

Sundry Snippets

from the Daily Log Book of Ideas

General Councils

GENERAL COUNCILS are summoned by the Pope to assemble all the bishops who are in union with him. Thus they are called **ecumenical councils**, of those in "one house¹" with the Pope. Dissident Separated Brethren were invited to Trent (1545-1563), not as equals but for dialogue, while various groups were invited to Vatican II (1962-1965) as observers.

Recklessness

Since the Second Vatican Council there have been devout Catholics who wanted to change everything, while others react and wanted everything left just as it was.

Trendies crave for the seeming security of any change with which they feel more comfortable, and are guided by the World, human respect and Political Correctness.

Antiquaries crave for the seeming security of an alleged golden age further back in history, unalterable since it is past tense. Alas, they too had problems...

These extremes are reckless and ruthless. Reckless means rash, brash, hasty, irresponsible. If the Devil can't get good people to become atheists or agnostics, he busies himself encouraging discord, especially protests against Papal teaching and the Church's authentic Tradition. Nor is old saying applicable, "Virtue stands in the middle," *virtus in medio stat*, since there is 50% less virtue in being 50% right (and 50% wrong) than there is in being 100% right. **TRUTH** is **not a middle way** between extremes. **NO!** Truth stands **above** all errors.

Erroneous rejection of VCH

General Councils have, as a matter of historical fact (see *Handouts* n. 40), been called to:-

1. **DEFINE** doctrines more precisely against current errors; e.g. the Council of Trent, 1545-1563;
2. **SYNTHESIZE** earlier teaching to increase understanding; e.g. First Vatican Council, 1870;
3. **APPLY** revealed teaching to current problems/errors; e.g. Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965. Blessed John XXIII summoned it for a **pastoral application of doctrine**: "The greatest concern of the Second Vatican Council is that the Sacred Deposit of Christian **Doctrine should be guarded and taught** more efficaciously." (Introductory speech, see Abbott p. 713.) Clearly, it is not yet implemented in Australia!

To assert that VCII was invalid "because it was only pastoral" is based on a false major premise, that a council can only be called to quash a heresy. Actually VCII was pastoral by its application of traditional doctrine to the post-War Church, but the Devil found openings in false enthusiasms — so beware of pride.

Dissidents pick more holes in VCII than atheists do in the Bible. No document is interpretation proof!

It is like saying God could/should not have created man because man so quickly made a mess of it!

Gifts of the Tongue

THE GIFTS of the TONGUE are mightier than the **GIFT of TONGUES**. **St Paul** put the Gift of Tongues in perspective in 1 Corinthians 12:28-31:-

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal...

He continues in 13:1 with his praise of the supreme gift of charity. It includes "tongue-virtues" which all can exercise supremely well and effectively. Thus the Gift of Tongues is less than the Gifts of the Tongue.

St James is persuasive with vivid examples: -

Let every man be **quick to hear, slow to speak**, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not work the justice of God. **James 1:1-20**

Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. **(James 1:21)**

If anyone thinks he is religious, and does not **bridle his tongue** but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain.

James 1:26

The perfect man is able to bridle the whole body...

we put **bits** into the mouths of horses...

ships... are guided by a very small **rudder**...

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! So the tongue is a little member... and **the tongue is a fire**.

James 3:1-6, then continue from 7-12

St Peter warns:-

He that would love life and see good days, let him **keep his tongue from evil** and his lips from speaking guile.

1 Peter 3:10

Finally, **Our Lord** said:-

For **by your words you will be** justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

Matthew 12:37

A motto: "**Speech is silvern, silence is golden.**"

THE NEW BARBARISM

THE great powers of the human spirit make it possible for man to appreciate and reverence: **GOD, GOODNESS, BEAUTY and TRUTH**.

Without them, or when they are denied or just forgotten, man quickly lapses into **barbarism**. Thus the **relativism** of the present age is the sign of a dying civilization. Just consider how the political correctness of the media, academe, schools, parliament and public service, impose on all of us a default setting of what we must do and say and think, a newly established anti-religion for the English-speaking world.

IT IS FALSE that God, traditional religion and morality are mere private opinions to be silenced or actively destroyed; or that **goodness** only exists in the minds of the politically correct, and that the real evils in the world are sexism, racism, religion and any alleged "phobias"; or **beauty** merely in the eye of the beholder; or **truth** a consensus of modern scientists — as long as they are atheists. **All these are FALSEHOODS!**

IS THE CURSOR KILLING CURSIVE?

CURSIVE handwriting is fast becoming a lost art. For many years, schools have failed to drill "running writing" into a habit in Year 3 Primary. Thirteen years of schooling can leave pupils unable to do more than print, and some scarcely that, who even sign their names with an X. Soon they might not be able to read handwriting at all. (But hurrah for the salutary humiliation when one cannot read one's own!)

Instead, their **cursors scurries across the flat screen** (backed by a jab or two on the keyboards) instead of a pen or pencil running across the pages — ironically, both cursor and cursive mean running.

Yes, the cursor is quicker and it takes less effort. But **you don't get something for nothing**: consider:-

- **"Crimes" against** spelling, grammar, syntax, meaning, expression and style.
- **"Modified cursive"** is a government imposed fraud with **"missing links"** between several letters that could link up but do not; it **lacks loops** which make for intelligibility (just as serifs do in typefaces). See *Handouts n. 42, Copy Book Maxims & Handwriting*.
- **Compulsory Computers** in schools, from K-12, with one on every desk for school Years 9-12, guaranteed to **enslave the pupils to technology**. The computer is no **longer a tool** but a **distracting toy** for playing games and a **temptation to indulge in pornography**, to while away the tedium of the teacher's strenuous efforts, that their minds might meet his mind through speaking and hearing and thus hold their attention.

HELPING PEOPLE

HERE ARE 10 P-words for some of the honourable Professions at the service of People.

- Parents come first as the most vital and difficult vocation. All else depends on fathers and mothers. Too often they are taken for granted or blamed for everything that goes wrong.
- I put Priests next, because I am one, and because a priest is a spiritual parent, a father begetting the God-life in souls. Moreover, he is spiritually married to the Church, like Christ the Bridegroom and High Priest.
- After them we can put Prelates and Pedagogues, which are fancy P-words for bishops and teachers.
- Practitioners of healing is generic for doctors, nurses and the whole galaxy of related professions. (True, Physician is a P-word but doesn't sound like it.)
- Police and Politicians are often unpopular, yet they save us from anarchy, and gratitude is appropriate.
- Public Servants at all three tiers of government
- Publishers and Publicans round off a list of ten.

All these callings deal with **People**, and even good people present **Problems** because of the original revolt in the **Paradise** of Pleasure where our first parents had a brief lapse into God-deniers and by it made permanent problems for the future.

What is more, those in these ten problem-fixing Professions (and many more unlisted) themselves labour under the problems they must fix - so helping, healing, encouraging and forgiving are more profitable responses than blaming for the absence of good which should be there.

INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS FAMILY

Modern **individualism** leaves humanity impoverished. Alas, governments legislate in favour of it rather than of marriage and family, and so are wrecking both.

The truth is that marriage means the **complementarity of the sexes** and family implies **subsidiarity and solidarity**.

TOOLS, TOYS OR TEMPTATIONS?

TOO much time on a COMPUTER is addictive, and damages spiritual, social, mental and bodily health.

First, a parable: a young man was urged to check his sugar intake. Into a large bowl he spooned the quantities of sugar he expected to consume in 24 hours: 20 teaspoonfuls for tea and coffee, 5 more for breakfast cereal, at least 10 in fruit salads, cakes etc. He was deeply shocked: his daily intake was at least 3 cupfuls!

Second, for many years, surveys found that children were mesmerized on the TV for over 3 hours a day, every day of the year. And some even 5 hours! From the viewpoint of wasted time, think how much exercise, social interaction, profitable reading, is lost.

Likewise we might measure computer addiction by the **time** spent on it: self-evaluate with a watch, and tabulate daily time (some items overlap) spent on:-

- eating, sleeping, washing;
- work outside home, home-making, chores or school;
- travelling time;
- soul exercise - prayer, spiritual/Bible reading;
- mental exercise - serious reading, conversation;
- body exercise - manual work, sport;
- time with others versus time alone;
- social work helping others, at home and beyond;
- social contact: time with others face-to-face;
- computer virtual reality versus time with real people;
- social contact: phone, letter, email, texting etc;
- stranger-danger, bad company, in lounge room, bedroom offering "entertainment": TV, DVD, VCR, CD, radio.

STRANGER-DANGER and BAD COMPANY

CAN a family live without TV and internet? Can a family keep its virtue with them? Could it manage on good DVDs and old VCRs?

If not, how do parents protect themselves from the **commercialism of blatant worldliness**? How can they protect themselves from **soft and hard porn**?

How can parents help adolescents to avoid porn and worldliness? What is to be done about TVs and VDUs in lounge rooms and bedrooms, and mobile phones in cars, classrooms and everywhere?

Blessed John Henry Newman declared that the world (as in the "World, the Flesh and the Devil", cf. I John 2:16) was the agent of Satan, the Beast and its Image, i.e. the False Prophet of Apocalypse 19:20.

Even if the home is kept pure, what about the temptations visiting friends and workplaces?

How is Our Lord's order, "pluck it out, cut it off, Matthew 5:29; 18:9, to be applied to the modern electronic **stranger-danger** and **bad company**?

How can moral strengths be built up during the latency period, before puberty and adolescence? What **spiritual exercises** could be intensified? What of prayer and fasting? (cf. Mark 9:29)

Is it hypocritical to appear better than you are? After all, people with sundry "vices" might not be "paying tribute to virtue" (the old definition of hypocrite), but really striving, trying hard to do better.

Father James Tierney