

WATAC NEWS



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WATAC Administration Officer: Helen Coles 9520 9409

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Mailing address: Box 37/121 Anzac Avenue, Engadine, 2233

Website address: www.watac.net email: watac@people.net.au A.B.N. 48 406 052 808

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: BERNICE MOORE

TYPESETTING/DESIGN: MARGARET KNOWLDEN

Email: knowlden@optusnet.com.au

What a Wonderful World

I see trees of green, red roses too
I see them bloom for me and for you
And I think to myself, "What a wonderful world".
I see friends shaking hands..saying, "How do you do"?
They're really saying "I love you"
I hear babies cry, I watch them grow
They'll learn much more than I'll ever know
And I think to myself, "What a wonderful world".

Louis Armstrong

How well the words of this song capture the atmosphere of the WATAC luncheon at Parliament House on 10th September. The beauty of the dining area with its windows overlooking the grass and trees of the Domain, with the sunshine outside captured by the joy and beauty of the people gathered within – hard to imagine a more wonderful moment of life!

As usual there were many young people and teachers from 15 schools mingling with WATAC-ers and their friends and supporters. The meal and wonderful service made the event so enjoyable you found yourself wanting it to just go on and on.

Then came the magic moment when Bishop Pat Power, our special guest speaker, was invited to talk to us on the challenging topic 'Futuring Now – Today's Challenge'. If there ever has been a 'WOW' moment, this was it!

Great and honest man that he is, Bishop Pat's words were down-to-earth, inspiring, thought-provoking, totally inclusive and Jesus-centred. He left his speaking notes with us, so we will include in this WATAC News a short summary of some of the points he made.

The audience response provided many thoughtful questions and issues, and only the limit of time drew

this wonderful session to a close. Those of us who were gifted to be present could never thank Bishop Pat enough for his words and commitment to life so honestly shared with us.

Other highlights of the Luncheon included the very beautiful Acknowledgement-of-Land led by two of the students, Lauren Ferreira and Mary Kikitis, from St Scholastica's College, Glebe. This was followed by a heart-touching blessing composed and proclaimed by Jacinta Hart from St John Bosco College, Engadine. We have included the words of this very special blessing in the Newsletter for your inspiration.

Needless to say the fun event of the Luncheon was the drawing of the raffle with its multiple prizes, and the 'lucky-door' prizes. Maybe the most special win was when our youngest participant, Maree Willows, the 5-year-old grand daughter of Liz Willows was invited to draw the final winning raffle ticket for a Peruvian doll from the Good Shepherd Trading Circle, and it had her own name on it!!! (Helen can swear she didn't look.) I think to myself "What a Wonderful World".

Of course events like this don't happen without lots of 'hands-on' work by amazing people. The Working group of WATAC is the number one energy force and leading the efforts for the luncheon were Helen Coles, Maureen Watterson and Margaret Keyes. Margaret Day facilitated the event with gentle skill and Maree Kennedy responded to Bishop Pat with generous words we would all have liked to have said. Our thanks to all of them for the gift of who they are for us. Maureen Short, our photographer, also deserves our on-going thanks for her wonderful work. Maureen's fantastic photos from the day will be on the WATAC website by the end of October so do check them out. Go to www.watac.net and click on 'Photo Galleries' then the 2009 WATAC Luncheon.

Bernice Moore



Futuring Now – Today’s Challenge

Some Reflections on Bishop Power’s talk

This is the topic which Bishop Patrick Power, our guest speaker, explored at the WATAC Luncheon on 10th September. Bishop Power is the Auxiliary Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn and earlier this year he was declared the Canberra Citizen of the year because of his commitment to those who have no voice in our society.

He was WATAC’s guest speaker and some of the key points he made in his challenging talk included the following:

The energy needed to ‘Future Now’ really comes from remembering significant moments in the past when change was made possible by decisions made and actions taken. Some of these moments and people over the last ten years include:

- √ When I walked across the Sydney Harbour Bridge on 28th May 2000. This was an act of Reconciliation with our indigenous sisters and brothers when thousands of people joined together to say “Sorry”.
- √ The National Apology to the Indigenous community given by our Prime Minister in Parliament House in Canberra, February 2008.
- √ The Oceania Synod of Bishops held in Rome in November / December 1998 (see page 12 for Bishop Pat’s presentation to the Synod).
- √ The Report on the Participation of Women in the Australian Catholic Church which was published in 1999 after a series of consultations throughout Australia when we bishops heard the voice of many women talking of their concerns.
- √ The number of extraordinary women who have worked to make a better world: Caroline Chisholm, Mary Mackillop, Dorothy Day, Mary Ward, Catherine McAuley, Mother Teresa. And the many who have worked in Australian Social Services such as Norma Parker, Mary Lewis, Pamela Riddle, Dorothy O’Halloran, Margaret McHardy.

Bishop Pat then encouraged us all to consider these realities:

Being energised by these events and people, what are the challenges to ‘Futuring Now’? Women have special charisms, they are good at listening, are multi-skilled, perceptive and intuitive. Many people, particularly women, have become disillusioned with the Church which often does not present the compassionate face of Christ and often acts to exclude groups and individuals.

Over many years there has been a meaningful connection between WATAC and Bishop Pat. The Bridge walk in 2000 was a moment that he shared with a WATAC group and he enthusiastically met with the WATAC-ers who attended the Canberra Press Club luncheon when the Participation of Women Report was launched in 1999. In his luncheon talk Bishop Power spoke of the hope WATAC gives to people such as him and the hope and challenge WATAC maintains by continuing on with energy and commitment to all women and to our church.

Addressing, in particular, the fifty young women and men, students who were at the luncheon accompanied by their teachers the Bishop

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nominated some of the particular challenges they face today, for example cyber-bullying, drugs, sexual exploitation. However he sees that their idealism and sense of justice can energise this wonderful generation to 'Future Now' with hope and commitment.

Bishop Pat writes: "The power of the Holy Spirit continues to pulse through the Church, teaching young Australians the ways of justice, inspiring our youth to be ambassadors of hope, and charging us to speak in partnership with the young concerning the issues of injustice and inequality that affect them. We experience this dynamism as a spirit of insight, of decision and of action. In particular, building on the energy of World Youth Day, we seek to enhance the reign of God in our land through forging reconciliation, acting for justice and making peace".

Bishop Power went on to speak of other marginalised groups in the Church, such as homosexuals, divorced and re-married people, ex-priests and so on. He quoted GK Chesterton:

To love means loving the unlovable. To forgive means forgiving the unpardonable. Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless.

And he concluded with a warm and encouraging challenge to women: "More than ever, our Church and the wider society need the voices of committed Christian women as you give expression to the aspirations of all that is best in our society. Your commitment to dialogue and to greater understanding among all people will help all the Church to be true to Jesus' prayer that 'All may be one'".

Bernice Moore

Reflecting on Luncheon Highlights

If thirteen is supposed to be an unlucky number, then WATAC, being true to form, ran against the tide of popular convention – its thirteenth annual luncheon in the dining room of the NSW Parliament House was a great success.

Many thanks to our gracious host, Marie Andrews (MP for Gosford), for being present with us and for enabling us to once again enjoy this beautiful space. The ambience of the room, the fine food and the attentive service all contributed to the success of this event.

Reflecting on this year's luncheon the following are highlights:

- √ the opening blessing, prepared and delivered by Jacinta Hart from St John Bosco College Engadine. How many, if any, of us "more mature" WATAC-ers would, at the same age, have been able to address our God so directly in our own words and with such an inclusive vision of "sainthood"?
- √ the number of familiar faces; the warmth of greetings and genuine support and concern for "old" friends.
- √ the record number of males at our gathering – how wonderful to see so many amongst us. I hope they found it a rewarding experience and will continue to accompany us in even greater numbers.
- √ our reminder of Miriam's gift of "sons" to WATAC! For those "not in the know", Patricia Horsley gifted a heifer, named Miriam, to WATAC at our Canberra Conference. From thence, the proceeds from the sale of Miriam's male progeny, all named Michael, have been donated to the WATAC coffers (some \$2,000).

The names recognise the two speakers at our Canberra conference; Miriam Therese Winter and Michael Morewood. This speaks to me of legacy. WATAC continues to survive because of the financial support of its members. Those who have spoken at our conferences and luncheons since WATAC's inception have all left their legacy of scholarship and lived, reflected experience with us. Though I'm not sure what Michael Morewood makes of his namesakes' being led to the slaughter for WATAC's financial support.

- √ our guest speaker, Bishop Pat Power. What a gift was this man's model of Church leadership. While I was personally renewed by his witness, I was even more heartened that our young guests from our various Catholic secondary schools were able to witness such a model of Church leadership and to hear such a profound, yet simple message, "God loves you." We listened to a bishop who did not have a dogmatic black and white response to the moral issues of our time; who acknowledged those groups most excluded and alienated by the institutional church; who valued and affirmed his young questioner's own powers of discernment; who acknowledged his own limitations of understanding but was adamant in his unswerving faith in the restorative power of compassion and love – in the message of Jesus; the gifts of our God.

What a legacy he left each of us. What a legacy WATAC gave us yet again through its annual luncheon. And what a legacy each of us has the responsibility to carry beyond that luncheon.

Margaret Day



Blessing before the Meal

13th WATAC Luncheon
NSW Parliament House
10th September 2009

Dear God,

We give thanks for all women, past, present and future generations, we thank you for the unique gifts they bring to our church.

Gifts of kindness, wisdom, compassion strength and courage.

We thank you God, for our grandmothers, our mothers our sisters, our aunties and our friends and for the light, gentleness and laughter they bring to our world.

We ask you, Mary our mother and mother of our church and Jesus your son, to guide us along paths we should follow to bring more love to all that we do.

Thank you for the gift of our church in this blessed land of Australia, this ancient land of the Dreamtime, this land of the Holy Spirit, this land of the Southern Cross. Thank you for the inspirational lives of women like Blessed Mary Mackillop and Mamma Shirl.

Help us to care for this land and its people.

Holy Spirit, gentle healer, help all women to bring the gifts needed to heal the hurt, injustice and suffering in our church and our world.

Help us to be brave enough to be a voice for the defenceless, the weak, the poor and the vulnerable.

Help us to be protectors of life and to cherish it from the moment of conception to the frailty of age.

Help us to stand together and to work together,

Help us to smile and to laugh together!

Dear God help us to love and support each other today and in the years to come.

Blessed be the God of life and love and of creation for all eternity!

Amen, Amen!!

Brothers and sisters we say Amen!

*Jacinta Hart
St John Bosco College, Engadine*

Some Young Women Reflect on the WATAC Luncheon

52 students and 19 teachers from 15 schools attended the luncheon.
Here are reflections from some of the students

Last Thursday, four of us were given a wonderful opportunity to accompany Mrs Marturia and attend the Annual WATAC luncheon held at parliament house. WATAC has a vision to provide an inclusive church and to enable the voice of women to be heard on global and social justice issues. They believe in equality within the Church regardless of race or gender. This year the guest speaker we were very lucky to have was Bishop Pat Power. He spoke about his work for the marginalised in society including women, indigenous, and homosexual people and those in poverty. He was very aware of the issues in society including racism and the cyber community. He told us he was 67 but it was really refreshing to hear him speak as he had such a young and knowledgeable mind. We all found him very inspirational, and he left the younger members of the luncheon with the message to stay open to all people especially those that are in suffering and to remain faithful to our church.

Santa Sabina student

Nine year-10 girls along with Mrs Thompson and Sr Chanel were invited to the 13th Annual WATAC Luncheon at Parliament House. WATAC (Women and the Australian Church) is a movement of women and men who are committed to total equality in the church and society. Their goal, starting from the 80's, was to make a change in the understanding of the role of women in their participation in the Australian Church and in society. Their aim is the conscious-raising of women on Christian feminist issues. The luncheon was attended by many WATAC members as well as

secondary school students including St John Bosco College, Engadine and St Mary's Star of the Sea, Wollongong. The guest speaker of the luncheon was Bishop Pat Power, who was an outspoken priest on controversial issues in the church such as homosexuality. He spoke about his desire to make these people who were out-casts of the church to be re-admitted into the church. The afternoon was made complete by a delicious lunch.

*Manisha Ediriwira
Year 10 Brigidine College St Ives*

On Thursday 10th September we attended the Women And The Australian Church (WATAC) Luncheon at NSW Parliament House, a gathering of young Christians, members of WATAC and other distinguished guests. The Luncheon began with a warm introduction, followed by a delicious two-course meal provided by the parliamentary catering. After we'd all eaten we heard an incredible talk from Bishop Pat Power, who highlighted the fundamental role that women play, and have played, within the Church. He also spoke of his hope that one day all marginalised groups within the Church would be appreciated through equality. After an interesting question time, the Luncheon concluded with a raffle and 'thank-yous'. Overall the Luncheon was stimulating, informative, empowering and filling (not only in a physical sense!). We would like to thank Mrs Lee, the College Liturgy Coordinator, for accompanying us on the day, and for providing us with the wonderful opportunity to represent our school at such an inspiring forum.

*Charmaine Begg & Roslyn Coutinho
Bethany College*





Patricia Horsley



Maree Kennedy



Clearing up some of the myths on asylum-seekers coming to Australia

Phil Glendenning

Director Edmund Rice Centre



Phil Glendenning spoke at the WATAC Conference in May about his commitment to asylum seekers coming to Australia. Recently he sent this informative article to help us keep in touch with the present situation re asylum seekers. WATAC is very grateful to Phil for his work and for taking the time to write for our newsletter.

In recent months there has been an increase in debate about the number of asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat. Once again we have heard our politicians and some media commentators referring to these people as ‘illegal immigrants’ and ‘queue jumpers’, ignoring the facts that it is perfectly legal to ask for asylum in Australia under our law no matter how you arrive, and that there is no ‘queue’ in war-torn places like Afghanistan and the Taliban held areas of Pakistan.

Still the rhetoric escalates. As Liberal Senator Judith Troeth said recently in the Parliament words like ‘flood’, ‘panic’ and ‘hundreds of thousands of people arriving on our shores’ are used all too often. What is in danger of being lost in all of this are the plain and simple facts of the matter. In her speech in the Senate on September 8 Judith Troeth put some simple facts on the record.

“The most recent report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, shows that the number of individual claims for asylum worldwide rose for the second year in a row by 28 per cent to 839,000 people.

Developed countries like Australia do attract asylum seekers, but the fact is that 80 per cent of the world’s refugees are hosted by developing countries – Pakistan, Syria, Iran and Jordan.

Among the developed countries, the US received 49,600 applications for asylum; France, 35,400; Canada, 34,800; the UK, 30,500; and Italy, 30,000. Australia received – and this is taken together, both boat people and plane arrivals – 4,500 asylum claims. That is 0.05 per cent of the worldwide total, and almost all of them did not arrive by boat”.

In fact only 4% of that 0.05% arrive by boat. 96% come mainly through Sydney Airport, yet there are no demands to annex Mascot from the Australian mainland. Even given the 1,500 who have arrived by boat over the past 14 months, these are tiny figures when compared to the rest of the world.

The vast majority of those who have arrived by boat recently come primarily from three countries – Afghanistan and Pakistan where the Taliban are again on the rise and the war is escalating, and from Sri Lanka, which has been the scene of one of the world’s most brutal civil wars and where peace is yet to be established.

There has been no opening of floodgates. What has happened is that right across the world the numbers of asylum seekers have increased because war has escalated and humans caught in its midst need to get out and find peace and security.

You can check out the Edmund Rice Centre at this weblink <http://www.erc.org.au>

WATAC Conference Dinner May 2009

The Voice of a Young Woman

“I Have a Dream ...”

Susan Flynn – Mount St Joseph Milperra

I have a dream of equality...

- Of a world where war won't be a feature on nightly news.
- And no child will go to sleep hungry
- When education will be there for all
- And dreams may become reality.

My dream may seem like a young idealistic view of a world that is almost inconceivable, unreachable impossible. But I can't pretend to be the first person to have this dream nor can I expect to be the last. As a young Catholic Australian, it is a testament to the men and the women who have gone before me that as a child I believed this world was equal. However, it is with age that understanding follows. At school we are taught words such as racism, poverty and disadvantage but it takes experience before those words become more than just last week's homework.

I don't think any teen can truthfully say we know it all even though I'm the first to say, we like to think so. We learn from the men and the women who have gone before us. It is they who show the world's flaws, human mistake and disadvantage. And it is to you who we look to encourage and help us fix the

inequality we see. This is done through by providing opportunity to young students be it through a school's social justice group or outreach program or by encouraging us to step outside our comfort zone. Because it is only when we step outside our world of experience that desire and conviction for change is created. This is a lesson I learnt in my time spent in the indigenous community of Warmun.

Warmun is a small Aboriginal community 200 km north of Kununurra in far north Western Australia. During the week that five other students and I were blessed to spend there, I formed a far greater realization of the inequality that exists in our own country. Not inequality in terms of spirit or community because the people of Warmun have a kinship and spirituality that is both enviable and amazing to experience. Nor should they be underestimated in their own courage which inspired them to build a school for their young and which is fueled by their deeply spiritual Gija faith. However due to the remote nature of their community, the

people of Warmun do not have access to the opportunities many young Australians like myself take for granted. Education, health and social issues affect all in Warmun from the youngest child to the Elders who lead the community.

As young women, after spending a lot of our time at the school of Gnalangangpum in Warmun we were enriched by the marriage of tradition and culture with the educational skills desired by the community. However, we were all deeply affected by the challenges many of these kids face. In particular, literacy is a large problem in Warmun. It is said that by the time a child reaches school they should have had access to at least a thousand books. This has not been possible in Warmun. Hence, an important contribution we felt we could make was to help provide this access through the program Books in Home that we established with both our school and a

primary school near us. Moreover, as prejudice is a result of ignorance we have told anyone who will listen about our experience and through a local social justice day held at our school encouraged other schools to form similar relationships with other indigenous communities. This year this link will be continued through

the opportunity of another group of students from MSJ who also will be able to experience the beauty and welcoming culture of the Gija people.

Equality is a word that has spanned across the human history - from Joan of Arc to the current work of groups such as Caritas or Amnesty International. The understanding of what equality means and the desire to achieve it is dependant upon what each generation learns from those before them. It is often said that children are the future but our future is shaped by the lessons we have learned from the past. We may have the desire for change but it is only with your direction and guidance that these dreams will become a reality. We need you to educate us in inequality, challenge us to face injustice head on and don't let us quit because it seems too hard. In the words of Mary Mackillop, I ask you to never let us see a need without helping us to do something about it. To help make our dreams of the future, happen today. □



The WATAC connection with Mount St Joseph Milperra continues at the luncheon

A Spirituality of Social Justice

In the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, I asked the question "Is an Iraqi life of any less value than an Australian life, a British life or an American life?" In more recent times with the slaughter in Gaza, we might well ask "What is the value of a Palestinian life?" As the rest of the world looks on helplessly at so many parts of Africa, we are numbed by the poverty, starvation, AIDS and other preventable diseases and almost every imaginable deprivation. Where is the recognition of the human dignity of each person in the face of such dire misery?

Within our own "lucky country" we are all diminished by the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots", by the disadvantage of so many of our Aboriginal people, by the many faces of poverty around us. It is not just governments who are to be concerned about people who are poor, unemployed or homeless along with their families. Each of us has a responsibility.

While we pay lip service to "a fair go for everyone", the reality in our country can be quite different. Think of the prejudicial attitudes towards people in prison, to homosexual people, to those afflicted with mental illness, to migrant and ethnic groups, to people who are in any way different to the norm, whatever that might be.

As the followers of Christ, we not only see Jesus as the light of the world, but we recognise our own privilege and responsibility to bring the light of Christ to those around us. In that wonderful account of the Last Judgement in chapter 25 of St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells us: "I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you made me welcome, naked and you clothed me, sick and in prison and you came to see me. As long as you did this to one of the least of my brothers and sisters you did it to me."

But true Christian discipleship does not simply involve doing things for others. It means acknowledging that we are all part of the one human family and that like Jesus himself we are to take on the burdens and the hardships of others. I write this reflection on Good Friday when we stand in awe of the Son of God sharing in our humanity with almost indescribable suffering, humiliation and pain. During his public ministry, Jesus was "at home" with the lepers, the blind, the handicapped, with sinners and with little children. In his final suffering and death, he identified with the worst of the human condition. Here was no distant God, but the Word incarnate, truly one of us. And of course, his death was not the end of the story. His resurrection gives us hope with the promise of new life and the knowledge that he continues to be our "companion on the journey" as the way, the truth and the life.

It sometimes worries me that 2000 years after Jesus walked this earth, the Church has become too respectable; we can be afraid of getting our hands dirty. People like Frederic Ozanam, Mary MacKillop, Edmund Rice, Oscar Romero, Mother Teresa and many of the great saints point us back to the way of Jesus.

Jean Vanier and the members of the L'Arche communities provide us with an authentic example of discipleship. There we find no sense of superiority or patronising attitudes. They remind us of all that we have to learn from people who might appear to be less fortunate but who are in fact instruments of God's grace. Vanier also reminds us that the brokenness we see in others often provokes an awareness of our own brokenness. Ultimately it is the broken body of Jesus which unites us all as we seek to be "one in Christ Jesus".

(Bishop) Pat Power

Auxiliary Bishop Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn

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Global Warming – Being Involved

Matthew van Gestal

Mary van Gestel has been a WATAC member since its early days of existence and she is a very active member of the Engadine group. Recently, Mary's husband, Matthew, was invited to be part of a national group of people who gathered together in Sydney to consolidate their advice to world governments on the urgent issue of global warming. Matt has written a report on this exciting event which was part of an international project involving 38 countries. I am sure readers of WATAC news will be inspired and challenged by this summary of his experience and the vital information it contains. If you would like more details contact Matthew on 02 9520 9235.

I was privileged to be one of the one-hundred people chosen throughout Australia to attend the meeting of World Wide Views on Global Warming. The project was initiated by the Danish Board of Technology and the Danish Cultural Institute in consequence of the upcoming UN climate conference in Copenhagen. The University of Technology Sydney is the WWViews Australian partner for WWViews International and the major sponsor of the Australian event. The project was held in 38 countries, with nearly 4,500 citizens worldwide participating. These were randomly selected and had no special qualifications to answer the questions. They were chosen with reference to each national demographic composition regarding age, gender, education, income and ethnicity.

We met on Friday 25th and Saturday 26th September, where we deliberated on key questions that will be addressed at the global climate talks in December. We were divided into groups of six, plus each table had an independent facilitator. On my table there was a male accountant from the central coast, a female graphic arts teacher from Sydney, a male builder/developer from Adelaide, a woman from Victoria who was in computer science, a young indigenous woman involved in bush medicine from the Kimberley and the female facilitator from Melbourne. I was the senior citizen of the group. One participant was inclined to be sceptical at the beginning, but he changed his mind as the meeting progressed and one woman who, although very positive that global warming was happening, was very cautious about casting her vote.

There were also several roving facilitators who were professionals in their field, science, water

management etc., and they were available during our deliberations to answer specific questions, but under no circumstances could they, or the facilitators assigned to each table, express their personal opinions.

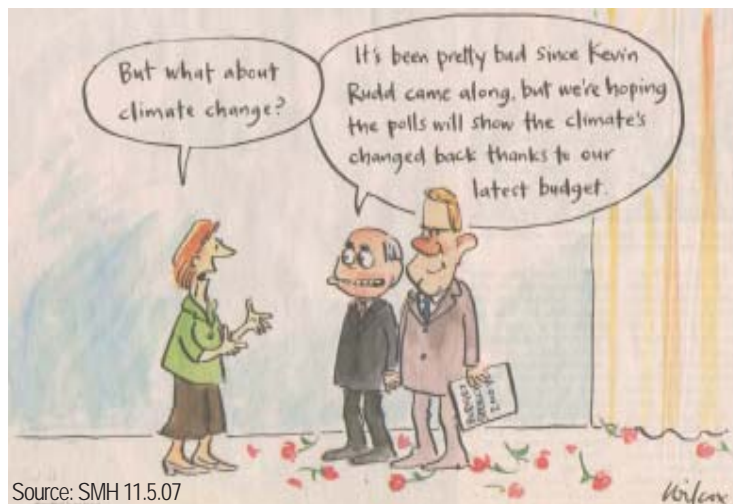
Although on some issues we didn't always agree, we were a close-knit group who listened to each point of view. It was interesting to hear all the for-and-against opinions and then make up my own mind before casting my vote. Altogether, I came away feeling very excited, positive and with an urge to become more involved. I was also very conscious of the world we leave behind for our children and grandchildren.

We participants in Australia spent a day-and-a-half deliberating crucial climate issues, then voting, providing a group answer to a set of pre-set questions and recommendations to political leaders. The process and questions originated from Denmark, based on years of innovation in demographic process by the Danish Board of Technology and WWViews project partners. During the WWViews event, participants had the opportunity to meet with their peers face to face. They were given information about the issues and the chance to discuss what they think before they put forward their views. This makes the process more considered to a regular poll.

Over the course of 48 hours, other nations held exactly the same process, providing a global set of answers to the same questions on climate change.

For any more information please visit these websites:

www.wwviews.org.au/results or www.wwviews.org



Australian citizens support cuts of more than 25% in global talks with 38 countries

Matthew van Gestel from Engadine has just got back from the Australian event in a global climate change consultation where randomly-selected citizens from all corners of the world met to express their views on climate change and how a future climate deal should be shaped. This event is being held in the lead up to the Copenhagen Climate Talks to be held in December, to give ordinary citizens a voice. World Wide Views on Global Warming was the world's first global citizen democracy project and was run in Australia by the University of Technology, Sydney.

A group of 100 Australians were selected completely at random and brought to Sydney from all States and territories - as far afield as Humpty Doo, Broome, Launceston, Cairns and Kapunda. On Friday 25th and Saturday 26th September 2009 they met to deliberate on key questions that will be addressed at the global climate talks later this year and make recommendations for Australia's climate negotiators. The results are an Australian citizen perspective on what position Australia should take at the global climate talks in Copenhagen.

In the Australian group **an overwhelming majority (92%) think that a global climate deal is urgent and should be made at COP15 in December 2009.** If it happens, 94% believe Australian politicians should give high priority to joining it.

Of our group **74 % say the price of fossil fuels should be increased to deal with climate change.** They also want a legally binding global agreement.

Their top recommendation was that "Australia should Act now to limit warming below 2 degrees C through a legally binding global agreement. Develop new technology in an ethical and accountable process. The need for leadership, education and technical advances is paramount."

A full 99% said there should be reduction targets for Annex 1 countries for the short term and 89% said they should be 25% or higher, significantly more than what many countries have on the table. **Two-thirds believe countries that do not meet their commitments under a new climate deal be subjected to "severe" or "significant" punishment.**

During the same time period, over 4,000 citizens in 38 countries around the world deliberated on the same specific questions, using the same process and same information material. In countries as diverse as Canada, China, Uganda, Indonesia, and Chile, citizens with different backgrounds and in all ages

discussed how politicians should handle global warming. Citizens answered and results from all countries were fed live to the web.

Global citizen consultation

Results from World Wide Views are being delivered directly to Australian politicians and leaders right around the world, who this December will be making decisions with far-reaching consequences for the future of the planet.

Editors Notes:

World Wide Views on Global Warming is a global citizen consultation initiated by the Danish Board of Technology in consequence of the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen, December 2009. The project was held during 24 hours in 38 countries, with nearly 4,500 citizens worldwide participating, including 100 Australian citizens. Participating citizens are randomly selected and have no special qualifications to answer the questions. Citizens are chosen with reference to each national demographic composition regarding age, gender, education, income and ethnicity.

University of Technology Sydney is the WWViews Australian partner for WWViews International and the major sponsor of the Australian event. The University of Technology Sydney is internationally recognised as delivering research which is at the cutting edge of creativity and technology. This event is providing social research linked to policy on an issue that is recognised as critical by a majority of Australians. UTS thanks Pricewaterhouse Coopers, NAB, WWF and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment for their generous support of the Event.

The Danish Board of Technology is an independent advisory organisation financed by the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. The Danish Board of Technology was brought into being in order to disseminate knowledge about technology, its possibilities and effects on people, on society and on the environment. The Danish Board of Technology is experienced within citizen consultations and has held citizen meetings in Denmark concerning subjects such as The Future Health Care systems (2008), Smoking policy (2005) and the establishment of national parks (2005).

Oceania Synod Of Bishops

Marginalised People: In Society and in The Church

If we are to walk the way of Jesus, as the theme of this Synod suggests, we must walk with the poor, we must tell the truth on behalf of poor and powerless people, we must attempt to share something of their life as Jesus did.

The *Instrumentum Laboris* (§3) reminds us that we bear witness to Jesus and the Gospel not just by words but “by charity and justice, by solidarity with the poor, the marginalised, the oppressed”.

Some of the principal groups of such people in Australian society are:

Mentally ill people - no longer in large numbers in institutions, but at times coping poorly in boarding houses or just wandering the streets.

Prisoners - out of sight and out of mind, frequently considered as deserving of all they get, having no real human rights.

AIDS victims - still often feared and judged harshly.

Drug addicts - sometimes perceived simply as a threat to others' lives and property, but feared rather than helped.

Unemployed people who lack the resources to live decently and are often without hope.

Aboriginal people - While some of their rights are beginning to be recognised, they are still likely to be among our poorest people, leave school earliest, die youngest and have a much higher chance of going to prison.

Victims of sexual abuse, still in many cases suffering alone and in silence.

Young people, especially those who do not conform (Suicide is the major cause of young deaths in Australia).

Disabled people still suffer discrimination.

Older persons are not always valued.

Refugees do not always find a welcome in Australia.

Single parents have a daunting task and are frequently the subject of prejudice.

Poor people are often forgotten by those more fortunate and blamed for their poverty.

While individuals and groups within the Church are committed to marginalised people in Australia, for the most part such people do not see the institutional Church sympathetic towards them or standing at their side. Very few of the poorest Catholics feel at home in our churches. I feel embarrassed when I hear of the Church's “preferential option for the poor” when I see so little evidence of it. At the same time I am proud of the work of the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission, the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, the St Vincent de Paul Society, the L'Arche communities and many other wonderful groups working at a local level.

A friend of mine replied in these terms to my request for help in preparation for the Synod: “The Gospel of love is an invitation to mutual acceptance and non-judgement. The Church, however, in some of its practices, appears to express the exact opposite. Many people in the broader community see the expressed values of the Church as being inconsistent with many of its actions and pronouncements. This is a very real difficulty for the Church in terms of its credibility in the wider community. Some members of the Church community and hierarchy appear to act quite cruelly towards people such as single parents, homosexuals, divorced and remarried couples, former priests and religious. This incongruity between stated values and practice is a major issue in our Church and one that needs attention.” My own experience fully supports the observations of my friend.

I must add that many Catholic women are feeling marginalised by the Church. The non-inclusive language of the Catechism, the Sacraments and the Lectionary continues to hurt and offend them, as does the seemingly deaf reaction to their pleas for change. Many women and men believe that the Church will continue to be impoverished and only half-graced and half-alive while women are prevented from bringing their particular gifts to the life of the Church and are deprived of any significant voice. I share those views. This very Synod is lacking because the participation of women is so restricted.

The *Instrumentum Laboris* (§7) reminds us that “The Gospel is a call to conversion, first of all a call addressed to the Church herself, to all her members and communities. It is a call away from being exclusively inward-looking and preoccupied with her own needs, towards becoming outward-looking and responding to the needs of others. It is in fact a radical call to holiness... It is a call to reconciliation, to renewal and reform of life in Jesus Christ and to greater fidelity to his Spirit.”

As Church we must be prepared to meet people “where they are at” and to enter into genuine dialogue with them. My own experience in meeting with a group of homosexual Catholics earlier this year gave me new insights into their lives and their struggles,

and, I hope, helped them to remain within the Church. I experience the same dynamic in my relations with Epiphany, a group of priests who have left the active ministry.

Walking with the poor, living with their ambiguity and uncertainties, being truly catholic and inclusive are just some of the challenges which we face as Church if we are to be true to the Gospel. As well, we need to be a humbler Church, a less clerical Church, a more forgiving Church. We should seek to minister to whole persons, not just to their intellects if we are to offer them a true experience of God as revealed in Jesus.

The *Instrumentum Laboris* (§51) tells us: "The Church and her members are drawn into the communion of life and love of the Trinity as a people brought into unity, through the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This sharing in the

communion of Trinitarian life is the basis for all Christian relationships and the foundation of all Christian communities. "

Jean Vanier and the assistants in the L'Arche communities recognise how the handicapped people lead them to the person of Jesus. A priest-friend of mine tells me how his fellow members of Alcoholics Anonymous have taught him more spirituality than he ever learnt in the seminary. It is the poorest among us who are graced to draw the rest of us into closer communion with God.

As Church entering a new millennium, we must find new ways of embracing those people closest to the heart of Jesus so that authentically we may "walk his way, tell his truth and live his life".

(Bishop) Pat Power
November 1998



Source: *Women-Church Journal* No 2, 1988
with thanks to Graham English ©

A Woman's Place?

Phyllis Zagano

The Tablet - 26th September 2009

As teachers and nurses they were once the mainstay of the US Church. Today those left are more likely to be theologians, pastoral workers and spiritual directors. And they are prepared to say what they think. Now the Vatican is investigating America's active women Religious.

Louise Akers has dedicated her life to the Church. A Sister of Charity from Cincinnati, she has spent the past 40 years teaching, including writing the curriculum for courses on the Church and on social justice for teachers and religious educators in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Now Cincinnati's archbishop, Daniel Pilarczyk, has banned her from teaching in archdiocesan parishes and institutions because she refuses to renounce publicly her support for women priests. Her supporters say that she has served the Church well for decades and that her opinions on women's ordination should not overshadow that work. The archdiocese maintains that anyone teaching in the name of the Church must do so in accord with its teachings.

Sr Akers says her primary motive for taking this stand is the value, dignity and equality of women in the Church, which makes the timing of the ban particularly ironic. During the past year, two Vatican dicasteries - the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), which oversees religious orders and institutes worldwide, and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) - launched investigations into the lives and policies of apostolic or "active" women Religious and their major leadership organisation, apparently taking the bishops of the United States by surprise. American contemplative nuns are not currently under Rome's microscope.

Why investigate US women Religious? Quite simply, Rome wants to know why there aren't more of them. Sociologists identify key causes of this: greater opportunities for first-world women combined with feminism, and all it implies.

From 1965 to 2000, the number of women Religious in the US dropped from 173,865 to

79,876. Since then, the number has shrunk to 59,000. Meanwhile, aided by Hispanic immigration, the number of Catholics in the US continues to rise - up from 46.6 million in 1965 to approximately 67 million now.

There is a church personnel problem in the US, but not among men. While the US priest population dropped from 59,000 in 1965 to 40,500 in 2009, the number of ordained males has remained static since the close of Vatican II. Today there are nearly 16,500 ordained (mostly married) male deacons in the US, nearly 35,000 worldwide.

Charity, the heart of church work, has historically been undertaken by women. But the lives of women Religious have changed. As sisters in the US and elsewhere peeked over convent walls in the late 1960s, they saw a world brimming with possibilities for women and ripe for change. No longer would their influence be confined to classrooms or sickbeds. Their lives and ministries could expand to writing and speaking, to administrative and pastoral work, to chaplaincies and spiritual direction.

Then, as American Catholicism moved through the 1970s, the issue of women's ordination as priests came to the fore. In 1976, the CDF issued its "Declaration on the Question of Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood", stating that women's priestly ordination was impossible, markedly leaving aside the question of women as deacons. Soon, committees of the Catholic Theological Society of America and the Catholic Biblical Association found nothing in doctrine or Scripture to eliminate women priests, and the Canon Law Society of America presented an affirmative study on women deacons. Then in 1994, what the CDF had first stated in 1976 was confirmed by John Paul II in the letter "*Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*": "I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women", and that the subject was closed.

As for women Religious, their lives were changing profoundly. Since the 1980s, more women were training as theologians, and women Religious were embarking on nonprofessional theological education and renewal. Ensuing decades saw popular lectures and essays by several women Religious - especially the Benedictine Sr Joan Chittister, and Sr Sandra Schneiders of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary - that argued women need not be relegated to second-class status in Catholicism.

Their ideas found a welcome among apostolic women Religious.

At the same time, post-Vatican II renewal eroded most evidence of monasticism in the lives of the apostolic women Religious, who built US Catholic health-care and education systems. Now, unlike cloistered nuns, these sisters live and work more like the married men in the revived order of deacons, except that their private way of living the Christian life is as celibates in community.

CICLSAL's investigation into the "quality of life" of the 59,000 active sisters belonging to 400 different institutes is headed by American-born Mother Mary Clare Millea. The remit is, according to Sr Eva-Maria Ackerman, a member of the American province of the Sisters of St Francis of the Martyr St George, "to discover and share the vibrancy and purpose that continue to accomplish so much, as well as to understand the obstacles and challenges that inhibit these individuals and institutions, thus limiting their growth and/or redirecting their resources and outreach", as she put it at the announcement of the visitation in January.

Sr Ackerman and Mother Millea have declined to discuss how the visitation is financed, although Mother Millea told the Catholic News Service that the US Conference of Catholic Bishops is not funding the effort.

"Anyone who has contributed has not wanted their name to be publicised," said Mother Millea. "The [Vatican] congregation is conducting the visitation so they're ultimately responsible for financing it. We have a project that is going to last three years. We are welcoming the support of individual dioceses, individuals or groups who would be willing to help defray the expenses."

A canon lawyer and current Superior General of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mother Millea has spent most of her adult life in Rome. She has interviewed women superiors general and will choose specific institutes for on-site visits after

evaluation of their responses to her questionnaire, which is set to arrive soon. One telling question in the working document she shared with women's leadership is: "What is the process of responding to sisters who dissent publicly or privately from the authoritative teaching of the Church?"

Mother Millea is scheduled to send her secret report to CICLSAL's 75-year-old prefect, Slovenian Cardinal Franc Rodé CM by the end of 2010. Meanwhile, the CDF investigation is of the Maryland-based Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), a membership organisation for heads of women's orders and institutes founded in 1956 at Rome's request. The chief investigator is Bishop Leonard Blair of Toledo, Ohio, a 60-year-old patristics scholar and member of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine.

Less is known about the details of Bishop Blair's scrutiny, although it is possible that it will include his examining LCWR position papers and public statements regarding three announced topics: adherence to church teachings on homosexuality, women's ordination, and the centrality of Christ and the Church.

In both cases, the Vatican investigators are likely to learn that US sisters have come a long way since LCWR's first regional conference on "Revitalising Religious Life for the Individual and the Community through Combating the Effects of Naturalism, Lack of Mortification, and Excessive Activity". In fact, LCWR has publicly asked for "full disclosure about the motivations and funding sources for the studies", and objects to the fact that its 1,500 members will not be privy to the reports filed about their institutes.

Meanwhile in Cincinnati, Sr Louise Akers is standing her ground. "For me, it's an issue of justice within the Church," she said last week. "To make a public statement in support of the doctrine would be to go against my conscience, and I can't do that."

Dr Phyllis Zagano is the senior research associate in residence in the Department of Religion at Hofstra University, New York. Her most recent book, with Kevin F. Burke and Eileen Burke-Sullivan, is *The Ignatian Tradition*.

Group Reports

Inverell

Sanctuary Inverell has just sponsored another family from Africa – Gloria and her two brothers, George and Eliya. Bernice kindly met them at the airport and was to transport them to Domestic to catch a plane to Armidale or Moree (Inverell no longer has a plane service.) Then I discovered that it was going to cost us over \$1000 for fares – I spent a small fortune phoning Qantas, trying to reach someone with authority to ask for a reduction on ‘humanitarian grounds’ but the airline folk would not be moved. (Singapore airlines, you have my custom from now on!!!)

So, Bernice to the rescue – not only did she meet the new family at the airport but she took them to her home, gave them a bed overnight and then drove them to Gloucester where I met them and drove them back to Inverell. So Bernice in particular and WATAC in general are now honorary members of Sanctuary Inverell!

Gloria is indeed a ‘valiant woman’ – when she was 15 and away at boarding school, her parents were burnt alive in their home as he was a member of the ‘wrong’ tribe. Three siblings had run off and she doesn’t know even today if they are alive or dead. She found the 3-year-old brother still alive and with another brother (who had been at school at the time of the attack) she managed to escape to Uganda and for 10 years kept them from starving by learning to sew. What a courageous young woman!

The Thursday group continues weekly (it was supposed to be monthly but somehow the women arrive each week). We have a time of chat, a time of reflection, 30 minutes on our own in silence (in the garden, weather permitting) and finally a time of sharing followed by a cuppa. It’s very low-key but seems to suit all who come.

Rosemary Breen

Glebe/Inner City

Our group continues to meet. We have had some winter ill health, plus overseas travel for 2-3 members, so meetings have been rather disrupted for the last three months. Our next meeting will be on the last Monday of October, 26 October, at 7pm, my house in Glebe, discussing chapters 6&7 of Bishop Robinson’s book. We loved the lunch at Parliament House, and found it stimulating and most enjoyable. What a great gathering of talented women we are!

Margaret Cody

Engadine

On the third Monday of each month we happily gather in the home of different members of our group, and what a wonderful few hours we share together. Our last three meetings have been based on discussion of Albert Nolan’s book *Jesus Today – a Spirituality of Radical Freedom*. What an inspiring and challenging book this is; and how nourishing to the spirit is the discussion which emerges every time we get together.

Our October meeting will be on Part Three: “Personal Transformation Today” which looks at “practical steps we need to take in order to live in our day as Jesus lived in his” – sounds challenging!

Some Engadine WATACers and their partners also meet once a month to pray and reflect together. This is always a very precious moment of our WATAC life. People take it in turns to prepare our prayer and there is always a sense of being in tune with the early Church where people gathered in their homes to pray and share. As Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them”.

Alma and Phil Madden’s home is our regular meeting place which provides welcome space and wonderful homemade goodies for morning tea. A not-to-be-missed experience.

Bernice Moore

Penshurst

We usually have most of our group at the Parliament House Luncheon but, this year, due to ‘grandma duties’, holidays etc., only two of us were able to attend. However both Pam and I enjoyed it immensely. The bishop himself was a good reminder of what is best in the Church and the questions and comments by WATACer’s spoke of how Church is at this time for women.

This month we are taking a break from our monthly meeting and having a night out to celebrate Bern’s Birthday. Next month we are commencing Albert Nolan’s new book *Jesus for Today*.

Maureen Hagar

Milton Ulladulla

September found our group scattered far and wide. Anna Flynn in hospital recovering from a successful knee replacement surgery. Bernice travelling up north and Val in Sydney waiting for the birth of a grandchild.

Six of us met at Judi Powe's to look at Chapters Three and Four of *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church*. Margaret Day and Bernice had prepared a synopsis of each chapter.

Chapter Three concerns the handing on of tradition, and over time the development of different understandings of this vital element of our faith.

Chapter Four addresses our understanding of church (a word which is rarely mentioned in the gospels) versus the kingdom of God, or *kindom*, which refers to activity not a place.

Bishop Robinson reaches the conclusion that the sole basis for power or authority in the church is *service*. These chapters Margaret explained form a foundational basis for our understanding of church and the role of church in the world.

We concluded our gathering with a wonderful Liturgy prepared by Bernice, which included a reflection of Franz Cardinal Koenig entitled 'How to Be The Church of Christ'. This concludes with the following stanza:

*A church of those who live on the seamy side of life.
Of those who are crying and mourning.
A church of the worthy, but also the unworthy.
Of saints but also sinners.
A church - not of pious slogans, but of the quiet
helping deeds.
A church of the people.*

Kath Prendergast

Eastern Suburbs

Our monthly meetings have had a variety of venues - in June at Lyn Allen's home, in July at Maureen Brian's, in August at Faye Lawrence's, and in September at Carmel Maguire's. Usual attendance is around 8 or 9 and the Group has grown in strength and confidence under Bernice Moore's incomparable inspiration. In reflecting on Bishop Pat Power's talk at the WATAC luncheon, several of us saw in his recognition of women's contribution to the Church and in writings like those of Geoffrey Robinson and Michael Morwood signs of the beginning of a watershed. Lest we get too excited, we continue a watching brief, through authors like Mary E. Hunt, on the Apostolic Visitation to the Women Religious of the US - an undertaking apparently designed to limit rather than facilitate women's contribution. Through Catholics for Ministry we have had a heads-up on the new English translation of the liturgy and are looking forward to reading Paul Collins's pamphlet 'And also with you'. Stirring times!

Carmel Maguire

Wollongong

Our group has been very remiss this year with reports, so this is a summary of our year. We have continued to meet every fourth Saturday afternoon at Thirroul.

This year we began our sessions with a presentation from our member Elizabeth on Mary MacKillop.

For the rest of the year we have adapted material from Sister Paula Smith rsm workshops on *Women and the Waters of Life*. We are grateful to Sister Paula for making this available to us. Individual members have taken turns to prepare and present the material and Liturgy. We have had sessions on Mrs Noah, Elizabeth (Mary's cousin) Mary and the Marriage Feast of Cana and finally Jesus and the Woman of Samaria. We have enjoyed the theme and had many interesting discussions. This is the first time we have used a theme for the whole year.

In July one of our group went to Vietnam to teach English to the seminarians at one of the Seminaries. We have been receiving fascinating reports from her of her activities there, and look forward to her safe return to us next year.

Jan Ryan

Parramatta

We are still enjoying being together and this year we met at Patricia Mayne's, only about 2- Km from the OLMC Convent, where we usually meet. This year we had a log fire which gave added warmth to an already warm and loving place to be. Interspersed with conversation and wine, we 'fire-watchers' agreed the fire with its changing flickering shapes, its formless patterns, its high and lows of heat became a metaphor about life, and the way we have been shaped by our respective experiences and faith journeys.

Our September meeting was just such a meeting. Maria Maquire's presentation was about 'Taking Down Walls'. Using the Berlin Wall as a *leitmotif* she took us exploring many questions, about walls of fear, control and the attached guilt in the context of dictatorship, then looking and how language and concepts can be used for the purpose of oppression or liberation. She then moved away from the collective to the personal, the walls that we build about us without even recognizing it and why.

Maria encouraged us to 'see' walls that can be dismantled through individuals, committed to Gandhi's wisdom of "*Be the change you want to create in the world*", adding, it is essential to have groups such as this Parramatta WATAC group where people can feel understood and connected.

Patricia Mayne

Broken Bay

Our group first met in October 1988, following the second WATAC Conference held at OLMC, Parramatta. We were convened by Sophie McGrath, but she soon invited me to take over the coordination – hence, our meeting on 27th September was a celebration of our ‘Coming of Age’, our 21st anniversary. Only four of us remain from the original group and we wonder what our lives would have been like without periodic doses of WATAC magic to stimulate our minds, challenge our faith and cement friendships with like-minded women. For this we are eternally grateful to Bernice whose constant support, encouragement, and occasional discipline to keep us focused on what we are on about, help to keep our meetings from developing into a talkfest!

First, Bernice gave us the good news as she guided us through the message of the latest encyclical from Pope Benedict *Caritas in Veritate*. Drawn mainly from Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio*, she pointed out its relevance to our times. It was hopeful and encouraging.

But then came the bad news as we were given some extracts from Paul Collins recent booklet *And Also With You – Is The New English Version of The Mass a Betrayal of Vatican Council II?* (copies included with this issue of *WATAC NEWS*). Paul’s conclusion makes one despair – and yet it is a further challenge for “those of us who are actively committed to Catholicism to make a stand and reject outright this exercise in nostalgia which will make it even more difficult to hand on the faith to coming generations”. How many priests have even studied Latin?

We finished our meeting with a reading of Dorothea McKellar’s poem “I love a Sunburnt Country” which seemed poignantly significant after the extraordinary impact of the recent red dust storm on Sydney and a reminder of our very fragile ecosystem.

Our group – with some friends – took up a whole table at the very enjoyable and inspirational luncheon at Parliament House this year.

Margaret Knowlden



Source: *Women-Church Journal* No 3, 1988
with thanks to Graham English ©

GROUP CONTACTS

BROKEN BAY Group (Upper North Shore): Group meets on a Sunday about every two months starting at 12.30 pm with lunch. Venue: 32 Awatea Road, St Ives Chase. Contact: Margaret Knowlden 02 9449 7275 Email: knowlden@optusnet.com.au

EASTERN SUBURBS Group. This group usually meets on a Sunday 2pm-4.30pm monthly. Meetings dates for the rest of the year are 26th October, 30th November. Venue: 8 Dudley Street, Randwick. Contact: Carmel Maguire 02 9398 1004 Email: c.maguire@unsw.edu.au

ENGADINE Group meets on the third Monday of the month in a member’s home at 7.30pm. Contact: Margaret Keyes: 02 9520 4240 Email: keyes888@bigpond.com Engadine group members also meet every 2nd Sunday of the month at 10am for Prayer and Reflection: for more information contact Alma Madden 02 9520 8684 Email: admin@watac.net

INNER CITY Group meets at 62 Boyce St, Glebe at 7pm on third Monday of each month. Contact: Margaret Cody 02 9692 9384 Mobile: 0419 426 174 Email: margaret.cody1@bigpond.com

LISMORE HEIGHTS Group meets 1st Tuesday of each month for coffee & spiritual nourishment at ‘La Baracca Coffee Shop’ 29 Keen Street, Lismore. Contact: Mary Bruggy 02 6624 6530 Email: marytbruggy@optusnet.com.au

MANLY Group usually meet on the second Saturday of the month at 2pm at 2/36 Upper Fairfax Road, Mosman. Contact: Camille Paul 02 9969 2125 Email: camken@bigpond.com

MILTON/ULLADULLA Group usually have meetings on Saturday from 10 - 4. The last dates for 2009 are 11th October, 22nd November. Venue: Varies each meeting. For further information 02 4456 4445 Email: powe@zip.com.au

MOUNT CLAREMONT (W.A.) Contact: Margaret Finlay (08) 9384 9114 Email: finlaymarg@hotmail.com

PARRAMATTA Group meets on the last Monday of the month from Feb to November at the Convent Parramatta from 7.30 – 9.30. Contact: Margaret Hinchey 02 9890 7903 Email mhinchey@lifequestoz.net

PENSHURST Group meets at 7.30 on the fourth Monday of every month at 5/30-32 Grove Avenue, Narwee. Contact: Bernice Moore Email: bernice@watac.net or Maureen Hager 02 9580 5384: maureen_hager@optusnet.com.au

WAGGA WAGGA Group meet at Wagga Wagga on the first Monday of the month at 7.30pm at Ros Bennett’s, 14 Tarakan Avenue. Contact: Rosslyn Bennett. Email rosbennett@ozemail.com.au

WOLLONGONG Group meets on the 4th Saturday of every month February to November at Thirroul, 2pm - 4.30pm. Contact: Jan Ryan 02 4268 5965 Email: jjryan@iprimus.com.au or Mary Medley mbmedley@bigpond.net.au

YOUNG: This Group has recently started. For information contact Pat Cudmore 02 6383 3205 Email: pat.cudmore@cg.catholic.org.au or Kerry Ray 02 6382 5460

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

WATAC regularly organises for school students to have an interfaith dialogue with women from different faith traditions. Members of WATAC are also invited to join us.

We are currently planning our next

Interfaith Dialogue

Tuesday 17th November 2009 - 12 noon to 3pm

(Light refreshments will be served from midday)

Venue: The Theatrette at Parliament House, Sydney

Women, Religion and Peace

Speakers (yet to be advised) will explore, from the viewpoint of their faith traditions, the concept of Peace; both personal and its challenges at a global level. Following this there will be an interactive dialogue between the speakers and the students.

BOOKINGS

ESSENTIAL BEFORE FRIDAY, 6th November 2009

For further details contact WATAC:

Helen Coles Phone/Fax: (02)9520 9409

Email: helen@watac.net

COST: \$20 per person - Payment on the day at venue

If you wish to attend the symposium, please complete this form and return to Helen Coles:

Fax: (02)9520 9409

or post to WATAC, 37/121 Anzac Avenue, Engadine NSW 2233

or email relevant details to helen@watac.net

Contact Person: _____

Ph: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

No. of people attending: _____

Ideas in Passing – Joan Chittister

Seduced by the Good

It is so easy to be seduced, even by the good. But once it happens we stand to lose the very gain the finding of the good should have given us.

We find a prayer form that satisfies, even uplifts our spirits, often brings us to a new level of awareness and enlightenment. Everything is going well until the prayer form itself becomes our God.

If I can't pray every day in this pew at this time, the day is disturbed.

If I can't sing this hymn on this feast in this place, the feast has failed me.

If someone changes the translation of the "Our Father," I can't concentrate on it.

Is someone uses universal language for God rather than male pronouns, I get angry.

If there are no candles, no incense, no flowers and bright clothes and robes, it can't possibly be real prayer.

Though those things are all good, all important at some time in some circumstances, none of them is a worthy substitute for God. In fact, the very fact of needing to have them – at whatever cost to anyone else – may be the real sign of how little we've learned about God while doing them.

Just as we change as we go through life, so must our prayer forms change in order to nourish the new growth the last phase of our spiritual journey planted in us.

When we stop in the course of the spiritual journey declaring that we have already achieved the end of our search – that we have found the God for whom we seek – it is doubtful that we have found anything more than our own comfort, our own will, the god we have made for ourselves out of our own image. And that is a puny God indeed.

Once we begin a real spiritual journey we will be led from prayer point to prayer point, deeper and deeper into the Mystery that is God. We will be expected to let go so that God can lead us now. And that path has no end.

from *The Breath of the Soul: Reflections on Prayer* by Joan Chittister
(Twenty-Third Publications)

A COMMENT: Do read this piece keeping in mind the following article 'And Also With You' (p.21) about Paul Collin's booklet which is mailed to you with this Newsletter. And do take time to reflect on the present attempt from Rome to take us back to a 1950's understanding of prayer, worship and our God. Then please fill in and return our mini survey.

“And Also With You” – Paul Collins

Included with the Newsletter is a booklet published by Catholics for Ministry and written by Paul Collins. This is a very thoughtful analysis of the proposed new English translation of the Mass which is designed to be imposed on English-speaking countries later this year or early next year – this is if we, the people, accept it. The key question that faces us all is contained in the subtitle of Paul Collins article “Is the new English version of the Mass a betrayal of Vatican Council II?”

It is essential that, first of all, we know what it is about and secondly that We, the People who ARE the Church, as defined by Vatican Council II, find our voice and refuse to allow the Vatican Council to be rolled back through the undue influence of a tiny minority of fundamentalists who are very vocal and overly influential in the institutional Church today.

WATAC Follow-Up Action

If you want WATAC to respond to these impending changes in the Mass we will need an indication of how you feel.

Are you comfortable / happy with the outline of the proposed changes?

Yes No

Why do you agree or disagree? _____

If you are not happy do you want WATAC to speak out?

Yes No

What one or two issues do you most care about?

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Feel free to write more on a separate sheet of paper.

PLEASE RETURN ASAP to Bernice Moore, 5/30 Grove Avenue, Narwee 2209 or email your responses to bernice@watac.net

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