When someone close to us dies we are led to reflect on what our faith assures us about life after death and what kind of experience it might be.

We believe in the resurrection of the dead—that is one of the articles of our faith. We believe that God's love is stronger than death. During the funeral service we express our 'sure and certain hope that together with all who have died in Christ, [the deceased person] will rise with him'.

We believe that in death life is changed, not ended. It will be a life in which 'every tear will be wiped away'. We pray that the deceased loved one will 'rest in peace', will 'enter into eternal rest'.

In heaven we will be granted the vision of God as He is—the 'Beatific vision'—the joy of seeing God face to face.

We are led to ponder the mystery of God, insofar as we are given tantalising insights into it. We talk as though we know a lot about God, when in fact God is the mystery of mysteries, utterly other.

We know some things about God from what God has revealed to us. God has revealed Godself as a trinity, a community of Father, Son and Spirit. St John the evangelist tells us that 'God is love' (1John 4:8). All Jesus' life and ministry, his giving of himself, is a revelation of God.

All our deepest feelings help us know God—in the words of St Augustine: 'You have made us for yourself, O Lord and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee' (Confessions Bk 1).

We can know something about the mystery of God from the things that He has made. The dimensions of the universe give some insight. The universe, as far as it can be observed scientifically, is 93 billion light years across, and when we consider that light travels at the speed of 186,000 miles per second, the result is staggering. The Jesuit poet, Gerard Manly Hopkins, wrote in his poem, 'God's grandeur', that 'the world is charged with the grandeur of God'. When we say that the blessed see God face to face, the mystery of heaven only deepens.

We pray that the deceased may exalt forever in the glorious home of heaven, that perpetual light will shine upon him/her. We believe that the deceased will see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living, that he or she will enter into the light of God's face.

We think of heaven as the dwelling place of God, the angels and the blessed, where the deceased 'rejoice with the saints forever' (Prayer of the Church). Saints united joy without end at an eternal banquet.

Christ ascended to the Father's right hand. The blessed share the resurrection and the reign of Christ: 'If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure we will also reign with him' (2Tim 2. 11-12).

John the evangelist teaches that heaven is being with Christ: 'In my Father's house there are many dwelling places … I go to prepare a place for you and I will come again and I will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.' (Jn 14.2-3)

When our loved ones go to heaven they are entering into a mysterious and mysteriously wonderful state. Heaven is more a quality of life in its full maturity and perfection in the presence of God than a place located anywhere. As we say in the funeral liturgy:

'There is sadness in parting, but we take comfort in the hope that one day the love of God will gather us together in the joy of the kingdom.'

—Barry Brundell MSC, Editor
TIME TO CHALLENGE SECULARISM

P J CULLINANE

Both religion and secularism should expect to have to account for themselves. Neither should be accepted unthinkingly and uncritically. This essay is intended to challenge secularism, which seems to have been piggy-backing on the tarnished reputation religion has incurred, more than on any merits of its own. But: this is not ultimately about an ‘ism’; it is about people - people to whom religion can seem quaintly out of place in the modern world, or at least unnecessary. And so it is also about why, for others, faith makes sense and really matters.

Secular reality was not always thought of as secular. Animist religions had thought of the world as inhabited by various gods, demons and demiurges whom people lived in fear of offending, and needed to appease. In that context, human creativity, human responsibility for the planet, science and technology, and human rights could never easily develop. We humans had first to discover that there is one God, who loves us greatly, and wants us to enjoy the world, and harness its energies. The Hebrew scriptures record how an embattled, struggling people experienced that assurance.

Using methods of thought developed by Aristotle and introduced to the West by mainly Muslim scholars, medieval Christian theologians built upon this biblical insight, showing that the world is not a place we need fear to tread; all of it is secular. This cleared the way for the development of the sciences. This piece of history is sometimes called ‘secularization’. The liberation of secular reality to be its secular self owes much to the faith that came down from Abraham.

This is why members of the Hebrew, Christian and Muslim faiths have been untrue to their own origins whenever they have stood in the way of authentic intellectual, artistic, scientific, social or economic progress, or not respected the proper separation of Church and State; and whenever they have fought each other.

However, to respect and welcome secular reality is one thing—that results from ‘secularization’; to claim that secular reality is all there is, is another—that is ‘secularism’. Because it reduces all reality to secular reality by not allowing for God's existence, it is also called 'reductionist secularism'. When God is excluded, even properly secular reality is diminished: it is no longer seen as a revelation of God's purposes, and to be respected. To believers, secular reality is the place where God's love for us and our love for God become tangible—all of it is holy.

Reductionist secularism has devastating consequences at many levels. When people do not know how greatly they are loved by God, they do not know how greatly they matter, or even that they do matter. Is there anything they need to know more than that? After all, 'life isn't fair'; it can take away the ones who mean the most to us; even the best relationships can fail; people can feel trapped in impossible situations…To live in this kind of world, people need a reason for hope that stands beyond the reach of every disaster, and even uncovers meaning within them. That is what secularism would rob us of, by denying there is a God.

Revealed religion does not invent God to
meet our human needs, or to answer our
questions, or provide our 'proofs'. Abraham,
Moses and the prophets found themselves
confronted by the kind of God they were not
expecting, and who was not there to answer
all their questions. They didn't always
interpret their experiences well - that would
take time. But, for us as for them, discovering
what it means to be so greatly loved by God,
many of our questions no longer need to be
asked. The discovery is a transformative
experience, taking love to new lengths, depths
and heights; enabling us to take seriously the
real world and our place in it.

It is a discovery that involves
Contemplation, Conversion and Compassion.
Contemplation is a way of seeing. The Judeo-
Christian book of Wisdom speaks of the
blindness of those who see the world but fail
to recognize its maker. What it says of
unbelievers can be said also of sleep-walkers,
which is most of us most of the time. We see
the world around us without seeing 'the
presence of the ultimate in the commonplace'
(Abraham Joshua Heschel); the 'extraordinary
side of the ordinary'; (Pope John Paul II).
Those who live with their eyes fully open
live in constant surprise and wonder at being
part of something whose existence, like their
own, was not owed to them. In this way,
nature itself 'speaks' to them. 'All the bushes
now burn if you have seen one burn. Only
one tree has to fill up with light and angels,
and you never see trees the same away again.'
(R. Rohr).

This contemplative way of seeing becomes
a contemplative way of being: This is
Conversion. After all, it is not the bushes that
burn or light up; it is ourselves that change.
We move from taking the world for granted
(as if it were not a gift) to treating it for what it
actually is. That changes how we relate to
everything.

People of all religious traditions have been
'spoken' to like this by the cosmos. Abraham
and his descendants found themselves being
'spoken' to also by the events of their history.

They experienced a love that was not merited,
deserved, or due to them. In turn, they were
to love in the way they had been loved: this is
Compassion. Without this, society becomes
punitive, unforgiving, and not open to new
starts or rehabilitation or reconciliation.
Compassion is a circuit-breaker; it is not
trapped within the cycle of just deserts and
pay back and getting even. It is the opposite
of self-centred, cruel indifference to the plight
of others. It makes possible that shalom which
is the calling and mission of the spiritual
descendants of Abraham. They betray their
own faith when they do not honour that
calling.

Reductionist secularism is a grim
alternative. Why wouldn't it be? The bits and
pieces of a jig-saw puzzle find their meaning
within a bigger picture. If there is no God, and
no big picture to give our lives meaning, we
are like disconnected pieces. Life can become
bewildering. A society that trivializes what is
sacred ends up making idols of what is trivial.
Celebrities, glitter, banality and consumerism
make poor substitutes for meaning. Life begins
to feel empty. Reporting a recent Hollywood
death, the media thought it worth mentioning
that she died of natural causes.

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul
was scathing in his description of how
deprieved people became through ignoring
God. It seems some things haven't changed.
According to a report in the *Sunday Star Times* (Nov. 24 2013), the Department of Internal Affairs had blocked 34 million attempts within New Zealand, over three years, to access child sex abuse sites; New Zealanders seeking child pornography were increasingly demanding younger children and more violent abuse; and globally abuse is becoming more and more degrading.

Society doesn't seem to notice its own contradictions, or even make connections: e.g. we condemn sexual abuse, but treat pornography as a bit of a giggle; we deplore domestic violence, but serve up violence on the media as a form of entertainment. We ignore the dynamics of addiction, and those who are not practised in self-restraint eventually go to any lengths to get what they want. We have become the kind of society in which it is easier to commit abuse without feeling shame, and to boast about it on social media. Victims are perceived as objects, not as persons made 'in the image of God'.

But can we expect better in a society where even decent people devalue children by claiming a 'right' to have a child, or by speaking of 'equal rights' to be adoptive parents, without even a mention of the best interests, needs or rights of the child? Children are gifts; not possessions, not commodities, and not owed to anyone. We need to rediscover the wonder of each person.

The apostle's description of dulled minds and folly still fits. Some even do an extra contortion: they 'prove' the non-existence of God by excluding from their enquiry anything that cannot be known by the methods of scientific observation! Never mind that some of the conditions necessary for doing science, and doing it responsibly, lie outside the scope of what can be scientifically proved—e.g. personhood, personal integrity, commitment to truth, human freedom, values, ideas, compassion, love...

There are others who have a vested interest in keeping God out: e.g. unscrupulous employers. The Department of Labour has recently uncovered widespread exploitation of vulnerable workers (migrants and young people) and fraud by employers. Suppressing conscience goes with suppressing God.

Still others subscribe to an economic theory that the sole function of business is to maximize profits, it being someone else's responsibility to take care of the social consequences. And so, jobs can be eliminated and livelihoods threatened for no other reason, ultimately, than to increase profits, even if they are already huge. Workers are seen mainly as cost items, and targets for cost-cutting; disposable. Variations of this practice are even considered normal, acceptable, and simply good business—even by some who profess religious faith. But they contradict their faith, because persons made 'in the likeness of God' may not to be treated as we would treat goods and chattels.

These examples serve to illustrate where faith's emphasis on the dignity of every person, and the State's responsibility for the common good, converge. If it has been misguided on the part of any faith to try to co-opt the State to its own confessional interests, it is now equally misguided on the part of the State to make secularism's confessional interests its own. The practical exclusion of God from the public domain is reductionist secularism's specific agenda. It is not a non-partisan stance. The State's responsibility to promote the common good can involve facilitating the beneficial effects of any cultural vision, of which secularism is only one. The State is properly secular without adopting reductionist secularism's indifference to religion, disguised as neutrality.

If secularism has much to answer for, so too do the spiritual descendants of Abraham, who at least know better, but whose ability to influence society is hampered by religion's ambiguous reputation. In varying degrees we all contribute to this situation by our unfaithfulness. In fact, there is a case for
secularism to challenge believers. Religion is degraded when God is diminished (e.g. by pious practices that suggest people need to earn God's favour, or that would supposedly put God in our debt; or by teachings that put limits on God's presence, love or mercy; or by practices that associate God more with social, political or economic elites; or by those who think their relationship with God can be separated from their relationships with the world around them, or that 'going to church' is the main measure of people's faith or faithfulness.) In these ways, religion, too, becomes reductionist. Sooner or later, people seeking God, even if only implicitly by seeking truth, find that reductionist 'religion' - like reductionist secularism - fails to satisfy. This is even before they experience misrepresentations of God by fundamentalism, literalism, fanaticism, or crusades and wars carried out in the name of religion, whether Christian, Jewish or Muslim.

The rejection of diminished religion can reflect the quest for truth that is sometimes implicit within agnosticism's doubts and secularism's indifference. Diminished faith does not always connect with important human aspirations. This justified the Second Vatican Council's claim that 'Christians can have more than a little to do with the birth of atheism.' (Church in the Modern World, n.19)

It is the fullness of faith that both challenges and attracts. What attracted Moses and the prophets completely transcended their understanding, but could not be ignored. It was an experience of God intimately involved in their lives and struggles, but not at their beck and call, and not answerable to them: 'I am with you as who I am' (Exodus 3:1-15). Ultimately, this was the mystery of God's un-owed, self-giving love for all creation. By surrendering to that love, we become participants in God's love for the world.

This is the transformative experience that makes us more fully ourselves, more fully human, and more fully alive. And it is a worthy alternative for those who discover that secularism is an incomplete way of life.

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Joy is the gift in which all the other gifts are included. It is the expression of happiness, of being in harmony with ourselves, that which can only come from being in harmony with God and with his creation.

—Pope Benedict XVI, Christmas address to the Roman Curia, 2008.

We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses. The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters.

ST POPE JOHN PAUL II was convinced that the Catholic Church and media users or producers could integrate understanding of contemporary media in Christian culture. He said,

It is also necessary to integrate that message into the 'new culture' created by modern communications. This is a complex issue, since the 'new culture' originates not just from whatever content is eventually expressed, but from the very fact that there exist new ways of communicating, with new languages, new techniques and a new psychology. Pope John VI said that 'the split between the Gospel and culture is undoubtedly the tragedy of our time,' and the field of communications fully confirms this judgment. (Redemptoris Missio, 37c).

He hoped that through integrating features of media into Christian conceptual culture anyone connected to media would be guided towards the positive effects of the media. Throughout his works, Pope John Paul II illustrated ways of going about this: attributing to them biblical epithets, associating them with authentic development of human person, applying to them the communion model of the Church, describing them in terms of features of forum, including silence in means of communication, and ascribing them ethical principles.

John Paul II integrated contemporary media in Christian culture by applying the following biblical epithets to them: fruit of an authentic development, a source of communion, new crossroads, a community, a village and Areopagus (Redemptoris Missio, 37). The word Areopagus, for example, referred to the public place in Athens where St. Paul proclaimed messages about the Risen Christ to his audience (Acts 17:22-31). John Paul II encouraged the Church to consider all contemporary media in terms of the modern Areopagus (that is, a new platform, centre, or place to proclaim the Gospel), because he was convinced this was a discourse platform where media users could undergo transformation, a transition, and regeneration. He called this new discourse platform 'Areopagus' because he found in contemporary media an avenue for integrating understanding of culture and of authentic development for the human person, as was the case during the time of St Paul's missionary work in Athens.

Pope John Paul II associated contemporary media with features of authentic human development. According to Dulles, Pope John Paul II stated, 'communication [...] should be used not simply as a means of entertainment and gratification, as in a consumerist culture, but for true human development' (Dulles 2003:8). For me, this was another way Pope John Paul II integrated the understanding of media in conceptual culture. In fact, throughout his writings, Pope John Paul II preferred the concept of human person to that of human being in his understanding of contemporary media (Melady 1999: 42). In doing so, he wished to apply the Christian concept of person (defined in terms of authentic values, dignity and moral truth that people should promote, maintain and attain) to possibilities and opportunities that the
contemporary media could offer. By attributing to the media the Church's understanding of the 'person of Christ' and Christ's communion with God (Ecclesia in America, 33), Pope John Paul II clearly set the example of how to integrate an understanding of contemporary media in culture itself in order to inspire positive deploying of contemporary media for evangelization.

According to Dulles, John Paul II drew on Sacrosanctum Concilium (1963, 6) to integrate the understanding of media as 'communion', in terms of the Church's culture of conceptual models. Following this view, I noticed that Pope John Paul II adopted the concept 'communion' because it allowed for a better understanding and description of the means of social communications, in the sense that Jesus Christ, in communion with the Father, communicates with God the Father, to make it possible for believers to communicate with God. Pope John Paul II thus suggested that media producers and users could understand media in terms of a person's sacramental communion with others, just as Jesus Christ is in communion with God the Father, and just as the 'Church is built up through sacramental communion with the Son of God' (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 21). Given the above, John Paul II hoped to lend a culture of theological connotations to the means of social communications to offset some of the secular connotations tied to the media lexicon such as source of entertainment or of gratification and of consumerism.

John Paul II also proposed 'new forum' as the conceptual frame to describe media, as he hoped the world could gain a better understanding of contemporary media within the culture of the teachings of the Church (Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel, 2). In this, John Paul II perceived new instruments of communication as a 'new forum' for integration and transformation of those evangelized or re-evangelized. He added,

Internet is certainly a new 'forum' understood in the ancient Roman sense of that public space where politics and business were transacted, where religious duties were fulfilled, where much of the social life of the city took place, and where the best and the worst of human nature was on display. It was a crowded and bustling urban space, which both reflected the surrounding culture and created a culture of its own (Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel, 2).

He hoped that this integration would increase the Church's visibility on the international scene, amid ongoing challenges orchestrated by phenomena such as globalization, secularization, and other effects that media impact on the Church's evangelization.

John Paul II asked the Church and media producers or users to include non-verbal signs to integrate our understanding of media in culture. Non-verbal signs, proxemics, or absence of interpersonal language, were hitherto counted among kinesics, because social communications are understood in terms of verbal message. However, John Paul II enlarged the horizon of communication in pastoral ministry by including in social communications ways such as silence in all its forms (silent meditation, contemplation, adoration, liturgical silence, etc.). For him, the means of communication were not limited to languages or verbal signs. Given that media can impact silence (35th World Communications Day 'Preach from the housetops') and meditation, depending upon how Church and media users or producers

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integrate these ways of communication, John Paul II called for a broader frame for integrating our understanding of contemporary media. John Paul II also ascribed moral or ethical characters to contemporary media. He said,

Jesus teaches that communication is a moral act: 'A good person brings forth good out of a store of goodness, but an evil person brings evil out of a store of evil. I tell you, on the Day of Judgment people will render an account for every careless word they speak. By your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned' (Mt 12:35-37) (Apostolic Letter. The Rapid Development, 13).

According to Mugridge and Gannon, John Paul II invited all to consider the functions of contemporary media in terms of ethical codes and the teaching of Jesus Christ (2008: 22-23) in order to ensure their positive contributions to evangelization in the world and the authentic development the human person. John Paul II invited all to treat and understand media as phenomena marked with moral values (20th World Communications Day 'Social communications and the Christian formation of public opinion', 1986), because he was convinced that media were not amoral or neutral entities.

Overall, Pope John Paul II’s integration of the understanding of media in Christian culture offered us new concepts to overcome the adverse effects of media on missionary endeavours. He applied to the contemporary media connotations of concepts such as authentic development, communion, new forum, space, village, Areopagus, silence, meditation and moral character to broaden the understanding of media. Pope John Paul II allowed evangelization works to parse spheres of contemporary media while he made the media incarnate the culture of conceptual perspectives of the Church.

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Internet is certainly a new 'forum' understood in the ancient Roman sense of that public space where politics and business were transacted, where religious duties were fulfilled, where much of the social life of the city took place, and where the best and the worst of human nature was on display. It was a crowded and bustling urban space, which both reflected the surrounding culture and created a culture of its own.

—Pope John Paul II, Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel, 2.
COMPARING CATHOLIC AND NON-CATHOLIC STUDENTS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Some Implications for Understanding of Secularization

RICHARD RYMARZ and ANTHONY CLEARY

PRactical theology is deeply interested in the interface between religion and the wider culture. One of the most important aspects of this interaction is how to better understand secularization. To say that we live in a secular culture or that young people are becoming more secular is a very common observation. What is meant by secularization is a weighty and almost inexhaustible topic but in this paper I would like to briefly outline some of the dimensions and implications of secularization in situ. What does secularization look like when we examine the responses of young people? I would propose that we need to develop a more nuanced understanding of secularization, one which sees it not as a uniform and inevitable aspect of life today. Rather, secularization is best understood as having its greatest impact in practical lived experience. In this sense it tends to impact across a broad range of groups and certainly religious communities are not immune from the effects of this type of secularizing tendency. As we move away from impact on everyday life then religious ideas re-emerge but these tend to be quite abstract notions with low salience or impact. Salience is a sociological term that refers to how much influence beliefs— in this case religious beliefs — have on how a person lives and what they think. Secular here does not mean hostility or overt anger about religious belief, practice, and commitment. It is just that for an increasing number of people, and these are by no means just young people, religion has a relatively minor part in shaping what they believe and how they live. There is a very important distinction to be made here between overtly rejecting religion and regarding it, in practice, as having only a small impact of life. The latter position is one that is becoming normative in many cultures and is a good working definition of the process of secularization in many Western post-industrial countries such as Australia.

This understanding of secularization can be seen more clearly if we examine the responses of a selective, differentiated sample of young people. A range of studies have reported on the religious and spiritual lives of contemporary young people. Many of these have examined representative samples in order to make inferences and draw conclusions about national trends. In any representative sample, however, there is recognition that in obtaining normative data, information about subgroups can be lost or obscured. In this paper I will be reporting on research done on one such sub group, namely, students in Catholic schools in Sydney. Catholic schools educate a significant number of people in Australia today. Enrolments are, however, not representative of the wider community even though schools now educate large numbers of non-Catholics. Indeed the enrolment growth in Catholic schools in recent times has been driven largely by non-Catholics. In Sydney
Catholic schools approximately 75% of students identify as Catholic. The non-Catholic enrolment is broken down in the following manner; 10.6% as Orthodox, 4.9% as other Christian, 3.7% as other faith traditions and 5.1% as no religion. These figures indicate that for this population sample around 90% of students identify as Christian. This is a significant finding. Despite changes in the wider community students in Catholic schools exhibit a marked preponderance to professed Christian allegiance. Those with no religious allegiance account for only 5% of enrolments and this is in contrast with the rapid growth of 'nones' in the wider community. This is a widespread phenomenon in Western countries. In Australia, for example, in 1911 only 0.4% of the population described themselves as having no religious affiliation. By 2011 this figure had increased to 22% and is expected to grow further in coming years.4

If we conclude that most students in Catholic schools profess some kind of religious affiliation what can be said about differences or similarities between Catholic and non-Catholic students? A number of areas will be reported on in this paper. The first examines support for Christian beliefs. A statement such as 'I believe that Jesus is truly God and truly man' reflects a dogmatic belief. The same can be said for the statements and responses recorded in Tables 2 and 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree/agree (%)</td>
<td>83.9 (88.7)</td>
<td>78.2 (82)</td>
<td>65.6 (70.4)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14.7 (13)</td>
<td>22.5 (21.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.8 (3.5)</td>
<td>6.5 (4.5)</td>
<td>11.2 (7.6)</td>
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Table 1: Responses to statement: I believe that Jesus is truly God and truly man.
(Catholic students only in brackets)

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<th>Year 5</th>
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<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree/agree (%)</td>
<td>87.9 (88.7)</td>
<td>81.2 (85)</td>
<td>68.7 (73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>8.2 (7.6)</td>
<td>11.7 (10.1)</td>
<td>18.4 (17.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
<td>3.8 (3.5)</td>
<td>6.7 (4.5)</td>
<td>12.4 (8.6)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Responses to statement: I believe that Jesus died and rose again

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<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree/agree (%)</td>
<td>92.4 (93.6)</td>
<td>86.7 (89.8)</td>
<td>76.6 (80.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5.7 (4.9)</td>
<td>9.3 (7.8)</td>
<td>15.3 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
<td>1.7 (1.4)</td>
<td>3.7 (2.3)</td>
<td>7.8 (4.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 3: Responses to statement: I believe in God
The three tables above show responses of all students and Catholic students only in brackets. The first finding to note is the decline for both groups over time from what can be seen as traditional Christian views. The largest decline seems to be between Year 7 and Year 9 and this continues into Year 11. It can also be noted that there remains a majority view by students in Catholic schools that supports the dogmatic statement of belief proposed. This is especially so of Catholic students but the figure for all students also supports this conclusion. These findings are in accord with some researchers who have found that belief in dogmatic statements of belief amongst younger Catholics remains high.\textsuperscript{5}

Affirmation of dogmatic beliefs can be compared to other responses which probe beliefs of a different nature. If we ask students about topics that have a clearer referent in moral theology a different pattern of responses is evident. In these respondents support of the traditional Christian worldview is not as clear cut. This is in keeping with the view that secularization becomes more evident the closer an issue comes to a person’s lived experience. Table 4, for instance, asks about the exclusivity of religious views. The modal response of all students in Catholic schools is that it is OK to pick and choose religious beliefs. There was little difference between Catholic and non-Catholic students.

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<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree/agree</td>
<td>42.9 (43.2)</td>
<td>44 (42.4)</td>
<td>42.4 (41.6)</td>
<td>46 (46.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>29.1 (29.1)</td>
<td>31.8 (30.6)</td>
<td>31.7 (33)</td>
<td>31.8 (31.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
<td>27.8 (27.3)</td>
<td>23.7 (26.1)</td>
<td>25.8 (24.6)</td>
<td>23.7 (21.3)</td>
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Table 4: It’s O.K. to pick and choose religious beliefs without having to accept all the teachings of one’s religion

When asked explicitly about morals, Catholic and non-Catholic students responses were again very similar and discordant from what could be seen as a traditional Christian view. This is also seen in Table 5 which shows a majority of students across all ages agree that morals are personal choices and there are no definite rights or wrongs.

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<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree/agree</td>
<td>61.6 (62.2)</td>
<td>59 (59.4)</td>
<td>52.7 (62.8)</td>
<td>50.9 (52.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>26.2 (25.9)</td>
<td>31.1 (30.8)</td>
<td>33.6 (33.9)</td>
<td>29.9 (29.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
<td>11.6 (11.5)</td>
<td>8.6 (8.5)</td>
<td>13 (12.6)</td>
<td>18.8 (17.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Morals are a matter of personal choice because there are no definite rights or wrongs

The results of Tables 4 and 5 can be interpreted as being reflective of dominant moral cultural norms on moral questions. In the wider culture the ascent of relativistic views has been well documented.\textsuperscript{6} In one well-known categorization the dominant worldview of
young people is described as Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD). This is a worldview that seeks to minimize difference between all groups in a culture and lends itself very much to relativistic notions of morality. In MTD one of the key principles is to recognize the open ended nature of moral judgements which need to be seen as being reflective of cultural and personal preference. What 'works' for one person may not be applicable elsewhere and a perceived major transgression is to make judgements on actions or decisions. In light of the cultural pressure to conform to these views it is interesting to speculate whether just under 20% of the Year 11 students in Catholic schools in this study disagreeing with the proposition that there are no definite rights or wrongs is a high or unexpected figure.

If we now turn to indicators of praxis or how life is lived we find further evidence of lower religious salience. Table 6, for example, records responses to a very explicit statement about life trajectory. It asks students about how much they try and base their life on the teaching of Jesus. Notice that this is a strong statement. Far stronger, for instance, than one on, say, respecting Jesus teaching. Compared to the results recorded in the first three tables which look at more abstract beliefs, the responses for the tables below show much lower levels of religious salience. In addition, there is no consistent difference across the three measures between Catholic and non-Catholic students. Table 7 shows a similar pattern with the majority of students in Catholics schools by Year 11 being neutral or strongly disagreeing with the proposition that religion influences their lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly agree/agree %</strong></td>
<td>70.7 (71.1)</td>
<td>56.3 (58.7)</td>
<td>43.2 (45.5)</td>
<td>46.4 (49.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
<td>28.5 (22.3)</td>
<td>29.5 (29.7)</td>
<td>36.2 (37.4)</td>
<td>32.5 (33.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly disagree/disagree</strong></td>
<td>6.3 (6.0)</td>
<td>13.4 (10.7)</td>
<td>19.6 (16.2)</td>
<td>20.6 (16.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: I try to base my life on the teaching and example of Jesus.
Table 7: Religion influences the way I live my life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree/agree</td>
<td>68.9 (70.1)</td>
<td>55.9 (57.9)</td>
<td>44.9 (47.1)</td>
<td>47.2 (48.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>21.6 (21.2)</td>
<td>26.0 (26.3)</td>
<td>29.1 (29.6)</td>
<td>28.3 (29.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree/disagree</td>
<td>8.6 (7.9)</td>
<td>16.5 (14.3)</td>
<td>24.5 (21.9)</td>
<td>23.3 (20.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we compare the results shown in Tables 1-3 with those in Tables 6-8 we see the incongruence that often emerges when we examine beliefs against religious salience. For instance, a much higher number of all students agree with the statement that Jesus died and rose from the dead when compared to those who base their lives on the teachings of Jesus. It does seem reasonable to conclude that if you believed that Jesus rose from the dead it would have some impact on how you regarded his teachings and how you lived your life in this light. For this reason measures of religious praxis often give a clearer picture on the impact of religion on the lives of young people than measures of agreement with dogmatic propositions on their own.

Further evidence for a more nuanced view of secularization is seen if we look at measures of religious practise. These, again, can be seen as markers of salience. If religion is having an impact on how young people live and how they think then this should be reflected in how they behave. A good but by no means the only measure of this is a practise such as prayer. Table 9 shows responses to frequency of prayer by students in Sydney Catholic schools. We can see here again the decline across age levels with frequency of prayer decreasing as students get older. There is a close alignment of practise between Catholic and non-Catholic students with the notable exception that by Year 11 there is a significant difference in the number of students who never pray. Non Catholic students report a much higher figure for never praying when compared to Catholic students. Given that only approximately 5% of students in Catholic schools in this sample report no religious affiliation the reasons for this difference are worth exploring further.
Table 9: Frequency of prayer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each day (%)</td>
<td>53.5 (54)</td>
<td>39.4 (40.6)</td>
<td>33.8 (35.2)</td>
<td>28.2 (30.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>23.4 (24.1)</td>
<td>26.3 (26.7)</td>
<td>21.4 (22.8)</td>
<td>19.8 (21.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Few Times a Year</td>
<td>4.2 (4.1)</td>
<td>7.3 (6.6)</td>
<td>10 (8.9)</td>
<td>13 (12.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1.7 (1.4)</td>
<td>4.2 (2.6)</td>
<td>13 (12.4)</td>
<td>12.1 (7.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

It seems, like all good research, the data reported here raise a range of issues for further consideration. There is evidence here for a more nuanced view of secularization. In this view secularisation is seen as a loss of religious salience seen most clearly in a decline in praxis, how people live their lives and the views that they hold that influence this praxis. It seems that most students in Catholic schools agree with many classical statements of dogmatic Christian belief. The trend is away from acceptance of these views as students get older so the longevity of this agreement once students leave school can be questioned. It would seem though that Catholic schools do play a role in maintaining these views, at least while students are attending them. To be sure, significant numbers do not support these positions but these findings challenge the view that students in Catholic schools are heavily in discord over traditional teachings. This, however, does not necessarily lead us to question the impact of secularization on students in Catholic schools. More in accord with the view of secularization taken here, its influence can be seen if we look at other measures.

When we examine more praxis based responses the situation becomes more complex. It seems that for many students in Catholic schools, the impact of religious beliefs on how they live and in what they think is relatively weak and not in accord with assent to theological positions. This supports the view that religious salience even amongst this sub population of students in Catholic schools is diminishing. A question for further examination is whether or not this decline is in step with wider cultural attitudes. How would students in Catholic schools compare with students in public or independent schools is a question for further study. These results could then be contrasted with control samples which extrapolate to national representation. It may be the religious salience is decreasing amongst students in Catholic schools but this decline may be less significant than for the population of young people as a whole. For the practical theologian the question that is posed here is how best to make the connection between theological propositions and how these are translated into everyday life?

The difference between Catholic and non-Catholic students across all measures is less marked than some may have expected. This is in keeping with the vast majority of students being from a Christian background and only a small percentage having no religious affiliation. Many of the assumptions that are made about non Catholic students in Catholic schools could, on the basis of these findings, be revaluated. Non Catholic students share many of the views and practises of Catholics and both groups reflect an increasingly secular trend. The secularizing forces on
Catholic and non-Catholic students alike tend to homogenize responses and draw out more similarities than differences. This is in keeping with a view of secularization that sees it as a strong general cultural influence. In this view Catholic students will be just as influenced by the tendency to align their moral views with the normative societal expectations as non-Catholic students. For practical theologians one implication of these findings is that the differences in outlook of young people in Catholic schools are more likely to be reflective of the wider culture irrespective of religious background. The mechanism of this realignment is a topic that warrants further examination. One key question is how can religious communities have a more formative influence on young people within their communities and what role can Catholic schools play in this process?

NOTES


Just under 4.8 million Australians, or 22 per cent of the population, stated they had no religion on census forms two years ago. The fastest growth was in those aged 15 to 34. The trend is accelerating. In 1911, Australia was unusual in giving its citizens an option of saying they had no religion on census forms. Then just 10,000 people did so, or 0.4 per cent of the population. From 1971 onwards, the bureau notes, those reporting no religion has risen by about 4 percentage points a decade.

Is this the onward march of the scientific values of the Enlightenment and a victory for non-believers over the religious? It is not entirely clear. [...] The Social Trends report also notes some characteristics of those who say they have no religion. Nearly half of same-sex couples report no religion, more than twice the rate of the overall Australian population. And for those with a postgraduate degree, 31 per cent reported no religion, compared with one in five people with a high school education.

—From the Australian Bureau of Statistics website.
MSC SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEART IN AUSTRALIA TODAY

A Young MSC's Perspective

KHOI DOAN NGUYEN MSC

The idea of writing this article was initiated by the search for some answers for a paradoxical question we, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSCs), are facing: If our spirituality, the MSC spirituality of the heart, is still relevant in today’s context of Australia, then why do young people not respond to us? Why have we not attracted more vocations? I have puzzled over this question for some years. I joined the MSCs five years ago and still feel fascinated and energized by this spirituality. How come other young guys, like myself, have not found this themselves?

This article is not an attempt to respond to this question, but it is about acknowledging and examining the relevance, appropriateness and place of the MSC heart spirituality in Australian spirituality today.

Firstly, I will examine the appropriateness and preference for the term ‘spirituality of the heart’ to that of ‘devotion to the Sacred Heart’, which might be still attractive to some, in the context of the contemporary Australian spirituality.

Secondly, I will assess Australian spirituality today—its defining factors and the growing interest in spirituality outside of religions, or eclectic spirituality—particularly among young people—in facing a complex and uncertain world. Thirdly, I am going to review the MSC heart spirituality in the Australian context I have examined and assess the connection of this spirituality with the larger spiritual realm of Australian society and of the universal Church, exemplified by Pope Francis. Even though not trying to answer the paradoxical question about the shortage of vocations and the relevance of our spirituality to youth, in some instances, I still want to pay some attention on what youth spirituality is about and how the heart spirituality is fitting with what they are looking for.

Why ‘Spirituality’, no Longer ‘Devotion’?

In my last article published in Compass (Spring Issue 2014)—‘MSC Spirituality of the Heart in Vietnam’—I endeavoured to explore what the MSC heart spirituality means and is for the contemporary Vietnamese culture. However, the term ‘spirituality’ has been taken for granted because of its use and popularity. This time I would like to start this article by looking at this issue.

Another reason I would like to talk about why we accept the term ‘a spirituality of the heart’—as E. J. Cuskelly authored it—is because there has been a nostalgia of the term ‘devotion to the Sacred Heart’ when talking about the expression of our MSC charism. There have been a number of constructive and honest comments about the abstractness and distance of the term 'spirituality'; while 'devotion' means something much more practical and concrete, something that even some of the young, devout Catholics nowadays still look for. So why ‘a spirituality of the heart’, but no longer 'devotion to the Sacred Heart'?

Regis A. Duffy, in the HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, defines ‘devotion’ as a non-liturgical prayer form that promotes an affective (and sometimes
individualistic) attitude of faith; and this form of prayer emerged among the laity who could not understand and participate (much) in the liturgy, especially the Eucharist. And the devotion to the Sacred Heart was among the most popular devotions prior to Vatican II along with the Miraculous Medal novena, devotions to the Sorrowful Mother, Stations of the Cross, and the Rosary.

Devotion, Duffy continues, can be best understood as personal piety or 'popular religion'. It is called 'popular' because it makes sense even to the illiterate faithful since it concretizes some of the fundamental aspects of the faith—repentance, conversion, etc.—and stimulates some popular prayer expressions—reciting novenas, saying the rosary or making a pilgrimage. This was a form of spirituality of the day and it responded to the needs of the time. When we talk about spirituality, it is inclusive of devotions.

For example, when describing the characteristics of Catholic spirituality in Australia from 1788 to the end of World War I, Peter Malone, the coordinator and editor of the two books consisting of collective reflections and articles from a variety of Australian authors and writers on Australian Theology, writes:

Highlighting the expressions of the faith [Irish spirituality] in its time (without the benefit of critical hindsight). What emerges is a strong focus on the parish church, the priest, Mass, devotions and devotional helps; God as personal, a part of daily life as well as harsher interpretations, even a 'hard God'; sense of duty, loyalty, self-dedication and pride sustained through hardships by hope of the faith.

So devotional practices were part of Catholic spirituality in Australia during this time.

Furthermore, Dennis Murphy, in his book The Heart of the Word Incarnate, suggests that 'devotion' actually means 'religion taken to heart'. It seems to me that in reviving the appropriateness and relevance of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, Murphy tends to renew the concept of what a devotion means and wants to bring this concept even further into the realm of spirituality, a much broader concept which, as said before, includes devotional forms. He suggests that the devotion to the Sacred Heart 'belongs to the Berullian tradition of spirituality', the context in which Fr Jules Chevalier saw this devotion. This is to illustrate the point being made: devotion is an expression of spirituality of the day.

Therefore, one can understand why devotion is still attractive to a number of people—those who have a spirituality in which devotions are still relevant and even necessary, those who come from other countries or places where devotional practices are still present and popular, like Vietnam and some other Asian countries, and some of the young, more traditional Catholics look back with nostalgia to the pre-Vatican Church, a more institutional, traditional and formal Church.

Perhaps I agree with Murphy that we should not simplify either 'devotion' or 'spirituality' in order to disregard one or the other. Both have their own beauty and appropriateness to different people and circumstances. However, while it is appropriate to understand the connection of spirituality and devotion as I have been trying to do in this section, at the same time I think it is even more important to be aware of a nostalgia for a form of spiritual expression that is no longer congruent to the signs of our time and context.
The Australian Spirituality Today

Before starting to write this article, I desired that this article would be written by a number of us MSC seminarians, as a collective work and reflection of the younger MSCs in Australia. I wanted us all to examine broadly and carefully Australian spirituality and its context. I had an intuition that Australian spirituality and its context is a very broad and complex topic that it is very difficult (even impossible) for one person to do.

Therefore, in this article, I am not (and am not able) to examine Australian spirituality exhaustively and in detail, but I shall sweep through some of the important aspects of contemporary spirituality in this country. Just to demonstrate how complicated Australian spirituality is, I would like to quote from David Tacey as he describes the factors that give form and shape to a new spirituality in this country arising out of its changing social, political and economic circumstances, and its technological and scientific developments:

Broadly, the areas that appear to be giving rise to a new spirituality in Australia include the experience of nature and landscape, the environmental emergency, Aboriginal reconciliation, the visual arts, popular life-history and story-telling, biography, autobiography, public interest in Eastern religions, contemporary youth culture, progressives in the churches, the therapeutic and mental health professions, workplace relations, human resources and industry leadership, social analysis, the natural health movement and the re-enchantment of gardens and herbs, the popular men's movement, the spiritual women's movement, and a kind of generalized hunger for personal and cultural renewal.11

More can be added to the list. Since World War II, Australia has experienced a shift from England to America in the political arena, shown in the Second World War and our current military and political alliance with America. Also since that time, Australia has experienced an influx of migrants from Europe (1945-1975), from Asia (after the fall of Saigon in 1975) and other parts of the globe.12 This means that Australian society has become more multi-cultural and the Australian church a more multi-cultural church. Other perspectives added to the current spirituality are ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, ethical issues (especially in bioethics), the issue of governance (management and administration in the Institutions), and the issue of child sexual abuse.

In the midst of all these, there is an undeniable phenomenon emerging: the growth of interest in spirituality among people of all kinds of religion, non-religion, tradition, culture, career, social background, academic discipline and age—particularly among young people.13 Within the culture of diversity, Peter Malone rightly observes: ‘...we need to explore where, when and how the established religion broke into diversity and we began to speak more of spirituality.’14

However, the question is: what kind of spirituality are we talking about here? I once heard one of my lecturers suggesting spirituality as 'faith seeking expression' (based on the classic definition of theology: 'faith seeking understanding—St Anselm). You probably have heard this before. However, a spirituality we see popular among people today may not be a spirituality initiated by 'the faith' in its strict sense. Spirituality today can be a 'horizontal' spirituality15 or secularized spirituality, where God is not the necessary starting point of a spiritual journey. The starting point of this growing interest in spirituality for many people today is one's own lived experience and reality. Rufus Black suggests that 'the resources of Christian spirituality have been too narrowly focused on the quest for God rather than on the quest for a fulfilled human life, of which the quest of God is only one part.'16 This leads to the fact that Christians have been lacking in resources to help and guide people on the search for meaning in everyday happenings and their personal fulfilment. This also means that what
people are looking for today is not God, the Other, but themselves and the meaning of their existence.

However, is this not the purpose of God for humanity, the purpose of Jesus coming into our world? The first command of God to creation and humanity is: 'Be fruitful and multiply' (Gen 1:22, 28). And Jesus says: 'I came that they [the sheep] may have life, and have it abundantly' (Jn 10:10). The search for our true self, if it is true itself, will inevitably lead to and be inclusive of the search for God.

People nowadays are looking for the spiritual (when they get disillusioned and disappointed at the limitation of the material), but perhaps not the spiritual of the Church with doctrinal form and content which do not relate directly to their everyday life experience. David Tacey suggests that the problems of our Church today are the problems of language and representation. The language is disconnected from the education system based on experience and experimentation—scientific methodology. And the representation of the Church's faith is hierarchical, authoritative and static. On the other hand, our young people in schools are being taught to be dialogical, autonomous and creative. We should not be surprised, then, that people are not coming to our churches, especially young Australians.

Apparently, Pope Francis is seeing this very clearly—he claims that the recent Synod of Bishops on the Family (October 2015) was:

...about trying to open up broader horizons, rising above conspiracy theories and blinkered viewpoints, so as to defend and spread the freedom of the children of God, and to transmit the beauty of Christian Newness, at times encrusted in a language which is archaic or simply incomprehensible.

The Church, before the coming of Pope Francis, seemed not to be speaking the language of the day, the language of spirituality. In the complexity of Australian society, spirituality seems to be a way that can move people forward in facing this. It seems to be able to propose positive and relevant approaches to the most challenging issues of this time: the complexity of multicultural and multi-religious society, racism, discrimination, violence, immigration, ecology, integration of Aboriginal culture and people into the wider community, and family life struggles. And it seems to be a response to the youth who are longing for something more than materialism and hedonism in their lives. Tacey, out of his personal experience and reflection on youth spirituality today, writes:

For young adults today, spirituality is no longer a matter of private taste or personal concern. Many of my students talk to me about spirituality in worldly and public terms—as the basis for a new sense of human community, as a cure for racism, as an essential ingredient of the new ecological awareness, as an antidote to domestic violence and civil unrest. Spirituality for youth today has acquired a public conscience, with very little of the antisocial, pleasure-seeking flavor that it had for the university students of my own generation, in the 1960s and 1970s.

So the so-called 'secular' spirituality for our youth today is not merely about self-seeking, self-satisfying and self-centering, but it is more about something else. It is more about reaching out of themselves, finding ways to deal with public and social issues with human meanings, values and integrity. However, these meanings and values are no longer the products of some intellectual exercise or rhetorical method used in education and the institutional Church, but they are the result of real, personal and sophisticated life experiences and a reflection of them.

If spirituality is defined as 'connectedness'—with everything (reality of life and creation) and everyone (self, others, the marginalized in society, the world and the divine)—then the meanings and values youth spirituality brings to Australian spirituality today are the result of reflection on the
questions of experience and connection: What is behind the complication and challenges in my life? How can I cope with these? Is there a connection of all these in my life with those of others around me? If there is, what is it? What does this connection mean? What am I supposed to do about it? How come the older generations seem not to do anything about it?

It is an affirmative sign that our current Pope is stirring enormous energy and enthusiasm in numerous Catholics and non-Catholics, both young and old. He seems to be moving the Church forward in dialoguing and interacting with the world's reality as 'one in it', not as 'one above it', and in speaking the language of the day. Many examples show how he is very up-to-date with today's spirituality in general and with youth spirituality in particular. When just elected as Pope, he clearly marked that he wants—'a poor church for the poor'. In his Encyclical Letter Laudato Si', he begins to address the issue of the environmental crisis not from the Judaeo-Christian tradition but:

...by briefly reviewing several aspects of the present ecological crisis, with the aim of drawing on the results of the best scientific research available today, letting them touch us deeply and provide a concrete foundation for the ethical and spiritual itinerary that follows.22

Two things are to be noticed here: first, he starts with the present situation, the reality of environment; second, he includes science in his starting point. Furthermore, as Bruce Duncan suggests, underpinning the encyclical is the 'see, judge, act' methodology, which he used in the conference of the Latin American Bishops at Aparecida in 2007.23 The Pope does not merely want to contribute to the public discussion on the ecological crisis, but he also wants to move the discussion into practical action. Australian youth—and certainly myself—would have found this approach and content of this letter very resonant with their spirituality.

The Synod of Bishops on the Family is also a place where we see how Francis was endeavoring to direct the Church leaders to re-focus, not on the doctrines of the Church (though he knows how important these are), but on the real experience of family in the world. He invited his bishops to look at the situation and to reflect: Okay, if this is what we see, then what are we going to do about it?24 Again, we, young Australians, would be hearing all about this on the media and reading the concluding speech of Francis and seeing how 'real' the Church is for itself and for all of us.

**MSC Heart Spirituality in Australia Today**

In examining carefully the changes in the Church under the leadership of Pope Francis as above, I would like to show how closely connected Francis' spirituality is with the spirituality of Australian youth and many others today. However, in his Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, Francis seems to be well aware of 'a spirituality without God' as a reaction to a 'materialistic, consumerist and individualistic society', and at the same time he warns that this is also a means of exploiting the weaknesses of people, especially the poor, the marginalized and those looking for immediate, easy solutions to life's complexity.25 Nevertheless, one can easily see how Francis is moving the Church towards spirituality.

Also we can see that our MSC heart spirituality is more than ever relevant, appropriate and attractive to Australians. Heart spirituality is in many ways and to a lot of people more adequate than 'devotion to the Sacred Heart'. Even though written in 1981, I still find E. J. Cuskelly's conviction very relevant today:

I believe that we are specially blest in our days if we have learned to look carefully to the Heart of Christ. A 'spirituality of the heart' is admirably suited to help us (and to help us assist others) through this transition time which all the Church is living. It is centered on the new heart and the Spirit which the prophets saw as
the source of life and the new covenant. When he laid down his life for his friends, when his side was pierced, Christ gave us his Spirit.26

In defining the four journeys of the heart spirituality, notice that Cuskelly does not start with the Heart of Christ—and he did not use the capital 'H' in the term 'a spirituality of the heart'—but he begins with our heart (small 'h'), with its profound and personal needs for life, love and meaning.27 Our spirituality starts from where we are, our experience and our reality. This is the starting point for everyone. This fits our contemporary culture and spirituality. And this fits with what the Pope seems to be doing as well.

Of course, our starting point is not our end point. Our spirituality, our way of life, will have to, through the guidance of the Spirit, lead to the Heart of Jesus where the compassion, kindness and gentleness of the Father is revealed. The core of the MSC charism is the 'common' experience of God's love. Even though this experience of God's love is very common, we MSCs have a specific focus on this experience. As the working document for preparing for our 2017 General Chapter reminds us, our charism comes from the experience of being loved by God 'in the Heart of Christ'.28 The term 'in the Heart of Christ' may seem to be very commonly used words in our spirituality and our everyday language, but they signify the specific way we experience God's love for us. That is the love of God revealed in kindness, compassion and gentleness,29 all manifested through the humanity of Jesus.

This kind, compassionate, gentle and human love of God does not mean 'tough love' in which God is perceived as a rough, old father trying to teach his children how to behave. It does not mean 'testing love' in which God is presumed to put us to the test in our faith. It also does not mean a 'judging and righteous love' which ensures that everything has to be just and fair. Regardless of the fact that these characteristics of the love of God might be good and necessary for some, they are not what our charism is about. Our charism comes from the human love of Jesus and experienced, not between the divine and human, but between human and human, not from the top down, but from the grass roots level (cf. Heb 4:15).30 This means that God's love for us is not a feeling of pity of the superior party for the inferior one, but a real love between two equal parties in which God calls us through Jesus to respond to God's free and gratuitous love by our free and unconditional love to God through Jesus himself.

The experience of being loved in the Heart of Christ means a very specific thing and leaves out a lot of aspects of love experienced in human life. And the way we experience God's love is the way we are called to share love with others. This is our mission of love to the world. This is our specific way of being the Heart of God to the world. Once we know and 'own' our experience, of humanity and of love through our heart and Jesus' Heart, then we may accompany others in their own experiences and in their situations just as God does with us.

If we start with human experience, then we can speak freely to Australians, both young and old, who are yearning for spirituality. If we start with human experience, then regardless the fact that we may be speaking in terms of purely horizontal spirituality or secularized spirituality, we should trust that spirituality when mature would lead people back to its ultimate, however often neglected, origin—faith in the divine and the faith community.31 If we start with human experience, we will keep ourselves grounded with others and life reality and enhanced with connectedness, where genuine and realistic meanings and values come from. As Tacey says, spirituality today needs the 'second' innocence, the innocence that has embraced sophistication but also being naïve enough to be inspired by hope for spiritual truths.32 Our heart spirituality is not the first, naïve spirituality of love which yet knows about the challenges, failures and brokenness in love.
But our spirituality is the spirituality of the heart 'pierced on Calvary', of the heart which has been broken open by life's cruelty and human vulnerability. Cuskelly was well aware of this by rightly defining the fourth characteristic of the spirituality of the heart: 'we will not be dis-hearted or discouraged in the face of difficulties.'

In the nineteenth century, Fr Jules Chevalier, our Founder, had to face the illnesses of the time: egotism and indifference in the post-Revolution period; and he envisioned the love revealed in the Heart of Christ was the remedy for these. Today, I really think we are facing similar, but not totally the same, sicknesses in the post-secularism and post-materialism time: individualism and relativism. An individualistic mentality can lead to personal or narcissistic expression. And being relativistic can help one be dialogical and open-minded to others or can leave one feeling apathetic and deaf to the cries of the poor—as Pope Francis has challenged us when facing the refugee crisis today:

Has any one of us wept because of this situation and others like it? Has any one of usgrieved for the death of these brothers and sisters? Has any one of us wept for these persons who were on the boat? For the young mothers carrying their babies? For these men who were looking for a means of supporting their families? We are a society which has forgotten how to weep, how to experience compassion—'suffering with' others: the globalization of indifference has taken from us the ability to weep!

So being individual and relative are not bad in themselves. They only become sicknesses when they lose their balance between self and others, between openness and groundlessness. Our spirituality of the heart includes the person, person in community, openness and a grounded experience of love in Christ.

**Conclusion**

In reflecting on the transitioning of the Church from proclaiming faith as a 'contract' with God to inviting people to live out a 'covenant' with God in the 1980s, Cuskelly writes:

The days have come when the Church has need of religious and priests who live their own personal covenant with God in Christ, and can help others to be a covenant people. This applies to our reflections on the ministry - are we going to get people to make and observe contracts, or are we going to get them to keep covenants?

Till now I think the Church, which means all of us, is still going through this transition—however, since the 1980s till now we have done our best to get to where we are. One can observe the resistance of some of the bishops and the happenings in the Synod on Family to see that we still need to put the 'covenant'—relational, dynamic and conversional—language we have used in our canon law and systematic theology into practice and action in pastoral and real life situations of the people.

The MSC spirituality of the heart has a vital place in the life of the Church in Australia today, since it is grounded in human experience in everyday life, the experience of love, the experience of God's love in a specific way that is gentle, kind, compassionate and humane. And this inspires and encourages us into action to change our relationship with self, others, creation and God.

This spirituality is closely connected to Australian spirituality and Francis' spirituality that the rest of the Church is still to catch up with. However, this does not mean that we, the MSCs, can easily attract more young people to join us. Nevertheless, the appropriateness and quality of this heart spirituality should be acknowledged—as many of the MSCs have done over the recent years already—and should not be undervalued because we are attracting fewer vocations.
NOTES


4. See Ibid.

5. See Ibid.


8. See Ibid., 146-147.

9/ See Peter Malone, ed., Discovering An Australian Theology (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls, 1999), 16.

10. See Dennis J. Murphy, The Heart of the Word Incarnate, 153. However, what I notice is that Dennis Murphy uses the term ‘devotion’ and ‘spirituality’ in the chapter titled ‘A Devotion or a Spirituality?’ interchangeably and at his discretion. This gives me an impression that he tries to conceptualize devotional practice in the perspective of spirituality. In this case, the language to argue for the relevance of the use of ‘the devotion to the Sacred Heart’ is quite convincing because it is the language of spirituality, the language of today. However, the defending of the relevance of the devotional language, in my perspective, is not so.


13. See David Tacey, ReEnchantment, 186-187. Regardless of a critical sense toward the ‘horizontal’ spirituality, Charles Sherlock still acknowledges the fact that spirituality is popular in his contemporary situation, especially among young people. See Peter Malone, ed., Developing An Australian Theology, 54, 58.


18. See David Tacey, Re-Enchantment, 195-196.


21. Ibid., 15.


24. Francis’ Conclusion Remark for the Synod is both a stunning and challenging speech, not only for the Bishops, but also for all of us. See Pope Francis, ‘Conclusion of the Synod of Bishops.’


27. Ibid.

28. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, We Love As Jesus Loved—Working Document for the MSC General Chapter 2017 (Rome, 2015), 5. See also The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Constitutions and Statutes (Rome, 2005), #34.

29. See The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Constitutions and Statutes, #6, 12.


transcendental desire which would always remind us of our longing for meanings and values from the transcendental point of view.


**REFERENCES**

In my own efforts to live the gospel I have found that it is virtually impossible to reach and sustain that level of 'perfect love' without a practice of contemplative prayer... Ordinary awareness always eventually betrays itself and returns to its usual postures of self-defense and self-justification... Only from the level of spiritual awareness do you see and trust that all is held in the divine Mercy... You can begin to reach out to the world with the same wonderful, generous vulnerability that we see in Christ.

—Cynthia Bourgeault, Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening, 17.

I attended the first Australasian Wisdom School in New Zealand in Te Moata in February, 2016. I thought that the Wisdom School offered a useful frame for considering the place and purpose of contemplative practices in the spiritual life. I will outline my understanding of Cynthia's vision of why we fail to live in accordance with Gospel values and what she sees as the remedy for this problem.

Cynthia posits that all action springs out of a self that lies beneath our thoughts and emotions. The only truly efficacious act, then, emerges from a purified self, the source of all subconscious motivations as well as conscious thoughts and emotions. However, if we act primarily out of self-centered thinking or a divided heart, the ordinary human condition, we are likely to perpetuate rather than resolve problems in the world. Contemplative practice is necessary then to purify the self, or transform our consciousness, so that we can embody the Gospel message.

**The Human Condition**

Cynthia employs a computer metaphor, the 'egoic operating system', to explain why we fall short. This system rejects the gift of divine being that is our birthright and replaces it with clinging and grasping for our needs. One of Cynthia's teachers, Fr Thomas Keating, suggests that as each of us conforms to family expectations and social norms, we collectively turn away from a relationship with the living God and seek to meet our perceived needs through our own machinations. Our three most fundamental motivators are the desire for (1) safety/security (2) esteem/affection (3) and power/control.

These emotional programs for happiness, as Fr Keating calls them, are collectively run by the egoic operating system, which manifests itself in four easily observable psychological traps. The first trap is that our thoughts and emotions are driven by an attraction/avoidance dynamic. We move towards our attractors (e.g. safety, esteem, power, etc.) and avoid those things that disturb or threaten our egoic needs. 'The egoically generated self seeks pleasure- experienced as the enlargement or affirmation of its selfhood; and it avoids pain—experienced as the diminishment of selfhood and depletion of its vital elan.' This tug-of-war between our desires and fears leaves our ego by turns inflated and upbeat on good days and distraught and anxiety-ridden on bad days.

The second trap is that our actions are intended to establish a distinctive persona in contrast to others, bearing the imprint of self-identification. Standing out means that we are in competition with those in our community, splitting our heart's affection between our own needs and the equally important needs of others.
Third, these psychological strategies of identification and competition enter into physical form through our body language—gestures, expressions, movements, clothes—which often expresses our self-protective behaviors or self-focused intentions.

The final trap is that we squander the power of attention. Rather than being able to remain in a heart-resonant relationship with God, we are habitually distracted by a multitude of stimuli that take us out of ourselves, causing us to be drawn to or repelled by external phenomena. At other times, our attention is drawn to our inner world where we mentally dwell in the past or worry about our future, taking us out of a moment-by-moment indwelling with God.

The outcome of these traps is that rather than being bearers of the divine image and agents of compassionate action, our thoughts are scrambled and our emotions divided, skewed towards our own self-focused desires. As we grapple with the social demands of family and society, we struggle to get what we feel we need to satisfy ourselves. Rather than being inwardly directed by divine generosity, we become outwardly focused on a quest for survival with the attendant grasping and judging mind.

The egoic operating system usually runs beneath our conscious awareness. We are asleep to its reality, living on autopilot and fighting for our personal needs, which cuts us off from the whole. The egoic operating system effectively sabotages our well-meaning attempts to act compassionately by the four traps of likes and dislikes, identifications, embodied gestures, and inattention.

The Remedy

The remedy to our human condition begins with repentance, which for Fr Keating means to 'change the direction you are looking for happiness.' Cynthia also redefines the term in helpful ways, deconstructing the Greek word *metanoia* into *meta* meaning 'beyond' or 'larger' and *noia* being 'mind.' Repentance, then, means to go 'beyond the mind' or 'into the larger mind.'

Cynthia calls this larger mind 'three-centered awareness,' which can be understood as the intelligences of the body, the mind, and the heart. The body's intelligence is its ability to move into the world, bearing the presence of God through purified actions, gestures, and behaviors. The body seeks to connect with others, manifesting the divine mercy, intimacy, and purpose in life.

While the body has an innate desire to reach out, the mind's particular gift is questioning, critical thinking, and discernment. A mind that has been cleansed of its egoic tendencies can choose to act wisely on behalf of others without the traps of self-focus. The third dimension of three-centered awareness is the heart, which, when divinely-attuned, perceives from the perspective of wholeness. The heart's contribution is its intuitive ability to arbitrate between the body's affirmation and the mind's caution, leading to right action.

Overall, three-centered awareness enables people to step into a larger mind, changing the direction they are seeking for satisfaction from an ego-driven quest to a re-opening to God's sufficiency and abundance. The remedy of restoring body, mind, and heart to their proper skillful intelligences is enabled by contemplative practice.

The body, for example, can engage in conscious work, disciplining the mind to remain focused on physical experience (*e.g.*, sensing the feet as one walks, listening to the
sound created by work, entering into bodily sensations, etc.). The mind can be trained through meditation, first, to understand its unsettled, grasping nature, and in time become cleansed of its baser motivations to become gently in tune with the mind of Christ. These body and mind practices can also purify the intentions of the heart, enabling it to carry out its divine task of coherent perception and purposeful action.

Essential to this task is the training of attention. The underlying ability that maintains three-centered awareness is an attention that habitually drops the egoic operating system's persistent interior monologue in favor of a body-mind-heart moment-by-moment opening to the fullness of God's presence.

Cynthia’s preferred spiritual practice for purifying the heart and training the attention is Centering Prayer. Drawing upon Philippians 2:4-5, Cynthia explains that Jesus' method employs the practice of kenosis, which means to 'self-empty' the frenetic energies of the egoic operating system and return to an open state of dependence on God. Letting go of egoic drives opens space for a higher mode of living called non-dual awareness, which means to see from the perspective of oneness. All contemplative practices would aim to assist us cultivate this new way of seeing.

Jesus is identified, then, as the first teacher of non-dualism in the Western world to instruct followers how to overcome dualisms of like vs. dislike and me vs. others. Only then can Christians successfully love God and their neighbors with their full heart, soul, mind, and strength. Jesus' life, teaching, death and resurrection all bear witness how to live out of this state of wholeness. While the remedy emphasizes human responsibility in becoming more God-like, the entire journey from the small self to the Larger Self, is animated by God's grace. The abundance, presence and providence of God pervades our lives and guides our individual and collective paths.

**Conclusion**

Three-centered awareness offers a restorative path for us to recover our original harmony with God. Developing a habit of spiritual practices allows us to pierce the dark clouds of egoic behavior that obscure the blue sky of our original nature. As the self comes to dwell more in God's presence, it slowly becomes purified of ignorance, attachment, and identification. This Larger Self becomes free to truly act with compassion. Combining focused attention with purified intention enables the body-mind-heart to act not only as a unified intelligence within ourselves, but in resonance with the 'mind of Christ'.

Cynthia observes that the Rule of St Benedict, with its famed 'Ora et Labora' ('Prayer and Work') is an overarching template for sanctifying the self. St Benedict saw his monasteries as 'Schools devoted to the Lord's service'. By analogy, in our own non-monastic environments, this ancient prayer-work template can assist us in our twin tasks of inner awakening and compassionate action.

The Wisdom School has helped me better understand the role of spiritual practices. Whether one is of an activist or contemplative bent, we need to manifest our spirituality in the 'marketplace'. To summarise, Cynthia provides three useful pointers for framing the place and purpose of contemplative practice:

1. To upgrade our egoic operating system in favor of the divine image operating system.
2. To assist us cultivate three centered awareness which allows us to ground and channel the divine life within us so that we can respond to life more graciously and compassionately.
3. To enable us to move through our lives more effortlessly as we alternate between the rhythm of Ora (Prayer) and Labora (Work).
ST THERESE OF LISIEUX’S PERCEPTION OF GOD

JUDITH SCHNEIDER

(i) The way her writing can inform us of how we come to view God
(ii) In this light, what might we learn from Thérèse today?

It is probably true to say that, at the level of ‘popular’ faith, Thérèse of Lisieux has been adopted by many as their ‘go-to’ person-in-heaven. As such, she has been experienced as someone who bestowed special, even miraculous, favours—something she gave permission for in her lifetime. However, here we’re not talking about a beyond-death Thérèse we might have personally experienced. The Thérèse I will speak about is from research, specifically with respect to the feelings and events she recorded about her life.

It is well-known that millions have visited Thérèse’s relics over the years. Why people pursue relics is not something I will address here—except that Thérèse herself took part in this pursuit. She kept bits and pieces from places and people from the past as souvenirs, feeling that by touching them she would be imbued with some of their qualities.

What is Thérèse known for? Often referred to as ‘the little flower,’ Thérèse was a Carmelite nun, canonized in 1925, quite soon after her death at 24, from tuberculosis, in 1897. Her fame was brought about mainly by the widespread (and unexpected) impact of her spiritual autobiography Story of a Soul. This manuscript was written under obedience to her prioress, who also was her biological sister. Its impact, together with its testimony to Thérèse’s holiness and her on-going influence in people’s faith and their relationship with God, led John Paul II to declaring her a Doctor of the Church for her ‘Mastery of the Spiritual Life’.

To show Thérèse’s developing perception of God (influencing how she viewed herself) in her writing, and what we might learn from her, I will give a brief biography that includes her theological context, then make a comment on the literary form of her work Story of a Soul and follow with an observation about hagiography in general. That will lead to a short discussion on Thérèse’s psychological development, the value of her writing with respect to this, and what that might mean for us in our faith life and our understanding of God.

Biography

We know a lot about Thérèse because she wrote prolifically—as did her mother and sisters, both in and out of the convent. The youngest of nine children of whom only five survived, Thérèse was born in 1873 to Louis Martin (a watchmaker) and Zélie (a maker of fine Alençon lace). Both Louis and Zélie, before marrying, had attempted to enter the religious life, but were refused; Louis was informed that his latin was insufficient, and Zélie was supplied no reason at all. When they married and children arrived, in the background was something of the desire to retrieve an opportunity denied them: the ideals, and romance, of being a religious. Monastic ideals permeated their daily living. (Something that contributed to their recent canonisation, on 18th October 2015.) Their home was run according to these ideals. Louis and Zélie, and whichever children were old enough, attended mass early each morning, celebrated feast days with decorated home altars, walked feast-day
processions, and visited the needy with gifts of food. Louis further took part in Church meetings and pilgrimages. Later when Zélie became more pragmatic due to the demands of her business, Thérèse's older sisters Marie and Pauline (who attended a convent school where their aunt Sister Dosithée resided and worked as a nun) served as role models. Thérèse writes she wanted to be just like them.4

Tragically, the Martin family suffered the trauma of losing four children (Louis, in addition, lost a young sister) as at this time infant mortality rate was high. Thérèse herself nearly died in infancy. When Zélie stopped breast-feeding her, Thérèse developed what resembled life-threatening gastroenteritis. She was sent away for the next fifteen months of her life to a wet-nurse. It is interesting to note that Zélie travelled alone at night twenty miles to a farming village in Semallé to make this a possibility.5

Thérèse thrived in Semallé, experiencing the abundance of breast-milk and outdoor village life. It is better appreciated how this time with Rose Taillé will be pivotal in Thérèse's development—as will become clearer later. Further, one cannot help but note the contrast between this more 'earthy' phase of her life and the middle-class 'churchiness' of her biological family (a possible source of difference between Thérèse and her sisters). When she returned home, she readjusted and spent another two and a half years with her mother, before Zélie died from breast-cancer (soon after a painful and disappointing journey to Lourdes). Thus, after a fifteen-month separation from her mother, Thérèse's mother then died when Thérèse was only four years old.

In the absence of her mother (and Rose Taillé), Thérèse attached herself to her sisters, viewing as mother figures first Pauline, and then Marie, but one by one they left to enter the local Carmelite convent at Lisieux. For Thérèse, visiting her sisters proved to be even more wrenching than their leaving, as during their visits Pauline seemed to forget how special Thérèse was to her. In the psychological language of Attachment theory of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth,6 one might state that Thérèse struggled to form secure attachments, needed for 'self-forgetful' exploration. In Story of a Soul she writes that attending school was a misery—from the age of eight up to thirteen, she lacked resilience and the ability to be light-hearted.7 At ten years of age she fell sick, and lived in a kind of delirium for six weeks. In an article on her development, Vitz and Lynch show in the light of Bowlby's attachment theory that Thérèse suffered from 'Separation Anxiety'—validating the sense of weakness that she describes in her writing.8

Not having the benefit of this theory and its psychological terms, Thérèse employs spiritual language to describe her griefs, joys, challenges and successes, inheriting the Carmelite psychological tradition of St John of the Cross. Thus we do have a language here, and Thérèse's psycho-spiritual self-evaluation makes for good reading, especially when illuminated by insights from contemporary psychological theory.

**Context**

Thérèse was a person of her time—contending with Jansenism's God, portrayed as stern and scrupulous, requiring persons to ascertain whether, and in what way, they were predestined by grace. If you had a vocation as a vowed religious (discovered through signs, personally or via others), you might find an original way of expressing this—the prevailing religious aim being to assuage God's wrath directed against a secular population who cared little for poor suffering Jesus (images and verse of this time often depicted Jesus as wan and effeminate)9. Waning Catholicism in France was, among Catholics, understandably, evaluated with passion. Popular at this time was the devotion of St Margaret Mary Alacoque (newly beatified) to the 'Sacred Heart of Jesus' (to allay God's anger
toward ungodly France). Popular, too, was the young Joan of Arc, who in the 15th century returned French territory to Godly France.  

**Hagiography**

Recent research has highlighted that Thérèse wrote about herself through the elements of the hagiography of her time (narratives that elevated persons through selecting certain personality traits and life events). The saintly person, in some sense alone in the world, is portrayed as an innocent soul whose every good action in the face of various oppositions and difficult circumstances is observed by God—in the form of a benevolent, omnipotent, parental narrator—vindicating their every step. Today we might mock such narratives, viewing them as naive, but such writing, beyond its romantic strokes, can be explained in developmental terms.

Such hagiographical narratives may be viewed as constructed around the 'true self' who is under threat. The self under threat wants their good intentions recognized. In effect, they are saying: 'I'm the one who tried hard to do well, but my efforts went unnoticed; however, I did not give up.' The hagiographer transfers, in no small way, concern for the saint's plight onto a watching, rescuing, omnipotent other, thus expressing the sufferer's profound desire to be acknowledged. Constructing her own hagiography in *Story of a Soul*, Thérèse's story could be summarised as: 'I am a lover of Jesus. My expressions of love toward Jesus seem pretty ordinary, but a lot goes into them'. An ambitious streak leads her to declare that she is great, not in expressing love best of all, but in her desire to express love. Her desire is bigger than anyone else's. To use a simple analogy: if her desire to express love were currency, she'd be a billionaire—her desires are 'immense;' they 'reach even into infinity'; and the object of her love, God, she intuits, is very pleased with this.

Another feature of hagiographic writing is a sense of 'everyone is watching me.' We find this in Thérèse's writing. She feels endowed with immense purpose—self-consciously wearing it as a gift for all—in a vocation she invented for herself in response to a 'divine call': to be a victim of God's mercy, rather than of justice, the prevailing fashion (generally interpreted as wrath). This represented a shift from what was accepted in her time, from seeing God as to be feared, from avoiding hellfire as a motivating force, and from expiatory work as necessarily involving (self-imposed) suffering. Her unique assuaging of Jesus' suffering at first entailed seeking to endure pain so that others would, unknowingly, benefit from his mercy, but, later, it involved a reversal: allowing Jesus to accommodate her weakness would demonstrate her gratitude for his mercy. Thérèse's use of ironies, e.g., of reversal, underlines their importance in hagiographies. The weak one is strong; the young one is wise; the insignificant one is enormously significant—found in Biblical narratives and later stated explicitly by the apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 12: 10b.

We find, then, in Thérèse's writing a sense that all are watching her, that all revolves around her. While this may sound egotistical, such disclosure to her reader, which includes God as a listening participant, engages the issue of how one might possess a healthy self. When our value is felt to be eroded, a significant primary other capable of defending us (God) might demonstrate that they value us as a precious distinct other. She writes
about her Clothing Day:

What thoughtfulness on the part of Jesus! Anticipating the desires of his fiancée, He gave her snow! What mortal bridegroom, no matter how powerful he may be, could make snow fall from heaven to charm his beloved? Perhaps people wondered and asked themselves this question. What is certain, though, is that many considered the snow on my Clothing Day as a little miracle and the whole town was astonished.  

Early on in Carmel, in being given lowly tasks, Thérèse was given to think that she was of little consequence. There was talk of her not having a true vocation (she simply followed her sisters, she was the prioress’s favourite, and, worst, by entering the convent she broke her father’s heart), so Thérèse had a need to be acknowledged in order ‘to be real’. This was a matter of survival. Before suffering loss and the anxiety of separation, she experienced being the centre of attention at home with her family, and she eventually retrieves this through attention from her biological sisters in the Convent. The tenacity Thérèse’s expresses in her retrieval (and its accompanying hope) may be traced to the strength of her primary-care relationships, with Rose and Zélie, that informed her perception of God as lovingly indulgent. When she discovers that she is suffering from tuberculosis, she interprets this as her being so special to God that God has called her home to Himself. Perhaps now her sisters will see how special she is.

Poignant, yet helpful to us, is the transparency of Thérèse’s self-development in her writing. We read that as a child she is fêted, but when she loses her childish cuteness, she’s overlooked. After a time of intense suffering, she retrieves this attention, which embodies a homecoming of sorts. In a book The End of the Present World (by Charles Arminjon) owned by her father, she discovers images (that remain with her) of an ultimate home-coming: heaven as a family reunion around the hearth while snow falls outside, where God the great father listens to saintly travellers tell their stories of spiritual conquests in the world below, and pronounces ‘well done’. All are blissful united harmony in front of the crackling fire.

In these, Thérèse’s psychological vulnerability is exposed to the reader. If we were seeking to measure spiritual maturity by employing markers of healthy self-development, such as aimed by Joann Wolski Conn, using demonstration of confident trust as a gauge, Thérèse may be described as spiritually mature. Additionally, Thérèse appears to display a psychological acuity when she observes, in Augustinian humility, that all that she has, and is, is first given by God—meaning she feels confident trust is not something she could generate independently. (We discover, however, that Thérèse does not fully appreciate this as a universal principle when she asks others to also express confident trust without sufficient regard for their emotional-psychological capital as first ‘given by God’). But our purpose here is not to measure Thérèse’s spiritual maturity. She perhaps remains in a state of self-absorption, simply reflecting her circumstance of being in need of a watching other to bring her to psychological health.

**Her Little Way**

Thérèse is perhaps best known for her assertion that each person’s efforts in the name of love—no matter how small—are of value to God. The expression ‘Little way’ (attributed as unique to Thérèse) was commonly employed among Carmelites of her time and earlier times, especially in obituaries called circulaires. It was a bit like saying ‘I did it my way!’ except the diminutive effect of ‘little’ lent a tone of humility. The aim was to suggest, if not an original path, a distinctive one in spiritual terms, which nevertheless conformed to the formula of noting features praiseworthy in the Carmelite life. Thus
Thérèse’s little way (petite voie or petit chemin) did not specifically refer to the notion of spiritual childhood. However, accepting a child’s qualities was part of her way. The metaphor considered unique to her was that God might lift her up to himself as an elevator lifts persons, bypassing stairs—good news for those who cannot negotiate stairs such as a child or an invalid.32

So, what else was distinctive and inspiring in Thérèse’s way? To envisage God as valuing all our efforts no matter how small, or ordinary, to love Him and our neighbour, by self-effacement, especially by enduring other persons’ irritating actions and little injustices. These Thérèse readily encountered, being the youngest (from her teens and into early twenties) in a convent, which at times resembled a geriatric facility (the unreasonableness of some elderly nuns perhaps symptomatic of the onset of dementia). For example, Thérèse describes how when she helps a particularly demanding aged sister, and is rewarded by irritability, this in God’s eyes resembles a scene from grand ‘feast’ in a society ‘drawing room’.33

Importantly, from the bank of her life experience, and her spiritual imagination, Thérèse describes a Father-God before whom we should not cower (‘run back from’ in Jansenist fashion), but, rather, spontaneously run toward. Today, God continues to be portrayed as exacting when we assert God wants us to conceive of him as this, and not that, or expects this from us, and not that, when God is bigger than our narrowing projections. Ultimately, Thérèse did practice resignation of the will to Church teaching regarding God’s character, but not in a spirit of timidity or passivity; it was, rather, through a lens of confidence in God’s love for her as being like her early parental experience.

**Links to Psychoanalysis and Developmental Theory**

Thérèse’s writing tells us something about how we interpret our lives with God in mind. Psychological insights into human development since her time have allowed deeper understanding of her spiritual activity. For example, it has been shown that before we come into formal contact with the God of our tradition, we bring our own God—constructed from our experience of parental care.34 Indeed, we arrive at childhood having constructed a map of relationships in our mind—a map of how the world works and what to expect from others.35 In our faith life, we reconfigure that map—taking early relationships and their images, via the objects and persons that represent these (e.g., parents and, importantly, the mother), and draft them into other forms (named ‘transitional objects’ in post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory). In this interior map, God becomes the guardian, and our quest is to develop into our true selves—in harmony with God. We interact with this map through prayer, where we readjust our expectations in the relational sphere, to express, and experience, hope and courage where previously we lacked hope and courage.

This way of looking at things tells us a lot about a person’s emotional health. So frank and transparent is Thérèse’s writing that we can see the God she brings to that of her tradition. Her God has the elements of a hard-working mother who sacrifices a lot for her children and husband, and of an often-absent father, who when present, is extravagant in his affection and gifts. Through her mother’s correspondence relating how Thérèse was indulged emotionally and materially (in being readily forgiven, and supplied things that brought her joy—e.g., hot chocolate, a swing, a puppy), we can readily identify young Thérèse’s God as correspondingly quick to forgive, and powerfully provident (just as Zélie effectively impacted Thérèse’s environment in response to her requests). Later on, when we find Thérèse’s attentive, self-giving God often absent, this may be seen as reflecting Zélie’s after death absence, or Louis’ absence due to his travel and staying at the Belvedere (his
spiritual hide-away). Next to affirming what the Church taught about God's character, Thérèse includes, consistent with her early felt experience, the idea that after her death God would empower her to fulfil prayers addressed to her,36 confident that in her eager responsiveness to him, her desires were in unity with God's will. In assenting to formal teaching about God's character, many of Thérèse's contemporaries were subdued and unimaginative in their faith projections. Thérèse stood out in her irrepressible confidence.

Why was Thérèse able to express such confidence in God's mercy for her—was it because she remembered instances of it, and longed for it again for herself? Her primordial experiences of being loved (Rose, mother, father's doting) and of 'mercy' did give her a sense of inner strength and of being a 'true' self, but her experience of parental abandonment also formed part of how she experienced God. She later felt herself in a 'dark tunnel'; the thought of heaven as 'no longer anything but the cause of struggle and torment.'37 A sense of inner strength and of being a self meant that she could sustain these 'absences'—even absence of God. We find this phenomenon exemplified in some other prominent spiritual figures. An example of childhood experience influencing her sense of God, in both positive presence and unfathomable painful absence, may be seen in Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. While expressing magnanimity and business acumen (on behalf of God) in her spiritual endeavours, she also increasingly felt that God deserted her (an experience of 'darkness, coldness and emptiness...' not unlike the 'dark night of the soul,' an expression from St John of the Cross).38 This corresponds to elements in her early life. Her father, a successful businessman who was often away on business, died when she was 'about eight,' whereupon her mother capably took charge. The qualities of generous presence and profound absence reappear in her faith-life. Such observation is not meant to reduce spiritual journeys to a sum of influences, but to find how through prayer we transform absence and loss into a constructive self-sense that fosters hope.

What might Thérèse give us today?

Thérèse's writing, in today's somewhat less religious world, remains valuable because it allows us insights into value acquisition, and into how persons change their outlook through prayer, such as through the kind of interaction Thérèse had with God. Unfortunately, there's still a perception that psychology and spirituality, rather than paralleling, or mutually informing each other, oppose each other in their descriptions of causes and solutions, for fear of psychological explanations finding God superfluous.

From our discussion here, I suggest we steer the two disciplines to speak to each other in a mutually enhancing way. An important connection between Thérèse's psychological and spiritual trajectories is that the more she felt her limitations (and she felt them acutely—first in her school years, then in Carmel, and finally in her sickness), the more she felt that God accommodated her, lift her up, and compensate for her lack. It was as if her limitations, felt to be caused by God, indebted, or compelled God to come to her aid. She found this liberating, and was audacious in her expectation that God would respond. Thérèse hoped and trusted God against evidence pointing otherwise. She felt human limitations and failures were, in God's eyes, assets, attractors of God's love and mercy.

NOTES

1. Such invitations (to request favours from her after her death) are attributed to Thérèse by her sister Pauline in *Her Last Conversations*. However, as they are filtered through a hearer, some Thérèsian
scholars, such as Jean François Six, *Light of the Night: The Last Eighteen Months of the Life of Thérèse of Lisieux* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1996) dispute their authenticity. Nevertheless, invitations are recorded in Thérèse's correspondence to the seminarian Maurice Bellière.

2. This article develops an address presented on 22 August, 2014, at 'Fridays at Fairweathers', a bi-monthly scholarly address at The University of Notre Dame Fremantle.


5. The name of her wet nurse was Rose Taillé.


7. Clarke, trans, *Story of a Soul*, 53-93. In this passage, some markers of Asperger's or Autism spectrum disorder may be observed, in Thérèse's preference for telling stories, collecting and imparting knowledge, and concerning herself with objects, rather than participating in games. She tends to aim for correctness, and competes rather than interacts.


9. For example, see popular versions of Pompeo Batoni's 1767 depiction of the 'Sacred Heart of Jesus.' Images of Romantic heroes like this provoked disdain from such as Friedrich Nietzsche. Margaret Alacoque was a visitation nun from the late 17th century. Her devotion stemmed from visions she had.


11. Interest in Joan of Arc was rising. She would be beatified just 12 years after Thérèse's death.

12. See, for example, Thérèse of Lisieux: General Correspondence Volume I, 1877-1890, translated by John Clarke OCD (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1982), 416.

13. For this sense (narrating other persons), see, for example, St John of Egypt, *Lives of the Saints*, by Alban Butler, Benziger Bros. ed. [1894], at sacred-texts.com. See also 'Humility' in *Spiritual Diary: Selected Sayings and Examples of Saints* (St Paul Books & Media; 2nd edition, 1990).


18. Jesus 'meets only the ungrateful and indifferent…' Clarke, trans, *Story of a Soul*, 189. See also 180.


20. This is also a Romantic device: the innocent primitive one has the truth naturally (as did Bernadette Soubirous of Lourdes). Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (New York: Penguin, Compass, 2000), 145-150, especially 150.

21. Clarke, trans, *Story of a Soul*, 155-156. Also, '…everyone seemed to think it so wonderful to see such a handsome old man with such a little daughter that they …'41.


23. Clarke, trans, *Story of a Soul*, 210-211: She experienced the coughing up of blood as ‘…a sweet and distant murmur that announced the bridegroom's arrival.’

24. Nevin aptly entitles a chapter of his book:
How shall I show my love is proved by deeds? Well—the little child will strew flowers...she will embalm the Divine Throne with their fragrance, will sing with silvery voice the canticle of love. Yes, my Beloved, it is thus that my life’s brief day shall be spent before Thee. No other means have I of proving my love than to strew flowers; that is, to let no little sacrifice escape me, not a look, not a word, to avail of the very least actions and do them for Love. I wish to suffer for Love’s sake and for Love’s sake even to rejoice; thus shall I strew flowers. Not one shall I find without shedding its petals for Thee...and then I will sing, I will always sing, even if I must gather my roses in the very midst of thorns—and the longer and sharper the thorns the sweeter shall be my song.

—Story of A Soul, Chapter XI
ONE WOULD NOT know it from our mass media, but there is much happening globally to address the threat posed by the over 15,000 nuclear weapons that still exist. And one wouldn't know it from our own government's statements, but Australia is a part of the problem, rather than a part of the solution, in getting rid of these worst of all weapons.

The problem

Nine nations possess nuclear weapons - Russia, the US, the UK, China, France, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. Alone among these nations, the US keeps some of its weapons on other nations' territory, specifically that of NATO member states, and also offers "extended deterrence" to some of its allies including Australia. This means that Australia accepts "protection" by US nuclear weapons. Just what that means in practice is unclear and seems taboo for Australian governments, perhaps because they don't know, and perhaps because the implications of the policy - possible use of the weapons - are too horrifying to contemplate.

Globally, the ongoing risks posed by nuclear weapons are significantly greater than generally realised. With the end of the Cold War there came a complacency that persists to this day. The Doomsday Clock of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, the best known marker of humanity's proximity to self-destruction, is currently set at three minutes to midnight, in recognition of the twin dangers of nuclear weapons and climate change.

The dangers are not limited to a possible deliberate nuclear detonation. A quarter of a century after the end of the Cold War, approximately 1,800 US and Russian nuclear weapons are still on high alert, which means that they can be launched within 5 to 15 minutes notice, including by accident. Chatham House in the UK reports 13 instances since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 when nuclear weapons were nearly used, often as a result of technical and communications failures in both the US and Russia.

Repeated studies, including that of the 1996 Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, have warned that unless nuclear weapons are abolished they will be used again. The Canberra Commission stated that "the proposition that nuclear weapons can be retained in perpetuity and never used - accidentally or by decision - defies credibility".

The results of any nuclear weapons use would be catastrophic beyond measure, and beyond the capacity of any meaningful humanitarian response. The combined effects of the intense blast, firestorms, gale force winds, collapsing buildings, multiple projectiles and radioactive contamination would kill tens or hundreds of thousands of people immediately and many more over the ensuing days, weeks, months and years. Rescue agencies would be able to offer the survivors very little with medical, transport, electricity, communications and other services destroyed. In addition, a nuclear war is unlikely to be limited to one bomb, so this devastation would probably be replicated across countries or regions or globally.

A further impact of nuclear war that has received renewed attention in recent years is that of 'nuclear winter', caused by vast amounts of particulate matter from burning
cities that would block sunlight and reduce rainfall and agricultural production for up to a decade, with widespread famine as a likely result.

Even before detonation, these weapons are responsible for unconscionable neglect of human need, as the nuclear-armed nations between them spend over $100 billion on their nuclear weapons programs every year, diverting scarce resources from the provision of health care, education, food, clean water and shelter.

**Signs of hope**

However the tide is turning, with what has come to be called the "Humanitarian Initiative" playing a key role. From 2013 a series of intergovernmental conferences have been held, accompanied by strong civil society collaboration, to focus attention on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. No longer can the governments of nuclear-armed nations hide behind sterile talk of military and strategic doctrines that ignore the reality of what these weapons do to people and to the environment. The nuclear-armed governments are losing control of the agenda, which is increasingly highlighting their ongoing defiance of overwhelming world opinion in favour of nuclear weapons abolition.

The conferences, held in Oslo, Nayarit (in Mexico) and Vienna from early 2013 to the end of 2014 each concluded, with increasing sense of alarm, that, because of the catastrophic effects of these weapons, they must never be used again.

After the last of the three conferences, in Vienna in December 2014, the Austrian government initiated what is now called the Humanitarian Pledge which currently has 127 signatory countries. The Pledge states ‘…that no national or international response capacity exists that would adequately respond to the human suffering and humanitarian harm that would result from a nuclear weapon explosion in a populated area’. It calls for ‘effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons’, referring to the fact that, unlike the situation with other weapons of mass destruction such as chemical and biological weapons, there is no treaty explicitly banning nuclear weapons.

ICAN, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, was first launched in Australia in 2007, and it is now a strong global campaign with 440 partner organizations in 98 countries. ICAN has been the civil society partner for each of the government conferences. The campaign's goal is a nuclear weapons ban treaty, to ban the development, testing, production, use and threat of use of these weapons.

It must be emphasised that a ban treaty is not being promoted with any expectation that the countries with the weapons will immediately sign it and disarm. Its purpose is to stigmatise and delegitimise the weapons so that our thinking about them—and the nations that stockpile them—changes. A change to the legal framework will have an impact far beyond those nations that sign the treaty, as we have seen with, for example, the treaties banning chemical weapons and landmines.

The momentum towards a ban treaty is building. Right now in Geneva a new UN Open Ended Working Group is holding its second meeting (the first being in February), that is examining the legal measures and provisions that will be needed to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. Despite its unexciting title, this group holds
the best chance in decades for real progress in getting rid of the world's most destructive devices.

**Australia's role**

Australia has opposed and sought to undermine the Humanitarian Initiative process that is heading towards a nuclear weapons ban treaty. At the UN General Assembly last year, Australia voted against every resolution that was calling for the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

At the heart of Australia's resistance to a ban treaty is our continued reliance on ‘extended nuclear deterrence’, that is, the threat of use of US nuclear weapons in our ‘defence’. A threat can only deter if it is credible, and the threat in this case is to incinerate cities and their inhabitants—children, women and men—indiscriminately.

The Australian government refuses in international forums to agree that nuclear weapons must never be used ‘under any circumstances’. This raises the questions: Under what circumstances does the Australian government believe nuclear weapons should be used, and against whom?

In September 2015, in an historic speech before the UN General Assembly, Pope Francis added his voice to the global call for a prohibition on nuclear weapons. He condemned the doctrine of deterrence as ‘an affront to the entire framework of the United Nations’ which could reduce the global body to ‘nations united by fear and distrust’.

Australia would do well to heed the Pope's message. We could make an outstanding contribution by renouncing the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons in all circumstances; this would have a powerful effect internationally and put us on the right side of history on this issue.

The actions of the 127 governments (thus far) that have endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge and are determined to ‘stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate’ nuclear weapons are underpinned by an equally determined civil society movement. ICAN Australia welcomes the support of individuals and organisations who will join us in getting rid of these instruments of terror.

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**Nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction not yet prohibited by an international convention, even though they have the greatest destructive capacity of all weapons. A global ban on nuclear weapons is long overdue and can be achieved in the near future with enough public pressure and political leadership. A ban would not only make it illegal for nations to use or possess nuclear weapons; it would also help pave the way to their complete elimination. Nations committed to reaching the goal of abolition should begin negotiating a ban now. International law obliges all nations to pursue in good faith and conclude negotiations for nuclear disarmament. However, the nuclear-armed nations have so far failed to present a clear road map to a nuclear-weapon-free world. All are investing heavily in the modernization of their nuclear forces, with the apparent intention of retaining them for many decades to come. Continued failure is not an option. So long as nuclear weapons exist, there is a real danger they will be used again. A ban is urgently needed.**

—From the ICAN website,
FROM JUST WAR TO JUST PEACE

CLAUDE MOSTOWIK MSC

'From Brazil to Africa, to Bangladesh, Burma, China and to the Philippines stretches the large family of humble people - Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, who are discovering this liberating force of nonviolence as they are about to build new societies aimed at justice, participation and peace..."

We live in exciting times. Though our world is studded by acts of violence and conflict from the Middle East to West Papua, from the Philippines to parts of Latin America and Sri Lanka to Africa, people remain convinced that the default position of responding to violence with more violence is unviable and ineffective. It is not in accord with being a follower of Jesus, who incarnates the God of Peace.

In April, on the 50th anniversary of Pope John XXIII's release of the encyclical Peace on Earth (Pacem in terris), a ground-breaking and unprecedented conference was held in Rome called Nonviolence and Just Peace: Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to Nonviolence. Co-hosted by the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International, a movement for peace founded in 1945, the conference hosted 85 nonviolence and peacemaking practitioners from around the world. Many of these people have shown in their own bodies the scars of doing life differently when it comes to violence and war.

The move away in the Catholic Church from the just war theory as 'settled teaching' to a more expansive call to proactive peacemaking is not really new. It has been questioned by Popes John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and now Francis. Its rationale was, 'To seek peace, deep peace rooted in justice, shalom—not a mere absence of war, but the fullness of life for all—that is the Christian vocation and way of life. As followers of the One who is Peace, who on the cross overcame the violence of our world and who then called for peace and modelled forgiveness, we are called to help move our broken and violated world toward the full flowering of the New Creation, repeating Jesus' way of active, nonviolent, persistent, risky, creative peacemaking.'

Conference attendees came with a view that the 'just war' doctrine needed to be rejected for a 'just peace' paradigm and that Pope Francis write an Encyclical on peace and nonviolence. Pope Francis' powerful statement of welcome and support to the conference began a conversation about Catholic teaching on war and peace which would reject 'just war' and engage in a spirituality and practice of nonviolent peacemaking as lived and taught by Jesus. The 'just war' doctrine was deceptive. It led people to think that because a war was declared as just, that it was actually a good thing. However, even when a just war may have been permissible, it was still an evil.

Conference participants envisioned concrete ways to deepen an understanding of, and commitment to, active nonviolence; find alternative frameworks that engage with and transform conflict by nonviolent ways such as building trust and just peace; encourage and promote a global conversation on nonviolence and respond to violence and injustice with strategies of nonviolent peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Pope Francis began to question this thinking before the conference when he said that 'many powerful people don't want peace
because they live off war......Some powerful people make their living with the production of arms.....It's the industry of death'. In meetings with the people, especially children, he has focused on peace, how to build it and how to keep it.\(^3\) In this he challenged the military-industrial complex—those who make and export armaments as well as exporting poverty.

In his powerful message of support to the conference, Pope Francis alluded to a world war that occurs in instalments: "In order to seek solutions to the unique and terrible 'world war in instalments' which, directly or indirectly, a large part of humankind is presently undergoing..." We need 'true peace' where it is necessary to bring people together concretely so as to reconcile peoples and groups with opposing ideological positions. It is also necessary to work together for what persons, families, peoples and nations feel is their right, namely, to participate on a social, political and economic level in the goods of the modern world.

The Pope encouraged discussion on 'revitalising the tools of non-violence, and of active non-violence in particular.........' and that conflict must be faced and not ignored or concealed so as not to remain trapped within a framework of conflict. He went on to remind the conference participants that the greatest obstacle to be removed is the 'wall of indifference' that affects not only our fellow human beings but also the natural environment, with consequences for security and peace.

The conference consisted of people from South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, Palestine, Iraq, Croatia, Philippines, Colombia, Mexico and Australia. Many had paid the price for continuing to engage with the so-called 'enemy'. They had seen colleagues, friends and family members murdered, disappeared, imprisoned or tortured, or themselves suffered these traumas, yet deeply convinced that nonviolence works and is effective. These were the experts that speak more loudly than those who are sceptical of any 'just peace' paradigm that Pope Francis alluded to in his statement. Pope Francis referred to these people who did not ignore the 'formidable undertaking to work for peace by living the practice of non-violence' despite the milieu of violence they live in by recognising the humanity of the 'other' and maintaining links, building bridges and overcoming fear by pursuing open and sincere, yet difficult practice of dialogue.

The final report of the conference *An Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence* reminded us all for the need for forgiveness as 'We confess that the people of God have betrayed this central message of the Gospel many times, participating in wars, persecution, oppression, exploitation, and discrimination.' This report went on to say, that '...the Word of God, the witness of Jesus, should never be used to justify violence, injustice or war.'

It also states that there is no 'just war'. It has been used to endorse rather than prevent or limit war. To suggest that a 'just war' is possible undermines the moral imperative to develop tools and capacities for nonviolent transformation of conflict. The call is to find a new framework and shift to a 'just peace' approach based on Gospel nonviolence. This offers a vision and an ethic that strives to build peace that comes by committing to human dignity and thriving relationships in order to prevent, defuse, and to heal the damage of violent conflict. The belief was that whilst...
anyone resorts to military force, there will be no attempt to find alternatives that can and do make a difference.

Pax Christi International co-president, Marie Dennis, said, ‘As long as we say that dropping bombs will solve the problem we won't find other solutions and I think that's more and more clear to us.’ The challenge is to invest creative energy, deep thinking, financial and human resources that could make a difference. The truth is that modern wars have rendered the just war theory obsolete and minimalistic. It had a negative focus, emphasising war and not peace. The distinction between just and unjust wars do not account for the massive, indiscriminate violence of modern war. Modern warfare has resulted in casualties among civilians upward of 80% to 90%. These figures alone must determine that just war theory is still not permissible.

'It (war) is out of date for our world of today…….Any war is a destruction. There is no justice in destruction…. It is outdated…….We should not give now, at this moment, reasons for war. Let us block them and promote relationships of harmony, of brother and sisterhood, rather than going for war.'

The challenge is to ensure that more people know about nonviolence, its techniques and understand that peace is not the absence of conflict or war but a new vision of 'shalom', just peace, where we take care of the earth, stop killing people and rebuild a world where all people have enough food, housing, healthcare, education, employment and respect as persons. This takes imagination and creativity. It takes courage and strength from other for the long haul…. but there is no other way to peace.

*Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start.*

—Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*

ENDNOTES

1. From Hildegard Goss-Mayr in the foreword of Niall O'Brien's book *Island of Tears*.
2. Principles of Just-War Theory
   1. Last Resort: A just war can only be waged after all peaceful options are considered. The use of force can only be used as a last resort.
   2. Legitimate Authority: A just war is waged by a legitimate authority. A war cannot be waged by individuals or groups that do not constitute the legitimate government.
   3. Just Cause: A just war needs to be in response to a wrong suffered. Self-defense against an attack always constitutes a just war; however, the war needs to be fought with the objective to correct the inflicted wound.
   4. Probability of Success: In order for a war to be just, there must be a rational possibility of success. A nation cannot enter into a war with a hopeless cause.

5. Right Intention: The primary objective of a just war is to re-establish peace. In particular, the peace after the war should exceed the peace that would have succeeded without the use of force. The aim of the use of force must be justice.

6. Proportionality: The violence in a just war must be proportional to the casualties suffered. The nations involved in the war must avoid disproportionate military action and only use the amount of force absolutely necessary.

7. Civilian Casualties: The use of force must distinguish between the militia and civilians. Innocent citizens must never be the target of war; soldiers should always avoid killing civilians. The deaths of civilians are only justified when they are unavoidable victims of a military attack on a strategic target.


John Dear The Church’s Turning Toward Nonviolence The Huffington Post April 20, 2016 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-dear/the-churchs-turning-toward-nonviolence/


Vatican Conference on Nonviolence Pace e Bene April 14, 2016 http://www.paceebene.org/2016/04/14/vatican-conference-on-nonviolence/


**FURTHER READING**

Rethinking the Just-War Legacy Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2007


Joshua J. McElwee Francis encourages Vatican just war conference to revitalize tools of nonviolence National Catholic Reporter April 12, 2016


Pax Christi International, An appeal to the Catholic Church to recommit to the centrality of Gospel nonviolence


Terrence J. Rynne Gandhi and Jesus: The Saving Power of Nonviolence Orbis Books 2008

Terrence J. Rynne Jesus Christ, Peacemaker: A New Theology of Peace Orbis Books 2014

Maria J. Stephan, ‘What happens when you replace a just war with a just peace?’, Foreign Policy May 18, 2016 http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/18/pope-francis-just-peace-catholic-vatican-africa-isis/

The author of this article was the only Australian to attend the conference in Rome.
This book contains much interesting information about the current state of religion in Australia. E.g., that only about 8% of the population go to church each week, about 20% go occasionally, and that 70% or so of all marriage ceremonies do not take place in church. As well, Mackay is very strongly concerned to recommend a faith to live by, and that is, well, Love, actually:

Beyond the cool, rational dictates of Reason, every healthy society, like every healthy relationship, also needs the civilizing, humanizing power of Love. [p. 257]

He usually writes ‘love’ as the ‘compassionate mind.’ The addition of mind is essential, since compassion needs intelligence to work out what to do. Mackay makes a powerful case for the compassionate mind as a national objective. In Japan, the great aim of education is to turn pupils into team players. Here, it could be the development of the compassionate mind.

Mackay doesn’t show much interest in bringing God into the picture. Instead, he advocates Christian agnosticism:

I was neither a believer nor an unbeliever when it came to the existence of a supernatural God...but my view of the world was sympathetic to Christianity and its values. [p. 127]

Mackay makes it clear that he does not support atheism; that requires a leap of faith, just like religion, he says.

And Stern Reason plays a rather large part in the book. It attacks the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. What about life after death? That, writes Mackay, is the ultimate example of our willingness to believe in untestable propositions. [p. 231]

Some people believe in it, reports Mackay, and some don’t. You can take your pick.

God is dispensable, but, argues Mackay, we have to have faith in something larger than ourselves to give life meaning, and we can have faith in loving kindness, which will ennoble us all. Thus we can have faith without belief, hence the title of the book.

One wonders whether God is as dismissable as all that. Perhaps reason can help here. Referring to one of the old arguments for the existence of God, Mackay asserts that The Uncaused Cause has been discredited philosophically. Well, the late Bob Meier of the ANU, a logician of international renown, published a paper in a learned journal arguing for an Uncaused Cause. Whether that was successful is controversial, but such arguments are unlikely to go away, simply because the world we live in seems too wonderful to be an accident.

Moreover, when nature is examined minutely, it is found to contain relationships of mathematical exactitude, of which there are plenty. That prompts the question of whether nature is the product of a great mind.

Can anything support a positive answer to that question? How about mystical experience? Not reliable, says Mackay. But he doesn’t get mystical experiences right. He claims

The central message of the mystics of every age is that we surrender to the imperatives of love and kindness. [p. 208]

That is not their central message. Thus John Woolman:

being inwardly united to the fountain of universal love and bliss enlarges the heart towards mankind universally.

What comes first, is the inward experience of union with God, and, as a consequence, mystics turn to others with love and kindness. Mackay picks up the latter, but misses the former. It is a very large omission. The inner experience of God provides spiritual fulfillment.

What about life after death? Belief in that is unlikely to go away either, for the reason that there are enough visitations from the other side to keep it in business. Mackay obviously has not had one, but the great day may yet come.

—Reg Naulty.
PREPARING TO CELEBRATE THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

July—October 2016

From the Fourteenth Sunday to the Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time in Year C.

Prepared by Michael Trainor

PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE READINGS

The following is a brief overview of the readings of the Liturgy of the Word for major celebrations proclaimed while this issue of Compass is current. It focuses on the readings for Sundays between July and October, from the Fourteenth Sunday to the Thirty First Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C). Please feel free to use or adapt these reflections, with the customary acknowledgement of source.

1. The First readings have been collated with the theme of the Gospel in mind. While this might lock these readings into a particular interpretation, the power of these important readings should not be forgotten, especially as the Christian community and its homilist draws on their unique, ancient insights always needing to be celebrated. Two themes from these readings over this period concern wisdom and wealth.

   • During this time of the year (August-October), several readings are drawn from that body of Old Testament literature called 'Wisdom.' These are found in our readings from Ecclesiastes, the Book of Wisdom, and Sirach—also called 'Ecclesiasticus'. Wisdom was a central gift for the Israelite people, and reflected God's wisdom and presence among them. These readings focus on several features of God's wisdom seen in creation and among human beings: The gift of wisdom itself (OT 18), communion with God (OT 19), the need for discernment (OT 22), interiority (OT 23) and God's concern for the poor (OT 30).

   • A second insight comes from the prophetic literature (beginning in the 8th cent BCE with Amos, OT 19 & 26) which invites us to consider the use of wealth and how the poor are exploited. This theme dovetails with appropriate passages from Luke's Gospel.

2. The Second Reading is drawn from the letters of the New (Second) Testament. Only two are from Paul himself. Philemon (OT 23) was written by Paul in the mid 50s to a slave owner of a Jesus household to welcome back his runaway slave, Onesimus. Though Paul presumes the institution of slavery, his letter invites a way of relating based more on the Gospel and spirit of Jesus than social convention.

   Several other selections for the second reading give us a feast of passages drawn from letters written after Paul's death and called 'post-Pauline.' These early letters from households of Jesus disciples, though conventionally attributed to Paul, were written by one of his disciples: Colossians dated in the late 60s or early 70s (OT 18) reflects on the nature of Jesus and what he offers the Christian community. There are selections from two other post-Pauline letters. These are more explicitly about pastoral issues concerning leaders of Jesus households and their members: 1 Timothy
(OT 25-26) and 2 Timothy (OT 27-30) are written to address concerns about correct teaching, fidelity to the tradition about Jesus and ministry stability. These pastoral letters written towards the end of the first century CE indicate that Jesus followers were entering a new era in their growth. The letter's writers were passionate about engaging Paul's Gospel for a new time unforeseen by Paul himself.

3. The Gospel readings during August-October are taken from Luke's Gospel, and the section of the gospel dealing with Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9-19). Luke's gospel presumes an urban audience of c. 85 CE. The writer is keen that Greco-Roman Jesus disciples live authentically in their world while deepening their union with Jesus. The journey narrative of the gospel (Lk 9-19) provides the evangelist with an opportunity to explore the main attitudes which disciples need in their following of Jesus in the journey of daily living. These attitudes are about possessions and wealth (OT 18, 23, 25, 26, 30) sensitivity to God's presence (OT 19), membership in Jesus' community (OT 28), hospitality (OT 22), mercy and forgiveness (OT 24), faith (OT 27), and confident prayerfulness (OT 29). All these discipleship themes provide a contemporary Christian community with ways of reflecting on the vitality of its own life, and celebrating various local expressions of discipleship. They continue to be relevant for Australian followers of Jesus.

PART TWO: NOTES ON THE READINGS


July 10—Ordinary Time 15: Dt 30:10-14. Moses reminds the people that God's Word ('Law'/ Torah), is accessible, personal and interior. Col 1:15-20. This powerful hymn to Jesus concerns God's expression of Sophia ('Wisdom') and celebrates Jesus' cosmic authority to reconcile all. Lk 10:25-37. This parable subverts the traditional and expected patterns of preferential behavior. Theme—Our World: From Colossians, Jesus' presence permeates the whole universe. Therefore the world is good. This challenges the conventional commercial and industrial treatment of our world. It also invites us to embrace a spirit of reconciliation and to recover an ecological spirituality grounded in Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato Si.

July 17—Ordinary Time 16: Gen 18:1-10. Abraham offers hospitality to unexpected and unrecognised angelic visitors, and is blessed. Col 1:24-28. The writer encourages a disposition to make God's Word fully known, to teach through Jesus in all wisdom and bring others to genuine maturity. Lk 10:38-42. Luke offers a snapshot of ministerial tension: either get all the work done or focus on Jesus. The encouragement is to focus on Jesus in the midst of life's concerns. Theme—Hospitality. A life of busyness and time of upheaval can leave us diving for self-survival. The readings (First Reading and Gospel) encourage a disposition of hospitality practically open to others and essentially focussed on God.

July 24—Ordinary Time 17: Gen 18:20-32. God is revealed as compassionate, forgiving
and conversational. Col 2:6-14. The writer celebrates the communion that the baptised disciple shares with Jesus. Lk 11:1-13. This is Luke's insight into Jesus' teaching on prayer. Theme—Communion with God. Two readings (First Reading and Gospel) invite reflection on the centrality of prayer in our lives, as conversation with a God who is open. In a NT highpoint, Colossians presents Jesus as God's tangible expression in bodily form. Both themes are important and complementary. They invite us into communion with God through Jesus.

July 31—Ordinary Time 18: Eccl 1:2; 2:21-23. The ancient wisdom-poet asks: 'What is true Wisdom after all our labouring?' Col 3:1-5,9-11. The writer encourages us to focus on Jesus. This focus will renew us. Lk 12:13-21. Jesus warns against forms of greed that make one oblivious to what is most important, true life. Theme—Wisdom: We celebrate the gift of wisdom which God offers us, through this community and our union with Jesus. Wisdom is a gift necessary at a time when we seem concerned about universal justice, peace and well-being. What is the wisdom that this community needs today?

August 7—Ordinary Time 19: Wisdom 18:6-9. God invites the holy people of God to be blessed by divine wisdom. Heb 11:1-2,8-19. A beautiful and powerful narrative of the faith as lived by Israel's ancestors. Lk 12:32-48. Disciples are encouraged to be alert to God's coming. Theme—Being Blessed. We are blessed by God, who walks with us in faith as we journey through life. We are alert to God's presence around us which is revealed in this community and its elders.

August 14—Ordinary Time 20: Jer 38:4-6, 8-10. The prophet suffers for his commitment to God and is imprisoned in a sewer. Heb 12:1-4. We are encouraged in life by those faithful witnesses of faith who have gone before us; we are encouraged to focus on Jesus the 'pioneer' of what it means to believe. Lk 12:49-53. Commitment to Jesus comes at a cost. Sometimes it is difficult. Theme—The cost of Fidelity: Jeremiah and Luke offer us two insights into commitment: Jeremiah finds himself in the local city sewer and Jesus teaches how commitment will even cause tension within families. The gospel does not predict what will happen, but is naming what is happening in Lk's households in the Greco-Roman world where commitment to Jesus' God is costly. Lk's world expects total allegiance to the god-king Caesar. Many examples abound in our local community of lived faithful commitment that give heart. They strengthen us in the face of difficulties.


August 28—Ordinary Time 22: Sirach 3:17-20,28-29. The writer encourages humble living with a focus on God and others, rather than a life lived arrogantly. Heb 12:18-19,22-24. We are 'citizens' of the 'city of the living God. Lk 14:1.7-14. A story about honour and inclusive hospitality set in Lk's Greco-Roman world of social etiquette and status. Theme—Eucharistic Hospitality. The Gospel offers an opportunity to celebrate the way our local faith community is inclusive, and expresses this liturgically. Who are those touched by this Eucharist? How does this Eucharist touch the local community, the nation, the world and cosmos?

September 4—Ordinary Time 23: Wis 9:13-18. This song celebrates Wisdom; God's gift
is revealed in the world and known by human beings. Philemon 9-10, 12-17. Paul encourages Philemon to welcome back his runaway slave, Onesimus, as 'a beloved brother.' Lk 14:25-33. The disciple is focused on Jesus and nothing compromises this relationship. Theme—Riches and Poverty. Luke challenges a world that sees possessions as a sign of divine blessing or favour. The gospel invites us to know a deeper wisdom celebrated in the first reading. Can we celebrate those local heroes, perhaps unnamed or unrecognized, who live by wisdom with a sense of justice, poverty and total commitment to God?

September 11—Ordinary Time 24: Ex 32:7-11, 13-14. Moses intercedes to God on behalf of the people. 1 Tim 1:12-17. Jesus reveals God's mercy; we live out of and reflect this same mercy to others. Lk 15:1-32. We come to the heart of Luke's gospel with these parables about mercy and forgiveness. Though tempting, don't shorten the gospel reading. The elder brother's conduct also needs thinking about. Theme—Mercy. Every Eucharist is a celebration of forgiveness and mercy. This gift, from God, is needed in our world today. Mercy and forgiveness rather than vindictiveness and enmity are encouraged. This is a great moment to remember the 'Year of Mercy'.

September 18—Ordinary Time 25: Amos 8:4-7. The prophet names unjust practices that target the poor. 1 Tim 2:1-8. The writer urges prayers for civic leaders and identifies the centrality of Jesus in the act of intercession with God. Lk 16:1-13. The steward acts to ensure that he will always be welcomed into village life. Acting judiciously brings acclaim to his master and a new appraisal. Theme—Acting Justly. The weak, poor and marginalized are victims of exploitation in our nation. We are invited to name those victimised and become advocates of the exploited. This Eucharist joins us to Jesus and the wider community of the just; we are in communion with all who suffer.

September 25—Ordinary Time 26: Amos 6:1a, 4-7. The prophet targets those who benefit from the exploitation of the poor. 1 Tim 6:11-16. This is a late first century NT summary about Jesus' ministry and exaltation. Lk 16:19-31. Jesus' challenging parable about how wealth must be used to alleviate the needs of the poor. Theme—Use of Wealth. In Luke's day, a wealthy person was a greedy person. The readings encourage us not to be possessed by our possessions but to use them for others.

October 2—Ordinary Time 27: Hab 1:2-3; 2:2-4. The prophet cries to God for deliverance from violence. God offers a vision of the possible. 2 Tim 1:6-8, 13-14. The leader is encouraged to be a person of integrity, reflection and trust. Lk 17:5-10. The disciple is encouraged to be a person of faith who acts authentically. Theme—Acting in Faith. In a world of violence, the disciple is encouraged to retain a perspective and trust centred on God. Local communities abound with living examples of such contemporary disciples.

October 9—Ordinary Time 28: 2 Kings 5:14-17. A Syrian (and foreign) army-officer obeys God's prophet from Israel and is healed of leprosy. He seeks to offer the prophet a gift for his healing. 2 Tim 2:8-13. This is a revered early Christian hymn about Jesus that encourages intimacy with him. Lk 17:11-19. Jesus heals those who are excluded from community life because of their disease. Theme—Exclusion: The first reading and the Gospel invite a reflection on the power of exclusion which suffering and illness bring. How does the local Christian community seek to include those who are excluded into its life? Who are the true healers in our community?

Moses' prayer for victory is effective, 2 Tim 3:14-4:2. The minister is encouraged to be faithful to what has been taught, to Scripture, and to the task of courageous proclamation. Lk 18:1-8. An unnamed widow's persistence gains justice and response from an elite judge. Theme—Prayer: The Eucharist is the local church's moment of prayer for and union with all humanity and creation. What are the current situations and events that could be the focus of our Eucharist celebration and intercession today?

October 23—Ordinary Time 30. Sirach 35:15-17,20-22. According to this wisdom writer, God shows deference to the poor whose prayer 'pierces' the clouds. 2 Tim 4:6-8, 16-18. The writer affirms God's fidelity in a time of suffering and trial. Lk 18:9-14. Jesus' God subverts the social expectation of favour and privilege. Theme—God Listens. God responds to our cries in times of difficulty, loneliness and distress. God seeks to be with all who struggle. What makes us sad? What is difficult?

October 30—Ordinary Time 31: Wis 11: 22-12: 2. This is a song about God's wisdom, patience, love and forgiveness for humanity. 2 Thes 1:1 -2:2. The writer prays that his audience will be faithful to their call, reveal God to others and remain patient for God's final coming. Lk 19: 1-10. Zacchaeus' conversion reveals the essential attitude of the potential disciple: open to change, ready for justice, and available to provide hospitality. Theme—Openness: The second reading readies us for the final weeks of the year as we turn our thoughts to the many ways God comes into our lives. Zacchaeus in today's Gospel expresses this openness in action which surprises everyone. Who in our faith or civic communities reveal a similar spirit?

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Because the homily is an integral part of the liturgy, it is not only an instruction, it is also an act of worship. When we read the homilies of the Fathers, we find that many of them concluded their discourse with a doxology and the word 'Amen': they understood that the purpose of the homily was not only to sanctify the people, but to glorify God. The homily is a hymn of gratitude for the magnalia Dei, which not only tells those assembled that God's Word is fulfilled in their hearing, but praises God for this fulfilment.

—Homiletic Directory, par.4.