

# What's to be Done?

## The Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the context of Evangelization

These proposals complete the last five *Handouts* nn. 119–123.

### PRE-AMBLE

#### DAMAGE OCCASIONED by the 2014 SYNOD

Even before the 2014 Synod, and more so since, some good laity felt abandoned and confused, in a re-run of the 1960s. Back then, it was over contraception. *Humanae Vitae* came too late. But now, it is also about giving Communion to remarried divorcees and sodomists. Reputedly autonomous consciences easily reduce doctrine and morals to relativism — and defy them with impunity.

"[If] I have not charity, I am sounding brass..." (1 Corinthians 13:1 KJV). It is not charitable to let the faithful be confused. Restaurants do not allow diners into the kitchen; likewise arguments of prelates and experts over morals are unsavoury for sinners battling to preserve virtue. Even our Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference is held in camera, with a laundered report released months later.

VC II was meant to "guard and teach the Sacred Deposit of Christian Doctrine":

The greatest concern of VC II is that the Sacred Deposit of Christian Doctrine be **guarded and taught** more efficaciously. St John XXIII opening VCII, 11-10-1962, and St John Paul, 11-10-1992, in the CCC pp. 1,2; cf. 1 Timothy 6:20.

### 1. PRO-CHILD

- Today's society is anti-child, anti-family, anti-marriage: "a people who err in their hearts" (Psalm 94).
- Sexual love is for marriage alone. And marriage has primary and second ends, both essential:-
- The primary and **biologically obvious purpose** of sexual intercourse is for conceiving children.
- The secondary and the **motivational purpose** of the sexual embrace is for self-giving love.
- Christ gave us Matrimony for the sake of others: i.e. for the sake of the other spouse and for children, and only after that for self (CCC n. 1534). Large families are God blessing generosity (CCC n. 2373; *Humanae Vitae* n. 10): Have another child!
- Today, our laws are becoming less civilized than Hammurabi's. He upheld six of the Ten Commandments from natural law, though in a motley mix with civil edicts and laced with penalties so draconian as to make Leviticus read like a toddler's tale. But we are counter-cultural!

See *Resources for Action REPORT* in the Newsletter of the NSW Branches of the National Civic Council and the Australian Family Association.

### 2. LITURGY NEEDS RE-SACRALIZATION

- Vernacular and intellection are not enough: God deserves, and priests and lay faithful need, to experience Wonder and Awe in God's presence:

It is evident that the liturgy must favour the sense of

the sacred and make it shine forth. It must be permeated by a spirit of reverence, adoration and the glory of God. *Final Report*, 1985, II B (b) 1

- Males are images of Christ the Bridegroom, and we need priestly vocations, so de-feminize the sanctuary.
- For girls, start a new vested Children of Mary, to minister in nave, porch, choir, sacristy.
- Extend the Eucharistic fast from "at least one hour" (CCL 919 §1) by recommending a three hour fast.
- Foster the Sacrament of Penance (*poenitentia*, penitence); teach confession of sins to a priest.
- Replace minimum option of CCL n. 1253 with CCL n. 1251's abstinence from meat, as in UK.

### 3. FAMILY CATECHETICS

- **Home tutoring in Christian doctrine**, plus apologetics for older children, fosters faith and piety, whereas most Catholic schools fail to graduate practising Catholics — even after 13 years schooling.
- **Confused doctrine and morals** from pulpits, schools and seminaries have caused or occasioned the **crisis in chastity** in marriage, priesthood, Religious life, and the paucity of vocations.
- Religious instruction in schools usually omits vital **memorization**, despite *Catechesi Tradendæ* n. 55.
- **Books/CDs/DVDs** on Bible, doctrine & saints abound for a tutoring mother, father or older sibling.
- *Catholic Family Catechism Apostles' Edition* (500 Q&As) and *Disciples' Edition* (50 Q&A) are specifically designed for family catechetics for **mind and memory**.

See *Handouts* (unnumbered) *Vera Doctrina — True Doctrine*

### 4. HOME SCHOOLING

- Home schooling **graduates** keep the faith, marry in the church and bring up their children in the faith.
- Some even become teachers in Catholic schools and help restore other teachers and pupils to fidelity.
- Home schooling **socializes a child** with all age groups, not just peers, and bonds a family in charity.
- **Academic results** are nearly always better than schools, and no one graduates to the dole.
- **Home schooling deserves strong Synod endorsement**

Submission by Father James Tierney on *Home Schooling* to the Legislative Council of the Parliament of NSW on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2014, is available on request via phone recorder on 02 4829 0297

For more on Homeschooling, look up *Handouts* nn. 112 and 115 on the internet or ask for copies.

Note that *Handouts* nn. 119 through to 124 p. 1 were originally prepared in February for the 2015 October Synod on the Family, and sent to selected bishops and laity as a 12 page folder which included four appendices (available on request).

# GROWING OR Shrinking in VIRTUES ?

**“While I live, I grow” — while I’m growing in virtues, I’ll live in God’s grace**

## PREPARING for MATRIMONY or PRIESTHOOD

Preparing for ordination to the priesthood usually takes seven years full-time formation. Even before entering the seminary, there is usually two or three years of discernment. Perhaps 10 years in all!

Preparing for matrimony lacks the same intensity — though “Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of the greatness of his love” — Genesis 29:20.

Even when matrimony is carefully prepared for, it might collapse when “for better or for worse” turns out for worse. But before that, one or both spouses **ceased growing** in virtues and started to shrink.

Nor do men always persevere in the priesthood: Satan beats down their spiritual zeal. They cease growing and start shrinking into self and selfishness.

## GROWING IN VIRTUES IS ESSENTIAL

**T**HE Christian Vocation is always to keep growing closer to God, in sanctifying grace and in all the virtues for one’s state in life.

Now virtues are good habits, naturally acquired or infused with sanctifying grace.

Habits need continuous exercise. Without exercise, they shrink or even wither away: “Use it or lose it!”

The specific *Christian virtues* are **faith** and **hope** and **charity** — 1 Corinthians 13:13.

These are enhanced by three of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit — **understanding** and **holy fear** (wonder & awe in God’s Presence) and **wisdom**, respectively.

The *natural virtues* are **prudence** and **justice** and **fortitude** and **temperance** — Wisdom 8:7.

They are given supernatural enhancement by four of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit: **counsel** (right judgement) and **piety** (reverence) and **fortitude** (courage) and **knowledge**, respectively.

The other intellectual and moral virtues are facets of these cardinal virtues (‘cardinal’ = pivot, hinge).

Discovers one’s vocation from God by growing in virtue. It is also the secret of persevering in it.

Hence the necessity of **morning and night prayers**.

Hence the need for devoutly prepared self-offering at **Mass**, and careful preparation for **Holy Communion**.

Hence the need for the **Sacrament of Penance** also called Confession, Penitence and Reconciliation.

Hence the self-restraint of **Friday Penance** and **custody of one’s thoughts, words and deeds**.

Hence **working for God** in a state of espousal, single, married or priest, in the Works of Mercy.

The days, the weeks, the months pass by: nothing remains but God and what we have done for Him.

## HELPING OTHERS GROW

**P**ARENTS, priests or other teachers — some of the prospective vocations, are for helping others (cf. CCC n. 1534) and all need growth in their virtues.

As teachers of religion and virtue to others, we teach first by example, then by words in season.

**Family catechetics** builds on an upbringing at home in manners and morals, directed to God and man.

**Parish catechetics** hands on the revelation of God through the priestly ministry and lay groups.

**School catechetics** also hands on the revelation of God by teachers dedicated to their apostolate.

## FACE THE FACTS

For ninety years, Religious Orders ran the Catholic schools in Australia with the clear-cut aim of graduating practising Catholics.

- Over the last 40 years, lay **teachers** and management in our schools have often lacked the old convictions and therefore failed to achieve them.
- Similarly, the **pupils** in our schools are often or even mostly non-practising Catholics or non-Catholics — and they stay that way.
- Their families are often lapsed or lazy Catholics or non-Catholic or non-Christian.
- Consequently, our school graduates are mostly non-practising and even non-believing.
- Even when their parents are practising, spiritual weaknesses of the peers and teachers can kill off faith and its practice. Worldliness is their False Prophet (cf. *Handouts* n. 120 p. 1; n. 122 p. 2).

## NO ONE GIVES WHAT HE HAS NOT GOT

What is missing is that **zeal for the lay apostolate** required by the Second Vatican Council. Despite educational qualifications, religious formation in piety and spirituality is all too often absent.

Compounding the situation is **false theology** and **false philosophy** sometimes taught in Catholic institutions offering formation to religion teachers. (cf. *Handouts* n. 89, *Pandora’s Catechetics*).

## REASONS FOR HOPE

*What makes a Catholic school Catholic?*

**Practising Catholics make a school Catholic.**

- Schools set-up by laity insist all teachers practise.
- Catholic homeschoolers set an example of success.
- Ex-homeschoolers shine out if later sent to school.
- Some schools have student apostolates to others.
- Some Bishops are vigorously inaugurating reforms.
- Many priests are taking catechetics more seriously.

Father James Tierney

20<sup>th</sup> August, 2015