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From the Editor

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From the editor

By Angela McCarthy

Welcome to Year A!

This issue brings with it good news and bad news. The good news is that in this issue there is very good material that challenges us to consider the 60th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and how it has been implemented so far. The bad news is that this might be the last issue of *Pastoral Liturgy*. The good news though, is that we are negotiating a new home for this journal as it has held its place as a valued resource for the liturgical needs of Australia. Let us pray that we find a new home that will support our work. The first issue of this journal was produced in 1970 to assist parishes with the resources needed for the Mass in English and the new participatory way in which the liturgy functioned following the promulgation of the new Missal. It has been an uninterrupted source of material until this issue. We are grateful to the University of Notre Dame Australia who have sponsored this journal since 2014 and previously supported the founding editor, Rev Dr Russell Hardiman.

In these uncertain times we were graced with certainty at the end of the long reign of Queen Elizabeth II and the beginning of the reign of King Charles III. Queen Elizabeth was mourned deeply by millions of people because she was a strong symbol of certainty in uncertain times. The celebration of her life, faith and death was wreathed in symbols that were rich and ancient. Symbols that brought us to connect with a reality that is much deeper than the ordinariness of the present. There was no uncertainty about who would grace the throne as the accession was immediate. Such certainty provides strength in a time that is fraught with political and economic change, war, famine and pandemics.

On 11 October 1962 the Second Vatican Council was opened by Pope John XXIII. The Council heralded in changes that made things uncertain and painful for some Catholics while others rejoiced in the way in which the Church embraced the signs of the times and threw open the windows so that we could see out and the rest of the world could see in (to paraphrase Pope John XXIII).

We have a lengthy article from Professor Emeritus Thomas O'Loughlin celebrating and challenging the way in which we have received Vatican II and what we are called to do now, in the present, to bring the implementation of the vision of the Council as a 'whole Church fulfilling its vocation of being the community that is called into existence "to offer worship in Spirit and truth" to the Father through the Christ (O'Loughlin). To have our Church community evolve to see the full implementation of the vision laid down in 1962 means that we have continue the renewal with strength and hope.

As a way of reflecting on Vatican II, Chris Kan chose three books from his bookshelf that speak about liturgical renewal from different decades. Bernard Botte OSB (1988), Dennis Smolarski (1995) and Kevin Irwin (2013) are the authors that he chose and they become the vehicle for his reflections on his hopes and dreams of liturgical renewal. Those who were not liturgically functioning before and after Vatican II would not remember the delight that came from the new Lectionary where such a rich variety of texts were now made available for a three year cycle of biblical richness. The newness, the energy, the excitement was life giving. Nearly a decade later the excitement had waned and the energy needed to be

directed into doing the new rites well and bringing communities to life and participation in the fullest sense. The way in which we celebrate liturgy has changed over time and will continue to do so but the heart of what we celebrate remains the same: the Paschal Mystery.

The third book Chris chose was from Kevin Irwin in 2013 and was looking at the reform of the reform. In Benedict XVI's papacy, the Tridentine Mass and new English Missal emerged and became a reform of the reform. Now we are questioning it all again but the questions we ask are important and the effect of the participation in the rites must be seen in the life we live.

Gerard Moore offers further reflection on what has happened since Vatican II. His first section about voice is very interesting. All of the rites are formed from the experience of people in the past. As a liturgical historian, Moore is asking whose voice is it that becomes our voice in liturgy. As he recalls, we still pray Collects that were written fifteen centuries ago. The experts who guided the conciliar reform were all experts in ancient texts. Moore insists that the only texts that should remain unchanged are the scriptures. All the other rites and rituals 'have no particular right to remain in use or unmodified'. This is a challenging and interesting point of view. Some have held texts other than scripture to be so sacred that they cannot be changed but this is not the reality. The sacredness does not come from a particular way of translating Latin. The sacredness is God's work. Moore also calls to mind that all of these texts were written by male clerics and almost always led by male clerics. This is not sufficient in this time for the People of God. Moore goes on to question many other aspects of our rich liturgical history. The original editor of this journal, Rev Dr Russell Hardiman, would always turn his students (me included) to history when difficulties arose in the present. If we know where it came from, we can think more intelligently about it in the present.

Mary-Anne Lumley offers further consideration of Vatican II and quotes Lawrence Shehan who refers to the saying 'The king is dead; long live the King'. After the change of monarch in the United Kingdom in recent months that is fresh in our minds. Shehan says we could say 'The Council is over; the Council has just begun'. The last 60 years have seen such wondrous developments but we have to keep working so that the rites continue to nurture us and enable us to bring Christ to the world.

Lumley also refers to a millennial's question: Vatican II was 60 years ago, why are you still talking about it? A very interesting question to reflect upon. Was Vatican II just a thing of the past or was it just the 'beginning of the beginning' as Karl Rahner was recorded as saying? *Aggiornamento* is still real and alive when we allow the Spirit to work in us.

The article by Michael Mangan is very practical about the way in which pastoral musicians need to understand their role during the Communion hymn. He gives a very good account of the symbolic relationship that the Communion hymn has between the priest's communion and that of the gathered assembly. He uses the analogy of musicians at a wedding – do they eat first? In my experience there are very few parishes who do what is asked by the Roman Missal rubrics, that the musicians receive Communion last. When we get the symbols right then we can live with them in a much deeper sense and the symbols themselves lead us to a much richer understanding of what we are doing.

In Pope Francis Apostolic letter from last June, *Desiderio Desideravi*, he talks about the Last Supper. 'No one had earned a place at that Supper. All had been invited' (DD, 4). That same Supper is made present every time we celebrate it and will continue until he comes again. If we really understand the importance of what we are doing, being formed as the Body of Christ through the action of the Eucharist, we will not be worried about our place or who we

are but we will be much more engaged in the reality of what we participate in. This is where we encounter Christ in what we eat and drink, in what we say and hear, and in what we become alongside each other. This Apostolic letter deserves a great deal of attention by all who are involved in pastoral liturgy.

There are two offerings about the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia. The first is the diary that I wrote each day of the Council. My intention was to have a fresh and heartfelt account of the experience. If left to write a reflection after I returned home it would not have the same effect and the memories of the first day would be coloured by the events of the week. It was a strong experience of synodality, unlike anything I have experienced before. Having worked in different capacities in the Church for all my adult life this was the pinnacle of my experience of being Church, the People of God. The second offering is a report on the action of the Council and particularly the decree on Liturgy. My experience has left me full of hope for the future.

There are three books reviewed, a new book by Fr Tom Ryan SM who is a regular contributor to this journal, on conscience reviewed by moral theologian, Fr Peter Black. Black offers a very good overview not just of conscience but how we have explained and approached an understanding of conscience in the past. This new book takes seriously the call of Vatican II to make sacred Scripture the heart and soul of moral theology and hence our understanding of the role and development of conscience. Black notes that Pope Francis comes from a Catholic moral tradition of patience and mercy. This approach to conscience has not always been prominent in our history. Conscience is about our struggle but at the heart of it is a person made in the image of God who is called to be responsible.

Joe Grayland's book about the COVID-19 experience of liturgical lockdown in New Zealand is very challenging and is well balanced and based on research carried out during and after the lockdown. There are many things that were rushed into the digital world that should not have happened and Grayland examines these issues very carefully.

The edited book, *The Synodal Pathway*, comes out of Ireland and is well worth reading. Pope Francis is pulling us along through this synodal experience and what I experienced at the second assembly of the Plenary Council taught me what synodality looks like, tastes like, sounds like, prays like, and feels like. It is good. The contributors to this exploration of synodality are esteemed writers and liturgists.

This issue offers Advent resources and I pray that the new liturgical year will bring fresh energy to bring the vision of Vatican II closer to our reality. We have a new writer contributing the Advent readings, Angela Marquis, and her reflections are well worth reading. The Christmas and Ordinary Time resources are all there for you to use to the betterment of your liturgical experience.

Much prayer is needed as we continue the Plenary Council process and the journey of the Synod on Synodality. Let us pray for our whole Church that we may come closer to the full realisation of the vision of the Second Vatican Council that began 60 years ago.

Peace to you all

Dr Angela McCarthy