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November 1998

Statement of Conclusions - From the Synod of Bishops with the Roman Curia

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Australian Jewish, Catholic Leaders Meet

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INTERDICASTERIAL MEETING WITH A REPRESENTATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS AND THE ROMAN CURIA - NOVEMBER 1998

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose of the Meeting.

Continuing the positive practice already established with other Episcopal Conferences, at the wish of the Holy Father a meeting was organized between some of the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia and a significant representation of archbishops and bishops from Australia, in connection with their ad limina visit, and on the occasion of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Oceania. The meeting was conducted in the form of a dialogue aimed at better understanding the situation of the Church in Australia, and at providing an opportunity for a fraternal exchange of views and proposals.



It was recognized at the outset that, while the meeting may have been occasioned by challenges facing the Church in Australia, many of the issues discussed are problems that are found in other parts of the Church throughout the world as well. Furthermore, these deliberations covered only some areas of concern and were not intended to deal with every aspect and dimension of the life of the Church in Australia.

2. The Laity.

The role of the laity in the Church in Australia was regularly discussed during this four-day meeting. Their vital commitment to the mission of the Church in the world and their generous collaboration with bishops, priests and religious in serving the needs of their parishes and dioceses was often acknowledged with great gratitude. It is hoped that the

reflections in this document on the present situation of the Church in Australia and on the ministry of bishops, priests and religious will be of assistance to the laity themselves. The bishops of Australia hope that any further renewal of the Church which these deliberations bring about will support the laity in living their unique role in the mission of the Church which flows from their consecration in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

II. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Most Reverend Francis Carroll, Archbishop of Canberra/Goulburn presenting his intervention - Synod of Oceania (right)



3. Positive Aspects.

The discussion began by recognizing the path already travelled by the Church in Australia in response to the word of God and to the reforms initiated by the Second Vatican Council:

-the membership of the Catholic Church in Australia has increased numerically, making it the single largest Christian Church there. This has in turn created a great responsibility and duty for the Church with respect to the society in which she finds herself. The intense collaboration between the bishops, priests, religious and laity; the increase in active participation in liturgical celebrations; the network of Catholic schools; the presence of numerous centres of theological formation; and the extensive and comprehensive involvement of the Church in the corporal works of mercy, as well as its willingness to be a prophetic voice on social justice issues when needed, are all positive factors that enliven both the ecclesiastical community and society at large;

-from the beginning of its history, Australia, despite the tragic history of European interaction with the aboriginal people and the recent brief resurgence of racism, has succeeded with its spirit of tolerance and solidarity in amalgamating into one the diverse ethnic groups, cultures and traditions of the peoples who have immigrated to that continent;

-one finds among the faithful in Australia, and in society as a whole, a search for authenticity and spirituality which calls for pastoral dedication on the part of priests, consecrated persons and laity well-formed as collaborators with the ordained ministers. The assembly would here like to express its appreciation, esteem and support for their priestly brothers who carry the weight of the daily pastoral care of the faithful, and to express grateful appreciation for the men and women religious who have made such an important contribution throughout the history of Australia down to the present day by the example of their life of prayer in the midst of the People of God, and by their apostolic works, serving the mission of the Church in education, service of the poor and care for the sick and aged.

4. Weaknesses. A Crisis in Faith.

There is a crisis in faith which has as its basis, as the Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio* makes clear, a crisis concerning the ability to know the truth. The crisis of faith is world-wide. It is manifested in Australia by the rise in the number of people with no religion and the decline in church practice. The tolerance characteristic of Australian society naturally affects the Church also. While it has many positive elements, tolerance of and openness to all opinions and perspectives on the truth can lead to indifference, to the acceptance of any opinion or activity as long as it does not impact adversely on other people. It can also lead to a reluctance in claiming that any particular affirmation, belief or conviction is true. The loss of confidence in one's ability to know the truth inevitably involves a crisis of faith in God. All ideas about God, including the denial of his existence, become equally acceptable. This makes it very difficult to affirm that the God revealed in Sacred Scripture is indeed the one true God. There also appears to be a weakening of faith in eternal life, replaced by such things as social utopias and re-incarnation. This crisis of faith and truth provide the context for the following problems.

5. A Crisis in Christology.

This crisis of truth is also a crisis in the profession of God as Person - the God of Abraham - and of Jesus as the true God, in such wise that one is able to say "I know God". It follows naturally then, that Christology is also in something of a crisis. Generally throughout the world, there is evidence of a weakening of faith in Christ, as well as a distortion of some doctrines based on the Scriptures and the early Councils of the Church. These modifications to Christology take two directions: in the first, a re-fashioning of Jesus into a great prophet of humanity, who, for example questions the rules of religion; in the other, substituting a pneumatological economy for the flesh and blood reality of Christ, true God and true man. Indeed, some aspects of feminist scholarship can lead to a rejection of the privileged place given to the scriptural language describing the Trinity and to Jesus' own teaching, and can even lead to rejection of the Trinity itself. The claims of other religions and non-religious movements can result in a blurring of the divinity or of the unique salvific role of Christ.

6. Challenges to Christian Anthropology.

Behind the above-mentioned elements is a profound paradigmatic change in anthropology that is opposed to classical anthropology. It is characterised, for example, by an extreme individualism, seen especially in a concept of conscience that elevates the individual conscience to the level of an absolute, thus raising the subjective criterion above all objective factors and having no point of reference beyond itself. Another example is a change in the relations between creation, nature, body and spirit, resulting in certain forms of feminism which express an anthropology profoundly different from classical anthropology.

7. Moral Problems.

From this paradigmatic change in anthropology, there follow great problems for Christian morality: indifference to the poor, racial prejudice and violence, abortion, euthanasia, the legitimation of homosexual relationships and other immoral forms of sexual activity. For example, in an anthropological perspective which ignores the "specifically human meaning of the body" (Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor* 50), heterosexuality and homosexuality come to be seen simply as two morally equivalent variations.

8. Problems in Ecclesiology.

There are ecclesiological problems that flow from the uncertainties mentioned above concerning God and Jesus Christ. For example, if Christ is nothing more than a great figure in history, who defies the rules, who is anti-ecclesial and who did not create a hierarchy, then it follows that the Church is of merely human origin, and, along with the re-interpretation of Revelation, the Church needs to be re-organised to make it more suited to the present day. Truth is no longer discovered in a Revelation already given, but is based on the shifting sands of majority and consensus.

9. Response to These Challenges.

The bishops are confident that, in communion with the college of bishops throughout the world, and with the assistance of the Catholic theological community in Australia, they will be able to respond to these trends. God, in revealing himself, has revealed Truth, and the bishops remain determined to make the face of God visible to the people of today. Formation at all levels must continue and must rely on instruments offered by the Church: above all, the word of God, the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church which offer timely indications for dealing with the different challenges mentioned.

III. THE BISHOP



10. The Role and Responsibilities of the Bishop.

The bishop, in his role as chief pastor in his diocese, proclaims the "Good News" of salvation by his life and witness to the saving message of Jesus Christ: a message of truth, hope and joy for the world. Like a good shepherd, the bishop is close to his people, which has always been a mark of the Australian bishop, and in his episcopal ministry he is ever mindful that he is at the service of the People of God.

While every bishop is himself a witness to the truth and is the "visible source and foundation of unity in the particular Church" (Dogmatic Const. *Lumen gentium* 23), each bishop is a member of the one episcopate, the single and undivided body of bishops. The unity of

the episcopate is therefore one of the constitutive elements of the unity of the Church, and the visible source of the unity of bishops is the Roman Pontiff, head of the episcopal body. It is the authentic communion of the individual bishop with the Successor of Peter which, in a certain sense, guarantees and ensures that the voice of the bishop speaks the word of the Church and so witnesses to the same revealed truth.

The bishop is entrusted with specific responsibilities and duties which are at times difficult and indeed burdensome. In our day we are only too aware of the multitude of influences in our society which work not only against the gospel message of truth, but are even directly hostile to the Catholic Faith. The People of God look to their shepherds for guidance and leadership now more than ever in these confusing and increasingly secularised times. The bishop, as servant of the Gospel, is a beacon of light, leading people to Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life.

The principal means by which bishops carry out this mandate from Christ to build up the unity of His Mystical Body, is through the three fold office of teaching, sanctifying and governing, which every bishop is called to exercise.

11. To Teach

The bishop teaches clearly and effectively in union with the Holy Father and the Magisterium of the Church: "the teaching of each bishop, taken individually, is exercised in communion with the Roman Pontiff, pastor of the universal Church and with the other bishops dispersed throughout the world or gathered in ecumenical council. Such communion is a condition for its authenticity" (Congr. for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Donum veritatis* 19; cf. *Lumen gentium* 25). The People of God who are entrusted to their care have a right to receive authentic and clear Catholic teaching from those who represent the Church in its various institutions.

The bishops in Australia are intensely conscious that they are authentic teachers "endowed with the authority of Christ" and that it is their grave responsibility, clearly and unambiguously, to proclaim the Church's teaching and to do all that they can to preserve the faithful from error. As the "visible source and foundation of unity" in his diocese, the bishop is committed to fostering unity among the faithful and to preventing factions and divisions from developing among the People of God. The bishop may not tolerate error in matters of doctrine and morals or Church discipline, and true unity must never be at the expense of truth. This delicate tension between truth and unity is experienced by most Australian bishops. When such cases of tension arise, the bishops intend to overcome it, trying to identify the truth by all appropriate and available means, especially consulting their brother bishops and the Holy See, and striving to correct errors, not by blunt use of authority, but through dialogue and persuasion.

Making their voice heard by all Catholics (let alone non-Catholics) is a major problem for bishops today. They recognise the importance of a free press and legitimate criticism and, for their part, will endeavour to collaborate more effectively with all responsible forms of the media in order to find new ways for effectively communicating the Gospel in today's world.

The bishops of Australia, as *testes veritatis*, are committed to teach the Catholic Faith in Australia. They are assisted in this task by theologians. The Magisterium and theology are both, each in its own way, necessary for the building up of the People of God. In summary yet essential terms, one can say that the theologian has the task of reflecting on Revelation with the instruments of critical reason and of exploring the contents of the Faith with the arguments proper to the intellectual process, but always within the context of the Faith of the Church and in communion with its Pastors. The Magisterium, on the other hand, taking into consideration sound theology, has the task of safeguarding, expounding and teaching the deposit of the Faith in its integrity; that is, of interpreting, with an authority which comes from Christ, the word of God, whether written or transmitted in the living Tradition of the Church.

To Sanctify

12.

The bishop is the guardian of the sacraments, the means of sanctification for the faithful, particularly the Holy Eucharist, which is "the source and summit of the Christian life" (Lumen gentium 11). The bishop is called upon to exercise vigilance over the celebration and administration of the sacraments in his diocese. He ensures the sacraments are administered according to the proper liturgical norms set forth by the Church. If he discovers that these norms are not being followed properly, with integrity and reverence, he acts quickly to correct the error or abuse.

The Australian bishops realize that the sacred Liturgy is at the heart of their pastoral responsibilities. In promoting authentic sacred Liturgy, they have to provide against the introduction of spurious elements on the one hand, while, on the other, encouraging a Liturgy that is living and vibrant according to the prescribed norms and in the spirit of the liturgical reform. Most important is the bishop's own life of prayer which sustains his whole ministry, especially his central role in the Liturgy of his diocese. He must constantly return to the wellsprings of prayer in order to be strengthened by God in the grace of the Holy Spirit for his own personal sanctification for the good of the Church.

To Govern

13. Minister of Unity and Communion.

The bishop, in his pastoral governance, is entrusted with the important task of cultivating deep communion within the particular Church which, in turn, contributes to communion in the universal Church and for each and all members of his diocese: priests, members of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, the lay faithful and other diocesan groups and associations. As the minister of unity in the diocese, the bishop exercises an authority in the service of truth and love. The bishop receives his responsibility and duty to govern as a mandate from Christ himself and therefore keeps watch "over the whole flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers, in which you tend the Church of God that he acquired with his own blood" (Acts 20: 28).

14. The Bishop in the College of Bishops.

The bishop's duty to teach, sanctify and govern is a personal one, received by virtue of his episcopal consecration and the laying on of hands. This duty is by divine right, and cannot be surrendered to others. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is a forum where a local bishop can seek the assistance of his fellow bishops in pursuing his mission to proclaim the Gospel message (cf. *Motu Proprio Apostolos suos* 5-7, 14-24). In collaboration with his brother bishops in his own country and throughout the world, and in communion with the Successor of Saint Peter, the local bishop can build up and strengthen the Body of Christ in his own diocese.

15. The Bishop and his Collaborators.

In choosing their collaborators in the diocesan administration, in the seminary and in parishes, bishops need to make these appointments with a careful eye and with great attention, always giving emphasis to sanctity of life, orthodoxy and pastoral competence. Continual vigilance is imperative in order to safeguard the integrity of the Faith and to ensure that it is clearly taught and explained at all levels of diocesan life.

The bishop maintains contact with his people at many levels and in many different contexts. It is his special care to demonstrate gratitude and appreciation, and to encourage the faithful in their endeavours as members of the Church, both in their striving for holiness and their charitable service to others. He keeps close contact with the many different diocesan agencies and apostolates under his care.

16. The Bishop and His Special Relationship with His Priests.

The bishop nourishes a special relationship with his priests, treating them as friends and collaborators, encouraging them in their work, promoting a sense of fraternity in the presbyterate, organizing retreats and promoting opportunities for their on-going education. The bishop himself receives support and encouragement from his priests by their dedication, priestly example and friendship. On the human level, the bishop can foster the positive identity of the priest by being present to him in a caring, personal, direct way, affording him all possible attention and time. As the priest is the closest and most

indispensable collaborator of the bishop, he has a primary call on the bishop as his spiritual father, thus no care expended on him can ever be seen to be excessive.

The bishop's care for priests extends to a special concern for the promotion of all vocations, especially to the priesthood, not only locally, but also nationally. One initiative already taken is the national network of vocation directors in Australia - "Catholic Vocations Ministry Australia" - which provides support, ideas and materials.

As a personal responsibility enjoined upon him for the welfare of his seminarians, the bishop gives his assistance to the rector and staff of the seminary especially in the choice of candidates for admission. The bishop must have assurance of the candidates' proper motivation for entrance to the seminary and their preparation (doctrinal, moral, spiritual, human and pastoral) for ordination. The diocesan bishop must have moral certainty of the suitability of the candidate in terms of doctrine, spiritual life and human qualities, before he is ordained to the diaconate. The bishop should never ordain a candidate if there is any serious doubt as to his suitability for Holy Orders.

17. The Mystery of the Cross in the Life of the Bishop.

In the world in which we live today, for a bishop to be a true shepherd, he is called to teach doctrinal truth with gentle firmness and profound humility, to sanctify by word and example, and to govern with fidelity and genuine authority. This will necessarily lead to suffering and the Cross. We know well that when the bearers of apostolic office dare to exercise authority which is theirs in matters of doctrine and morals, they become a sign of contradiction to the world. While this is indeed a real challenge for the bishop today, it is at the same time his source of grace, strength and deep joy. The greatest sign of contradiction is also the greatest sign of hope. For in the mystery of the Cross we learn a wisdom which transcends our own weakness and limitations; we learn that in Christ truth and love are one, and in Him we find the meaning of our vocation.

IV. THE PRIEST



18. The Current Context.

In viewing the priestly landscape of the Church in Australia, it is difficult not to be struck by the dedication of priests, labouring faithfully under sometimes trying and varied conditions. They are to be lauded and encouraged as they give of themselves so generously for their flocks. The culture of secularism, which is pervasive today, is not of assistance to the priest as he attempts to carry out his sacred duties in a context that can be challenging, even hostile and apathetic at times to his vocational identity and to the ministry he exercises in the name of Christ and of His Church.

19. The Identity of the Priest.

It is not to be wondered at that in such an ethos the identity of the priest needs a strong affirmation and almost constant clarification. The priest acts in the person of Christ the Head and the Shepherd (Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* 15; Catechism of the Catholic Church n. 875; Interdicasterial Instruction On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests, p. 13, n. 1). To ensure this understanding it is fundamental that correct intellectual, ascetical and doctrinal formation, as well as dutiful and inspired discipline be assured in Seminaries. This should also be continued throughout priestly ministry and life.

20. The Spiritual Life of the Priest.

An integral component of true priestly identity is priestly spirituality. It is not a separate element but is at the heart of the identity of the priest. Being a man of God living in the culture of secularism, with all the contemporary pastoral demands and burdens, it is easy for a priest to lose zeal, energy and perspective unless he is firmly rooted in the Spirit of the Living God. Time spent in pursuing the spiritual life is not time taken from pastoral activity but is rather the means of sustaining and enriching pastoral charity in the most meaningful way possible.

Among the principal elements of the priest's prayer life are the daily Eucharistic celebration, frequent confession and spiritual direction, the Liturgy of the Hours, examination of conscience, mental prayer, *lectio divina*, retreats, Marian devotions, the Rosary, the *Via crucis* and other pious exercises, and the fruitful reading of the lives of the saints (cf. Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests 39).

Attention to the annual Day of Sanctification for Priests can also be a rewarding and sustaining experience for those whose ministry is so essential to the Church.

Priestly associations which foster fraternal support, promote holiness in the exercise of the ministry and foster the unity of clergy with one another and with their bishop, are to be encouraged. On the other hand, associations which are pressure groups or are not in harmony with the mission of the Church and show division rather than unity, must be eschewed as unhelpful to priestly ministry and not constructive to the unitive mission of the Church.

21. Continuing Formation.

The pastoral demands of the age, as well as the priest's personal development require that his intellectual formation must

not be seen as something pertaining to the seminary period of life only, but must be seen as a continuing, on-going and permanent aspect of his personal response to his vocation. The priest then must personally develop a systematic approach to on-going study as well as participate in the opportunities provided by his bishop, the diocese and the Episcopal Conference for in-service training.

In fact, permanent, on-going formation is essential in constructively dealing with the above-mentioned issues and situations. In this regard, prayerful, systematic study and assimilation of recent documents of the Holy See will provide practical guidance and assistance in the challenging areas of priestly ministry and life. Among those of particular relevance and strongly recommended for attention are: Pastores dabo vobis, Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests, On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests, and Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons.

22. Pastoral Charity.

The priest is the man in the front lines. His armament is spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. Despite the many attempts to remove the figure of the priest from the centre of the lives of believers, the faithful treasure their relationships with their spiritual fathers, despite the "earthen vessels" priests are.

Because of his closeness to his people and their lives, and as he is constantly being bombarded by the easy pragmatic solutions to difficult pastoral problems proffered by the culture of secularism, it is not always easy for the priest to call his people to embrace the prophetic stance of the children of light, yet this is what he must do without fail. No pastoral solution can be so called that is not flowing from God's Revelation as this is interpreted by the Magisterium of the Church. Thus a practice in pastoral life which is contrary to the teachings of Christ and His Church, is not an act of compassion, but rather is one that radically disorders pastoral charity and has long term negative consequences for the faithful and for the unity and identity of the priesthood and the Faith. Thus, the priest acts truly in persona Christi when he brings the fullness of the truth of the High Priest to the People of God whom he serves. It is only that pastoral truth which can really set them free.

23. Collaboration of the Lay Faithful.

Despite the goodwill involved, in a sometimes functional approach to priesthood, the identity of the priest has been further clouded when tasks have been entrusted to laity that belong to the ministerial priesthood. There has, at times, been a concomitant excessive involvement of the priest in areas that should be attended to by a committed and well-formed laity. This situation has had the effect of blurring the lines between the baptismal priesthood and the ministerial priesthood with negative effects on both. Clarity in this area is essential for many reasons, not least of which are the preservation of the authentic identity of both priest and laity, good order within the Church and the promotion of vocations.

24. Responsibility for Catechesis.

As the preaching of the word of God and catechesis is such an important part of priestly ministry, and so necessary for the salvation of souls, priests must be aware of their responsibility in these areas. The matter of catechesis cannot be left solely in the hands of others, no matter how skilled they be. The transmission of the Faith is to be actively attended to by priests as this is an essential part of their ministry.

Priests will find the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Directory for Catechesis invaluable aids in carrying out their responsibilities in this area as well as a source of enrichment for their personal lives.

V. CONSECRATED PERSONS

Most Rev Peter Stasiuk (left) and Most Rev Issam Darwish (right)

25. Consecrated Life in Australia.

Consecrated life, as evidenced by its universal presence and evangelical witness, is not isolated and marginal but a reality which affects the whole Church. Because consecrated life manifests the inner nature of the Christian calling and has contributed significantly to the vitality of the Church in Australia, she is committed to supporting it. Elsewhere in this document, the great contributions of religious, oftentimes as pioneering innovators and at great personal and community sacrifice, have been recognised.



26. Vocations Decline.

The Church in Australia is undergoing a difficult period due to the decline of vocations to the consecrated life. In light of this challenge, the Church must pray for vocations. The Lord always heeds the prayer which issues from the Church and, in responding, always far exceeds our expectations. In addition to prayer (cf. Mt 9: 37-38), and to heeding the invitation of Jesus to "Come and see" (Jn 1: 39), a primary responsibility of all consecrated men and women is to propose the ideal of the following of Christ, and then to support the response to the Spirit's action in the heart of those who are called.

27. Authenticity and Transparency of Life Attract the Young

Consecrated persons need to show forth a life which is recognised for its transparency and authenticity, and this in regard to their spirituality, their ministry and their community living.

All must be able to recognise in them the fact that they are distinguished by an intense spiritual life sustained by prayer, especially by the Eucharist, by fidelity to the evangelical counsels and by asceticism. Consecrated persons are to be "experts in God," and in His ways. Their whole being ought to be suffused with the divine presence. When people approach religious, they should find men and women whose lives bespeak union with God, and whose lives invite others into that union.

Consecrated persons express the person of Christ -- Christ saving and redeeming, Christ forgiving, Christ healing, Christ teaching, Christ in every gesture of compassion toward those in need, Christ loving his people. But there is still more to the apostolate. As the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* puts it: "More than in any activity, the apostolate consists in the witness of one's own complete dedication to the Lord's saving will, a dedication nourished by the practice of prayer and of penance" (n. 44). "The very purpose of consecrated life is conformity to the Lord Jesus in his total self giving" (*Vita Consecrata* 65).

The authenticity and transparency of community life are a striking expression in our time of the fact that living together in grace, with one mind and one heart, is not merely a possibility, but a reality. The whole Church greatly depends on the witness of communities filled "with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13: 52). Such authentic common living, where each one supports and forgives the other, witnesses to the presence of Jesus and speaks directly to the deep yearnings of the heart. For members of Institutes of consecrated life, community life is of the essence of their vocation.

When consecrated persons live their vocation with authenticity and transparency, they are an example of total commitment to the Gospel lived in the spirit of their Founders. This example, joined with constant prayer, is a very effective vocational promotion program. As Pope Paul VI reminded us, people of our age, especially the young, have become sceptical of mere words, and are convinced by words only when these are accompanied by example (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 41). The example of consecrated persons evidently rooted in Christ is the best way to convince and inspire young people, inviting them to follow Christ in religious Institutes.

28. Formation.

Formation, both initial and ongoing, is aimed at showing in the various moments of life that religious belong totally and joyfully to the Lord. Both formators and those being formed need clarity regarding the charism of the Institute. For this purpose, the establishment of structures to train those responsible for formation would be helpful. The whole person needs to be formed, in every aspect of one's being, human, cultural, spiritual, and pastoral. Ongoing formation for every member is an intrinsic requirement of consecrated life. Institutes have made great efforts in this area. As a result, religious are often found in solidarity with the most marginal elements of society and in new ministries. In some instances, however, problems have arisen because the selection of formators or of centres for ongoing formation was not made in view of full communion with the Magisterium of the Church.

29. Fragmentation.

Because of a changing world and changing expectations, of a desire to be closer to the people or to one's work, or because of the cost of maintaining large buildings, a number of religious have, with permission of their superiors, opted to leave communities in order to live in apartments or privately. Such an option, however, fragments the life and witness of an Institute.

It is not enough that individual members of Institutes engage in employment in the secular sphere and find living accommodations singly. It is not enough that religious engage in any work whatsoever, even if they do this "in the spirit of the Founder." Such general dispersal of members and of energies prejudices the corporate witness of an Institute which was founded with a specific charism for a specific purpose. Such charisms are given by the Holy Spirit for the good of the entire Church, and religious need to be faithful to them.

30. Associate Members.

The fragmentation of Institutes is often accompanied by a practical redefinition of members. Various Institutes now have associate members or collaborators, who share for a period of time the Institute's community life and its dedication to prayer and the apostolate. This needs to be arranged in such a way, however, that the identity of the Institute in its internal life is not harmed. Though the collaboration of associates allows works conducted by the Institutes to continue, it needs to be recognised that lay associates are not members of the Institute in the way that professed members are. Associate members are not an alternative to the vocations decline.

31. Communion.

Vita Consecrata expresses a rich mystery in simple terms: "The Church is essentially a mystery of communion, "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (n. 41). This communion is expressed at every level of her life. It is communion that distinguishes her as a body from all other bodies, for communion is not mere regulation, but is an ordering of relationships, in charity, within the Body of Christ. Each member of the Body has a specific importance and role. The Church does not create her own ordering and structuring, but receives them from Christ himself.

32. Experts of Communion.

In light of the Council's strong teaching about communion, "consecrated persons are asked to be true experts of communion and to practise the spirituality of communion.... The sense of ecclesial communion, developing into a

spirituality of communion, promotes a way of thinking, speaking and acting which enables the Church to grow in depth and extension" (Vita Consecrata 46). Indeed, "the Church was not established to be an organization for activity, but rather to give witness as the living Body of Christ" (S. Congr. for Religious and Secular Institutes & S. Congr. for Bishops, Directive Note Mutuae Relationes 20). In the Founders and Foundresses we see a constant and lively sense of the Church, which they manifest by their full participation in all aspects of the Church's life and in their great cooperation with and ready obedience to the bishops, especially to the Roman Pontiff.

33. Consecrated Life in the Particular Church.

Consecrated persons must be in communion with their Pastors, and this at the level of both the particular Church and the universal Church. Consecrated persons are called to be mindful of the ancient dictum: *sentire cum Ecclesia*, to live and think and love with the Church. In this regard, Vita Consecrata is very explicit. "A distinctive aspect of ecclesial communion is allegiance of mind and heart to the Magisterium of the bishops, an allegiance which must be lived honestly and clearly testified to before the People of God by all consecrated persons, especially those involved in theological research, teaching, publishing, catechesis and the use of the means of social communication. Because consecrated persons have a special place in the Church, their attitude in this regard is of immense importance for the whole People of God" (Vita Consecrata 46).

The special place of consecrated persons in the Body is recognised by the Church when she erects the Institutes, confirms their Constitutions, entrusts an apostolate to the community and recognises the profession of each member. Because the one Faith underlies the Church's life, all members must be in union with the teaching of the Church. In matters of the Faith, communion rules out such concepts as "loyal opposition," or "faithful subversion." The faithful strive to deepen their understanding of the Faith, not to oppose it or to subvert it. Institutions, especially in the field of education, which are under the authority of consecrated persons should assure that lecturers, both those who are on staff and those who are invited, serve, in union with the Church, to deepen the understanding of Faith.

34. The Role of the Bishop.

Institutes, at the time of their founding, are notably in communion with the local bishop. When an Institute acquires the status of diocesan right, the bishop of the generalate house has particular responsibilities which are specified in common law; for Institutes of pontifical right, the Holy See has specific responsibilities (cf. can. 589-96). All Institutes, however, are to integrate their pastoral activity within the overall pastoral plan of the diocese in which they are present and are to minister in communion with the bishop. He is responsible for discerning and respecting, promoting and coordinating all charisms in the diocese, including the charisms of the Institutes of both pontifical and diocesan right. He needs to be willing to intervene when problems arise, and, according to circumstances, he may also seek the collaboration of other bishops involved, or of the Episcopal Conference, or of the appropriate Dicastery of the Holy See. Conferences of major superiors (cf. can. 708-709) are formed to help each Institute achieve its purpose and to coordinate and cooperate with the Conference of Bishops and with individual bishops. These Conferences are not organs of parallel pastoral authority.

35. Public Status of Religious.

While relations between the bishops and the major superiors have been, generally, good, with most problems resolved by dialogue and understanding, still several difficulties have emerged with importance for the Church.

Religious, by reason of their public state in the Church, are prominent in the eyes of the faithful and of the secular media. This prominence requires a more evident fidelity to the Magisterium than is required of ordinary faithful. What is true of all religious is even more true of major superiors, by reason of their office. What is true of major superiors is still more true of a conference of major superiors erected by the Holy See.

36. Some Concerns.

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life has shared with the bishops several concerns about situations in Australia, and asks them to dialogue with the major superiors regarding such points as promoting prayer for ecclesial vocations, including those of consecrated life, and deepening both communion within the Church and assent to the Magisterium regarding such areas as the non-ordination of women to the priesthood, the theology of the Church and of the sacraments of faith, the theology of communion and moral problems.



VI. THE SACRED LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS

37. Gains and Future Prospects.

The work of renewal of the Church in Australia has made progress largely by means of the renewal of the Liturgy and the people's fuller participation in liturgical celebration.

In Australia, as elsewhere, experience bears out the Holy Father's observation that the vast majority of "the pastors and the Christian people have accepted the liturgical reform in a spirit of obedience and indeed joyful fervour. For this we should give thanks to God for that passage of the Holy Spirit through the Church which the

liturgical renewal has been" (Apostolic Letter *Vigésimus Quintus Annus* 12).

It is a pressing need that these positive results be built upon. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has already planned to set aside significant resources to produce educational materials on the Mass which can be used at a diocesan or parish level. Other concrete initiatives will also be devised to ensure the quality and authentic fidelity of liturgical celebration and sacramental practice as the third Christian millennium dawns.

38. The True Meaning of the Sacred Liturgy.

It is important that the sacred Liturgy as a whole be appreciated in all its profundity and mystery. The Liturgy is more than a recollection of past events, a means of imparting knowledge or a vehicle for expressing the faith and life of the celebrating community. It is fundamentally the manifestation of God's initiative and his loving will to save, expressed in the Paschal Mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ, made present and efficacious by the Holy Spirit. In the Liturgy, Christ's work is carried forward by the Church until the end of time.

The Council spoke therefore of the Liturgy as the summit or high-point toward which the activity of the Church tends and the fountainhead from which all her strength flows (cf. *Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium* 10; cf. *Apostolic Letter Dies Domini* 32). By their participation in the earthly Liturgy all the faithful are formed in right conduct and prepared for that Liturgy in the heavenly city to which we journey as pilgrims (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 8; *Dies Domini* 37).

39. The Liturgy: Act of Christ and of His Church.

The celebration of the Liturgy is therefore never a private action of the celebrant or of the community gathered in a particular place, but an act of the Church as such (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 26), in intimate union with Christ her Head. Accordingly, an insistence on "good liturgy" is right and useful as long as the expression is not misunderstood as meaning a human virtuoso, external performance or "choreography". Rather, all participants should accommodate and subordinate themselves and their manner of thinking, acting and speaking to the great gift and mystery of God's Redemption, and to the person of Christ, our sole Saviour, with a special reverence for the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist at the Mass and reserved in the tabernacle.

40. The Liturgy: Manifestation of the Nature of the Church.

Since it lies at the center of the Church's life, the Liturgy manifests the Church's very nature and directs it consciously and explicitly toward its ultimate goal. The Church is seen most perfectly in the celebration of the Eucharist, presided over by the bishop of the diocese, surrounded by his priests, deacons and the community of the faithful (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 26, 41; *Dies Domini* 34).

This ideal phenomenon is realized in varying degrees in circumstances where the bishop is not able to be present and where he is represented ordinarily by a priest. Even in such circumstances, the bishop remains the essential point of reference and the celebration necessarily reflects the nature of the Church as a "structured communion" whose nature is reflected in an "ordered exercise of liturgical action" (*On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, n. 6 ?? 1-2; cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 26; *Lumen gentium*, nn. 10-11).

It is when each takes part in the Liturgy according to his or her specific role in the Body of Christ that the whole Body is built up most effectively.

41. Authentic Promotion of the Liturgy.

In today's rapidly changing world it is all the more necessary to return constantly to the authentic teaching of the Church on the Liturgy, as found in the liturgical texts themselves and, among many other authoritative sources, as reaffirmed and explained in a lucid and accessible manner in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Many people today call for a more "transcendental" Liturgy, and indeed liturgical celebrations must be permeated with a proper religious sense born of faith in unseen realities (cf. *Dies Domini* 43). Care must be given to the beauty and elegance of the vestments, sacred vessels, surroundings, furnishings, and to the eloquence of the words and actions themselves, to factors which will encourage the participation of the faithful, and to catechesis concerning the meaning of the liturgical signs (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 11, 14; *S. Congr. for the Sacraments and Divine Worship*, *Inaestimabile Donum* 16-17; *Dies Domini* 35).

At the same time the Liturgy must be a living event, accessible to the people. There is a need in catechesis, in all pastoral care and in liturgical celebration itself to involve all Catholics, above all the young, more fully in the Liturgy and help them to understand and live out its meaning. The Church in Australia, as in other countries, faces a notable decline in recent years in the numbers of Catholics attending Sunday Mass, a situation which calls for a pastoral response (cf. *Dies Domini* 36, 46-49).

42. Weaknesses and Correctives.

A weakness in parish liturgical celebrations in Australia is the tendency on the part of some priests and parishes to make their own changes to liturgical texts and structures, whether by omissions, by additions or by substitutions, occasionally even in central texts such as the Eucharistic Prayer. Practices foreign to the tradition of the Roman Rite are not to be introduced on the private initiative of priests, who are ministers and servants, rather than masters of the sacred Rites

(Sacrosanctum Concilium 22 ? 3; Instruction Inaestimabile Donum 5). Any unauthorized changes, while perhaps well-intentioned, are nevertheless seriously misguided. The bishops of Australia, then, will continue to put their energy above all into education, while correcting these abuses individually. Such education and corrective action are also the effective means for the pastoral care of those at the parish level who criticize and report the efforts of others, sometimes justly, but sometimes in a judgmental, selective, ill-informed and unproductive manner.

A return to a real sense of the Church and of Liturgy is the most effective path to overcoming obstinacy in personal tastes and to setting aside arbitrary action, fault-finding, conflict and division. Both in regard to the Liturgy and other questions in the life of the Church, there is a need for fidelity to the mind of the Church and willingness to dialogue with others, above all the pastors and bishops.

43. Liturgical Translations.

For authenticity in the Liturgy, it is essential that the translation of the texts not be so much a work of "creativity" as of a faithful and exact vernacular rendering of the original text, which itself is the fruit of the liturgical renewal and draws upon centuries of cultural and ecclesial experience.

While fully respecting the genius of each language and avoiding a rigid literalism, an appropriate translation also carefully avoids paraphrase, gloss or interpretation. The explanation of the riches contained within the liturgical texts is the concern not of liturgical translation, but of the homily and of sustained catechesis.

The substantial unity of the Roman Rite is an expression of the theological realities of communion and of ecclesial unity and contributes to the rich plurality of the Church. Within their respective historical and cultural contexts, of course, the same may be said for the other Catholic liturgical families of venerable antiquity. To this end, the practice of the recognition of the Holy See as desired by the Second Vatican Council (cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium 36; cf. S. Congr. of Rites, Instr. Inter Oecumenici, 20-31; canon 838) stands as a guarantee of the authenticity of the translations and their fidelity to the original texts. By means of this practice, a concrete sign of the bond of communion between the successor of Peter and the successors of the other Apostles, translations become truly the expression in the local Churches of the heritage of the universal Church. The Holy See may not divest itself of this responsibility, and the bishops, who bear the responsibility of overseeing and approving the translations, likewise regard their own role as a direct and solemn trust. In this delicate work, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference will continue to cooperate in English-language questions in so far as possible with other English-speaking Episcopal Conferences.



44. The Sense of Sin.

Many bishops in Australia and elsewhere have noted a decline in the sense of sin, stemming from the deeper reality of a crisis of faith, and having grave repercussions for the sacrament of Penance. The situation calls for a renewed and energetic catechesis on the very nature of sin as opposed to salvation, and thus for a focus in sacramental praxis not only on the consolation and encouragement of the faithful, but also on instilling a true sense of contrition, of authentic sorrow for their own sins.

Catholics should come to understand more deeply Jesus' death as a redeeming sacrifice and an act of perfect worship of the Father effecting the remission of sins. A failure to appreciate this supreme grace would undermine the whole of Christian life. They should be made fully aware, too, of the indispensable role in the reconciliation of sinners which Christ has entrusted to His Church.

45. The Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation.

Individual confession and absolution remains the "sole ordinary means by which one of the faithful who is conscious of grave sin is reconciled with God and with the Church" (canon 960; cf. Rituale Romanum, Ordo Paenitentiae, n. 31; canon 960; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1484). Energetic efforts are to be made to avoid any risk that this traditional practice of the sacrament of Penance fall into disuse.

The communal celebration of Penance with individual confessions and absolution should be encouraged especially in Advent and Lent, but it cannot be allowed to prevent regular, ready access to the traditional form for all who desire it. Unfortunately, communal celebrations have not infrequently occasioned an illegitimate use of general absolution. This illegitimate use, like other abuses in the administration of the sacrament of Penance, is to be eliminated.

The teaching of the Church is reflected in precise terms in the requirements of the Code of Canon Law (cf. esp. canons 959-964). In particular it is clear that "A sufficient necessity is not ... considered to exist when confessors cannot be available merely because of a great gathering of penitents, such as can occur on some major feastday or pilgrimage" (canon 961 1).

The bishops will exercise renewed vigilance on these matters for the future, aware that departures from the authentic tradition do great wrong to the Church and to individual Catholics.

46. Appropriate Liturgical Formation.

So that the faithful may be sure to receive from their priests an authentic and informed ministry and teaching, insistence will continue to be placed upon the stipulation of the Council's Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium (n. 16), that the sacred Liturgy be regarded as one of the principal subjects in major seminaries, a requirement that is the subject of further guidelines offered by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education's Instruction, In ecclesiasticam (3 June 1979).

Such liturgical formation needs to be followed through in all the different sections of the Catholic community and at the various levels in a consistent and permanent fashion. Only in this way will communities and individuals be brought to a deeper understanding of the Liturgy. Likewise, only by sustained programs of this kind can the Church in Australia be assured of a sufficient pool of resource persons to sustain the different areas of liturgical development.

VII. EDUCATION AND EVANGELISATION

- **Preparation for the Priesthood**
- **Tertiary Education**
- **Education in Catholic schools**

47. Evangelisation.

While it is clear that education is not the only means of evangelisation, it has been, and continues to be, in the Australian context, a very important one. Among other means, a competent use of the mass media figures as well in this area. We are mindful too of the words of Pope Paul VI: "Techniques of evangelization are good, but even the most advanced ones could not replace the gentle action of the Spirit" (Evangelii nuntiandi 75).



Preparation for the Priesthood

48. Idea of the Priesthood.

Preparation for the priesthood takes place in the seminary which is "an educational community, indeed a particular educating community" (Pastores dabo vobis 61). It is essential for the seminary to achieve its task, that the education imparted there be characterized by a clear and authentic idea of the ministerial priesthood, its specificity and its relationship to the priesthood of all the baptized (cf. Lumen gentium 10). This idea, in turn, should be based on a sound Christology and ecclesiology, as transmitted by the Church. These ideas should be clear in the minds of both the teachers and the students.

49. Co-workers of the Bishop.

Candidates for the priesthood should be instilled with the idea that they will be the appreciated co-workers of their bishops and the bearers of the joy of the Gospel to the People of God. They are to be the bishops' collaborators in the work of evangelizing, sharing also, in virtue of their ordination and mission, in the three-fold task of teaching, sanctifying and shepherding.

50. Priesthood and Celibacy.

Seminarians should be helped spiritually, and in other appropriate ways, to nourish a conviction of the relationship of celibacy to their priestly vocation, and its fruitfulness in the priestly ministry, and to commit themselves to its observance.

51. Formation.

The Apostolic Exhortation Pastores dabo vobis proposes the essential aspects for a well-integrated formation of candidates for the priesthood in the context of today's world. These are: human formation as its basis; spiritual formation as the heart, to achieve union with God in Christ; intellectual formation containing a strong philosophical component, as an instrument for the understanding of the Faith; and pastoral formation, as its goal, to bring about in the priest a sharing in Christ's own pastoral charity.

Priestly formation requires not only formation of the candidates for the priesthood but also that of the educators in the seminary. The choice and preparation of the priests who will be rectors, spiritual directors and other members of the seminary's formation team require a special attention.

52. The Scrutinies.

For the good of individuals and of the whole Church, careful attention is to be given to the considerations set out by the recent circular of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments regarding the Scrutinies to be held before each of the major steps in the advancement of candidates to Holy Orders. A candidate for the diaconate or the priesthood must be totally free before God and the Church to assume the responsibility of ordained ministry. For his part the diocesan Bishop must have a moral certainty of the suitability and worthiness of the candidate in terms of doctrine, spiritual life and human qualities, before the man is ordained to the diaconate.

53. Vocations.

Pastoral work, especially among the young, should have a vocation-promoting dimension to it. The "soil" for welcoming the seed of vocations should also be cultivated among parents and within the family generally. The supernatural means of vocational promotion should underlie all such efforts, and the ecclesial sense of vocation should be clear. The idea of a continental congress for Australia on vocations, such as has been held for Latin America and for Europe merits consideration.

54. The Apostolic Visitation.

The Apostolic Visitation of the seminaries of Australia, interrupted in 1997, should resume as soon as is feasible.

Tertiary Education

55. The Ecclesiastical Faculty.

The curricula leading to ecclesiastical degrees at the Catholic Institute of Sydney, which was erected by the Holy See, should be utilized to the fullest extent possible. This is important because such a faculty, with its particular structure, has "the aim of profoundly studying and systematically explaining, according to the scientific method proper to it, Catholic doctrine, derived with the greatest care from divine revelation. It has the further aim of carefully seeking the solution to human problems in the light of that same revelation" (Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* 66). Both the Chancellor and the Holy See have the right and the duty to safeguard the Catholic character of an ecclesiastical faculty.

56. Catholic Universities.

The recent establishment of two Catholic universities in Australia merits recognition, and they are deserving of the support of the whole Catholic population, particularly of those parts which are in the geographical areas where the Universities are located. The university itself and the bishops should be attentive to safeguarding the university's Catholic identity. The Catholic university "makes an important contribution to the Church's work of evangelization. It is a living institutional witness to Christ and His message, in cultures marked by secularism" (Apostolic Constitution *Ex corde Ecclesiae* 49). The Catholic university performs this service in accordance with its nature as a university.

57. University Pastoral Ministry.

Of significant importance as well is the pastoral care offered to Catholic students, professors and staff in civil universities. Men and women should be carefully selected and suitably prepared for this work, which aims at a Catholic formation of persons in the university world that is congruent with their secular academic preparation.

58. Church Authority and Theological Formation.

The local ecclesiastical authority, who may seek the assistance of the Holy See in the matter, should follow with understanding and with active concern the question of the doctrinal soundness of the theological formation given either in departments of theology in Catholic universities or in other theological centres, called "theological faculties" in Australia.

59. Formational Purpose.

While differing in some aspects of their functions and aims, all of these institutions and activities connected with tertiary education have precise formational intentions. They aim at an integral formation of persons, not just their preparation for a professional task. They aim as well at preparing leaders for the Church and for society at large who will be both competent in their respective fields and faithful in Catholic belief and behaviour. The fidelity to the Church's Magisterium in these institutions and in the publications by their professors will be an important gauge of the Catholic life of the nation today and an influence on it in the future.

Education in Catholic schools

60. Contribution of the Catholic Schools.

Catholic schools have made a tremendous contribution to the Church in Australia throughout its history, and continue to do so today. The Catholic school system is active and flourishing, well organized and generally of high quality, providing one of the foremost means of evangelization and of instructing young people in the Faith. Evangelization programs must take account of the increasing secularization of students, who no longer receive the basic faith formation at home as in the past and of the increasing number of non-Catholic students. Care is needed to ensure that a desire to be welcoming to all does not compromise the Catholic identity of the school.

61. Formation of Lay Teachers.

The rapid loss of religious men and women teaching in the schools has had an impact on the atmosphere and Catholic identity of the school. The lay teachers who have taken their places must be properly formed in the Faith, especially principals and those who teach religion. Much has already been achieved in this regard. Because Catholic school education involves interior education and formation in the Faith, a significant proportion of the staff should be practising Catholics, who look upon themselves as educators in the Faith as well as teachers of their specific subjects. All staff, both Catholic and non-Catholic, should support the religious formation of the students and the educational goals of the school.

62. The Place of the Catholic School in the Local Church.

The Catholic school does not exist in isolation, but is part of the wider faith community of the parish and the diocese. Students, teachers and parents should all be conscious of the school as a part of the ecclesial community, first in the parish, then in the diocese and the universal Church. For many children, the school rather than the parish represents their Church and is their only contact with the Church. Catholic education should lead to full participation and involvement in the Church - the Church which, at the local level, is centred in the parish. There need to be strong partnerships built between parish and educational programs; the parish should support the school as one of its most important apostolic works and the school should assist the parish in forming young people in their faith.

63. Atmosphere.

In a Catholic school, the educational climate should be permeated throughout by a Christian way of thought and life. Students should know as soon as they set foot in a Catholic school that they are in a different environment, one illuminated by the light of faith and having its own unique characteristics. Particular attention should be given in the school to prayer and the celebration of the sacraments.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Participants

Signatories

The aim of the meeting between various Dicasteries of the Holy See and bishops representing the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference was to arrive at a deeper understanding of the situation of the Church in Australia in the area of doctrine and morals, the liturgy, the role of the bishop, evangelization and mission, the priesthood and religious life, and Catholic education. The vitality of the Church in this great continent was brought into full relief during the meeting, as were some of the challenges facing the Australian bishops, but most evident was the common desire to work together to overcome the problems.

The meeting was therefore a great "moment" of authentic affectus collegialis between the Church in Australia and the primary collaborators of the Roman Pontiff. To preserve and ever deepen this communion, the spirit of collaboration experienced in the meeting must continue into the future. The fraternal nature of this exchange of views will assist the regular cooperation between the Holy See and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, and the proposals will provide the context, at least in part, for their collaboration. By building on the good will and sustained efforts of many priests, deacons, religious and lay faithful, the Church in Australia will live out with ever greater fidelity the mystery of Christ in communion with the universal Church.

The bishops, as devoted shepherds of the Church in Australia, are well aware of its strengths and its weaknesses, and remain deeply committed to its service. They are confident that, with the assistance of the theological community and so many loyal priests, religious and lay faithful, along with the support and guidance of the Holy See, they will be well prepared to meet the challenges that confront them.

This common labour is before all else a cooperation with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, each one praying for the wisdom always to give first consideration to the honour of God and the salvation of souls, and by begging for the strength needed for the task of building up the Body of Christ, so that all efforts may bear abundant fruit for the mission of the Church in Australia and beyond.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants from the Roman Curia were: His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; His Eminence Cardinal Jorge Medina Estvez, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments; His Eminence Cardinal Lucas Moreira Neves, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops; His Eminence Cardinal DarRo Castrilln Hoyos, Prefect of the Congregation for Clergy; His Eminence Cardinal Eduardo MartRnez Somalo, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life; His Eminence Cardinal Pio Laghi, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Geraldo Majella Agnelo, Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Francesco Monterisi, Secretary of the Congregation for Bishops; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Csaba Terny<k, Secretary of the Congregation for Clergy; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Piergiorgio Nesti, Secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life; and His Excellency, the Most Reverend Giuseppe Pittau, Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

The participants from Australia were: His Eminence Cardinal Edward Clancy, Metropolitan Archbishop of Sydney, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Francis Carroll, Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn; His Excellency, the Most Reverend George Pell, Metropolitan Archbishop of Melbourne; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Eric D'Arcy, Archbishop of Hobart; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Leonard Faulkner, Metropolitan Archbishop of Adelaide; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Barry Hickey, Metropolitan Archbishop of Perth and Chairman of the Committee for Liturgy; His Excellency the Most Reverend John Bathersby, Metropolitan Archbishop of Brisbane; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Brian Heenan, Bishop of Rockhampton, Chairman of the Committee for

Clergy and Religious; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Justin Bianchini, Bishop of Geraldton, Secretary of the Committee for Clergy and Religious; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Michael Putney, Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane, Chairman of the Committee for Doctrine and Morals; His Excellency, the Most Reverend David Walker, Bishop of Broken Bay, Secretary of the Committee for Doctrine and Morals; His Excellency, the Most Reverend James Foley, Bishop of Cairns, Chairman of the Committee for Education and Secretary of the Committee for Liturgy; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Barry Collins, Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes, Secretary of the Committee for Education; His Excellency, the Most Reverend Edmund Collins, Bishop of Darwin, Chairman of the Committee for Evangelization and Missions; and His Excellency, the Most Reverend William Morris, Bishop of Toowoomba, Secretary of the Committee for Evangelization and Missions.

SIGNATORIES

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Jorge Cardinal Medina EstJvez
Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments

Lucas Cardinal Moreira Neves
Congregation for Bishops

DarRo Cardinal Castrilln Hoyos
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Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life

Pio Cardinal Laghi
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Edward Cardinal Clancy
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Most Reverend Barry Hickey
Chairman of the Committee for Liturgy

Most Reverend Brian Heenan
Chairman of the Committee for Clergy and Religious

Most Reverend Michael Putney
Chairman of the Committee for Doctrine and Morals

Most Reverend James Foley
Chairman of the Committee for Education

Most Reverend Edmund Collins
Chairman of the Committee for Evangelization and Missions

23 June 1998

Australian Jewish, Catholic Leaders meet

Top level delegations from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and the Australian Jewish community have held an historic meeting in the Great Synagogue, Sydney, to discuss on-going Catholic-Jewish dialogue in Australia.

The ACBC Bishops Committee for Ecumenism and Inter-Faith Relations met with a delegation from the executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) at a meeting inspired by the release by the Vatican of the document "We Remember": A Reflection on the Shoah". Although Jews and Catholics have been present in Australia since the First Fleet, this was the first formal meeting between the recognised head bodies of the two communities.

The Jewish community delegation comprised Mrs Diane Shteinman, President of the ECAJ; Rabbi Raymond Apple, AM RFD, Senior Rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Sydney; Rabbi Fred Morgan, Senior Rabbi of the Temple Beth Israel, Melbourne; Mr Laurie Rosenblum, OAM, President of the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies and Honorary Life Member of the ECAJ; Mr Jeremy Jones, Executive Vice-President of the ECAJ and Director of Community Affairs of the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council; and Leslie Caplan, AM, a past president and Honorary Life Member of the ECAJ.

The ACBC delegation comprised Archbishop John Bathersby, Archbishop of Brisbane and Chairman of the Committee for Ecumenism and Inter-Faith Relations; Bishop Ray Benjamin, Bishop of Townsville and Secretary of the Committee for Ecumenism and Inter-Faith Relations; Bishop Peter Ingham, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney; Bishop Michael Putney, Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane; Bishop Peter Stasiuk, C.Ss.R. Bishop of Ukrainian Eparchy; and Ms Denise Sullivan (Executive Secretary).

After presentations by Bishop Putney and Rabbi Apple, the meeting discussed Catholic-Jewish relations in the specific Australian context, taking into account the implications of the Vatican document. As the meeting was held during the Week of Prayer for Aboriginal Reconciliation, the session was opened with the reading of a prayer for reconciliation composed by Rabbi Apple.

The Vatican document was welcomed as one of a number of documents over the past 33 years which have created a new, positive environment for Catholic-Jewish relations. It was noted that the "Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations" issued in 1992 by the ACBC was an excellent basis for a constructive relationship based on mutual respect and understanding.

While certain criticisms were expressed at particular parts of the Vatican document, it was recognised and applauded as a genuine attempt to begin the process of the better understanding - a subject which is both complex and confronting.

It was agreed that further meetings would take place to focus on the progress of Catholic-Jewish relations in Australia.

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| Further information: | Archbishop John Bathersby | Phone: (07) 3224 3364 |
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2 June 1998

Jubilee Calendar finalised

The Convenor of the Bishops' Committee for the Great Jubilee, Bishop Michael Putney, is pleased to announce that the official Calendar for Holy Year celebrations was released in Rome earlier this month.

The Calendar details an extensive event schedule which includes festivities such as the Opening of the Holy Door on 25 December 1999; the Jubilee for Artists (February 20); the Day of Prayer for collaboration among the different religions (11 June); and the closing of the Holy Door on 6 January 2001.

The President of the Central Committee for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, said in his foreword to the calendar that "The singular position of the City of Rome, episcopal Seat of the Roman Pontiff, and the fact that, for the first time ever, the Jubilee will be celebrated simultaneously in Rome, the Holy Land and in local Churches, indicates that the Calendar is addressed not only to the Roman Church but to the Church as a whole."

"The official publication of the Holy See Calendar for the Holy Year means that we can go about finalising our own ideas for the Jubilee here in Australia at the national and diocesan levels," said Bishop Putney. "This will provide us with the opportunity to incorporate our unique Australian spirit in the Jubilee Year celebrations."