

Vatican Council II

Reforming Liturgy

Edited by
Carmel Pilcher, David Orr
and Elizabeth Harrington



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Dedication



MICHAEL ERNEST PUTNEY STD, AM

Bishop of Townsville

Born 20 June 1946

Ordained Priest 28 June 1969

Ordained Bishop 27 July 1995

Bishop of Townsville 24 January 2001

This dedication honours
a wise pastor and teacher
who has helped explain and promote
the work of the Second Vatican Council,
and whose prophetic voice
has shaped ecumenical dialogue
in Australia and throughout the world.

It is all God's work.
It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ
and gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:18

Mind the Gap: The Church in Australia Forty Years After the Second Vatican Council[1]

Michael Putney

The Great Grace of the Council

In *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, calling for the celebration of the Great Jubilee in 2000, Pope John Paul II asked that the Church should examine itself on the reception it had given to the Second Vatican Council. Then in the almost concluding paragraph of *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, reflecting on the new millennium, he said of the Second Vatican Council:

> With the passing of the years, *the Council documents have lost nothing of their value or brilliance*. They need to be read correctly, to be widely known and taken to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium, within the Church's Tradition. Now that the Jubilee has ended, I feel more than ever in duty bound to point to the Council as *the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century:* there we find a sure compass by which to take our bearings in the century now beginning.[2]

1. The following paper is an abridged version of the book *Mind the Gap: The Church in Australia 40 years after the Second Vatican Council* (Strathfield: Catholic Institute of Sydney, 2006) which comprises two lectures given by Michael Putney at the 2004 Triennial Gathering of the Manly Union: 'The Great Grace of the Council' and 'Receiving the Council'. It has been included in this series to honour Bishop Michael Putney and his great contribution to the Church as scholar, ecumenist and pastor and because the issues raised by the author continue to be relevant.
2. #57. See reference at <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte_en.html>. Accessed 20 June 2013.

It is far too early to locate the documents of the Second Vatican Council in some repository for ancient texts. We are not yet ready for a Third Vatican Council because we haven't yet received the Second Vatican Council in any way near adequately. Furthermore, there is a new vision in the documents of the Council which cannot be understood simply as a repetition of the past. Again, much of this new vision is still to be received. This is important as we try to discern how we ought to move forward as the Church at this point of history in our Australian context.

The 'big pictures' which follow are only one person's contribution to a reflection in which we can all engage, and in which we need to engage, if we are to find the best way forward. What we are really doing is trying to discern the way in which the Holy Spirit is leading us.

Finding the Way Forward

The Church cannot find the correct way forward unless it is faithful to the Word of God found in written form in the scriptures. We also know as Catholics that we need to be faithful to the great living tradition of the Church which continues to interpret the Word of God even today by many means,[3] including 'the great grace' of our age, the Second Vatican Council.

Like all powerful insights, this one can be turned into something constricting rather than liberating. Unfortunately, there are some who are so enamoured of the past and its beauty, that instead of moving forward with their direction shaped by the great tradition they have seen in the past, they actually move backwards towards a particular moment in that tradition. Perhaps they do this with some hope of re-establishing it or continuing it exactly in the present without any recognition of the new situation of the Church today.

There is another way of thinking which also deserves our attention and can inspire our imagination. One of the themes of the Council itself was that we are called to read 'the signs of the time'. This phrase is used theologically in different ways, but it can legitimately be used in some cases to mean signs of the presence and activity of God in

3. Pope John Paul II spoke of 'the relationship between Sacred Scripture, as the highest authority in matters of faith, and Sacred Tradition, as indispensable to the interpretation of the Word of God'. (*Ut Unum Sint* #79).

the world.[4] To see these signs we must be looking at the society and culture which surround us, and in a sense looking ahead of ourselves. If the Church is to carry out its mission in the world, it must engage with its culture and the society in which it lives. In some ways it can be led forward by 'the signs of the times' that it sees around it and ahead of it, and so our attention should be focused there.

Unfortunately again, there are some who are so dazzled by some signs of the times which they see around them, which they too quickly and easily interpret as signs of the Holy Spirit, that they run after them, following them wherever they lead and, in the process, let go of their connection with the past from which they have come. Because what they followed were not really or unambiguously signs of the presence of God, or they did not stay connected to their past, they end up surrendering to the culture and take their lead entirely from it.

Neither of the extremes of these approaches to finding our way forward can give any hope for the Church. To be so enchanted by the past that one goes backward, or so dazzled by the future that one is lost in the surrounding culture, is to take a very destructive path for the life and mission of the Church.

We cannot respond authentically to the 'signs of the times' which are of God unless we are faithful to the tradition which lies behind us. We can't be faithful to that living tradition which is always seeking new expression, in each time and place, unless we actually move forward and respond to the 'signs of the times' which we see around us. Because both the tradition and the 'signs of the times' are works of the Spirit, they cannot contradict each other. In fact, it is only when we read one in the light of the other that we will interpret them in the most authentic way for our time and place.

Pope John Paul II offered us a very important insight when he said of the Second Vatican Council that 'there we find a sure compass by which to take our bearings in the century now beginning'[5].

4. See Rino Fisichella, 'Signs of the Times' in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology* edited by René Latourelle and Rino Fisichella, (New York: Crossroad, 1994): 995-1001.
5. *Novo Millenio Ineunte* #57 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte_en.html>. Accessed 24 June 2013.

A compass indicates the direction one needs to take, but does not describe the point of arrival. It does enable one to find one's way. Any 'signs of the times' which are genuinely signs of God's activity will be like beacons drawing us in the same direction as this compass provided by the Second Vatican Council. Any which take us in a direction contrary to that established by the compass are false lights which could lead us into the wilderness.

Sadly, our journey forward as the Church in Australia has not been as sure-footed and enthusiastic as it might have been. Too many people have become lost along the way, and others have headed off very determinedly in one direction only, rejecting the compass or ignoring the beacons, and have tried to pressure everyone else to go with them. We need to resist these pressures, to come together, and to move with enthusiasm into God's future, not our own. To do this, we will move most securely if we use the compass and take note of the beacons.

Minding the Gap

Another reflection to assist our new imagining arises when we endeavour to look with eyes fully open at the members of our Church communities in Australia today. We notice the ageing of our congregations and are alerted to the danger that in some places we will become a 'retirement village' Church. Everyone notices the numbers, but not everyone seems aware of the difference between those in 'the retirement village' and the many fewer who are younger. This difference is a crucial factor if we are to be able to do anything about the numbers.

There is a gap in the Church at the moment between my generation and those which have come after. Anyone who has ever caught the underground railway in London would know that as one alights from the train, a voice is heard over the loud-speaker alerting everyone to 'mind the gap'. The reference is to the gap between the train and the platform. I think those of us who are now in roles of pastoral leadership in the Church need to 'mind the gap' that exists between the ecclesiastical priorities and issues which shaped our thinking and claimed our energies after the Second Vatican Council and continue to shape the religious imagination of many of us, and the ecclesiastical culture of the present younger generation.

We make a serious error if we continue to act as if the issues of the Conciliar and immediate post-Conciliar generation are any longer the most important priorities for the Church. The growing awareness of this throughout the Church in the Western world may be able to be called a 'sign of the times'. It is certainly a large flashing light or beacon calling us to adjust our pastoral priorities.

We are all struggling to keep moving with the Holy Spirit, who alone knows fully where we are going, or ought to be going. We have no clear roadmap. We only have the compass and the beacons referred to before.

It is therefore essential that we have some very clear, imaginative frameworks and goals governing our activity at this time of the Church's history. One of these may be to recognise that we are at a stage where we need to, as it were, 'refound' the Church, and to 're-found' the priesthood and religious life for that matter. This is not used in the sense of the ecclesiogenesis of people like Leonardo Boff. Rather, it is a reference to the founding again of the same Church, the same priesthood, the same religious life, because of the 'gap' referred to before.

We need to find a way of enabling a younger generation to discover Jesus Christ, to discover the Triune God, to discover the Gospels, to discover the eucharist, to discover the Word of God, to discover the Church, to discover Mary and the saints, to discover the priesthood and the religious life, just as we did. We need somehow to cross the gap that divides us in age and culture in order to inspire them and support them as they do it again and build it again for the future.

It is essential at this time that we plan for the pastoral care of people, given the diminished number of priests to serve them, but what we must avoid is planning for not having any priests at all. If we decide that is our inevitable future, then it will be our future. Some presume that because there are too few candidates for priestly ministry in the Church of Australia that this is God's will, and that the priesthood as we know it is meant to die out and something different to be born. One cannot really say this with any certainty because no-one really knows the mind of God.

If we were able to 'cross the gap' and reconnect on a large scale with young people, might we not see an increase in candidates? It is only if priests believe in the priesthood themselves and endeavour to

live it in its fullest form that they can offer something even to those fewer young men who are participating in the life of the Church and are open to something more. This is a gap they have to bridge if they are, as it were, to refound the priesthood in the Church in Australia.

The only way we will help young people to rediscover all of these things which have remained precious to us through the years, despite the fact that they have lost their hold on so many of our colleagues and our contemporaries, is if we turn to the deepest resources we have as a Church and offer them to the generations which follow.

Perhaps what they long for is an experience of God, not simply talking about God. What they long for may be an experience of Christ in the eucharist, not simply discussion of liturgical change. What they deserve is to hear the Word of God, not just discussion about the historical nature of our texts. What they deserve is the mystical, sacramental, marian, christic and trinitarian tradition of our Church, with all its saints and heroes and its incredible sacrificial commitment to the poor, the marginalised and the suffering throughout history. Perhaps what they long for is for us to share with them our personal relationship with Jesus Christ more than anything else.

They may not need at all to hear about all the issues of change and power which have so engaged the minds and hearts of so many for so long. They barely know there was a Council. What they deserve from us is God, not our views about what the Church ought to be like, no matter how wise these may be. What they want to find in us, maybe, is our holiness.

Age or cultural difference need not be a barrier to the communication of these deep sources of life, because they come from God and they need very little participation on our part to be communicated. The more attentive we ourselves are to the sources, the more chance they are of being tapped by others.

This does not mean that we don't need good contemporary scholarship and the wisdom of the theological community, or that we don't have to talk about and engage in practicalities and strategies and liturgical change and means of communication, hermeneutics and social analysis, etc. But these are secondary tools for 'refounding' or rebuilding the Church. They are only ways of assisting our response to that larger call to be the Church, to be the children of God, to be the disciples and the apostles of Christ, to be the priests of Jesus Christ. That alone will enable us to move convincingly across the gap and so 'to refound' or rebuild the Church for the future.

The Gospel Itself is our Agenda

Even if we are prepared to do this, it will not always be easy. It would be naïve not to acknowledge that there are real tensions in the Church between the two groups already described as heading in different directions, which we have to deal with. This cannot be denied. But the pastoral priority in the Church is not to fight on either side, or just to take on one or other of the protagonists. Those struggles, no matter how engrossing they may appear, are not the most important ones. No matter how necessary they may appear at times in order to defend either the gains that one attributes to the Second Vatican Council or to defend the tradition of the Church, which appears in some way to be compromised by the actions or attitudes of others, such struggles are still not the most important ones.

There is a spectrum between each extreme and it is not easy to locate people upon it, even ourselves. We can only see the whole spectrum from where we are standing, and most of us think we are located in the centre. Any group which has as its major agenda criticism of other people in the Church could not be seen as anywhere near the centre. We ought not give our support to any group which focuses above all on what is wrong with other people in the Church. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI wrote of the Church evangelising 'when she seeks to convert solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people'[6]. This is the methodology for all communication within the Church. If we are supporters of any cause within the Church, we promote it best when we seek to share it with others as something positive, a blessing for the rest of the Church, not by showing how wrong and even unfaithful everyone is who does not accept what it is we have to offer.

We have a deep and incredibly significant responsibility, which is to realise in our communities and in our own lives, the death and resurrection of Jesus which we remember in the eucharist. This is our task and it is this deep call, this deep responsibility, upon which we need to focus.

We must not let polarised groups determine how we or anyone else perceives or experiences the Church. They must not be allowed

6. #18. Go to <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html>. Accessed 20 June 2013.

to set everyone's agenda. We cannot, nonetheless, avoid dealing with them. But we will only deal creatively with the tensions of the moment if we believe in something bigger than the issues, and the people who demand so much attention in our pastoral situations. We will only find this 'something bigger' if we ourselves rediscover the excitement, the beauty and the unimaginable depth of the Catholic tradition which offers us access to the unfathomable mystery of Jesus Christ and the Triune God whom he reveals. We have to hold on to this and it is because so many do that the Church continues to be so life-giving for so many.

The Church is very good at dialoguing with other Christian communities. It is becoming better at dialoguing with the world religions. It has a long way to go in learning how to dialogue with contemporary culture in the world around it, and it has barely started to learn how to become a community of dialogue within itself.

We have to find a way of lowering the barriers that have been put up between us, of softening the positions that we have felt the need to hold onto so firmly, and of looking with gentler eyes upon the opposition whom we have seen ourselves needing to resist. Too often we are dealing with people who love the Church and accept the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. They just see it differently. They belong to different schools of thought, with different priorities, and different values. If we were all to recognise this, we would be able to learn from each other, marginalising somewhat those who are on the extremes of either school of thought.

Still Receiving the Council

If one locates the Second Vatican Council in the great tradition of the Church, then one can understand why Pope John Paul II would so evocatively say of it that it is 'the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century'[7]. When one recognises just how long Councils take to be 'received' by the Church one can see how important it is that we plumb its riches for the sake of the next generation and our task of 'refounding' the Church. The Council has not yet been 'received' in its deepest levels by the Church.

In order to carry out this long overdue task, it is appropriate to remember the opening sentence of the Constitution on the Sacred Lit-

7. *Novo Millennio Ineunte* #57.

urgy, which was the first document passed by the bishops at the Second Vatican Council, and which names the four goals of that Council. These were: 'To impart an ever-increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call all people into the Church's fold.'

Adapting Institutions

Here in Australia and in many other parts of the world, we concentrated much of our energy on the goal of adapting our institutions to the needs of our age and of our culture. This was urgent and necessary, exciting and liberating. Perhaps it drew most of our attention because it was also practical and concrete and its results were able to be measured. This work is always unfinished and so it is still a cause of considerable tension within the Church.

The question which arises immediately for those engaged in this task is, how much and what kind of adaptation can take place in response to the needs of an age or a culture, or to the 'signs of the times', while still remaining faithful to the Catholic tradition, and the direction established by 'the compass' of the Second Vatican Council?

The Church as a gift of God bears the full mystery of Christ to us in many ways: in the Gospel which we receive through the Church's scriptures and its living tradition, in the liturgy of the Church, and in the larger communion of the Church which has carried the mystery of Christ to us through the ages. This gift of God asks of us only that we participate in the great life-giving mystery it offers us. It enables us to enter into the very heart of the Triune God, through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

But this great mystery can only be received by real men and women within their social relationships and structures, so it is that we human beings make a very real, concrete contribution to the realisation of the Church. It is our task to receive this gift by inculturating it, by making it real in our daily lives, by expressing it in forms of prayer and worship, by structuring the great communion of the Church in ways that enhance our appropriation of the mystery. Anyone engaged in pastoral planning in their parish or diocese needs to know that they have a task unlike that of any other planning group. Every other element in the Church is secondary to this encounter with the mystery.

As Pope John Paul II said of pastoral planning in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*:

> We are certainly not seduced by the naive expectation that, faced with the great challenges of our time, we shall find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: *I am with you!* It is not therefore a matter of inventing a 'new programme' (29).

He then went on to name more specific elements of this pastoral plan. His first was holiness:

> First of all, I have no hesitation in saying that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness. It is necessary therefore to rediscover the full practical significance of Chapter 5 of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, dedicated to the 'universal call to holiness' (30).

At the same time, the Church is a human community and therefore it is not inappropriate to draw upon the social sciences to assist in any renewal of the Church. One of the dangers as we try to work out the best way forward for the Church of today in Australia, is that dialogue might occur only between bishops or pastors and experts or professionals in the Church, and that the needs and wishes of ordinary Catholics, which are sometimes quite different to those of their leaders and of Church professionals, will not be heard.

Through its living tradition, its scriptures, its sacraments, and its fellowship or communion, the Church bears to us, every person, and every age, the possibility of entering into the very life of the Triune God through Jesus' death and resurrection, and to do so with one's brothers and sisters. Any adaptation serves this and is only for the sake of this. In fact, the goal of the Council—'to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change'[8]—was a practical goal which was always for the sake of the much more important first goal of the Council: to impart an ever-

8. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #1.

increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful, and for the sake of the third ecumenical goal and the fourth missionary goal. It is only in their context that we can understand this more practical goal.

Imparting a New Vigour

Because it has not always been linked to these other goals in our thinking, our adaptation has sometimes been unfinished or even at times a little inadequate. Sometimes we may have failed in our adaptation to move beyond deconstruction, as it is called, to genuine reconstruction. When one fails to do that, deconstruction can actually become a form of destruction. There will have been a deconstruction of a previous account or experience of the mystery, which will not have resulted in a better way of sharing the mystery with others.

To take one very simple example, there is no good news, in itself, in showing people that some of the events in scripture are not to be interpreted as accurate scientific history. This is only the stage of deconstruction. What is needed is life-giving, enlivening, inspiring reconstruction that conveys the message of faith which is contained in the scriptural accounts.

Priests, preachers and teachers, parents and witnesses of any kind, are bearers of the mystery of a relationship with God available through Jesus Christ. No matter how much adaptation they engage in, it has to be for the sake of making that mystery more accessible. Its ultimate aim, therefore, is that first goal of the Second Vatican Council: 'to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful'.[9]

Maybe we sometimes have fallen into the trap of believing that our adaptation is complete because we have adapted the rules, the structures, or the formulation of our teaching or prayers. This was ever only the first stage of the process of adaptation. It is incomplete if it remains unrelated to that other goal of the Council, its first and primary goal, which is to convert human hearts, to assist people to become holy, as Pope John Paul pointed out in *Novo Millennio Ineunte,* or to become committed disciples of Jesus Christ, and to assist them to experience life in Christ more fully. If people do not love God and their neighbour more, pray more profoundly, live more dedicated lives, and make an impact on the world for the better, because of our

9. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #1.

adaptation, then one has to question whether or not the adaptation has been authentic, or is still unfinished.

The Example of Lent

A little example of how we can fail to keep these two goals of the Council together is that of Lent. When I was a child, Lent was a very demanding period which made very clear and concrete claims upon the daily life of the individual Catholic and the communal life of parishes. Much of that has disappeared, and some of it rightly so. As we saw with many pious practices at the time of the Council, they could easily lose their connection with the true spirit which was meant to inspire them.

While Project Compassion has developed throughout this time as a great contemporary example of genuine Lenten self-denial for the sake of others, the larger claim of Lent upon our personal and ecclesial lives is not always as obvious any more. Parishes celebrate the season liturgically but sometimes not too much else changes in any obvious way. As a Church we do not seem to keep Lent in an observable way anymore.

We adapted Lent with good intentions but may have lost something of its capacity to increase the vigour of the Christian life of the faithful. Perhaps what is needed is a reconstruction of some of the Lenten practices of the past, through new ways of fasting and penance and new public devotional practices, along with the great Project Compassion, to enable the liturgical season to claim more of our lives.

This example also illustrates another difficulty in enhancing the vigour of the Christian life of the faithful through a time of change. Sometimes we were not able to assist people sufficiently to have the spiritual maturity and commitment they would need to make the choices they now needed to make in a Church of greater freedom.

We need to admit that not everything that has happened since the Council has been for the best. We didn't always get it right or, at least, completely right. We lost some things along the way. To want to recover them is not to go back, or to indulge in restorationism, but to reclaim the wholeness of our tradition. Any reclaiming will involve a revisioning, a relocating, rather than a restoring. We cannot just replant the practices and ideas of the 1950s into our post-Conciliar context without their being re-expressed because of that new context.

It is not a kind of restoration which is needed, but a reclaiming of all our riches. There are many examples of elements which might need to be reclaimed in some places or to some extent.

It is a question of balance, but also wholeness. The Catholic tradition has been greatly enriched by the new balance in our Christian life inaugurated by the Council, but unless we are faithful to the whole vision of the Council, what we have might not be balance but another partial version.

The major pastoral task in any parish is to help people to become holy, which means to become people who love God and their neighbour more and more, which in turn means people who can pray and can serve and even suffer for the cause of the Kingdom which always involves a commitment to justice and peace. We will only 'impart a new vigour' to the Christian life of God's people if they have a chance to be claimed by the whole Christian mystery in all its beauty. Only then, as well, will we have a chance of bridging the gap to the next generations and overcoming the tensions in our Church.

Promoting Christian Unity

The third goal of the Second Vatican Council was that of 'promoting unity among all who believe in Christ'[10]. We have achieved an enormous amount in this regard and the commitment of the Church in Australia is as good as anywhere in the world. This is one of the best signs of the Church in Australia genuinely receiving the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

At the same time we ought not confuse an easy Australian tolerance and respect for different beliefs with the more profound engagement of divided communities in the search for a restored unity in Christ. This latter can build on the former but it can also settle for the former and hence fall far short of the Council's goal,[11] which is itself the goal of Christ's prayer: 'That they may be one' (John 17:22).

There is something humbling about the acknowledgement of the Second Vatican Council that one of the means it determined for the renewal of the Catholic Church was to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ, and vice versa. We too easily

10. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #1.
11. For a fuller treatment of this see: Michael Putney, 'Ecumenism in Australia Today', in *Australasian Catholic Record*, 76/2 (1966): 208–216.

forget that our own struggles as a Church are part of a larger divine plan to draw the whole of humanity into communion with God and with each other, and indeed with the whole created order.

This mission for which Jesus was sent and died and for which the Spirit was sent means that our efforts to live a spirituality of communion and our efforts to restore communion with other Christians are intimately related because they are part of the one divine plan with which the Trinity is so intensely engaged and for which the second person of the Trinity died. All elements of the one divine program belong together.

Unity can never be achieved by compromise, but only by the two qualities of faithfulness and openness. This is true within the Church as much as it is true between the Churches. We need both truth and love. Without faithfulness, an adherence to the truth as we see it, love can easily lead us to settle for compromise. Without love, truth or faithfulness, insurmountable barriers can easily be created. What we need is loving truth and truthful love, within the Church and between the Churches.

Evangelisation

The final goal of the Second Vatican Council was 'to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church'[12]. This goal has not yet fired the communal imagination of the Catholic Church in Australia. We need to remind ourselves that it is God in whom we are called to believe and it is the world and its needs about which we are called to be concerned.

We are called to transform the world by working to build communion between people, with our environment, and with God. This involves work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, but it also involves offering to every person the possibility of knowing what is offered to them in the life and teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

One rather urgent aspect of the Church's mission is the diminishing number of Catholics who wish to participate in a tangible way in the visible communion of the Church. We can't continue as we are for much longer and still claim that we are a viable sacrament of God's engagement with Australian humanity, serving that engagement, cre-

12. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #1.

ating communion with God and among themselves for the whole of Australia. We will become an empty shell, a museum of a once-vital Australian Catholic Church.

The re-evangelisation or the new evangelisation of our baptised but disengaged Catholics, and the new evangelisation of secular Australians who are often seeking for authentic spirituality everywhere but in the Church, is one of the most urgent and exciting challenges confronting the Church today. We need to bridge the gap, for the sake of our mission. We need to rebuild or 'refound' the communion if we are to serve our mission of extending that communion to everyone and everything everywhere.

New Evangelisation of the Baptised

The new evangelisation of baptised Catholics who no longer participate in any significant way in the life of the Church is an extraordinary challenge, but also one rich with possibilities. One of these is our Catholic school system. The second is parish-based sacramental programs, or any sacramental programs, for that matter.

The fact that parents send their children to Catholic schools, or bring their children for the sacraments of initiations, is usually an indication that they have some desire to be connected to the Church, or hope that their child will find some connection with the Church. This is an opening for evangelisation that is rich with possibilities. Many parishes and schools make great efforts to reach the parents of the children whom they have in their care, either in the school or in a sacramental program. The Church in Australia could do well to draw upon the best practice of such parishes as a resource for all. Much more could happen if all were to have a quite clear pastoral plan for reaching the parents of these children.

Another major focus for new evangelisation in Australia is the group referred to above which is sometimes called Generation Y, and Generation X which preceded them. We need to become experts on making contact with them to bridge 'the gap', so that they have the possibility of accessing what we have to offer. We have to find doorways through which we can both move so that this kind of communication is possible. Their spiritual quest may be one of these and this would be congruent with the very deep spiritual resources we have to offer them. Another may be their openness to issues of justice and

ecology. This too is now a very rich part of our Catholic tradition in which we can invite them to participate. They may also be seeking meaning for their lives and something larger to which to belong. We can offer both, but we can't do it if we are not reaching out to them in a welcoming kind of way, and are able to articulate the meaning and share the belonging.

The Way of the Future

Whatever the future may hold, it seems clear that the Church in Australia has still a way to go in receiving fully the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

The way of the future is neither to go backwards into the tradition nor deeper into the culture. It is rather to go deeper into the tradition for the sake of our mission in the surrounding culture.

The resources are within us because the Church is a creation of the Holy Spirit. These resources are the deep streams of life of our Catholic tradition. We can draw upon the richness of the past in order to deal with, to confront, to embrace, to dialogue with, to accept and at times reject the culture that surrounds us; and 'minding the gap', to reach out in a creative way to share what we love with those who are across the gap and so to refound the Church of the future with them.

We have to continue to believe that we can inspire a new generation of young people to fall in love with the same Christ, the same Triune God, the same eucharist and the same troubled but beautiful Church which we know so well and sometimes forget how much we love.

As we do this, we can affirm again on its 40th anniversary, that the Second Vatican Council is 'the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century: there we will find a sure compass by which to take our bearings in the century now beginning.'[13]

13. *Novo Millennio Ineunte* #57.

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Introduction

Whenever a major reform occurs it takes many years for the dust to settle. Fifty years have now passed since one of the greatest Church Councils, Vatican II, promulgated *Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC),* on 4 December 1963. This book commemorates that event. It has been created, designed and written by a group of liturgists who have been at the forefront of implementing the reform and have weathered the storm of change over the decades. Most have served in the Australian Church, one in the neighbouring island of Flores in Indonesia, while others have worked in the United States of America. Our most distinguished contributor—Archbishop Piero Marini—has served the Church's liturgical life at its heart in the Vatican: as secretary to the great liturgical reformer, Archbishop Annibale Bugnini CM, for many years as Papal Master of Ceremonies, modelling the reform in papal celebrations in various diverse cultural environments, as a teacher at Sant' Anselmo in Rome, and currently as the President for the Pontifical Committee on Eucharistic Congresses.

The purpose of this collection of essays is to focus on the situation of the liturgical life of the Church since the Council and to indicate challenges that still need to be addressed if the great vision of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is to be fulfilled. We did not set out to dwell on the past but rather to look to the future. The chapters of the book closely follow the order of *Sacrosanctum Concilium.*

The book begins with a reflection by Piero Marini. We remember him from January 1995 in Sydney, Australia, where, as Papal Master of Ceremonies for the beatification of Mary MacKillop, he stretched the imagination of the local liturgists so that the celebration might became a kaleidoscope reflecting the diverse cultures of the Australian Church, including local languages, music, dance, and ritual elements of our first peoples.

A number of authors take principles from the reform and engage us with them in the contemporary Church. Rhodora Beaton focuses on the Church as sacrament. She gives a careful analysis of the changing understandings and the prevailing christological emphasis

on the Church's visibility as the place of encounter with God and the sign of God's presence in the world.

Tom Elich returns to the goal of the reform and discusses full, conscious and active participation—words that have been repeated countless times, but his insights invite us to consider anew how this might be achieved in worshipping assemblies.

Clare Johnson addresses liturgical intelligibility and identifies issues in performance and meaning that need to be addressed if liturgy is to inspire the change of heart necessary to practise charity in the Christian life.

At a time when inculturation in the liturgy appears to have been compromised, John Fitz-Herbert, Carmel Pilcher and Bernardus Boli Ujan explore this significant principle of the Council. John Fitz-Herbert and Carmel Pilcher look specifically at inculturating elements of indigenous ritual into liturgy in the Australian context. Bernardus invites the bishops of Flores, Indonesia, to seek ways of incorporating Catholic liturgy into traditional rituals for various cycles of life.

Anthony Kain explores the issue of leading liturgy in the context of a diverse assembly and how to enable full engagement in worship. He uses the gospel of Mark as a model for the various ministerial skills that are required for this to be achieved.

The reform changed all aspects of the Church's liturgical life and its celebration of the sacraments. The next three writers take up a discussion on the area of the reform that has arguably most affected the assembly, the celebration of the Eucharist. Carmel Pilcher develops eucharistic sacrifice in light of current scholarship and concludes that full participation will be realised only when the assembly consciously exercises its significant role in offering sacrifice that flows into daily life. Gerard Moore highlights the significant connection between scripture and the prayer texts of the Mass. He establishes the relationship between the scripture and the prayer of the community, in particular the collect, the Eucharistic Prayer and ritual action. Carol Hogan speaks from her experience of the liturgical reform and its impact upon participation as a woman. She discusses ways that would support and enable women to engage consciously in the liturgy.

At a time when the ordering of the sacraments of initiation is contentious, David Orr speaks of the significance of confirmation as

the passage to full participation by the priestly people at the table of the Eucharist. Julia Upton explores the history of the Sacrament of Penance, the theology and ritual practice of which has evolved over time. She offers ways for this sacrament to become again pastorally effective.

Prior to the Council the Divine Office was primarily used only by priests and religious. Catherine Vincie evaluates the response to the invitation by the Council to restore the Divine Office as the prayer of the entire Church.

Although *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (*SC*) dedicated a chapter to the liturgical year, its writers could not have envisaged the subsequent changes in our understanding of time. Guy Hartcher explores the impact of modern technology and changes in lifestyle—amongst other issues—on the liturgical cycle.

William Jordan reviews the multiple responses to the Council's call to restore music to its integral place in the celebration of liturgy. He explores the current challenges that liturgical musicians face when incorporating appropriate music into the liturgy and makes recommendations for ongoing implementation of the Council's vision. Sadly, Wililiam (Bill) died after a short illness before this book wwent to print. It is fitting that this essay be his 'last word' becaue he has made one of the most significant contributions to the promotion and development of liturgical music in Australia after the Council.

Stephen Hackett reviews the response by diverse communities to provide an appropriate home for the People of God engaged in liturgy. Stephen evaluates a number of church designs in light of the principles enunciated by the Council and concludes that more could be learned by returning to the directives and tradition of postconciliar church design.

Frank O'Loughlin takes us in a new direction. His contribution is to ask: What might *Sacrosanctum Concilium* look like if it was to be written today? He offers an interesting insight into the Church of the early twenty-first century and its liturgical issues.

Stephen Burns and Robert Gribben make a unique contribution to the collection. These colleagues, writing from an Anglican and Uniting Church perspective, reflect upon the impact the work of the Council has had on liturgical reform in Protestant Churches. Stephen, whose work has straddled three continents—the United

Kingdom, Australia and currently the United States—leaves us with a lament that the great bonds of ecumenism brought about by the Council are in danger of fragmenting. In the Afterword, Robert offers a valuable summary of the themes raised in this book and leaves us with a message of hope.

A project of this size is never possible without the contributions not only of the authors but of many behind the scenes.

The editors wish to thank our colleagues Kathleen Hughes RSCJ, Paul Turner, Robert Daly SJ, Paul Philibert OP, Bruce Morrill SJ, Orm Rush, John Frauenfelder, and Frances Gray who peer reviewed the papers.

We thank Paul Mason, Robert Schreiter CPPS and Joan Hendriks who provided research material, Mary Labruna SJBP who translated Piero Marini's paper and to our publisher, ATF Press. We are also extremely grateful to Hilary Regan, and his team, whose dedication and commitment to ATF Press goes way beyond that of a usual publisher. We cannot thank Hilary enough for his enthusiasm, encouragement, support and willingness to go the extra mile to do all he could to meet our requests.

Special thanks to Paul Taylor, secretary of the Australian Bishops' Commission for Liturgy, and to Patricia Malone RSJ, Professor Emeritus at Australian Catholic University, who offered expert advice and assisted greatly with the editorial process of the papers.

We also pay tribute to our colleagues and friends from every part of the world who have served the Church in the implementation and ongoing reform of the liturgy over the decades since the Council, often at great personal cost, but always with great energy and passion to enable God's people to live the liturgy.

Finally we dedicate this book to Bishop Michael Putney in recognition of his scholarly and ecumenical contribution to the work of implementing the conciliar reform. This book begins with an essay he wrote commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the Council. His message that 'those of us who are in roles of pastoral leadership in the Church need to mind the gap between our priorities and issues and the ecclesiastical culture of the present younger generation' continues to be relevant today.

Carmel Pilcher RSJ, David Orr OSB, Elizabeth Harrington

Liturgical Reform: Most Visible Fruit of the Second Vatican Council

Piero Marini

The Second Vatican Council was an important Council for the liturgy, so much so that the Church could state that 'the liturgical renewal is the most visible fruit of the whole conciliar effort'.[1] John Paul II affirmed this statement when he recalled that 'for many people the message of the Second Vatican Council has been experienced principally through the liturgical reform'.[2] It is not by chance that the first act willed by the Council was *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (*SC*).[3]

The importance of the liturgy for the Council is evident when we consider that in the entire history of the Church, it is the only Council that dedicated a specific document to the liturgy. Vatican II had available to it an overview of centuries of the evolution of liturgical practice in the West and in the East, a vision that four centuries before, at the time of the Council of Trent, was not possible due to a lack of adequate tools. Consider, for example, the great advantage that the invention of printing brought only after the Council of Trent to the dissemination of the Bible, of liturgical books and texts of the Fathers.

For the first time in the history of the Church, with Vatican II it was possible to delineate, partly as a result of the studies promoted by the liturgical movement, both the fundamental principles of the

1. Extraordinary Synod of Bishops 1985, Final report, II, B, b. 1, in *Enchiridion Vaticanum* 9 (Bologna: Dehonian Editions, 1987), # 1798.
2. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 1988. #12. <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19881204_vicesimus-quintus-annus_en.html >. Accessed 6 May 2013.
3. The translation is from the text on the official Vatican website <http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html>. Accessed 19 January 2013. All subsequent quotations from the Sacred Constitution are from this site.

liturgy and the essential elements of the liturgical celebration, bearing in mind also the experience of the liturgies of the Eastern Churches. In the fifty years or so since the liturgical reform sought by the Council begun on 7 March 1965,[4] a reform has been accomplished that exceeds in breadth and depth all other major reforms of the past, including the one attributed to St Gregory the Great and the reform of the sixteenth century.

Reforming the Liturgy to Reform the Church

The directives outlined by John XXIII in the Allocution *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* at the end of opening rites of the Council on 11 October 1962 find their synthesis in the preface of *SC*:

> This sacred Council has several aims in view: it desires to impart an ever increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind (sic) into the household of the Church. The Council therefore sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy.[5]

There were four objectives for the Council: the growth of the Christian life; the renewal of Church institutions according to the needs of our time; the unity of all believers in Christ, that is, ecumenism; and the call of all members of the Church to mission. To achieve these four objectives, the Council 'sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy'. For the Council the renewal of the Church, ecumenism and missionary activity are closely linked and depend on the way in which the Church celebrates and lives the liturgy.

The Council Fathers teach us, therefore, to consider liturgical celebrations in relation to the life of the Church. In fact, 'liturgy is the

4. Date of implementation of Instruction *Inter Oecumenici*, #26.
5. *SC* #1.

summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows'.[6]

Beyond Centralisation and Rediscovering the Local Church in the Liturgy

The type of centralised Church that had characterised the period before the Council was changed by Vatican II through the rediscovery of the relationship between Church and liturgy. This discovery led to the re-evaluation of the local Church. The first and fundamental direction given by *SC* focused upon the celebration of the liturgy: particularly the celebration of the Eucharist with the full, active participation of all God's holy people, presided over by the bishop surrounded by his priests and ministers in his cathedral church, in fact is to be considered as the main manifestation of Church.[7]

The Council Fathers then delineated the image of the Church starting not from a theological speculation, but precisely from the concrete celebration of the Eucharist.

The Foundations of the Liturgical Reform

As well as indicating some goals that they had proposed in undertaking the reform of the texts and rites, the Council Fathers established the basic criteria upon which to set the whole reform and renewal of the liturgy according to the tradition and the needs of our time. In *SC* we can identify a twofold series of principles: guiding principles and operational ones.

Guiding principles:

- Liturgy as an exercise of the priesthood of Christ (*SC* 7)
- Liturgy as source and summit of the Church's life (*SC* 10)
- Full, conscious, active participation (*SC* 8)
- Liturgy as the manifestation of the Church (*SC* 26)
- Substantial unity, not rigid uniformity (*SC* 38)
- Sound tradition and legitimate progress (*SC* 23)

6. *SC* #10.
7. See *SC* #41.

Operational principles:

- Language
- Scripture
- Catechesis
- Singing
- Reform of texts and rites

These principles, which are inextricably linked together, form the foundation of the liturgical reform and have already been extensively discussed and deepened.[8] I would like to dwell briefly on just two underlying principles that are, in my opinion, foundational to all the others: the return to the sources—*resourcement*—and a single priesthood for worship. The sources indicated by *SC* are essentially two: sacred scripture and the writings of the Fathers.

Sacred Scripture

The liturgy implements what is written in scripture. That is, scripture testifies a lived story of God and people, a story of salvation that continues in the liturgy through prayers and symbolic acts: *per ritus et preces.* Furthermore, scripture stresses the importance of God's people: the journey of salvation on which God leads his people is achieved not just by an individual but by all the people. Scripture helps us therefore to understand the importance of the assembly and the public nature of the liturgy.

For this reason sacred scripture is the norm, and the means to understand the liturgy and to reform its practice. 'To achieve the restoration, progress, and adaptation of the sacred liturgy, it is essential to promote that warm and living love for scripture.'[9] Thus, there is an intimate link between scripture and liturgical reform. Even the ancient mystagogical texts attest that knowledge of the liturgy is nothing more than knowledge of scripture. The relationship between scripture and liturgy is clearly expressed in *SC*: 'it is from the scriptures that actions and signs derive their meaning'.[10]

8. See Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948–1975* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 39–48.
9. *SC* #24.
10. *SC* #24.