service to others. On the contrary, Community must be claimed only when it is based on relationships between people who actually know each other. This task is hard for some people hoping for inclusion(wanting to be listened to) and suffering the pain of exclusion(wanting to belong). The emphasis is on hospitality in Vision Statements and hospitality thrives when judgement is withheld.

30. Recognition ought be given to the paths of returning priests including facilitation of re-entry into the pastorate and similarly contact be restored with former religious.

31. The ability to preside at Liturgies of the Word with Communion, should be commonplace. The delegation of Anointing of the aged infirm should be considered as an appropriate privilege for Eucharistic Ministers pending rare attendance by the priest.

Finis.

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