

JPIC 81-NOVEMBER 2018

Health in the Lord and the Blessing of the Holy Spirit..[Rule of Saint Albert]
Saudavel iha Maromak no grasa Spirtu Santo Nian .. [Regula Sto Alberto]

WHAT KIND OF CHURCH ARE WE ?

Comment by Paul Cahill, O.Carm, Prior Provincial



Bishop Vincent Long of Parramatta gave an address recently (11 September 2018) to the *Concerned Catholics of Canberra and Goulburn Forum* entitled *The Role of the Faithful in a post-Royal Commission Church in Australia*.

In this short article, I would like firstly to quote some excerpts of his address and at the end make a few suggestions as to how they might apply to the Carmelite Family.

- *The failures in the Catholic Church's response to child sex abuse that the Royal Commission has exposed are largely the failures of leadership, more specifically the failures of a clerical system of leadership.*
- *The Church has been humbled and humiliated. It has been thrown off its high horse because it has been exposed as having failed its mission and betrayed its own ethos. But it is not necessarily a bad thing that we now have to start from a position of weakness and vulnerability in order to regain our trust and indeed our Gospel compass. I am reminded of the story of the Apostle Paul on his way to Damascus. He fell off his high horse in more ways than one. The fall from his privileged position and the temporary physical blindness meant he had to be led by the hand. But this complete vulnerability was the catalyst for a whole new way of seeing, acting and relating. Paul was never the same afterwards. He learned to be humble, open and docile to God's way. His strength no longer came from his status, entitlement, privilege and power. The Catholic Church has had its Damascus moment in the sexual abuse crisis. It has fallen from the privileged position in society and the power and influence that came with that status. Now, like Paul who was led into a place of vulnerability, we are undergoing a time of uncertainty and darkness until we can learn to see, act and relate in the way of Christ the Humble Servant. We should not fear this time, which is a kind of a Holy Saturday experience. It is a time of ambiguity, of mourning and yet hoping for Good News; it is a liminal interval, a time in which one stands between the old and the new.*



- *It is a question of clericalism inherent in the very culture of the Church, which we must look at very honestly.*
- *The culture of clerical hegemony has been solidly entrenched in the Catholic Church ever since it took centre stage in the Roman Empire. It is a by-product of the model of Church, which sees itself as self-sufficient, superior to and separate from the outside world. Its security, reputation and internal relationships are the centre of attention. The Church in this model becomes the Church of the ordained at the expense of the baptised.*

As a result, the ordained becomes an exalted and elitist club that protects the interests and privileges of its members. This explains the obfuscation and cover-up which is so endemic to this club mentality. It is a far cry from the model of the Humble Servant that Jesus exemplified and this celibate clerical club provides the ideal condition for the disease of clericalism to fester.

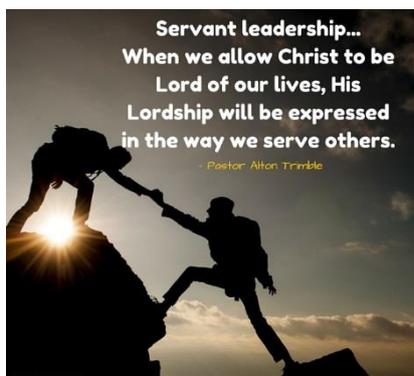
- *The Church as understood and articulated by the Second Vatican Council sees itself as a pilgrim People of God, incarnate in the world. It is a new paradigm – one that is based on mutuality not exclusion, love not fear, service not clericalism, engagement with the world not flight from or hostility against it, incarnate grace not dualism. It is the Church going out of itself as opposed to closing in on itself.*



The time has come for us to embrace and implement unambiguously and decisively the vision of the pilgrim Church, that the Second Vatican Council entrusted to us. The time has come for the Church to be truly the Church of the baptised and together with the ordained, all the People of God can create a new culture of humility, accountability and service.

- *The Church needs prophetic voices, even voices from the margins and from outside, to keep its leaders honest, transparent and accountable. We cannot afford to let the momentum for cultural and structural change in the Church fizzle out. It is for the sake of a healthier Church that all the baptised participate in its functioning and bring their gifts to bear on its growth.*
- *Until we have truly incorporated the gift of women and the feminine dimension of our Christian faith, we will not be able to fully energise the life of the Church.*
- *As a religious bishop, I find myself at times in many situations of conflict. Bishops as you know are custodians of traditions while religious, especially those of the mendicant and itinerant variety are more identified with the people on the periphery.*

Even though priests are those most vulnerable to *clericalism*, all of us in Religious Life can be caught up in a system whereby we are afforded special status, privilege and honour and we can, albeit unwittingly, cultivate a sense of entitlement. Even as a *Carmelite Family*, we need to be careful that we don't somehow, even subconsciously, see ourselves as separate from (or worse still – better than) others. All of us as human beings are one with all the sons and daughters of God, all sinners in need of God's mercy and travelling with one another as pilgrims on a journey, in need of each other's support.



As a *Family*, we need to recognise, cultivate and utilise the gifts of each other, whether priest, religious, or lay; male or female; gay or straight; of whatever nationality, socio-economic or political background – and find ways, together, of putting these gifts at the service of the kingdom of God.

In our ministries as a province, we need to honestly evaluate our systems, processes and structures for any traces or expressions of clericalism. If we find any, we need to reform these systems, processes and structures to ensure they are inclusive and support a culture of humility, accountability and service.

We need to ensure that our formation systems and structures do not, even subconsciously, cultivate a culture of clericalism and that those “in formation” are prepared for life and ministry that *is based on mutuality not exclusion, love not fear, service not clericalism, engagement with the world not flight from or hostility against it, incarnate grace not dualism.*

Paul Cahill, O.Carm

(full text of Bishop Long's address: <https://parracatholic.org/address-to-the-concerned-catholics/>)

The Rising Seas: Climate Change and the Pacific

Recently I joined members of many Religious congregations at the Good Samaritan Centre, Glebe, to welcome and to listen to a passionate appeal by Anote Tong, former President of Kiribati, one of our Pacific Island neighbours. We heard the message loud and clear:

'Climate Change is impacting NOW on our island neighbours and they need our support.'

Our compassion was aroused when we learnt how difficult it is for the leaders of these Pacific Islands to prepare their people for the day when they must leave their homes to migrate to other lands because their islands will be uninhabitable.

IMAGINE !!

- *It is expected that in 12 years from now their homes will be hit by enormous tsunami-like waves which will completely wash over their islands.*
- *Leading up to this time they will not have any fresh groundwater for drinking as the wells will be unusable because of salt water intrusion. Any agricultural production will be halted.*
- *Fish stocks will be affected due to ocean acidification and damage to coral reefs, etc.*

(Gabrielle for JPIC)

WE PRAY: that larger prosperous nations will realise their greed for resources and consumerism is having an impact on these vulnerable Pacific Islands who are powerless to stop the rising sea levels and impact of climate change. May we learn to care for each other in this our ONE WORLD and come to assist each other with adaptation and financial assistance.



IMPROVEMENTS AUSTRALIA CAN MAKE ?

- As a rich country that mines and exports coal and that has one of the highest green-house gas emissions per person in the world, it is only fair that Australia contributes much more to funds such as the Green Climate Fund.
- More Australian funding needs to go to adaptation programs in Pacific Islands.
- Australia could integrate climate change strategies across all of its aid programs.
- Support Pacific Island international campaigns to ensure projects and climate finance for Pacific Island nations is more predictable and accessible.

<https://www.erc.org.au/pcp>

FOR YOUR CALENDAR: NOVEMBER

- 4 Nov - Day of Prayer for Anglican-Roman Catholic Reconciliation
- 5 Nov - World Tsunami Awareness Day
- 10 Nov - World Science Day for Peace and Development
- 11 Nov - Remembrance Day: 100th Anniversary of the end of World War I (1918)
- 12 Nov - 1991 Dili Massacre, Timor Leste
- 16 Nov - International Day for Tolerance
- 18 Nov - World Day of the Poor
- 20 Nov - Universal Children's Day - 1959 Adoption by UN of the Declaration of Rights of the Child
- 25 Nov - International Day for elimination of Violence Against women
- 25 Nov - UN Declaration of Elimination of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief
- 28 Nov - Proclamation of Independence Day Timor Leste
- 29 Nov - International Day of solidarity with the Palestinian people

TO PONDER:

✚ *There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he/she must take it because conscience dictates that it is right.*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

✚ Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves... live everything. Live the question now. Perhaps then, some day far in the future, you will gradually without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.

Rainer Maria Rilke