



# arvoice

A Report from Australian Reforming Catholics  
June 2002 Issue No. 4

## Message From The Secretariat

All is now in place for our Inaugural Conference on 4-6 October 2002 at Abbotsleigh, Wahroonga (Sydney). Venue is ready! Our balanced panel of speakers is ready and all are happy with our theme, *Conversations Around Jesus Christ, Our Friend*. Let the conversation begin!

Fr Tissa Balasuriya of Sri Lanka is looking forward to meeting you all and giving the keynote address, *Jesus, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. He will deal with the understandings of Jesus in the early Church, distortions in later centuries and efforts at rethinking now. He will give us his thoughts on the pluralist secular world of tomorrow reflecting on the operation of the Spirit among the disciples of the future or, in other words, on how the *Sensus Fidelium* functions. Our very own Mary MacKillop will also surely welcome him because they share the common experience of having fallen foul of certain gentlemen with the 'power' to excommunicate. Both sentences were rescinded. The dying Bishop Sheil repented of what he had done to Mary. So bishops, like everyone else, do change!

The concept of *Sensus Fidelium* is very important to ARC. It means that universal truths in matters of faith and morals can only be identified as such when understood and accepted by the People of God. Indeed, the Vatican II document, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (2:12) declares, 'The body of the faithful as a whole, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief'. Cardinal John Newman had insights into this concept and they will be touched on by Fr. Tissa.

Veronica Brady IBVM will examine *Gender and the Sensus Fidelium*. Sr Veronica has consistently and

steadfastly supported women's achieving equal status with men and indeed in her own case she has held several public positions rarely given to women such as Member of the Board of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. It is noteworthy that in her professional field of literature women's status was assured long before it was in other arenas. This has doubtless helped to give her the confidence to speak her mind.

contd. p.2

### ARC'S Inaugural Conference

4-6 October 2002

Theme: Conversations around Jesus Christ, our friend  
(John 15, 14-17)

Abbotsleigh, Wahroonga (Sydney)

Keynote Speaker: Tissa Balasuriya OMI

Other Speakers: Sr Veronica Brady, Fr Brian Gore,  
Therese Vassarotti, Mark Yettica-Paulson  
Chairperson: John Buggy

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### In this issue

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Page 1/2 | Message from the Secretariat<br>Conference Advertisement   |
| Page 3/4 | <i>Speaking up when it counts</i> - John Wijngaards  |
| Page 4   | <i>Rome Has Spoken</i> - advertisement<br>Have your say!<br>Cartoon - Jane Harty<br>International Observations |
| Page 5   | ARC Visual Identity Explained<br>Words of Wisdom   |
| Page 6   | NOTICE BOARD<br>ARC Membership Form  |

The world is in considerable crisis at the moment. Are the world's leaders dealing with the situation adequately, or justly, or morally? Fr **Brian Gore**, a Columban priest, made headline news in Australia in the early 1980's when he and some of his parishioners on Negros Island in the Philippines were accused of the most outrageous crimes. After 50 court appearances all charges were dropped. This first-hand experience of persecution by a corrupt government and his ongoing activities in the areas of justice, ecology and peace uniquely qualify Fr Brian to address *A Christian's Response to September 11*.

**Therese Vassarotti** will set the scene for the Conference on the Friday evening by addressing, *Is The Church In Crisis?* For two months prior to the Conference she will be on long-service leave in Europe and so will be in an ideal position to regard the Church there in a relaxed frame of mind. At home, Therese is Executive Officer of the Commission for Australian Catholic Women, set up by the Bishops Committee For Justice, Development and Peace on the recommendation of its unique Report on the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia (published as *Woman and Man, One in Christ Jesus*).

**Mark Yettica-Paulson**, a young indigenous man from the Baptist community and Executive Officer of the Lingiari Foundation, will reveal how indigenous Australians truly do regard Jesus as their cousin-brother. It may be the destiny of our indigenous sisters and brothers to teach us how to truly converse around, and with, Jesus Christ, our friend. Mark is highly motivational and spends a great deal of time working with young people to encourage and give them confidence in leadership. His address will be, *Jesus, Our Cousin-Brother*.

**John Buggy** will chair the Conference with a wealth of communication experience. He entered the priesthood in the wake of Vatican II and had high hopes for the future. He especially expected there to be changes with respect to the Church's attitude to birth control and, when little regard was given to advice from lay people who had eagerly participated in the Church's own enquiry into the matter, he remained outspoken and was required to resign in 1973. John has remained active in stimulating discussion on Church matters and in writing articles and he supports Christian values through the Family Group Movement.

There will be two sessions of workshops and the topics will be assigned closer to the Conference according to the perceived demand.

Unique to this Conference will be a Eucharistic Meal on the Saturday evening combining the Conference dinner with the rites prescribed after the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Jn 6) and during the Last Supper. On the Sunday at 4 pm we shall have an Ecumenical Service and hope that we shall have good representation from the various Christian churches. Abbotsleigh is an Anglican school for girls and we are grateful that the school authorities accepted us for this Conference. Perhaps ten years ago it might not have happened. Perhaps, indeed, the Christian denominations have reached the stage when we can start exploring together the nature of 'church', not at this weekend but at some time in the future.

Did anyone notice the first reading of the Mass for 30 June (yes, this is being written on the last day of June, we apologise that the June ARCvoice is a tad late)? Check it out in 2 Kings 4:8ff. Elisha is always breaking his journey to Shunem for a meal at a certain house. The wife suggests to her husband that they build him a small room on the roof with a bed, table, chair and lamp. Sydneysiders, we are asking you, not to build little rooms on your roofs, but to offer beds in existing rooms under your roofs! How about opening your hearts and your homes for the Sunday and Monday nights of the long weekend to the like-minded people from the rest of Australia who are making a big effort to come to Sydney? We shall end the Conference at 5.30 pm on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>. Take people home with you to continue the conversation there and get to know them. One of the difficulties of a national organisation in Australia is the size of the country. It is hard to get to know one another. Think about it and see what you can do!

Brochures are accompanying this *arcvoice* but if you do not have one please contact one of us. PLEASE DO COME TO THE CONFERENCE. We hope that after the Conference, groups will begin to form around the country and thoughtful people will begin to think and talk and write about the changes which must surely occur in the Catholic Church and in the wider Church.

*Barbara Campbell, Ted Lambert, Jim Taverner*

## Speaking Up When It Counts

John Wijngaards

To people who are not familiar with Church jargon or Church politics, the Pope's *Motu Proprio Ad Tuendam Fidem* of the 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1998 must have looked as innocuous as it was short. The Pope announced that 'everything set forth definitively by the Magisterium of the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals must be firmly accepted and held; namely those things required for the holy keeping and faithful exposition of the deposit of faith'. Those who disagree were threatened with a penalty by revised canon 1371 in Church Law; and the oath of fidelity imposed on parish priests, theologians and others from that time on included that narrow understanding.

So what? you may think. You will probably see the implications if you care to read the tortuous commentary on *Ad Tuendam Fidem* provided by Cardinal Ratzinger (29 June 1998). He mentions in passing that among the doctrines definitively taught by the Magisterium we find 'the more recent teaching regarding the doctrine that priestly ordination is reserved only to men'. Suddenly the exclusion of women from priestly ordination has been given the status of being a doctrine necessarily connected to revealed truth! Reason for this, the Cardinal maintains, is that this exclusion is 'founded on the written Word of God, and constantly preserved and applied in the Tradition of the Church'. He even goes so far as to assert that the Church may well, in good time, define it 'as a doctrine to be believed as divinely revealed'.

In other words, the ban against women has now been given almost the same status as other revealed doctrines: that Jesus Christ is God, that there are Three Persons in God, that Jesus founded a Church, and so on. And legally it means that the unreserved acceptance of the male-only priesthood can be demanded, under oath, from parish priests, theologians who teach in seminaries and colleges, from anyone with responsibility in the Church. Ratzinger warns that those who disagree with Rome 'reject a truth of Catholic doctrine and are therefore no longer in full communion with the Catholic Church'.

Rome's claims sound incredible and pathetic to anyone who knows the state of theological research. There is absolutely no shred of evidence for saying that the exclusion of women from the priestly ministry is taught by Sacred Scripture. Neither can it be shown to have been part of genuine Catholic Tradition. Sure, few women were admitted to the priesthood in past centuries, but this can be shown to have been due to cultural

prejudices, in particular to medieval Church Law which imported much from civil Roman law, including its refusal to see women hold any form of public office. Women were given a full sacramental ordination as deacons, thus receiving holy orders. The arguments for and against can be read in detail on the website [www.womenpriests.org](http://www.womenpriests.org) and in my book *The Ordination of Women in the Catholic Church* (DLT 2001). What the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith has actually done is claim a connection with revealed truth which the vast majority of Catholic theologians utterly reject. And so it has created a whole new 'ball game'.

Priests, theologians and other office-bearers in the Church are now faced with a conflict of conscience. I for one, after having taught theology and scripture for 36 years, decided that I would not be able to take the oath of fidelity. Moreover, I find it unbearable that conscientious Catholics who for valid reasons defend the ordination of women are told that they are no longer in full communion with the Catholic Church. I offered my resignation from the active priestly ministry three months after Ratzinger's official commentary on *Ad Tuendam Fidem*. I know from many of my colleagues and friends among bishops, clergy and teaching staffs that a lot of soul-searching is going on. The discussion has now shifted to more radical questions, like: How did Church authority drift so far apart from academic studies? How can Church leaders so utterly ignore the critical voice of its committed membership?

It is obvious that Church structures need a thorough overhaul. The teaching of Vatican II on co-responsibility needs to be implemented. The laity should be involved on all decision-making levels of the Church. The bishops should be elected through a far more democratic process and be allowed to give true local leadership in their own dioceses; after all, they are 'vicars of Christ' in their own right, not officials planted by Rome to enforce the party line. The way the ministries are perceived and exercised should be thoroughly reformed: they should be inclusive of both sexes; more focussed on being 'among people' (thus open to marriage) than being 'different from people' (thus all celibates); geared to service rather than power in a community where all the faithful are treated as autonomous and responsible members. The tools of oppression need to be revised, such as the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the latest *Code of Canon Law*.

The Catholic community is a wonderful reality in our

world, as I have seen with my own eyes in dozens of countries. I am privileged to personally know thousands of committed priests, religious and lay people who make a great contribution to society and to their local churches. Unfortunately, many are afraid to say what they really think. But if the Church means anything to us, we need to serve it now by 'speaking up' in whatever way we can. Vatican II clearly teaches that all the faithful, in line with their knowledge, competence or ability 'are permitted and sometimes even obliged to express their opinion on those things which concern the good of the Church'. Criticism should be voiced 'with truth, courage and in prudence, with reverence and charity toward those who by reason of their sacred office represent the person of Christ' (*Lumen Gentium* § 37). As we say in my native Holland, 'the friend who dares to tell me the truth, is the friend who cares'.

John Wijngaards is Director of Housetop International Centre for Faith Formation in London. He resigned from the priestly ministry in protest at *Ad Tuendam Fidem* in 1999.



## International Observations

### A fresh 'Rome has Spoken' case

Antonio Rosmini (1797-1855) was an Italian catholic philosopher whose book *The Five Wounds of Christ* (1832) was written as a program for church reform. Among other things Rosmini suggested the involvement of both the clergy and the people of a diocese in the election of their bishop.

This book was one of two that were put on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1849 and yet his entire work was declared above suspicion in 1854.

But in 1887, the decree *post obitum* of the Holy Office condemned as erroneous 40 propositions drawn from his writings.

Since July 2001 these propositions are no longer erroneous. Is this a switch?

No, says Ratzinger.

In the *nota* of the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith, published in the *Osservatore Romano*, it was decided to use – for the first time by the CDF – the historical-critical method. In 1887 the decree *post obitum* was based on then ruling neo-thomistic philosophy and the condemnation of Rosmini's work was correct in that context.

Reading Rosmini's work must be done in the context of his own philosophy.

Furthermore, the present pope, in his encyclical *Faith and Reason* of 1998, has welcomed philosophical pluralism in the church and, in fact, mentioned with great respect Antonio Rosmini among several Catholic thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

(See NCR 25 January 2002 page 18, an article by Gregory Baum, emeritus professor of religious studies at McGill University in Montreal).

Contributed by Jim Taverne

## Have your say!

ARCVoice is a report of news, opinion and reflection on the renewal and reform currently experienced in the Catholic church.

Your contributions, letters, articles or comments are most welcome (succinctness appreciated!)

The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Editor nor of ARC

Please send material to:

**Australian Reforming Catholics**

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OR (preferably)

email: knowlden1@bigpond.com

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## Rome Has Spoken

Editors: Maureen Fiedler and Linda Rabben

is the recommended reference book for all ARC MEMBERS. Available from the Eremos Institute Bookshop for \$49.95. Special deal to ARC Members: \$45 plus \$4 postage. For those who are also Eremos Members, \$40 plus \$4 postage.

Order by phone, email, fax or post from: Eremos Institute, 16 Masons Drive, North Parramatta 2151.

Tel: (02) 9683 5096, Fax: (02) 9683 6617

email: eremosinstit@hotmail.com

website: www.eremos.org.au

that is the foundation of the emerging manifesto. Considering that before retirement I had spent many years in marketing and brand management, I offered to help in developing an identity for ARC, and so the exciting project began. I was given a couple of suggestions for the design, one of which was a strong desire from Ted Lambert to have the map of Australia featured in some way. Apart from that, the ARC people were open to further options.

It was at that time that I met Margaret Knowlden who has a wealth of desktop publishing experience and was agreeable to helping out on the Project.

Firstly, I decided that even though by this time the organisation was referred to as ARC, the visual design should spell out the meaning of the acronym. And so the task of choosing an appropriate typeface (font) lay ahead.

There are hundreds of typefaces available these days, but with two basic style options. One is called a serif face, while the other is called sanserif. A serif style is where each of the letters has a link to the following letters, while a sanserif is where the link is removed and the letters remain free-standing. Considering the ethos of ARC, my preference was to use a serif typeface and as well to use lower case (no capitals) to symbolise humility and equality.

After tossing around a number of styles, we chose one called Georgia – which I think has a lovely lyrical sound and shape to it, and is also a charming feminine name. To give equal spacing to the three words, I placed a simple cross at the end of Catholics.

Since European settlement, the Catholic Church in

The outline of Australia forms the inside of the 'a' while an open-sided cross forms the inside of the 'c'. The open-sided cross – or cross on its side – is a resurrection message, a story of new life beyond the crucifixion.

When designing an identity it is usual to nominate specified colours. At this point in time though there are no specific colours which allow for flexibility and which also keep printing costs at a minimum. In most cases, the colour will be black on white – or white out of black. But when the logo needs to be used in colour, say for a banner or a large poster, I would recommend bright, fresh colours such as reds, yellows, light blues and white.

For the masthead of ARCvoice, the rounded style of the original sketch was replaced by a sharper, more modern Helvetica font style. We were forced into this because it was much easier in the time available to use a font within the computer than to work on completing a hand-drawn original. Even so, the character of the original is retained.

As ARC grows it may be appropriate to revisit the design of the identity. In many cases, the outcome of such reviews is to retain the design as is, whereas it may be decided to modify or seek something completely different. Meanwhile, the visual identify of ARC is as you see published in this journal.

I hope that this background to the creative development of an organisation's visual identify gives you some understanding of the creative and practical hurdles needed to be crossed in achieving a final design that links communication, nationality, visual appeal and spirituality.

*Alan Holroyd*

## Words of Wisdom

'In new circumstances, literal interpretation of the past does not necessarily re-present faithfulness to the great tradition.'

Edward Schillebeeckx *Minister? Pastor? Prophet?* p66

'Prophesy is again and again the renewing force which interprets the tradition afresh in new situations.'

Anton Houtepen *Minister? Pastor? Prophet?* p35

'Everyone has the right to live out his/her faith on the basis of old models of experience, culture and thought, but such attitude locks the faith of the church out of the future, it takes away from the church all missionary

persuasive power towards contemporaries, for whom the gospel is intended. New models will also be replaced again, that stands to reason. The question is not whether we know better than the faithful in the past. The question is, what we have to do in view of the new models of experience and thought, here and now, to maintain a living faith that also in this time because of its truth is relevant for the people, their community and the world.'

(Free translation of a paragraph on page 477 of

*Jesus, the story of a living person* by Edward Schillebeeckx)

## NOTICE BOARD

### Ordination of Catholic Women

November 22-24 2002

#### SHAPING CHANGE CONFERENCE

*Women, the Diaconate and Priestly Ordination in the Roman Catholic Church*

Jane Franklin Hall, Hobart, Tasmania

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** Dr John Wijngaards *Facing up to Women in Holy Orders: deacons in the past, priests for now*

Other speakers are: Dr John Collins, Rev. Val Graydon, Dr Kim Power, Soline Vatinel and Angelika Fromm

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### WATAC

#### third National Conference

16-18 August 2002

#### *Women Forging an Inclusive Future*

Rydges Lakeside Motel, Canberra

**Keynote speakers:** Dr. Camilla Burns (director of the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University, Chicago USA) and Miriam Therese Winter (scripture scholar, liturgist and author of many books, including *Out of the Depths*). The conference focus will be on Women in Christian Biblical tradition in light of contemporary feminist exegesis and in relationship to the cultural and political issues of society as we enter into the new millennium.

To register, contact:

WATAC Secretary, 9 Casey Close, Kurri Kurri 2327.

Ph: 02. 4937.2019 Fax: 02.4936.1109.

### Epiphany

**The Epiphany Australia Association** offers membership to all ordained Catholic priests who have left official ministry, to their partners and families, and to those who support their aims. Members may participate in all Epiphany Australia activities and receive all publications. Those not wishing to become members may sign on as Subscribers and receive the publications only.

For more information phone 07 3284 1495

Email [antphila@optusnet.com.au](mailto:antphila@optusnet.com.au) or [bwelsh@ozemail.com.au](mailto:bwelsh@ozemail.com.au)

### Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace

**This** is a coalition of individuals and groups working for the emergence of just, social structures in Australia and overseas. It works as an integral part of the Church at the service of the world and especially of the victims of injustice. Regular meetings are held on the third Sunday of the month from March to December each year, with guest speakers addressing a variety of justice issues.

CCJP has the following aims:

1. To act in solidarity with poor, disadvantaged and oppressed people in their struggle for justice and peace;
2. To bring a Catholic dimension to that struggle;
3. To assist and challenge all Catholics to work for justice and peace by establishing opportunities for reflection, dialogue and service;
4. To work within the Catholic church for a more inclusive, participatory and just Church;
5. To work in collaboration with counterparts in Australia and overseas.

Enquiries: The Secretary CCJP, PO Box A21 Enfield South 2133

Ph: & Fax: 02 9642 4507

Email: [ccjp@bigpond.com](mailto:ccjp@bigpond.com)

### Become a Member of ARC

Donations to assist in the running of ARC would be very much appreciated.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Amount donated \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (should the donation be at least \$20, you would be entitled to become a member of ARC — cheques payable to "ARC")

*Yes!* I would like to become a member of ARC [ ] Tick

Send to: Australian Reforming Catholics, Box 228 AVALON NSW 2107

[ ] PLEASE SEND ME A BROCHURE FOR THE CONFERENCE