Plenary Council 2020

Submission

Australian Army personnel receive Holy Communion at Bien Hoa, Vietnam, 1965.

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FOREWORD

> *There being an imminent danger for the Faith, Prelates must be questioned, even publicly, by their subjects.*
>
> ***St Thomas Aquinas***

This submission primarily focuses on the deficiencies in Catholic political action in Australia for at least the last two generations.

However, the Mass and the sacraments are the centre of the Catholic faith, gifted to us by Our Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ. Much attention must be given to reinvigorating these in line with Catholic tradition, as well as a renewal of prayer, particularly the Rosary. In short, this could be summed up as follows: the future of the Catholic Church in Australia is dependent on its return to basics and tradition.

A Catholic Church that does not hand on to its children what it has received from those in the past has failed its duty to God and its mission on earth.

Particularly in relation to Catholic political action, this submission contains criticism of Australian bishops and, to a lesser extent, Australian Catholic laity.

The criticism of bishops is, at times, specific. It also contains a more general criticism of bishops as a whole.

I do not make these criticisms lightly but after much prayer and reflection. I make these criticisms in the Catholic tradition of questioning decisions and actions that appear to cause danger to faith and morals. Often this appearance is also the reality.

It is clear that the Catholic Church in Australia is facing a crisis. Any other organisation, faced with the reality of diminishing membership, diminishing support and a diminishing understanding of its mission and key tenets (both by the general public and its own members) would accept that its leadership is failing. The Catholic Church is no different in this regard, except that its leadership traces a direct line to Jesus Christ himself. The Church has God in its corner and is still failing. As a result, this failure of leadership is all the worse.

This general truth must be accepted. It cannot be ignored. Each bishop must reflect on his own culpability in this regard.

That being said, I accept that bishops may make decisions or statements based on information that is not available to others. I accept that sometimes those decisions are not fully publicised in a manner that also relays the context of those decisions. As such, I accept that it is possible that the criticism of individual actions outlined in this submission to the Plenary Council may not be justified.

If that is so, then a second problem must be addressed: communications and transparency.

If Catholic laity do not understand the reasons for some decisions or statements that appear contrary to faith and morals, and assuming those decisions or statements are sound, the only explanation can be that Catholic laity have a misplaced concern about the threat to faith and morals, including a failure to appreciate that any other decision may be more likely to endanger them.

It is incumbent upon Church leadership to allay these concerns by addressing them. If my concerns (which are also held by many, many others) outlined in this submission are misplaced, then there is a failure in this regards with the explanation as to why bishops have taken certain decisions or taught certain things. I ask that this be addressed.

Where I have criticised bishops generally, I accept that this criticism may not apply to all bishops.

Finally, while I have criticised certain bishops this is not done with a contempt for the position they hold or for them. Bishops are the most important person in their diocese. Satan knows this and is intent on destroying them in every respect.

The job of a bishop is difficult and comes with enormous responsibility and pressure. These I will never fully understand. However, please rest assured that my family and the families of many other Catholics keep you daily in our prayers.

We want nothing more than to see you succeed, become saints and lead your flock with you to heaven.

THE PLENARY COUNCIL

> *The agenda for the first session of the Council will be formed in response to the dialogue and listening process that will happen during 2018-19. After an open and inclusive process of listening, dialogue, prayer and discernment, we will form the Council agenda in late 2019 and early 2020.*
>
> ***Plenary Council Website - FAQs***

> *Melbourne Archbishop Peter Comensoli has enlisted the LGBTI community to help the church set a new direction after years of scandal and internal unrest.*
>
> *In an unprecedented move that has divided some within the church, the Archdiocese this month invited gay Catholics to a 2½-hour meeting at which they discussed how the institution should change with the times.*
>
> ***The Age, 17 February 2019***

> *They point to the fact that Lana Turvey-Collins, national facilitator for the Plenary Council, is a promoter of same-sex marriage.*
>
> ***Churchmilitant.com, 4 February 2019***

> *Archbishop Coleridge has predicted the plenary council, the first to be held in Australia since 1937, will spark cultural and structural changes in the Church.*
>
> ***The Courier Mail, 6 October 2018***

Since the Plenary Council was announced, the great majority of media articles and commentary about it have been premised on an expectation that the Catholic Church in Australia is about to radically change.

This expectation has not been tempered by senior leaders within the Catholic Church. The President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Coleridge, has publicly raised the prospect of married priests. The President of the Plenary Council, Archbishop Costelloe, has told us that we may be surprised or unsettled as the process unfolds. And the Plenary Council facilitator, Lana Turvey-Collins, has stated that some of the key topics raised in the 'Listening and Dialogue sessions' include ecological change and a desire to incorporate Aboriginal spirituality into the Church.

These all point to a radically different Catholic Church in the future. Indeed, they point to an organisation that may alter even its key doctrines and tenets.

Various public submissions are proof that there is a widespread expectation that the Plenary Council will lead to radical change on matters of dogma and morality. These submissions have called for female ordinations, acceptance of homosexuality and divorce, acceptance of contraception and the removal of the seal of the confessional.

This raises two important concerns about Plenary Council.

Concern One - A lack of clarity

Firstly, the failure to clearly articulate what the Plenary Council can and cannot do will cause enormous and lasting damage.

The Catholic Church cannot change its teachings on matters of dogma and morality. However, the failure to state this has led to the impression that moral teaching especially is about to be 'updated' to please the post-marriage world.

This can only confuse the vast majority of Catholics who do not attend Mass or the sacraments. These Catholics often do not fully understand their faith and need to be protected with clear teaching. It is highly likely that many of them have formed an impression throughout the Plenary Council process that Church teaching can change. Consequently, many will also form a view that they do not need to adhere to 'fluid' moral teachings, especially in relation to sexuality.

As such, a perverse outcome of the Plenary Council is that many Catholics will have their souls endangered as a result of the impression given that moral teaching can change and is about to change.

Another undesirable outcome is that every activist group who wishes to see Catholic teaching 'change' has been emboldened to demand that this occur. When it does not, this will result in years of negative media coverage with a general narrative that the Catholic Church has not been able to 'keep up with the times'.

The likelihood of these demands was entirely predictable. As such, it is entirely irresponsible that there has been no publicity campaign associated with the Plenary Council to manage expectations and to counter these demands robustly.

An opportunity has been missed to proactively explain Church teaching, especially in areas of sexual morality. Unless this is swiftly addressed a long-term consequence will be an ongoing media narrative that paints the Church as defensive and apologetic for its teachings; a Church that will buckle if enough pressure is applied; a Church that cannot defend its teaching on faith and morals.

Concern Two – An ambush

Unfortunately, a second and more sinister possibility also arises from the way the Plenary Council has been managed to date: that it is an ambush to radically change teaching on dogma and morality.

While the Catholic Church cannot change its teaching, there have always been those who have abused their positions within the Church to attempt just that.

Given the widespread public view that the Plenary Council will result in radical change and the failure to address this expectation, it is a concern that the agenda and outcomes of the Plenary Council will be orchestrated to 'revolutionise' Church teaching.

This concern is heightened by numerous reports that the Plenary Council facilitator, Lana Turvey-Collins supports homosexual marriage.

Faithful Catholics have an expectation that the facilitator of the Plenary Council is also a faithful Catholic.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states explicitly that homosexual acts cannot be approved under any circumstances. Any person who claims to be Catholic while supporting the concept of homosexual marriage has rejected clear Catholic teaching.

If Lana Turvey-Collins supports homosexual marriage she is an entirely inappropriate person to be facilitating the Plenary Council. If the reports are true, she should be removed from her position.

Recommendations

1. A publicity campaign should be commenced to clearly explain that the Plenary Council cannot change Catholic Church teaching. This should be accompanied with clear teaching on subjects of confusion, particularly in relation to sexual morality.

2. In the interests of transparency the facilitator of the Plenary Council, Lana Turvey-Collins, should confirm or deny the multiple reports that she supports homosexual marriage. If she does, she should be removed as facilitator of the Plenary Council.

3. Any person associated with the Plenary Council who rejects Catholic teaching should be removed from their position.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE STATE

> *When once men recognize, both in private and in public life, that Christ is King, society will at last receive the great blessings of real liberty, well-ordered discipline, peace and harmony…*
>
> *…If princes and magistrates duly elected are filled with the persuasion that they rule, not by their own right, but by the mandate and in the place of the Divine King, they will exercise their authority piously and wisely, and they will make laws and administer them, having in view the common good and also the human dignity of their subjects. The result will be a stable peace and tranquillity, for there will be no longer any cause of discontent.*
>
> ***Quas Primas***

> ***1898.*** *Every human community needs an authority to govern it. The foundation of such authority lies in human nature. It is necessary for the unity of the state. Its role is to ensure as far as possible the common good of the society.*
>
> ***1915.*** *As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life. The manner of this participation may vary from one country or culture to another. "One must pay tribute to those nations whose systems permit the largest possible number of the citizens to take part in public life in a climate of genuine freedom."*
>
> ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

Background

States have an obligation to recognise Christ as King. Only in doing so can they hope to provide truly good and stable government for the common good of all. Further, it is incumbent upon Catholics to take an active part in the social life of the state. This is an especial obligation on the part of lay Catholics.

The active involvement of Catholics in political affairs is required if the state is to recognise Christ as King.

These roles and obligations on the state and the laity should go without saying. Unfortunately, they need strong reiteration in today's world.

As Catholics, we should have faith and confidence to bravely proclaim Christ's teaching in Australia's political affairs. This teaching should be incorporated as far as possible into the institutions of our nation so that all Australians can enjoy the fruits of an ordered and harmonised society in this life. More importantly, recognition of Christ as King by the state is required if the state is to play its complementary role supporting the Catholic Church to save souls.

Conversely, the failure of Catholic political action condemns our children to live in a world where it can be difficult, dangerous and even unlawful to practice the faith, with consequences for their spiritual wellbeing and even temporal needs.

The Plenary Council should prioritise renewed Catholic political action to prevent the threats we face today from worsening for future generations.

Situation

Shortly after the 1981 census, the Catholic Church became the largest religious organisation in Australia. This should have been a moment to celebrate. It was an opportunity for organised Catholic political action to focus efforts to ensure that our nation's laws were just and that Christ the King was recognised, as far as possible, by individuals, families and the state.

However, history shows that this opportunity never materialised. Instead, at the state and Commonwealth level there has been defeat after defeat.

Abortion, euthanasia, contraception, surrogacy and homosexual marriage are all legalised and subsidised by the taxpayer. Radical gender theory is promoted at taxpayer expense and one can face years of legal action simply for expressing Catholic teaching on issues such as homosexuality. I know this only too well and at great personal cost.

To rub salt into wounds, most of these changes have been promoted by the political party traditionally associated with Catholic political action: the Australian Labor Party.

An incredible opportunity has been squandered and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and leading Catholic political figures over the last forty years must take responsibility for this.

If the Catholic Church in Australia has attempted any sort of organised political action over this period, it has spectacularly failed at every level.

Bishops have neglected to teach fundamental moral principles, particularly in relation to the foundation stone of the social order: the family unit.

Catholic politicians have openly promoted evil laws and have done so with impunity. Not one politician has been excommunicated from the Catholic Church despite frequent and public violations of Church teaching.

Catholic voters have consistently elected or re-elected these politicians. The implication of this is crystal clear: the vast majority of Catholics do not care about the Catholic faith or know its fundamental truths.

To highlight the true nature of this failure, there is not a single organisation devoted to Catholic political action that is a household name in this nation.

Outlook

If the current situation is bad, the future outlook is worse.

From the heady days of the early 1980s, the number of Australians identifying as Catholic has plummeted. According to census figures, there has been a 5% drop among those identifying as Catholic and the absolute number of Catholics in Australia has begun to decrease. Going on current trends, it is likely that by 2040 people having no religious affiliation will more than double the number of Catholics in Australia, while there will be just as many adherents of non-Christian religions as Catholics.

All of this points to the strong likelihood that future Australian Catholics will face state-sanctioned persecution for upholding their faith. If today a bishop can be dragged before a tribunal to answer for a pastoral letter that described homosexual relationships as 'friendships', the next generation is likely to suffer far worse.

It is no exaggeration to say that within a generation it will probably be unlawful in Australia to publicly express Catholic teaching on marriage and sexuality. This should come as no surprise. It has happened before. And we should expect the same results as before unless we take action.

When Henry VIII took power, England was a Catholic nation. By the time he died, England was well and truly on the way to becoming a non-Catholic land. Most Catholics were silent and their children abandoned the faith. Unless we defend our faith, we will see our children abandon it too.

Key problem

The key problem to the failure of Catholic political action over the past forty years can be summed up in a single sentence: too many Catholic bishops speak like politicians and too many Catholic laity want to be priests.

It is a fundamental revolution in the order ordained by Christ.

The solution

The bishop exercises his priestly function by clearly teaching faith and morals. The bishop must address the spiritual element posed by moral problems. This necessarily entails speaking about the consequences of sin: hell. It also necessarily entails that the bishop will speak loudly and clearly if the state proposes laws contrary to morality.

The lay Catholic is not ordained. The lay Catholic must cease radical demands that the liturgy be 'reformed' to incorporate more of the laity (especially women). Instead, his ministry is to engage in social life. Lay Catholics must be encouraged to participate in the spiritual warfare that is part of politics.

These two roles are complementary. On a particular moral issue debated in public, the bishop addresses the spiritual problems, while the lay Catholic addresses the social problems caused by the spiritual problem.

Unfortunately, this is not occurring.

Bishops are refusing to use plain language to call out evil. As a consequence Catholic politicians who are motivated to engage in political action are left exposed. In our democracy, it is impossible for a Catholic politician to effectively argue a case using any language that could be seen as stricter than a bishop's phrasing.

For instance, if a bishop provides an equivocal statement about the concept of homosexual marriage, it makes it almost impossible for any Catholic politician to support laws limiting marriage to one man and one woman without immediately being tarnished as more extreme than the bishop. This is an untenable position for a politician. A Catholic politician needs strong bishops to be effective.

A second problem caused by a lack of clarity from bishops is that often lay Catholics see no point even attempting political action. This should not be hard to comprehend: why should they attempt to defend Catholic social positions in the public sphere when doing so will only risk their livelihoods and reputation, especially when they cannot hope to receive support from their bishops and will be left exposed?

Lay Catholics who refuse to engage in Catholic political action must carry their burden of responsibility for this, but if their shepherds will not inspire or protect them, it must be accepted that this failure is almost certain to occur.

Finally, when politicians who claim to be Catholic support laws that are contrary to Catholic doctrine and morality, bishops must publicly condemn them and by name. When such politicians continue to associate with the Catholic Church, a grave scandal is committed and the silence of bishops only leads to confusion. There must be a great many Catholics who assume that the laws supported by these politicians are not immoral if Catholic politicians can enact them without suffering any consequences.

The examples below highlight the failure of bishops in key political debates.

Example One: Surrogacy (Archbishop Bathersby)

In early 2010, the Queensland parliament debated decriminalisation of surrogacy.

Archbishop Bathersby wrote to every politician and his letter was tabled in the parliament, including this quote:

> *As was made clear in our submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry, the Catholic Church does not object to decriminalising altruistic surrogacy as regards the surrogate mother and the commissioning parents.*

The letter was so ambiguous that politicians even argued across the chamber about whether it meant the Catholic Church was in favour of surrogacy for homosexuals, as detailed by this excerpt from the Hansard:

> *Mr SPRINGBORG: Why is it that Labor has such intolerance towards our mainstream faith organisations as they express their moral and ethical objections, which generally reflect the hundreds of thousands of people they represent? The Most Reverend Archbishop John Bathersby of the Catholic Church has spoken out against the government bill.*
>
> *Ms Grace: He has not.*
>
> *Mr SPRINGBORG: He has not opposed non-commercial surrogacy for opposite-sex couples based on the best interests of the child. He has, however, opposed surrogacy for same-sex couples and singles as it is against the child's birthright and the church's teachings.*
>
> *Ms Grace: He has not. That is untrue.*
>
> *Mr SPRINGBORG: I note that the member for Brisbane Central is misrepresenting the facts. We have all received a letter from the Most Reverend Archbishop Bathersby in which he has indicated those things.*
>
> *Ms Grace: It is untrue.*

This exchange really is a damning indictment of Archbishop Bathersby's letter.

One politician claimed it supported the government's bill, which was to legalise surrogacy including for homosexual couples. The other claimed that the Archbishop supported surrogacy, but only in the case of heterosexual couples.

The truth is that Archbishop Bathersby's letter did not mention anything about homosexual couples and stated that there was no objection to decriminalisation of surrogacy. The Archbishop's letter also failed to mention that the Catechism of the Catholic Church states that surrogacy, regardless of the circumstances, is gravely immoral.

A good Catholic politician would have voted against decriminalisation of surrogacy in all circumstances. There were such politicians in that parliament. But none of them quoted Archbishop Bathersby's letter. Its only use in the political debate was in the hands of politicians who supported a gravely immoral law.

This letter should be seen as a betrayal of the faith and Catholic politicians. It is everything a bishop should not do.

Example Two: Abortion (Archbishop Coleridge)

In late 2018, the Queensland parliament legalised abortion. One week before the vote on the bill, Archbishop Coleridge gave a live, public address over the internet, during which he stated his views on abortion and its legality, including:

> *Now, I'm not against decriminalisation.*

and

> *So I'm not in favour of criminalisation.*

and

> *Now, that said, I'm not arguing for criminalisation but I am asking for something that is more balanced…*

These statements are shocking. Politicians who were involved in desperate efforts to defeat the bill could not believe that the Archbishop had made this statement. They were extremely concerned that the Archbishop would be quoted in parliament by those supporting the radical abortion laws.

The Archdiocese of Brisbane obviously also found these statements embarrassing: shortly after they were made aware of them the video was edited and the section in which they occurred was deleted.

Even though these statements were not picked up in the media or used by pro-abortion politicians, it is clear that they would have completely undermined political efforts to prevent the decriminalisation of abortion.

To make matters worse, there were politicians who would have voted against the decriminalisation of abortion if they had received stronger guidance from the Archdiocese of Brisbane about the morality of voting for such legislation. I know this from personal contact and lengthy conversations with them.

Unfortunately, I can find no statement from any bishop in Queensland that outlines with clarity the Catholic Church's official position on abortion or that involvement with it incurs an automatic excommunication. Likewise, I am unaware of any such statements that have been made by bishops in other states that have also recently decriminalised abortion.

Those involved in Catholic political action have been left with little to use from their bishops on this terrible issue.

Example Three: Homosexual Marriage (Bishop Putney, Archbishop Coleridge & the ACBC)

In the years leading up to the homosexual marriage postal survey, Catholic bishops continually provided a stream of what, at best, can be described as half-hearted opposition to the concept.

The late Bishop Putney told ABC radio in 2013 that:

> *There's no family that doesn't have gay members.*

My family does not have a gay member.

My wife's four married siblings have no gay members in their families.

My four married siblings have no gay members in their families.

None of the 19 brothers or sisters my wife and I have between us are gay.

My father came from a family of twelve. None of them are gay. Likewise, my mother came from a family of five, none of which are gay either.

In fact, I know hundreds of families that are entirely bereft of homosexual or lesbian members. Indeed, given the average family has about two children and only about 2% of the population are homosexual or lesbian, statistically it is impossible that every family has 'gay members'. The real figure is that about one in fifty families has this experience.

Bishop Putney's statement to the media was plainly wrong. It is worse that ABC radio could not gain an answer from him about the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage and homosexuality.

Unfortunately, Bishop Putney is hardly alone.

In September 2017, Archbishop Coleridge was interviewed on Sky News by David Spears and was repeatedly asked to provide the Catholic Church's position on homosexual acts. He refused, as the transcript of the interview below demonstrates:

> *Spears: That's a fair point, what's done and whether that relationship is loving, whether it's mutually giving, whether it's monogamous and so on, but if it all of those things, is it, it is ok? A gay relationship in the eyes of the church – leave marriage to one side – is a homosexual relationship that is all of things, is that ok?*
>
> *Coleridge: It can much about it that is wonderfully good and creative and loving, and anywhere you find genuine love – and here I'm not lapsing into sentimentalised discourse – anywhere you find genuine love and the kind of self-giving and self-sacrifice that entails you're dealing with something good. So to stand up in some pulpit and condemn that doesn't deal with the*

reality, either of human experience or even the reality of God, perhaps particularly the reality of God.

Coleridge: So…

Spears: Yeah, I think that is an interesting point because I think this has been muddied a bit…

Coleridge: …it has to be assessed.

Spears: ...and I just want you to say what the Catholic Church position is on homosexuality.

Coleridge: A lot of things have been muddied and this is one of the things that have been most muddied.

Spear: Yeah and this, this is important to clear up, the Catholic Church view on homosexuality, but also the homosexual activity. There is no problem from the Church's point of view with that?

Coleridge: Look, there is a problem but to say that is not say nearly enough. Again because…

Spears: So what's the problem?

Coleridge: It focuses upon the act in a vacuum. The problem is precisely focusing on the act – that you've mentioned – in a vacuum.

The act has to be set within a context of a relationship, so to assess the act you need to assess the relationship. And with same-sex relationships there is the same variety of relationships as there is in heterosexual relationships…

Spears: Yes, so this gets back to the point.

Coleridge: …a vast spectrum of all relationships…

Spears: As long as it's in a relationship that's monogamous and loving, giving and so on, then it's ok by the Church?

Coleridge: Well, no, what I'm saying David is that the act, within the context of a faithful, loving relationship is very different from a one night stand. I state the obvious.

Spears: Sure, but if, but if it is all of those things, is it ok by the Church? Homosexual activity is ok in the Catholic Church's eyes?

Coleridge: What do you, what do you mean?

Spears: I mean homosexual activity…

Coleridge: You want me lapse into, do you want me to lapse, no but David do you want me to lapse into black and white, all or nothing? That's the very language…

Spears: No, no, no, no, no. I'm just asking whether it is at all…

Coleridge: ...because all or nothing, black or white language does not help in this discussion.

Spears: ...if it meets the criteria that you've been discussing here, whether it's in a loving monogamous relationship, is it ok by the Catholic Church?

Coleridge: No, I'm not going to use your language because it's the language of black and white, all or nothing. What I'm saying is that there can be something good and creative in that relationship.

Catholics are frustrated that their bishops refuse to teach the Catechism, which states that homosexual acts cannot be approved under any circumstances. The impression strongly given by the bishops is that they are too embarrassed or ashamed of the teaching of the Catholic Church to utter it in public.

This must stop.

The pastoral letter issued by the Australian Catholics Bishop Conference on homosexual marriage also suffers from the same problem.

This letter describes homosexual relationships as 'friendships' on numerous occasions. Further, despite claims that this letter presents 'the Church's teaching to the faithful', it does so half-heartedly or perhaps even deceitfully.

The letter does state some catechetical teaching on homosexuality, but it does so incompletely. While it states that homosexual persons should not be unjustly discriminated against (which means that just discrimination is permitted and even required) and are called to live chastely, it completely refrains from any mention of the Church's position that homosexual acts are acts of grave depravity, intrinsically disordered, contrary to natural law, do not proceed from any genuine affective and sexual complementarity and cannot be approved under any circumstances.

The statements given by Bishop Putney, Archbishop Coleridge and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference all directly or implicitly concede a point that the Church has never conceded: that there is something normal or good to be found in homosexual behaviour.

It is no surprise then that journalists such as David Spears pressed for an answer on this point. What is written by the Church is unspoken by the bishops.

Further, given the concessions made, opposition to homosexual marriage is necessarily undermined. If you concede that there is something normal or good about these relationships, you make it very difficult to mount any successful campaign to defend natural marriage.

There are many reasons why the campaign to protect marriage in Australia failed. In large part it is because the Catholic Church has been entirely irrelevant in the debate about contraception, monogamy and divorce. As a result, the cultural concept of marriage was already dead. An idea like homosexual marriage can only fester in a decaying corpse.

The Church hierarchy must take responsibility for this. But, somewhere in all of the other reasons, it must also take responsibility for the fact that during the campaign not a single bishop went on the public record to articulate the Church's clear warning about the fact that homosexuality is contrary to the natural order and is gravely depraved. Instead, the arguments presented by the Church unjustly conceded that homosexual relationships deserve respect.

Consequently, the campaign was doomed from the beginning. Without any desire to oppose the immorality of homosexual acts, there can be little defence against a campaign to have them recognised by the state.

Example Four: Misplaced Priorities (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference)

Since the start of 2013, the ACBC has issued 28 media releases or other associated documents related to government policy on refugees or asylum seekers, according the 'Media Releases' section of its website.

In contrast, over that same period the ACBC only issued 6 media releases or associated documents in relation to the issue of homosexual marriage.

Further, I can find no document released by the ACBC over this period relating to the issue of abortion at all, despite it being debated and subsequently legalised in a number of states.

Interestingly, the last media release issued by the ACBC on this issue of asylum seekers specifically praised the Australian Labor Party's policy to increase Australia's annual humanitarian intake of refugees. I can find no such statement regarding homosexual marriage praising any political party for its position that marriage is a union between one man and one woman. There are political parties that hold that position today. Nor was there any statement criticising the Australian Labor Party by name for its position supporting homosexual marriage.

The Catholic Church does teach in its Catechism that there is a requirement to:

> *…alleviating the miseries of refugees dispersed throughout the world, and assisting migrants and their families.*

However, questions about how, when and where governments assist refugees are not answered by the Catholic Church and they are questions that secular authorities legitimately have wide discretion over. Indeed, if a government can use its limited resources to assist more refugees in the region where they originate, it would make sense to do just that.

It is clear that the ACBC has misplaced its priorities when it comes to Catholic political action. The government's refugee policy cannot be described as gravely immoral. Yet it has received far more attention from the ACBC than other political issues which involve efforts to legalise or promote gravely immoral practices here in Australia.

Example Five: Defence (Bishop Davies)

In early 2013, for a number of reasons including my concerns about proposed changes to anti-discrimination laws and a growing campaign to force Catholic schools to hire homosexual teachers, I stated that I would not allow homosexual persons to teach my children.

Although I did not speak in my capacity as a member of the Army Reserve, had done no paid Army Reserve work for over 12 months, and had not commented on any matter remotely connected with Defence, I was informed that my views on how I raise and educate my children had become a matter of interest for the Chief of Army. Effectively, I was barred from continuing any further work as an Army Reserve Officer because my views conflicted with the Army's decision to march in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

I was further told that it was against Defence policy for Reservists to express political opinions, even though Defence Instruction (General) Personnel 21-1 *Political Activities of Defence Personnel* explicitly allowed Defence members to express political views, join political parties and even run for office.

This policy did, however, prohibit Defence members from attending events of a political nature in uniform. Six weeks after my career in the Australian Army (which started in 1997) was effectively ended, the Army marched in uniform at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, along with numerous political parties and left-wing lobby groups. The constitution of this event states that it is political.

I had a choice to either defend myself or accept that I would never work in the Army again. I chose to do the former.

To that end, I contacted Bishop Davis and asked him if he was prepared to speak out publicly against unformed participation in the Mardi Gras. He refused. He also refused to even speak privately within the chain of command. His reasoning was that it was not his job to do so.

While Bishop Davis did not feel it was his job to speak, others felt otherwise.

The Defence Gay and Lesbian Information Service, a group of Defence members who were campaigning publicly to remove freedom and funding from religious schools, was lobbying senior Defence leaders to have me sacked. Later, at a dinner held by this organisation, guests were told by a keynote speaker from the Australian Human Rights Commission that Defence was committed to weeding out 'pockets of resistance'.

Subsequently, I was sacked and Defence refused to investigate my complaints on the basis that it was now Defence policy to participate in events that vilify Jesus Christ.

The refusal of Bishop Davis to act was a deep personal betrayal. If Catholic bishops are going to abandon their flock when they face persecution, they should not expect the laity to engage in a fight to defend their faith (or them) in the future. He later wrote to me that my actions were contrary to Army values. On this point Bishop Davis was wrong: not a single Army investigation found that I had disobeyed orders or policies requiring me to uphold those values. He also wrote that 'it is only just' that Defence members be allowed to march in uniform at the Mardi Gras.

But Bishop Davis' failure was much more than a personal betrayal of myself. When the Army marched in the Mardi Gras it did so with others dressed as clergy, holding signs that 'Jesus is Gay'. To my knowledge, not a word of protest has been said about this sacrilege by Bishop Davis. And now the Australian Defence Force ignores its longstanding policy against religious vilification when it comes to Christianity.

To add insult to injury, I was eventually able to convince the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services to protest Defence involvement in the Mardi Gras. But it was not a Catholic who acted. It was Rabbi Ralph Genende.

A Jewish man was prepared to do more to prevent the Australian Army from participating in the vilification of Jesus Christ than the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of this saga is this fact: Defence violates its policies on religious vilification, political vilification and unacceptable sexual behaviour in Defence workplaces every time it marches. Many images from the Mardi Gras cannot be displayed on Defence computer systems due to their sexually-explicit nature.

In other words, this was a battle that could have been won. It could still be won. But it has not been won because I was left to fight it alone. We have come to accept and embrace failure.

As a result, homosexual political activists gain huge support from the credibility they receive by their association with the Australian Defence Force.

The time is fast approaching when Catholic chaplaincy in the Australian Defence Force will face a concerted attack. I hope that lay Catholics in the Australian Defence Force offer the Military Ordinary more support than he offered me.

Failed Catholic politicians

While the examples above focus on bishops, lay Catholics carry the primary responsibility for Catholic political action. Unfortunately, it must be recognised that the laity has failed in its responsibilities over at least the last two generations.

Homosexual marriage was legalised under a Catholic prime minister.

Abortion was legalised in Queensland under a Catholic premier and deputy premier.

Another Queensland premier, also raised a Catholic, introduced surrogacy.

Safe schools is promoted and funded by the Catholic premier of Victoria. The same man has also ensured the passage of laws legalising euthanasia.

On every battle to safeguard life and the family unit, it seems that a Catholic is leading the charge to legalise gravely immoral laws.

This speaks of a sickness in the general Catholic population. Its leaders in society obviously do not know their faith, or, if they do, they are willing to sacrifice it in order to gain the world. It also speaks of a sickness in the Catholic education system, which needs to be urgently addressed and is dealt with in a separate section of this submission.

Politicians who deceitfully use buzzwords like ‘equality’, ‘choice’ and ‘love’ to legalise concepts that exterminate children, kill the elderly, separate mothers and fathers from their biological offspring and destroy the natural family unit bring misery and sadness to the societies they lead.

Opposing them is not just a matter of morality and securing our next life. Doing so helps to bring happiness into this world.

It is made worse when such politicians also claim links to the Catholic Church and often cite its ‘compassion’ as a key reason for their support of evil laws.

These politicians should be publicly rebuked. If they fail to address their ways, they should be excommunicated and warned that they will be refused the sacraments until they repudiate the evil that they promote.

This sounds harsh but it is true compassion. Public repudiation of these Catholic politicians would force them to consider the spiritual consequences of their decisions. It would also send a clear message to Catholics in general, many of whom do not know their faith, that there are clear moral boundaries which cannot be crossed without endangering the soul.

Failure to publicly repudiate these politicians is not compassionate. It gives the impression that the Church allows Catholics to support gravely immoral acts. It places them into a position of eternal danger.

Example: Catholic Politicians & Abortion (Archbishop Coleridge)

It seems not a single Catholic politician has been excommunicated for their support of the raft of evil laws that have been passed with increasing rapidity in recent times.

However, Archbishop Coleridge was prepared to name Queensland Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk and Deputy Premier Jackie Trad during last year's abortion debate, as reported in *The Courier Mail*:

> *The Archbishop said Ms Palaszczuk and Ms Trad were both Catholics and offered to counsel them.*
>
> *"Whether they are both Catholic in name I am not in a position to judge,'' he said.*
>
> *"But it would seem to me that to be a protagonist to this type of legislation is very hard to reconcile with anything that resembles true Catholic faith."*

While he does deserve some credit for taking this step, his language was still open. 'Very hard to reconcile' still contains the possibility that Catholics can support abortion.

Unfortunately, shortly afterwards Archbishop Coleridge back-peddled on his statement and this was reported in the media as an apology and damage control. He stated:

> *As it turned out the piece had a tone and focus that I didn't intend.*
>
> *That was chiefly because it focused upon the premier and deputy premier in a way that personalised the issue.*
>
> *I rang the premier to explain that my concern was not with her personally but with the issue before the parliament and with certain inconsistencies in the government's position.*
>
> *I made it clear that I had no intention of setting up a situation of the archbishop versus the premier and deputy premier, still less church verses state.*

It is not clear whether the Archbishop's decision to distance himself from his original statements was on the advice of media advisors, but if it was, that advice was flawed.

All it did was make the Archbishop look weak and indecisive, while allowing the Premier and Deputy Premier the upper hand in this exchange. Politically, Archbishop Coleridge buckled on what was his right and duty: public guidance of two senior members of his flock who were leading others astray.

It would be better for all Catholics if other bishops were prepared to follow Archbishop Coleridge's example and name Catholic politicians who promote evil laws. However, they should learn from this episode and ensure that they do not flinch once they do so. And if the politician ignores the warning and votes for a gravely immoral law, they should be excommunicated.

The correct approach: the seal of confession

This section has outlined a number of examples of political action by both bishops and politicians that are deeply problematic and must not be repeated.

These examples give the impression that the Catholic Church in Australia is resigned to defeat and accepts failure. We should not. Further, when defeat occurs the Catholic Church must continue to fight for truth, justice and morality. The Catholic Church must lead the way back to victory.

There is one example where the hierarchy of the church is doing this: the seal of the confessional.

While this submission deals elsewhere the absurdity of demands that the seal of confession be removed, in this part it highlights and praises the strong response provided on this issue by a number of bishops to laws that demand the seal of confession be violated.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has emphatically rejected such laws.

Archbishop Coleridge, faced with many questions from a media seeking to run the narrative that the Catholic Church is using the confessional to cover up sexual abuse has robustly defended this sacrament.

Archbishop Hart reiterated statements that he would rather go to jail than violate the seal of confession. Hundreds of Australian priests have also stated this. Numerous other bishops have also made public statements clearly rejecting this idea.

All who have done so deserve the praise and thanks of the Catholic laity.

From a personal perspective, it does puzzle me as to why there has been such a robust response on this issue but not others, but I am extremely grateful. It is inspiring to see the deep determination on this issue – so much so that priests would rather choose jail rather than violate this sacrament.

This is the kind of example that inspires lay Catholics to engage in political action as well.

I hope and pray that this example becomes the norm and the spark that revitalises Catholic political action.

Money before morality?

One further case study warrants consideration in this section on Catholic political action: the response by the Catholic Church as a whole to the issue of Commonwealth education funding.

Catholic education bodies have been pursuing increasingly coordinated political campaigns focused on the issue of Commonwealth education funding. These campaigns have been effective and are the most significant attempt of Catholic political action in the last 40 years.

In the 2018 Batman by-election, letters were sent to the parents of children at Catholic schools in the electorate attacking the Liberal/National coalition's educational funding policies and quoting the Labor opposition leader, Bill Shorten. Catholic Education Melbourne made 30,000 robocalls in the days before the election. Labor's victory in the by-election was widely attributed in the media to this campaign.

It should be noted that this campaign followed on from efforts by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria during the 2016 federal election, urging Catholics not to vote for the Australian Greens. The 2018 Batman by-election came down to a contest between Labor and the Greens.

The campaign continued later in 2018, particularly during the by-election in the Queensland electorate of Longman. Again, parents at Catholic schools received letters on the issue of Commonwealth education funding and, again, this campaign was widely acknowledged to have played a significant role in Labor's victory. This time it was over the Liberal/National coalition.

The political effectiveness of these campaigns is demonstrated in the following headlines.

The Australian newspaper ran articles titled:

> *Labor victory fuelled by Catholic education backing*

And:

> *Catholics crucial to Labor's Longman win*

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the campaign was set to continue in this year's federal election, with the headline:

> *Catholic schools consider a repeat of Longman intervention*

Only recently this same newspaper reported that Catholic schools were targeting a number of political parties over the issue of funding in the lead up to the New South Wales election.

The ABC has also carried reporting on this issue and even *The Guardian* online has run this headline:

> *How the Catholic schools sector outplayed the Coalition*

There are a number of points to make about this campaign.

Firstly, it is important to note that the question of education funding is an important one. Catholic parents pay taxes and they are entitled to the same level of educational funding support as other Australians.

The decision taken by the various Catholic bodies to ensure that funding of Catholic schools is fair is justifiable.

Secondly, while this issue is important, it is not a clear cut moral issue. The government has wide discretion over educational funding models and it is not gravely immoral to pursue one model over another.

Thirdly, it must be accepted that Catholic education is failing terribly, with the vast majority of Catholic students rarely or never returning to Mass or the sacraments once they finish schooling. This failure is addressed elsewhere in this submission.

Fourthly, this campaign has been conducted in a vacuum of Catholic political action. This is the crucial fact.

Fifthly, the campaign has resulted in political victories for the political party that has led the charge to legalise immorality: abortion, euthanasia, divorce, homosexual marriage, Safe Schools and surrogacy are just a few of the evil laws that have been mostly promoted and enacted into law by the Australian Labor Party.

It means that the Catholic Church, as a whole, has prioritised Catholic political action to pursue money over morality.

It has done so in an environment where it has remained silent in large part on moral issues. To secure this funding it has boosted the political fortunes of a political party that has an entirely anti-Catholic ethos. And the funding it has secured has not even been used effectively to educate young Catholics in their faith.

The Catholic Church needs to consider the consequences of these points very carefully.

If they are not addressed, the Church's moral standing will be entirely destroyed. If the child abuse scandal has wounded it deeply, pursuing money over morality will effectively destroy the Catholic Church as an institution in Australia.

If the Catholic Church continues down this path, there will be dire consequences.

It will only embolden growing calls to 'tax' the Church. These calls will become irresistible and the state will give grants with one hand while stripping the Church's assets with the other.

Furthermore, grants will be given with conditions: Catholic schools will be funded only if they accept measure that will make it impossible for them to teach the faith in any meaningful sense.

A Catholic Church that prioritises government grants over God will soon become nothing more than a conscripted arm of a godless state.

Reviving Catholic political action

Despite the failures outlined above and the difficulties on the horizon for the Catholic Church in Australia, it is never too late to act.

Indeed, the examples above do highlight that the Catholic Church has the capacity to run exceedingly successful political campaigns. And it should continue to do so.

The answer is to learn from the educational funding campaigns and to broaden them so that they are not conducted in a vacuum.

To do this requires courage and conviction. Given we believe that Christ is God and that we are members of His Church, if we lack that courage or conviction it only points to our own lack of faith.

An objection may be raised that the Church's authority in the wake of the sexual abuse crisis is so damaged that it must wait until some future time before taking any real action. This objection should be seen for what it is: a call to delay the good indefinitely.

If the Church's moral standing is weakened, it will not be lifted unless it begins to vigorously defend morality in the public sphere.

To this end, the Catholic Church should assist lay Catholics to establish a body for Catholic political action. This body should be fully resourced by the Church to operate effectively in all states and for national campaigns. It should effectively utilise the Church's greatest political weapon: the ability to get 'bums on seats' on a weekly basis.

While Sunday Mass is not a political rally and is devoted to the worship of God, the communities built in every parish are a reality. No political party in Australia has the ability to match the strength of these communities.

Such an organisation should prioritise and coordinate campaigns to ensure that the various Catholic agencies do not pursue vested interests at the expense of the overall standing of the Church.

It should assist Catholics to network and organise within the political structures of Australian politics so that they can effectively pursue social outcomes that are in line with Catholic teaching.

It should help ordinary Catholics to engage in political action by giving them leadership, training and direction and showing how their single efforts, as part of a coordinated whole, can result in tangible success.

Above all, it should recognise that all of this requires Catholics who know, love and understand their faith. This requires, especially, educating Catholic students in their faith and developing paths that channel them into effective political action within their chosen endeavours.

Catholic students should also receive strong education about our system of democracy so that they can become effective advocates for Catholic social teaching in their adult lives.

Two areas that Catholic political action must address immediately are the role and standing of the natural family unit in society and anti-discrimination law.

The reality is that Catholic social teaching does not just help Catholic families. It assists all families and therefore the entire nation. The Church should prioritise political action that strengthens the family unit. These are the moral issues related to sexuality and gender. Success on this front will be achieved when social, economic, cultural and political settings recognise marriage as the fundamental institution in our society – an institution that can function on a single income and raise future generations.

The Church must also vigorously oppose anti-discrimination laws that place the Catholic Church on the same standing as any other religion. Such laws equate good with evil and truth with error and are philosophically flawed. They have nothing to do with the principle of religious tolerance and are entirely intolerant of the Catholic Church. They endanger the ability of the Catholic Church to operate freely.

A Catholic Church that accepts it should be treated like any other religion is a church that has abandoned Christ as King and the very essence of its role in society.

Finally, any organisation devoted to Catholic political action must also provide support for lay Catholics who are increasingly likely to face persecution in the work places of the future. This will require a capacity and an appetite to engage in legal action to defend them. I speak on this point with significant experience, having faced more than 50 different investigations for my Catholic views on marriage, family and morality, resulting in hearings before tribunals all the way to the High Court of Australia.

Not a single finding has been made against me, but I have been forced to sell my house. Some bishops are certainly aware of this campaign by various activists against me. But I have received no support from the Catholic Church.

These fights will become increasingly common. The Church must be prepared to engage in them if for no other reason than self-preservation. If lay Catholics can be destroyed and have their assets removed for expressing views on marriage, it will not be long before bishops feel the same heat.

Recommendations

4. The Catholic Church should do all that it can to ensure that Christ the King is recognised by the states and the Commonwealth.

5. Catholic bishops must actively engage in commentary on political issues that endanger faith and morals. They must use clear language. This language is found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

6. Catholic laity must engage in Catholic political action.

7. Politicians who claim to be Catholic who support gravely immoral laws must be repudiated in public. If they fail to correct themselves they should be excommunicated, denied the sacraments and prohibited from using Catholic facilities for their political causes.

8. A body must be established to pursue prioritised and coordinated Catholic political action across Australia. This body's purpose should include assisting Catholics to network within Australia's political institutions and to build pathways for well-educated Catholic youth to engage in Catholic political action. As a priority, it should defend the natural family unit and oppose laws that philosophically equate truth with error and endanger the ability of the Catholic Church to operate freely in Australia.

9. The Catholic Church must also develop strategies that provide tangible support to lay Catholics facing persecution for their support of Catholic teaching, particularly in relation to marriage, family and morality.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

2223 *Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.*

2229 *As those first responsible for the education of their children, parents have the right to choose a school for them which corresponds to their own convictions. This right is fundamental. As far as possible parents have the duty of choosing schools that will best help them in their task as Christian educators. Public authorities have the duty of guaranteeing this parental right and of ensuring the concrete conditions for its exercise.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

30% of Educators indicated they were careful what sexuality topics they teach because they don't fully know or understand the Church's position on some sexuality topics.

Relationships and Sexuality Education System Report, Brisbane Catholic Education, July 2014

If you're judging a level of lived Christian belief based on Mass attendance, you're looking at the wrong indicator

Brisbane Catholic Education Twitter Account, 4 October 2018

Situation

Catholic education in Australia is a complete failure.

According to the National Centre for Pastoral Research and as reported in *The Catholic Weekly* in May 2016, less than 5% of Catholics in the Archdiocese of Sydney attend Mass every week. Of those, 2% are below the age of 15 or over 65.

There is no reason to assume that these figures differ in any significant respect across Australia.

This means that about 3% of working-age Catholics attend Mass weekly. While it is unknown what proportion of working-age Catholics attended Catholic schools, these schools are clearly failing to instil a basic understanding of the Catholic faith in their graduates.

The vast majority of graduates from Catholic schools cannot even keep the first precept of the Church: attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

In short, students who attend Catholic schools are far more likely to abandon the faith than practice it.

In any other setting and any other organisation this would be considered a total failure, especially given Catholic schools have up to 13 years to explain this rather simple concept and receive billions from the state to operate each year.

Solution

The reality of the failure of Catholic education must be accepted. Currently, the Catholic Church education system largely operates as an extension of the state education system.

This failure will not easily or quickly be overcome.

It requires, firstly, parents to do their duty and meet their responsibility as the primary educator of their children.

This is unlikely to occur on a widespread scale, given the fact that most Catholic parents do not know or understand their faith. Consequently, most parents do not have the ability to ensure that their children are properly instructed in the faith.

As such, Catholic schools should implement programs to instruct parents of children at those schools in the faith. This should include serious consideration of real and tangible methods to ensure parents undertake this instruction, such as fee reductions for parents who attend and pass instruction courses.

Secondly, it will require a determined effort on the part of each diocese to rebuild its schools.

This will require each diocese to determine which teachers are part of the status quo of failure and which teachers believe that Catholic education requires a whole-of-school Catholic culture to achieve success. It will also require a determination of the cultural health of each school in terms of its community's adherence to the Catholic faith.

This is important. Far too many teachers at Catholic schools do not know the basics of their faith, as proven by the fact that Brisbane Catholic Education's own assessments have found that one third of teachers do not understand the Church's position on sexuality. It's pretty simple really: sex goes with marriage. If you get that right, most of the rest will fall into place.

This appalling situation has led to disastrous outcomes, including the fact that a number of Catholic schools have signed up to the 'Safe Schools' program and a number of others have implemented similar abominations.

The outcome of this process will enable each diocese to determine the number of schools it can sustainably resource with teachers in the pursuit of a truly excellent Catholic education.

It may be that some dioceses can only prioritise a single school.

The focus of those entire school communities should be to ensure that students live the faith completely and that graduates continue to do so.

The remaining Catholic schools in a diocese should be ranked in order and action progressively taken to ensure that Catholic education is re-enlivened.

All teachers at Catholic schools should be required to demonstrate that they understand the Catholic faith, regardless of whether they are Catholic or not.

Over time, all Catholic schools should hire teachers who are practicing Catholics.

Teachers who undermine the Catholic faith by their support for gravely immoral practices should be removed from the Catholic education system.

Action is urgently required especially to ensure that Catholic schools remain free to remove teachers who support homosexual behaviour, as well as students who may promote it. Unless action is taken, schools will find themselves facing litigation for refusing things like 'Safe Schools', LGBT Ally clubs and the like, the acceptance of homosexual or lesbian activism and 'culture' and acceptance of transgenderism.

This should not be read, however, as a demand that students who struggle with confusion over sexuality should be barred from Catholic schools. Sensitive and discrete pastoral care is required to assist such students. But such pastoral care does not include any acceptance that homosexual acts are permitted.

Recommendations

10. Parents of students at Catholic schools should be given instruction in the Catholic faith. Consideration should be given to real and tangible methods to ensure parents do so, such as fee reductions for parents who undertake and pass such instruction courses.

11. Dioceses should prioritise a limited and sustainable number of school communities for implementation of a wholly Catholic education program designed to ensure students live the faith and continue to do so after graduation.

12. Catholic parents in each diocese should be informed of these schools so that they can make informed enrolment decisions for their children.

13. These programs should be progressively rolled out, on a sustainable basis, to every school in a diocese.

14. Teachers at Catholic schools should be required to demonstrate that they understand the Catholic faith and Catholic schools should progressively aim to hire teachers who practice the faith.

15. Teachers who undermine the faith by supporting gravely immoral practices should be removed from the Catholic education system.

16. The Catholic education system should vigorously oppose laws that will prevent them from discriminating against teachers and students on the grounds of homosexuality, sexual orientation, gender or marital status.

17. All Catholic schools should reject 'Safe Schools' and similar programs.

MASS & THE SACRAMENTS

> *However, the present survey, compared with other data, reveals a striking variance between Catholics attending the [the Latin Mass] versus those who attend the [Novus Ordo Mass]. These differences are dramatic when comparing beliefs, church attendance, monetary generosity, and fertility rates.*
>
> ***Traditional Latin Mass Survey***

> *Over the past 50 years, the numbers of religious sisters and brothers have declined to the point of irrelevance in Church life. For example, the number of religious sisters (4,161 as at 31 December 2017) currently stands at less than a third of the 13,720 religious sisters in ministry in 1967 - and the current median age is around 80.*
>
> ***Concerned Catholics of Canberra – Demographics of the Australia Church***

The Mass and Priesthood

The sacrifice of the Mass is central to the Catholic faith. It is the same sacrifice that Christ made on Calvary and is intertwined with the sacrament of Holy Communion.

The Mass is important.

Hence its liturgy is also important.

Unfortunately, the revolution in liturgy unleashed by the Novus Ordo Mass has wrought havoc in the Catholic Church.

Simply put, a non-Catholic who walked into a church and witnessed a Tridentine Mass may not understand much about it at all. But he would know that something important was occurring. The same could not be said if he stumbled across a Novus Ordo Mass. The by-stander would be far less likely to think about God and far more likely to assume he had interrupted a banal and bureaucratic public meeting of an aging hippie community which had replaced its sense of wonder with woke self-righteousness.

The reason attendance at Sunday Mass has declined in such large numbers is because the main message the Novus Ordo Mass sends to Catholics is that pretty much anything else is more important and sacred.

No one will attend a sacred activity that fundamentally gives the impression that it is not sacred at all. The Novus Ordo Mass embodies this very contradiction and it is why Catholics have simply stopped showing up.

Those that do have their faith weakened as well.

The ACBC's own Pastoral Research Office research demonstrates that that just half of Mass attendee's believe abortion is always morally wrong, and just 42% believe premarital sex is always wrong. Those attendees overwhelmingly attend Novus Ordo Masses.

Recent research from the United States confirms this.

Attendees of the Latin Mass overwhelmingly have different views than those who attend the Novus Ordo Mass on contraception, abortion and homosexual marriage.

They are also five times more likely to attend Mass weekly and are much more prepared to donate. They are also the future of the Church, having 50% more children.

Survey Question	TLM%	TLM samples	NOM%	NO Data Source
1. Approve contraception	2%	1773	89%	Pew Research 2016 (Sept 28)
2. Approve abortion	1%	1769	51%	Pew Research 2018 (Oct 15)
3. Weekly Mass attendance	99%	1763	22%	CARA 2017 (Apr 11, 2018)
4. Approve gay marriage	2%	1759	67%	Daily Wire (July 2, 2017)
5. Income % donated	6%	1702	1.2%	Catholicphilly.com (May 17, 2013)
		Protestants	*2.5%*	*Relevant Magazine (March 8, 2016)*
		All Christians during the Great Depression	*3.3%*	
6. Annual Confession and Weekly Mass	98%	1753	25%	CARA 2014 (Feb 16)
7. Fertility Rate*	3.6	1085	2.3	Pew Research 2015 (May 12)
**This question was directed to women only.*				
Traditional Latin Mass national survey conducted by Fr. Donald Kloster (March 2018 through November 2018).				

The Catholic Church should also research the link between the Latin Mass and the rate of vocations. This is a critical area of need in the Church.

It goes without saying that the Latin Mass reinforces the role of the priest, whereas the Novus Ordo Mass diminishes it to a very significant degree. It must be accepted that young men are extremely unlikely to commit themselves to the priesthood when the ritual of the Novus Ordo Mass tells them that the priesthood is unimportant.

Priests should be required to maintain celibacy. Young men need to be inspired and encouraged to follow as closely as possible the example of the High Priest, Jesus Christ. Celibacy is indeed a sacrifice but it is not the cause of child sexual abuse (as demonstrated by abuse in denominations that allow married priests), nor is it the cause of a lack priests. This stems from the feminisation of the Church and the removal of the centrality of the priest from the Mass.

Protection of Sacred Places

The Mass is sacred and so are the churches and altars on which it is celebrated.

In October 2016, the Archdiocese of Brisbane permitted St Patrick's Church in Fortitude Valley to be used for a scandalous and sacrilegious purpose.

Images from this event are shown below.

They are highly sexualised and, at worst, satanic. They very best that can be said about them is that they only imply satanic links. That is not high praise at all.

JAMES ST

JAMES ST

Never again should such sacrilege be permitted in a Catholic church.

Confession

This submission elsewhere has praised the determined response to preserve the seal of the confessional.

It should be noted that currently there is a royal commission in Victoria into the use of evidence from a legal practitioner who informed on her own clients.

This is rightly seen as an abuse of legal privilege. However, it demonstrates the absurdity of calls demanding that priests become informants for the state.

These laws should continue to be resisted and the Catholic Church should highlight that they are likely to result in the deliberate framing of priests by deceitful activists who simply hate the Church.

Unfortunately, during the debate over the seal of the confessional it was mentioned a number of times that Catholics rarely make use of this sacrament. This sacrament is important and all Catholics are required to confess at least once per year.

The Catholic Church should ensure that this sacrament is once again widely utilised.

Marriage

The sacrament of marriage is widely misunderstood in society.

The Church must ensure that all Catholics understand marriage is for life and has the begetting and education of children as its purpose. They must also understand the divinely ordered role of man and woman, with the father as head of the family.

In this regard, the Church must fearlessly teach explicitly about the immorality of divorce and contraception. It must do so out of compassion.

In my experience, there are many Catholics who have entered into 'marriages' without understanding what is required. Often there has been no intention in these relationships to beget children or to commit for life. When these relationships break down these people are dispirited and demoralised. They believe that 'divorce' is their only option and so they abandon the Church.

If only they knew that the Church offered them hope. But they do not because marriage instruction is poor to non-existent before these relationships begin. Further, these illegitimate relationships are given tacit approval by many clergy who refuse to speak clearly against premarital sex and cohabitation or contraception. Hence there are many who, having no understanding of marriage, must believe that they are married when they are not and then willingly choose to divorce and 'remarry' when they do not need to do so.

However, this should not be misunderstood as a call for 'easy annulments'. Annulments should only be given where it can be demonstrated that there was no marriage. It is simply to recognise that there must be many Catholics, in today's confused environment, who are not aware of the requirements for marriage and who believe that they are or were married while in relationships that were entirely closed to the purpose of marriage.

Divorced and remarried Catholics should not be permitted to the sacraments until they confess and repudiate that choice.

Further, the crisis of homosexual marriage can only be addressed if true marriage is lifted out of this quagmire.

The only way this can be done is by focusing on what true marriage is about: it is an institution for the raising and educating of children.

Condemning especially contraception is the best means the Church has of clearly differentiating the union of a man and a woman from a homosexual relationship.

Finally, bishops must do more to ensure that clergy do not confuse Catholics on this issue. A number of clergy, notably Father Frank Brennan, argued during the homosexual marriage postal survey in favour of legal recognition of homosexual marriage.

This position is contrary to the teaching of the Church. The state may tolerate such relationships but under no circumstances can it approve of them.

Archbishop Porteous deserves praise for preventing Father Brennan for speaking after this at the Catholic Care conference in Hobart.

Extreme Unction

The sacrament of Extreme Unction has largely been forgotten in our society.

In January 2016 my brother was killed in a motorbike accident. I arrived at the scene shortly after it occurred with a priest.

The Queensland Police initially refused to allow this priest to approach my brother to provide him this sacrament. Given the time-sensitive nature of this sacrament, I could not believe that I was forced to contemplate whether we would need to place ourselves at risk of arrest simply to provide my brother with this important sacrament.

As it was, it took approximately 30 minutes for the priest to administer my brother Extreme Unction.

The Catholic Church should liaise with various law enforcement and emergency services agencies and the Australian Defence Force to ensure that persons needing this sacrament are able to obtain it in a timely manner.

The Rosary

Australia is blessed to have Our Lady Help of Christians as our patroness.

Furthermore, while the bulk of this submission has focused on Catholic political action, that should not be understood to diminish the importance of prayer to this mission.

The Catholic Church should encourage a strong prayer life, in particular the family Rosary.

Furthermore, in times of debate such as the during the homosexual marriage postal survey, the various bishops of Australia should instruct that a coordinated public prayer campaign be commenced, including outside places of parliament. The Rosary should be central to any such prayer campaign.

We should not be ashamed to recognise our patroness in public.

Fridays & Lenten Fasting

Penance and self-mortification are essential elements of a strong Catholic life.

The traditional abstinence from meat on Fridays should be renewed, as should fasting or other forms of mortification during Lent.

Recommendations

18. The Latin Mass should be prioritised and revived in every parish in Australia. It should become the focus of every Catholic community.

19. The Catholic Church should research the correlation between attendance at the Latin Mass and vocations to the priesthood.

20. The requirement for priestly celibacy should not be relaxed.

21. Catholic churches should not allow sacrilegious events to be held in their precincts.

22. Catholics should be strongly reminded that they are required to confess their sins at least once a year.

23. The Catholic Church should clearly teach about marriage, including by explaining the teaching on the roles of the man and woman and condemning contraception, divorce and premarital sex and cohabitation. This should also be recognised as the most effective means of countering homosexual marriage. This teaching should also be addressed at the many who have entered into relationships without proper formation and who now believe that divorce and remarriage is the only option they have.

24. Catholics who have divorced and remarried should not be permitted the sacraments while they continue adulterous relationships.

25. Bishops should follow the example of Archbishop Porteous and restrict clergy from operating within their diocese who confuse Catholics on any issue of doctrine and morality.

26. The Catholic Church should liaise with various law enforcement and emergency services agencies and the Australian Defence Force to ensure that persons needing the sacrament of Extreme Unction are able to obtain it in a timely manner.

27. The Rosary should be encouraged daily in every Catholic family and during significant moments the bishops of Australia should organise coordinated public recitation of the Rosary.

28. Friday abstinence and Lenten self-mortification should be strongly encouraged.

TEACHING THE FAITH

"Outside the Church there is no salvation"

846 *How are we to understand this affirmation, often repeated by the Church Fathers? Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body:*

> *Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

There is a crisis in faith which has as its basis, as the Encyclical Letter Fides et Ratio makes clear, a crisis concerning the ability to know the truth. The crisis of faith is world-wide. It is manifested in Australia by the rise in the number of people with no religion and the decline in church practice. The tolerance characteristic of Australian society naturally affects the Church also. While it has many positive elements, tolerance of and openness to all opinions and perspectives on the truth can lead to indifference, to the acceptance of any opinion or activity as long as it does not impact adversely on other people. It can also lead to a reluctance in claiming that any particular affirmation, belief or conviction is true. The loss of confidence in one's ability to know the truth inevitably involves a crisis of faith in God. All ideas about God, including the denial of his existence, become equally acceptable. This makes it very difficult to affirm that the God revealed in Sacred Scripture is indeed the one true God. There also appears to be a weakening of faith in eternal life, replaced by such things as social utopias and re-incarnation. This crisis of faith and truth provide the context for the following problems.

ACBC General Statements 1998

Vatican II

There are many things to be said about Vatican II, but for the purposes of this submission it suffices to say that since Vatican II the Catholic Church has suffered from a loss of direction and widespread confusion.

The loss of direction comes from the view, now widely believed, that the Catholic Church no longer teaches that it is true Church founded by Christ. In other words, it is believed that a person may attain eternal life by practising some other form of Christianity, some non-Christian religion, or even if they have no religion or belief in God at all.

A church that does not believe it is the only religion established by God will not long last and can have no direction. What is the point of being Catholic if you can save your soul some other way?

The confusion comes from ambiguous language at Vatican II. This has led to all manner of errors and, as noted by the ACBC in 1998, a hesitation to affirm truth.

Twenty years after the ACBC made this statement things have only worsened.

Where ambiguous statements in Vatican II have been used to support error, they must be corrected decisively and publicly and in line with Catholic tradition.

Australian bishops can do this. But they should also provide feedback to the Vatican so that the required corrections are promulgated universally.

Teach the faith

The bishops must teach the faith. They must do so clearly and without hesitation. They must do so without ambiguity.

Two examples demonstrate that often this does not occur.

Cardinal Pell has long held a reputation for being the most vocal and orthodox defender of the faith.

Unfortunately, if he is the best we have, we are in trouble.

During a 2012 debate on the ABC show, *Q&A*, between Cardinal Pell and the leading advocate of atheism, Richard Dawkins, Cardinal Pell was asked directly about Adam and Eve, prompting this response:

> *TONY JONES: So are you talking about a kind of Garden of Eden scenario with an actual Adam and Eve?*
>
> *GEORGE PELL: Well, Adam and Eve are terms - what do they mean: life and earth. It's like every man. That's a beautiful, sophisticated, mythological account. It's not science but it's there to tell us two or three things. First of all that God created the world and the universe. Secondly, that the key to the whole of universe, the really significant thing, are humans and, thirdly, it is a very sophisticated mythology to try to explain the evil and suffering in the world.*

This is hardly a compelling defence of the concept defined in the Catechism that Adam and Eve are our first parents, created by God. And it is not the defence required when debating a leading atheist who rejects God's creation of man and instead posits that they 'evolved' without any link to God at all – who is also denied.

Furthermore, without Adam and Eve, the concept of original sin must fall away. It is unsurprising then, that Richard Dawkins immediately stated this:

> *RICHARD DAWKINS: Well, I'm curious to know if Adam and Eve never existed where did original sin come from?*

A second example of what can, at best, be described as extremely poor and ambiguous language comes more recently from Archbishop Coleridge.

In October 2018, he responded to a statement from Daniel Ang (who is on the Plenary Council Executive Committee) on Twitter.

Daniel Ang had stated:

> *"Most people want Jesus as a consultant rather than a King"*

Archbishop Coleridge responded a few minutes later with this:

> *Not too sure I want (or have) him as either.*

This statement, on face value, is scandalous. It is difficult to read it in any way that does not involve a rejection of Christ as King. Yet it is a doctrine of the Catholic Church that Christ exercises power as our King. He is our redeemer, our law-giver and our judge.

Archbishop Coleridge faced considerable criticism for his statement. Four days later he issued another statement on Twitter in response:

> *I worship Jesus reigning from the Cross, whose "kingdom is not of this world" and who "casts the mighty from their thrones"...I don't favour royalist ideologies "of this world" which make Christ remote, the Church triumphalist, the Pope and bishops princely etc. #StJohnXXIII*

Again, this appears very strongly to be a rejection of the Kingship of Christ, and also promotes a falsehood that earthly kings, princes and rulers cannot be like Christ and do not exercise power given to them by Christ.

Bishops must clearly teach the faith. If they speak in ways that are not understood, it is incumbent upon them to clarify any confusion.

Accountability & Accessibility

To this end, two important points must be addressed by the bishops which have generally been raised by Catholics of all persuasions. Indeed, many of the submissions from groups that appear to be chafing for a radical revolution in the Church also raise this point.

While Archbishop Coleridge claims that he does not want to be a princely bishop, I must admit that he comes across as entirely aloof.

I have written to him a number of times and received no response. So have many others. And this complaint has been generally levelled at the bishops in many of the other submissions to the Plenary Council that have been made public.

I accept that this may not be Archbishop Coleridge's fault, but rather the fault of his office. The same applies to other bishops.

However, if Catholic laity seek a response from a bishop about a matter of doctrine or morals, or the operation of the Church, they deserve a response.

Furthermore, when it comes to social media, bishops should be extremely careful.

Twitter, in particular, is not a means conducive to presenting complex and nuanced teaching. It has a character limit and statements must be kept simple.

Whatever Archbishop Coleridge meant with his statement on Christ the King, if he does accept Christ the King, the medium of Twitter was not simple enough for his meaning. It caused great scandal. If a bishop wishes to use Twitter it must be done so effectively.

If Archbishop Coleridge had wished to teach about Christ the King, he should have placed that written teaching online where it could be read in full and used Twitter to direct people to that teaching.

If bishops are not prepared to do this they should not use Twitter.

They should also be aware that mediums like Twitter are public. If they are going to use it they should also understand this: it is not a good look if their timelines focus on pasta and hats instead of teaching the faith. If bishops occasionally interacted with the faithful who engage with them on social media it would also assist in removing perceptions that they are 'princely'.

Recommendations

29. Ambiguous statements in Vatican II to should be decisively clarified in line with Catholic tradition to prevent ongoing confusion and error.

30. Bishops must clearly and faithfully teach the faith. If they speak in ways that are not understood, it is incumbent upon them to clarify any confusion.

31. Bishops should answer letters that they receive concerning doctrine, morals or the operation of their diocese.

32. Bishops should not use social media unless they understand its limitations, especially if it is likely that their statements can lead to confusion.

SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS

The Catholic Church claims data showed that the average age of the claimant at the time of the first alleged incident of child sexual abuse was 11.4 years for all claimants, 10.5 years for females and 11.6 years for males.

…

… adult males who sexually abuse adolescent males are much more likely to be men of homosexual orientation…

…

Cahill and Wilkinson noted that there are various estimations of the proportion of homosexual priests and religious in the Catholic Church. They observed that the better estimates are in the 20–50 per cent range, which is considerably higher than in the general population.

Final Report: Volume 16, Religious institutions Book 2,
Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

In the light of such teaching, this Dicastery, in accord with the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, believes it necessary to state clearly that the Church, while profoundly respecting the persons in question cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practise homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called "gay culture".

Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders

But most had some kind of past incident or failing that could be used against them if made public, even if it were only their identity as a gay man. And so a poisonous kind of omertà took hold, the priesthood acting as a forum of mutually assured destruction. Since many fellow priests know about each other's sexuality and/or lapses, they all have the ability to blackmail one another. Mundane failings — like a brief affair — can become easily blurred with profound evils like child abuse. If you expose a child molester to his superior, for example, he might expose your own homosexuality and destroy your career.

The Gay Church, nymag.com, 21 January 2019

Satan's three attacks

The sexual abuse scandal that has engulfed the Catholic Church across the globe is diabolical. It contains three attacks by Satan using men who abused trusted positions within the Catholic Church.

The first is an attack against the victim of sexual abuse. One only has to read a few of the terrible case studies outlined in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to see the lifelong emotional, physical and spiritual trauma caused by this abuse.

The second attack is an assault on the Catholic Church itself. It is now being crucified publicly as trust in this institution is eroded, often maliciously and unjustly by those who hate the Church. This is worsened by the fact that even the Pope appears to have protected figures such as ex-Cardinal McCarrick, or ignored evidence that he had abused children and seminarians for decades. As a result, a great many Catholics, divorced from any real love of the Mass or sacraments by the revolution unleashed by Vatican II, have used this scandal as a reason to walk away from the Church. In many cases, it is simply a lazy excuse for those already heading for the door, but it cannot be denied that trust has been sorely tested.

Thirdly, Satan is using this attack to destroy the innocent. Good and holy priests now find themselves facing vicious calumny even though they have done no wrong. While ex-Cardinal McCarrick remains free despite an acceptance by the Church that he abused children, Cardinal Pell is in jail after the most incredible allegations against him.

Bishops, especially the good ones, need to accept the reality that they are heading to jail in today's rabidly anti-Catholic environment. Regardless of whether they are complicit in child sexual abuse or not, senior clergy in the Catholic Church are heading to jail for another reason entirely: they are Catholic bishops.

This is the most diabolical assault of all.

The perpetrators of child sexual abuse inside the Catholic Church are responsible for far more than the damage they caused to their victims. So are those in positions of power who allowed this scandal to go unaddressed for so long.

Inaction is the key theme.

It allowed the formation of networks of abusers. It has also tarnished trust in the Church, fuelled anti-Catholic sentiment and enabled a smear campaign against all priests, regardless of the fact that the vast majority are innocent of child sexual abuse. As such, it must be acknowledged that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church over the past 60 years has created the conditions for its own persecution.

Yet inaction continues.

It still allows a significant causative factor in much of the abuse against adolescent boys, homosexuality, to go unaddressed. And it now seems indecision and fear have gripped the hierarchy.

What must be done?

In truth, the Catholic Church in Australia faces great difficulty addressing this problem.

It must address the failures of the past in an environment where it is impossible to communicate effectively how it is doing this.

It must ensure these failures do not occur again in an environment where homosexuality is promoted and protected, even inside the Church.

And it must do both in an environment where the justice system itself acknowledges that it is tainted by anti-Catholic bias.

Unfortunately, it does not seem possible to do all three or even any of these necessities.

Addressing the failures of the past

Firstly, in justice, the victims of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church must receive compensation for their suffering.

Secondly, in justice, it must be demonstrated to Australians in general and the Catholic laity that the clergy who abused children have been punished.

And thirdly, in justice, it must be demonstrated that those who protected them have also been punished.

The first two requirements have largely been met by the relevant recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is correct to have referred these recommendations, where they relate to canon law, to the Vatican.

It goes without saying that clergy who have been found to have abused children by the criminal justice system should also face a Church tribunal to determine if they should be dismissed from the priesthood or as a religious. This process should not be delayed. But it also goes without saying that the Catholic Church does not need to wait for a criminal verdict before taking action against clergy who sexually abuse children.

However, given the anti-Catholic bias within Australia's justice system, dismissal should not be automatic. Church processes must be just and duly consider the allegations.

In relation to the third requirement, it is far from clear that this has occurred. The allegations and concerns raised by Archbishop Vigano remain unaddressed and indeed strengthened by the fact that the Catholic Church's own tribunal has now found ex-Cardinal McCarrick to have abused children and seminarians over decades.

It is entirely possible that child sexual abusers in Australia have also been protected by networks within the clergy, as demonstrated by the credible claims against Archbishop Little and others.

The only way this third necessity can be addressed is if the Catholic Church proactively assesses the management of each abuser. This requires an assessment of the actions taken by each diocese or religious order since 1950 that is independent from those currently or previously in positions of authority.

Where deceased hierarchy are found to have failed in their duties, the Church must publicly address this. If it is found that current or retired members of the hierarchy have done so, they must face the Catholic Church's own tribunal for judgement, quite apart from any criminal action that they may be subject to.

There can be little confidence that this will occur until Archbishop Vigano's testimony is addressed. This will only occur when documentation relating to such cases is made public. I am no expert on canon law, but if this requires approval from the Vatican to address concerns in Australia, this should be sought and sought publicly.

Finally in relation to the failures of the past, it must be noted that the Royal Commission was entirely unsatisfactory. It was anti-Catholic in its nature and by the way it was conducted. It effectively amounted to an intrusion by the state into the affairs of the Catholic Church and its governance.

This is unacceptable.

But it is even worse that the Catholic Church enabled the conditions for this to occur. The most effective way bishops can ensure that the state does not interfere with the Church is by ensuring that the Church proactively deals with clergy who abuse their positions of trust.

Protecting children into the future

It is impossible to protect children from abuse in the future if the Catholic Church is going to do so by adopting the moral standards of the world.

The world is sexually schizophrenic. It promotes an absurd idea of puritanical hedonism.

It seeks to protect children while simultaneously promoting homosexuality. It condemns child sexual abuse by priests inside the Catholic Church while simultaneously demanding that the Church openly embrace its closeted clergy.

The Catholic Church cannot protect children into the future unless it rejects this worldview and seriously examines the role of homosexuality in this scandal.

Indeed, the statistics in relation to the Catholic Church demonstrate that a very significant proportion of this abuse was not really against children but against adolescent males. Vastly more boys were abused and they were older, on average, than girls.

In other words, much of the abuse is homosexual abuse.

That case studies in the Royal Commission show abusers groomed young men and continued sexual relationships with them into their adulthood demonstrates this.

Lay Catholics have long suffered the open secret of homosexual clergy and numerous investigations have found that the proportion of homosexuals in the priesthood far exceeds the general rate of homosexuality in society. While the veracity of these reports and their motivation is not certain, it must be apparent that there is a problem reaching into the hierarchy of the Church. In the case of ex-Cardinal McCarrick it reaches all the way to the Vatican.

It should easily be understood why men with deep-seated homosexual tendencies should not be ordained.

They carry an internal flaw that is contrary to the natural order and places severe pressure on them in an environment that involves living with other men.

Men who face this cross carry a character trait that makes them wholly unsuitable for the priesthood and it is unfair on them to place them in such a position. This is not to say that such men cannot be good and holy and become great saints. It is simply to recognise a reality of human nature and the pressure of the priesthood.

It is also obvious that homosexuality is a risk factor in relation to sexual abuse of children.

Homosexual priests live a life that is contrary to the very essence of the priesthood and their faith. It is a life that they themselves must publicly teach to be immoral. This makes them moral hypocrites and dealers of double-standards. They live this life in secret and must behave deceptively to do so. Homosexual culture also focuses heavily on adolescents and often homosexuals have been abused at

this age. Studies also show that homosexual men are attracted to younger men in comparison to the age of women that heterosexual men are most attracted to.

Furthermore, homosexual acts are acts of grave depravity and greatly damage the soul. They necessarily have a tendency to weaken a person's ability to withstand temptations to other forms of sexual immorality.

And failures in regards to homosexuality can be easily manipulated to keep a priest's silence. This was even acknowledged eloquently in the pro-homosexual article quoted at the beginning of this section. Homosexual priests are less likely to raise concerns about any sexual misconduct by other clergy because of the risk they face of being exposed or blackmailed. This problem is only exacerbated in the case of a homosexual bishop.

The Catholic Church in Australia must take action to ensure that lay Catholics have confidence that their clergy are not tainted with homosexuality.

If it is true that 20-50% of clergy in Australia are homosexual, as figures given to the Royal Commission suggest, then urgent action must be taken to address the failure of seminaries to discriminate against men who are wholly unsuited for ordination. Moreover, it must be accepted that such extraordinary figures indicate far more than this: they instead demonstrate that it is likely that there are homosexual networks operating within the Church.

Any such networks must be exposed and removed from the Catholic Church. The Australian bishops must address the general concerns raised by Archbishop Vigano regarding homosexual networks as they relate to Australia. The lived experience of many Catholic Australians is that these networks do exist. Credible allegations abound about these networks, from the Corpus Christi seminary in Melbourne to the scandal of St Mary's parish in Brisbane. Bishop Long himself stated to the Royal Commission that he was sexually abused as a man by a member of the clergy. It is not clear whether he has taken any action in relation to this, or if his abuser is still active within the Catholic Church.

This is entirely unsatisfactory. Bishop Long raised this abuse and lay Catholics are entitled to know whether this abuse of seminarians was widespread and what lasting impact it may have had.

The Catholic Church must unequivocally reject homosexual behaviour and cultures. It must also reject any demand that homosexuals be ordained as priests.

Quite apart from the issue of homosexuality, the Catholic Church will not be able to protect children in the future unless its teachings are also widely promulgated and accepted. Its promotion of the natural family and the institution of marriage is the greatest defence against child sexual abuse. Most abuse of this form occurs inside broken families.

It must also condemn 'progressive' ideas, concepts and programs that threaten children, not just through human weakness, but by the promotion of immorality.

The Safe Schools program sexualises children and encourages them to engage in entirely unsafe experimentation, including by rejecting the natural concept of gender. And the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras allows a group to march that promoted on its webpage the secret colour codes pederasts should wear on their clothing to signal their presence to others.

These organisations and programs, and any others similar, should be publicly condemned by the Catholic Church.

Deal with anti-Catholic bias (or you are going to jail)

It is impossible to rectify injustice with injustice.

The extraordinary situation that confronts Cardinal Pell must be a wake-up call to bishops. We face a vast, unjust and unmerciful anti-Catholic hatred in Australia.

The accusations against Cardinal Pell are beyond fanciful. The improbabilities are insurmountable. There is no corroborating evidence. Yet he is in jail, found guilty 'beyond reasonable doubt' on the word of a single accuser.

However, the implications are clear, simple and brutal: no one in Australia is safe. Our justice system can and will send bishops to jail on the flimsiest allegation and to the baying of the anti-Catholic mob. It has bloodlust and is coming for more.

Australian bishops must brace themselves for this reality. We unfortunately live in a world where anti-Catholic prejudice has destroyed the concepts of justice. The Catholic Church in Australia is a persecuted organisation.

Unfortunately, this poses a major impediment to rectifying the past wrongs of clergy, or to building trust into the future. In this environment, where it is difficult to countenance a fair trial, the Church must be courageous. Allegations, even doubtful, must still be addressed and investigated.

Sadly, in the current environment, this in all likelihood means that the Catholic Church must accept that innocent clergy will be sentenced to jail.

As such, the response of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has been wholly inadequate and characteristic of an organisation that is paralysed by fear and weakness.

Archbishop Wilson had his conviction for allegedly concealing child sexual abuse overturned on 6 December 2018. This was just five days before Cardinal Pell was found guilty on charges laid by a dubious Victorian Police investigation that was commenced before any complaint against him was made.

The appeal judge rightly questioned the pressure exerted by anti-Catholic media in relation to the case against Archbishop Wilson, stating that it was the 'elephant in the room' and that:

> *It is not for me to punish the Catholic Church for its institutional moral deficits, or to punish Philip Wilson for the sins of the now deceased James Fletcher by finding Philip Wilson guilty, simply on the basis that he is a Catholic priest…*
>
> *… This may amount to perceived pressure for a court to reach a conclusion which seems to be consistent with the direction of public opinion, rather than being consistent with the rule of law that requires a court to hand down individual justice in its decision-making processes…*
>
> *…The potential for media pressure to impact judicial independence may be subtle or indeed subversive in the sense that it is the elephant in the room that no one sees or acknowledges or wants to see or acknowledge.*

Strangely, bizarrely and somewhat hopelessly, the ACBC has not put out a single statement about this judgement, even though it clearly attacked the unjust punishment of Archbishop Wilson as being driven by anti-Catholic bias in the media and society. In contrast, the ACBC issued five statements in relation to the conviction of Archbishop Wilson, including one that effectively called on him to resign.

This is a sign of an organisation that has lost even the desire for self-preservation.

That not a single word was said, even though the ACBC knew of the conviction of Cardinal Pell and the inevitability that the suppression order of that conviction would be short lived, is difficult to comprehend. No action has been taken to highlight the fact that anti-Catholic bias is contaminating the justice system in Australia against Catholic clergy.

This was a monumental failure of judgement, a failure to address an injustice and a failure to proactively defend the Church.

It is no surprise that Archbishop Coleridge is now facing claims that he mishandled child sex allegations.

Unless Catholic bishops robustly highlight the acknowledged flaws in Australia's criminal justice system and its anti-Catholic bias, they will find themselves in jail for the crime of being a bishop.

This will not address the problems of the past. It will not ensure child safety into the future. It will only harm all Australians.

Recommendations

33. The Catholic Church should proactively deal with allegations of child sexual abuse through its own tribunals without waiting for criminal investigations.

34. Independent assessments should be undertaken of each diocese and religious order to determine if abusers have been adequately dealt with.

35. The Catholic Church should publicly address any findings that those who have sexually abused children were not punished or were protected. Those responsible should face the appropriate Church tribunal for judgement.

36. The Australian bishops must address any general concerns raised by Archbishop Vigano as they relate to Australia and, where possible, release documentation that may shed light on any homosexual networks operating within Australia's clergy. They must also address evidence and concerns that significant numbers of clergy are homosexual.

37. Homosexual men must not be ordained to the priesthood.

38. The Catholic Church must fearlessly condemn homosexual behaviour and the organisations that promote sexual immorality to children.

39. The anti-Catholic bias in the Australian media and justice system must be addressed urgently and publicly, making reference to the appeal decision which overturned the unjust conviction of Archbishop Wilson.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plenary Council

1. A publicity campaign should be commenced to clearly explain that the Plenary Council cannot change Catholic Church teaching. This should be accompanied with clear teaching on subjects of confusion, particularly in relation to sexual morality.

2. In the interests of transparency the facilitator of the Plenary Council, Lana Turvey-Collins, should confirm or deny the multiple reports that she supports homosexual marriage. If she does, she should be removed as facilitator of the Plenary Council.

3. Any person associated with the Plenary Council who rejects Catholic teaching should be removed from their position.

The Catholic Church and the State

4. The Catholic Church should do all that it can to ensure that Christ the King is recognised by the states and the Commonwealth.

5. Catholic bishops must actively engage in commentary on political issues that endanger faith and morals. They must use clear language. This language is found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

6. Catholic laity must engage in Catholic political action.

7. Politicians who claim to be Catholic who support gravely immoral laws must be repudiated in public. If they fail to correct themselves they should be excommunicated, denied the sacraments and prohibited from using Catholic facilities for their political causes.

8. A body must be established to pursue prioritised and coordinated Catholic political action across Australia. This body's purpose should include assisting Catholics to network within Australia's political institutions and to build pathways for well-educated Catholic youth to engage in Catholic political action. As a priority, it should defend the natural family unit and oppose laws that philosophically equate truth with error and endanger the ability of the Catholic Church to operate freely in Australia.

9. The Catholic Church must also develop strategies that provide tangible support to lay Catholics facing persecution for their support of Catholic teaching, particularly in relation to marriage, family and morality.

Catholic Education

10. Parents of students at Catholic schools should be given instruction in the Catholic faith. Consideration should be given to real and tangible methods to ensure parents do so, such as fee reductions for parents who undertake and pass such instruction courses.

11. Dioceses should prioritise a limited and sustainable number of school communities for implementation of a wholly Catholic education program designed to ensure students live the faith and continue to do so after graduation.

12. Catholic parents in each diocese should be informed of these schools so that they can make informed enrolment decisions for their children.

13. These programs should be progressively rolled out, on a sustainable basis, to every school in a diocese.

14. Teachers at Catholic schools should be required to demonstrate that they understand the Catholic faith and Catholic schools should progressively aim to hire teachers who practice the faith.

15. Teachers who undermine the faith by supporting gravely immoral practices should be removed from the Catholic education system.

16. The Catholic education system should vigorously oppose laws that will prevent them from discriminating against teachers and students on the grounds of homosexuality, sexual orientation, gender or marital status.

17. All Catholic schools should reject 'Safe Schools' and similar programs.

The Mass and the Sacraments

18. The Latin Mass should be prioritised and revived in every parish in Australia. It should become the focus of every Catholic community.

19. The Catholic Church should research the correlation between attendance at the Latin Mass and vocations to the priesthood.

20. The requirement for priestly celibacy should not be relaxed.

21. Catholic churches should not allow sacrilegious events to be held in their precincts.

22. Catholics should be strongly reminded that they are required to confess their sins at least once a year.

23. The Catholic Church should clearly teach about marriage, including by explaining the teaching on the roles of the man and woman and condemning contraception, divorce and premarital sex and cohabitation. This should also be recognised as the most effective means of countering homosexual marriage. This teaching should also be addressed at the many who have entered into relationships without proper formation and who now believe that divorce and remarriage is the only option they have.

24. Catholics who have divorced and remarried should not be permitted the sacraments while they continue adulterous relationships.

25. Bishops should follow the example of Archbishop Porteous and restrict clergy from operating within their diocese who confuse Catholics on any issue of doctrine and morality.

26. The Catholic Church should liaise with various law enforcement and emergency services agencies and the Australian Defence Force to ensure that persons needing the sacrament of Extreme Unction are able to obtain it in a timely manner.

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Teaching the Faith

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30. Bishops must clearly and faithfully teach the faith. If they speak in ways that are not understood, it is incumbent upon them to clarify any confusion.

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Sexual Abuse Crisis

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36. The Australian bishops must address any general concerns raised by Archbishop Vigano as they relate to Australia and, where possible, release documentation that may shed light on any homosexual networks operating within Australia's clergy. They must also address evidence and concerns that significant numbers of clergy are homosexual.

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38. The Catholic Church must fearlessly condemn homosexual behaviour and the organisations that promote sexual immorality to children.

39. The anti-Catholic bias in the Australian media and justice system must be addressed urgently and publicly, making reference to the appeal decision which overturned the unjust conviction of Archbishop Wilson.