

decree a law? Is it in conformity with the story of his own life and death on a cross? On this basis can we reconcile the words of the gospels with all we know about the *person* who spoke them?

Conclusion

It is obvious that, even for those Christians who most earnestly seek the will of Jesus in this matter of divorce and remarriage, there are many problems in the evidence of the Second Testament, for uncertainties abound in every single one of the texts. Is this an indication that, while we must have the greatest respect for the Scriptures, God will not solve all our problems for us, and we cannot put all the responsibility onto God? Must we not rather take a large measure of both personal and collective responsibility in this delicate and difficult field?

I fear that some Protestant Churches have in practice been caught into ways of acting on this subject that do not do justice to the powerful call of Jesus. At the same time there must be queries as to whether the teaching of the Catholic Church, as set out in canons 5 and 7 of the Canons on the Sacrament of Matrimony of the Council of Trent,²⁶ truly respects the teaching and the *person* of Jesus as revealed to us in the Second Testament. I hope that I have shown that these canons of Trent are selective in the parts of the Second Testament they quote and fall well short of reflecting the entirety of the evidence. Surely there are matters here that are in urgent need of serious discussion.

26. '5. If anyone says that the marriage bond can be dissolved because of heresy, or irksome cohabitation, or because of the wilful desertion of one of the spouses, anathema sit . . . 7. If anyone says that the church is in error for having taught and for still teaching that in accordance with the evangelical and apostolic doctrine (cf Mk10:1; 1Cor 7), the marriage bond cannot be dissolved because of adultery on the part of one of the spouses, and that neither of the two, not even the innocent one who has given no cause for infidelity, can contract another marriage during the lifetime of the other; and that the husband who dismisses an adulterous wife and marries again and the wife who dismisses an adulterous husband and marries again are both guilty of adultery, anathema sit.' Quoted from *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, edited by J Neuner and J Dupuis (London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1983), 529.

God's Dreaming: Tomorrow's Roman Catholic Church

Antony F Campbell, SJ

Change has affected today's global world as seldom before. Global media have made this obvious to all who can see. The people, men and women, who are the Church are affected by this change. It would be impossible for change not to affect the Church. Much has occurred; more is on the way. King Canute could not hold back the sea; Rome cannot hold back the change.

To my mind, there are five BASIC areas where immediate change is needed in the Roman Catholic Church today. There are many others, but these five are basic.

1. The abolition of cardinals, their status and prerogatives.
2. The equality of women: being a woman as no obstacle for any position in the Church.
3. The revision of the status of pope: leader not monarch.
4. The recognition of the people of God as the core of the Church.
5. The recognition of God's love for us humans, sinners as we are, as the cause of the Incarnation.

Reducing these to something like a short summary might seem harsh and divisive. What the summary does is give a hint of the outcome of the comments below. Here are the soundbites:

No need for cardinals
Great need for women
Revision needed for papacy
Revaluation needed for people of God
'Loved though sinners' to replace 'guilt & sin'

Unpacking these briefly:

Cardinals have to go because they are too easily perceived as constituting a papal court, subtly emphasising the view of the pope as monarch. Monarchy and clericalism are the major flaws on today's Roman Catholic Church. Beyond the roles of bishop and archbishop, there would need to be some form of recognition for specific service to the Church. For example, Counsellor to the Pope (CP) and Advisor to the Pope (AP), and others.

The statement that being a woman or being female is no obstacle for any position within the Church is not to ignore that there are other obstacles beyond gender to specific positions within the Church. Such obstacles could be lack of experience, lack of knowledge, lack of the personal qualities required, lack of training and preparation, and so on. But being woman or being female is not an obstacle.

Currently the pope, once elected, is in power for life and that power is nominally absolute. The latter two qualities, life term and absolute power, are shared only with dictators, tyrants, and despots—not good company for a pope. That the pope is elected is essential, but not for life, and not by a College of Cardinals that has never been meant to be representative of the global Church.

With the cardinals gone, a new electoral college is required to elect the Pope. Such an electoral college should reflect the people of God, men and women, with one or more members from each bishops' conference, including the people, men and women, within the region of each conference. The college would elect the pope for a fixed term (say five or ten years). At the end of such a term, an electoral college would be reassembled with a simple mandate: whether to retain or replace the current pope. If replacement is decided, a new pope would need to be elected. In this way, the pope is the servant and leader of the people of God, not their monarch.

Doctrinal issues and the like within the Church, are not to be determined by the decision of the pope or the curial bureaucracy. Akin to the electoral college there would need to be an ecclesial college, representing the entire people of God, men and women, and convening as needed to advise their leader, the pope, on matters concerning the people of God. Decisions needed after the work of an ecclesial college would be the task of the pope as leader of the people of God.

Guilt has long been in the background of so much language of God correlated with divine mercy. With scriptural evidence for the notion of original sin largely dismissed, attention needs to shift to the issue of God's love for the sinner, all sinners. A focus on sin and guilt and redemption detracts from the mystery of the Incarnation and is unfair to God and untrue to God. It is the triumph of the human obliterating the mystery of the divine.

What I have briefly outlined needs to be unfolded in more detail. One way of thinking about the Church is that it is a precious vessel into which we pour our need for meaning, our longing for the spiritual, and our response to a loving God. The Church is a vessel, a sphere of life, in which those values are revered and are energised, in which lives are lived that embody those values. The Church is not merely something that happened to us: I was born Catholic; I went to a Catholic school; I was Catholic/I am Catholic. More than that: the Church is something that I chose as I matured and as these values became important to me. The Church is the sphere of life where I find the values that I hold dear sustained and cherished—and so energized and kept alive in me. There I find others who cherish the same values and whose friendship energises these values and keeps them alive in me.

The Church is today's response to the reality of Jesus Christ. We moderns need to be aware of the full impact of this reality, of the wonder and awe it involves. In the early years of the Church's existence theologians struggled with the task of finding language to express adequately the fact of Jesus Christ. There was but one God, yet Jesus was the Son of God, and Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit. Trinitarian theology was developed to cope with this. Beyond the idea of a Trinity, the life of Jesus as one of us was evidence of the value God set then and sets now on human life—God's concern for us, and God's commitment to us, and our wonder and awe in response. It was also evidence of how a human life could be lived.

Centuries went by as the Church struggled for suitable language to express these beliefs. The outcome was the great early Councils such as Nicaea, Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople. Their work is not surpassed today. The Nicene Creed (or equivalent) is an integral part of the weekly Roman Catholic liturgy. Over the centuries, however, it has never taken away the absolute mystery of Christian faith. Over

the years, the vessel has needed refining and restructuring; after all, there have been aberrations. Today the vessel acutely needs reshaping in order to be faithful to its past.

The vessel also needs reshaping in order to achieve its goals now. If the Church is to have a role as a significant body in people's lives, it has to energize what people value in their faith. The need for meaning can lead to contact with others and it can lead to seeking the ultimate contact with one's inner being. The longing for the spiritual can be met with others and with oneself in the context of a loving God and Jesus Christ, God's Son. The recognition of God's love for us is most present in the person of Jesus Christ. Contact with tomorrow's Church is at its best deeply and richly human. Support is there when support is needed. Life is energized when energy is lacking. When human presence is needed, human presence is there. When human goodness is to be sought out and sustained, the contents of the vessel can be drawn on and give life. Does the sophistication of much of modern life sometimes distract us from the innerness of these realities?

In the right circumstances, three simple words, 'I love you,' can have a transforming and totally joyful effect on a human being; wonder and awe approach it, but fall short. Hearing those words from God is far from simple, but it is the essence of modern Christianity. Ancient Israel enshrined it in Psalm 8:

What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them? (Ps 8:4)

'Wow!' falls far short of a human response. Yet it was said then and remembered; it still needs to be heard now and taken to heart. It is far from face to face expression, yet it is at the core of faith's reality. Many of us back off, but in our heart of hearts we know we shouldn't. Tomorrow's Church must place at its core that universal love, love for all—not by us for God, but of God for all people, all of us. As parents love their wayward kids, so does God love God's often wayward creation. The French saying is to the point: '*tout savoir est tout pardonner*' (to know all is to forgive all). God has the advantage of knowing all. Of course it is a mystery, but mysteries are to be treasured.

This essay seeks to address that reshaping. Five points are enough; others will flow from these.

Cardinals

Cardinals as princes of the Church go a long way back in history. The concept is not divorced from the feudalism of the late Middle Ages. The prince archbishop is not an unusual figure from those times. Reading John O'Malley's *Trent*,¹ I was surprised to realise that alongside so important and so extensive a Council attention had to be paid, beyond the bishops, to four monarchs: the Holy Roman Emperor, the King of France, the King of Spain, and of course the pope (King of the Church). The interaction of Church and State power goes back centuries. Over the centuries, the role of the pope as monarch is evident. Over the centuries, the role of cardinals has evolved. Today, whatever their status in canon law, they can be seen as a princely court surrounding the pope, with privileged access to the pope, and with higher standing than many in the governing circles of the Church.

If the model of leadership in the RC Church is to be, as it should be, the washing of the feet (Jn 13; 'For I have set you an example' Jn 13:15), cardinals in their splendour have to go. It will be a loss for TV and the media, but it is loss that must be borne. The evolution of the papacy into a monarchy is undoubtedly a troubled and complex one requiring the attention of a professional historian—which I am not. That the evolution has arrived at a monarchy is beyond doubt.

The practical issues would need to be worked out. It is relatively simple for a pope to announce that he would no longer nominate any new cardinals. That leaves the situation uncertain for those already in place. One possibility might be to offer current cardinals the choice between their current job and the status of cardinal. Keep the status of cardinal and resign from the current job. Or keep the current job and resign from the position of cardinal. There would be other possibilities.

The leadership model I am using is that of a prime minister in the Westminster system. The prime minister is elected by his party. If he strays too far from his party, he will be replaced. The party is elected by the people. If it strays too far from the people, it will be

1. John W O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

replaced. For the ways in which this might be achieved within the Roman Catholic Church, see below.

Women

Women make up at least fifty per cent of the human population around the globe. As a general rule, women have greater insight into matters religious than most men. The enormous contribution of women in the Roman Catholic Church is blindingly obvious, whether in schools, hospitals, social care, parishes, and so many other ways.

The idea that women should be excluded from certain positions within the Church can only be advocated from a position of patriarchy that cannot be sustained. Naturally certain positions require specific qualities and experience without which candidates would be excluded. Being female, being a woman cannot fall into this category.

So for example, if there is a search for a vicar-general, for a bishop, for a pope, certain qualities and abilities are required. If a man meets these requirements he can be a candidate; if he does not, he cannot be a candidate. Similarly, if a woman meets these requirements she can be a candidate; if she does not, she cannot be a candidate. Being male is not one of these requirements. It is an absurd waste that the Roman Catholic Church should deprive itself of access to fifty per cent of the talent available to it.

An aside: Does this mean that the current seminary system needs a thoroughgoing overhaul. According to what I have heard from those administering the system and those graduated from it, such an overhaul is needed. Trent is a long time ago; today is today. Access to university departments of theology is available now in ways that it never was before. The absence of access to effective pastoral priests is an unacceptable deprivation. One of the issues that today's Church authorities need to address urgently is what is needed in the formation of future priests and how this need can best be met. Theological education can be provided by departments of theology. Will this be comprehensive? Probably not. Is seminary theology comprehensive? Certainly not. A rethink and reshape is urgent.

Popes

If popes are to be leaders and not monarchs, some accountability towards those they lead is clearly essential. Two characteristics have to be mitigated: absolute authority and a life term. At first sight, it seems outrageous to suggest that popes are accountable to the people of God, men and women. But leaders are accountable to their people in ways more direct than those of monarchs. Vatican II is held up as an example of the people of God coming to the fore in the Roman Catholic Church. The role of the pope as monarch tends to remain behind the scenes. Reading the later Cardinal Yves Congar's account of the council (*My Journal of the Council*²) the evidence for this is constant and horrifying. A request is brought to the pope for a further title to be given to Mary. With the assembled Council present in Rome, Pope Paul VI quashed the request without the Council even knowing about it. The relationship between pope and council is a complex one. The pope is unquestionably a monarch, not the lesser status of a leader.

There is absolute authority and a life term. If the pope were elected for a limited term (five, or ten years, or whatever), subject to extension by an electoral college, the life term issue would be resolved. If extension of a limited term reflected accountability to the electoral college, less directly reflecting accountability to the people of God, the absolute authority issue would be resolved.

The proposal put forward here, therefore, is that in the absence of the cardinals, there should be an electoral college made up of one or two electors from each episcopal conference or a person from that region, outside the episcopal conference. The present electoral college of cardinals is hardly representative of the global Church. An electoral college drawn from the global spread of episcopal conferences has the possibility of being more globally representative. It has the *possibility*; many might say the *vain hope*. Those with hope and optimism have to say the possibility. Centuries might pass before the possibility becomes real.

When the limited term expired, the pope would be under the obligation to convoke an electoral college. It would face a simple question: whether to *retain* or *replace* the pope. If the college decided

2. Yves Congar, *My Journal of the Council* (Adelaide: ATF Press,).

to retain the pope, the issue of term limit would need decision. If the college decided to replace the pope, the pope would be under the obligation to resign and a successor would be elected. In this way, the two issues of absolute authority and life term are resolved. Lurking behind this proposal is the understanding of the people of God, men and women, as the core of the Church.

People

At first sight, it may seem to many that the idea of papal accountability to the people of God is out of the question. From the outset, Peter is the rock on which the Church is to be founded (Mt 16:18). Is that rock to lead or to reign? The foot washing of John 13 offers one example. 'For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you' (Jn 13:15). Leaders are attentive to their people.

'At first sight' is an invitation to further seeing. Looking reflectively into the past of theological tradition, we uncover the principle, '*Lex orandi lex credendi*' (the law of prayer is the law of belief). The praying is done by the people, men and women; the believing is articulated by the theologians. The recent pope Benedict XVI—himself a professional theologian, Professor Joseph Ratzinger, Tübingen—spoke out impressively on this issue.

God's people constitute the 'magisterium that precedes', to which theology later has to add depth and which theology has to accept on an intellectual plane. May theologians always listen to this fount of faith and safeguard the humility and simplicity of little ones!³

The message is clear, remembering the roots of Benedict XVI as a professional theologian: the fount of faith is God's people, men and women. 'May theologians always listen to this fount of faith.'

This is nothing new. In terms of tradition, it stretches from at least the Council of Vatican II to St Augustine (see *Lumen Gentium* #12 and 1 John 2:20, 27). Whatever utterances of reverence may come from various people from time to time, any awareness of history makes it clear beyond any doubt that God is not in some special

way embodied in the Roman Catholic pope. Morals and doctrine have both been gravely tarnished in the past by papal behaviours and papal assertions. As Pope Francis has said several times, reality triumph over ideas, or perhaps better that experience triumphs over speculation associated with faith. Jesus was the incarnate Word of God not because of God's longing to be one with the bureaucrats and officials of the Church, bishops and pope included. The Incarnation is evidence for the unitive love of God for the people God joined in Jesus.

The Roman Catholic pope is the leader of the Roman Catholic people of God. The pope is installed in office by the institution of the Roman Catholic Church. As leader, the pope is responsible to the people of God. When there is question of not renewing the papal term of office, the thoughts of the electoral college responsible for this should be on the well-being and faith of the people of God rather than favour or disfavour of the institution's central bureaucrats. While this is more easily put into words than established as fact in the political reality of human behaviour, the words must be there, 'the people of God are the Church' and political reality must be brought into line with that.

All of this is why, when Rome is seeking real answers to live questions (as in the series of Synods), it is the people of God who must be heard by the Pope and not the Pope who, in the first instance, instructs the people of God. The divorce and remarriage issue is a good case in point. Should it be decided by aged celibates, mainly in Rome, with extensive experience in theology and absolutely no experience in marriage, divorce, and remarriage. If the decision goes to the people of God, world wide, it is probable that it would be a very complex outcome. It would then be the role of the Pope, as leader of the people of God, to see how best that complex outcome should be put into practice across the global Church—whether region by region, or resolution by delay, or trust in personal conscience, or whatever possibilities may emerge. If the people of God are unhappy with the papal decisions, then at term's end a new Pope can be chosen.

Is it likely that this might be messy? Of course. Frankly, is there anything that is genuinely human that is not messy?

3. Quoted with source in Gill *Have Life Abundantly* (Adelaide: ATF Press), 66.

The Guilt Issue

It is hardly surprising that Christians are deeply concerned about evil and have long seen the death of Jesus as eliminating the burden of that evil. In today's world, the global reach of television and the more individualised reality of social media mean that we have an awareness of the widespread existence of evil that is probably unique to today.

It is difficult to look back to the very beginnings. Choices were not legislated; they happened and were perpetuated. The initial choice of Peter as leader was unbelievably symbolic. As the rock on whom the Church was to be founded, his frailty and fallibility can hardly be bettered. 'Get behind me, Satan' and 'I tell you, I know not the man' is evidence enough that humanity will never be excluded. That means also that what was acceptable at the beginning may no longer be acceptable in tomorrow's world. That also means that what is in the New Testament reflects its time and that time is no longer today. For answers, we must look to today's questions. Today's answers are not found in the solutions of yesteryear. Oddly enough, fidelity requires flexibility. What was valued then may need to make room for what is valued now. Divinity did not replace humanity. Divinity, in Jesus Christ, became human.

Conclusion

There is obviously much more to be said about specific areas where change is necessary. The clerical involvement in the issues of child sexual abuse is obviously one of them. But the five changes proposed here are fundamental; from them much else can flow. The elimination of the cardinals and the limits on the papacy play down the monarchical aspect of the Roman Catholic Church today. The opening to women of every position in the Church is simply doing away with an obvious hangover from a patriarchal past that greatly impoverishes the Church. The emphasis on the core role in the Church of the people of God should do much to diminish the crippling effect of clericalism in today's Church, both on the part of clergy and on the part of the people of God. The theological insistence must be on God's love for the sinner to replace issues of redemption from sin. It may be God's dream. Whether it will be the reality of tomorrow's Roman Catholic Church we have yet to see.

Being Church Today (Here Comes Everybody!)

William Morris

Centuries ago when map makers ran out of the known world before they ran out of parchment, they would sketch a dragon at the end of the scroll. This was a warning to the explorer that he/she would be entering unknown territory and at their own risk. Unfortunately, some explorers took this symbol literally and were afraid to push on to new worlds. Other more adventurous explorers saw the dragons as a sign of opportunity, a door to virgin territory.

Each of us has a mental map of the world in our heads that contains the information we use to guide ourselves in our day-to-day encounters. Like the maps of long ago, our mental maps also have dragons on them. These represent things that, for whatever reason, we don't want to do or push beyond. It is the fear of something that stops us. Sometimes these dragons are valid; sometimes, however, they prevent us from discovering something new.¹

Fear comes from a need to be in control and is one of the most debilitating emotions there is; elections are won on fear, people are controlled by fear. Frank O'Loughlin in his book, *This Time of the Church*, speaks of the formula used throughout much of the history of the Church, 'Outside the Church, no salvation' as being 'very significant as a strong motivating force in keeping people faithful to the Church and it was a strong motive for mission activity'.² When we fear something or someone we stop living and all our relationships starting with ourselves become stunted.

We need to break out of the ghetto of suffocation that fear puts us in and breathe the air of the Spirit. We need to walk in the hope of Pope John XXIII who was shocked to discover what was being said by some people who saw nothing but ruin and calamity in the existing