

## Vocations to the Priesthood

A **VOCATION** to the priesthood is a call by Christ via a bishop and his appointed priests:-

**Come, follow Me.** Matthew 16:24; Luke 18:22

**I have made you fishers of men.** Matthew 4:19

**Receive the Holy Spirit.**

**Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven.**

**Whose sins you retain they are retained.** John 20:22,23

**Do this in memory of Me.** 1 Corinthians 11:24,25.

**Herein vocations refers mainly to the priesthood** and not so much to marriage or the Religious Life.

A popular slogan at Vatican II was *Ecclesia semper reformanda*, "the Church is always in need of reform". In spite of Vatican II, it is unfortunately more true today than before it, with the priesthood, and also marriage and Religious Life, all badly mauled by Satan.

### SATAN

**Our Problem is the Devil.** He tries to spoil anything good, out of ill-will, trying all the time to spite God. **But the Lord Jesus has conquered the Devil** — by His Threefold Temptation in the Wilderness, in the Agony and Passion and Crucifixion and Resurrection, in His Ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus never ceases to conquer the Devil through His Church, through His grace, through His Sacraments. Our part is ACTIVE PARTICIPATION in His conquest.

### THE ANSWER IS, CATHOLICISM

A shortage of priestly vocations, and in Religious Life and fruitful matrimony, cries out for reforms in:-

#### 1. CATECHETICS

Texts quoted are from *A Catechism About Catechisms* (Handouts n. 1)

Blessed John XXIII said **"the greatest concern of the Second Vatican Council is that the Sacred Deposit of Christian Doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously."**

Opening Speech, 11-11-62, *Documents*, Abbott p. 713; cf. CCCp. 2.

**This has not happened:** catechetics has got worse, and Vatican IIs "greatest concern" has been thwarted.

At the 1985 Extraordinary Synod the Bishops said, *inter alia*, there had been **"a defective understanding and application of the Second Vatican Council."**

The 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops evaluated the Church 20 years after Vatican II. The St Paul Edition of its *Final Report* (FR p. 19) was translated misleadingly as "an incomplete understanding and lack of application..." as though all that was needed was "more of the same", whereas we have translated accurately the Latin text *defectuoso intellectu et applicatione*.

At the 1985 Extraordinary Synod, the Bishops said that "everywhere in the world today

**the transmission to the young of the faith and moral values deriving from the Gospel is in peril.**

The knowledge of the faith and the acceptance of the moral order are often reduced to a minimum." FR p. 31.

At the 1985 Extraordinary Synod, the Bishops said that there was required "a new effort in evangelization and **an integral and systematic catechesis**, and the provision of a catechism or compendium of all Catholic doctrine, both faith & morals." FR pp. 31,33.

Fulfilled in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 1992.

**Catechisms** went out of fashion because it was said that God's Revelation of Himself and His Plan could not be expressed in doctrinal formulas, and that teaching doctrine was irrelevant to religious behaviour.

Also, some doctrines were rejected as no longer relevant to life or even true, or as simply unsuitable for children.

CCC §22: "teaching in condensed formulae"; cf. *Catechesis in our Time* 1979 [CT] §22. Also there are philosophies that reject objective truth.

**Memorization** went out of fashion because the human memory, a vital aspect of God's Creation, was ignored, held in contempt, or declared out-of-date and in opposition to understanding.

Its use would have implied that objective truth could be known, taught, understood and remembered.

Pope John Paul II asked Bishops to **"prepare genuine catechisms, faithful to the essential content of Revelation and up to date in method and capable of educating future Christian generations to a sturdy faith."** CT §50.

The Rite of Baptism says that **"parents should be provided with catechisms written for families."**

*Rite of Baptism for Children*, 1971, pp. 10-11.

Pope John Paul II said the Synod of Bishops desired "a suitable *catechism for families* [italics in original]... clear, brief and easily assimilated by all."

*Christian Family in the Modern World* §39.

The IN BRIEF summaries may suggest to local catechists **brief summary formulas that could be memorized.**

CCC§22: fulfilled in Australia in the *Catholic Family Catechism* [CFC]

Pope John Paul II said that

**"the blossoms of faith and piety do not grow in the desert places of a memory-less catechesis."** CT §55.

In Australia, a memory-less catechesis has been commonplace for many year.

cf. the intense organized opposition to discredit the CFC since 1981.

#### 2. CONFESSION

The spiritual life of all in the Church requires conscious faith in the existence of several spiritual realities, especially awareness of God, sin, grace, angels, saints, devils, and discernment of good and evil.

**Re-arranging the furniture and renaming so many things has worked to weaken their reality and use.** Though kneelers, grills and "the sacrament of Confession" have been partly restored, they are often ignored.

Like contraceptive practice, the vice has taken such a hold that even government money fails to persuade husbands and wives to have more children.

Christian life and spirituality depend on:-

**Repent and believe the Gospel.** Mark 1:15  
Regular Confession fulfils the Will of God.

#### 3. CULTURE OF LIFE

The culture of life opposes the culture of death.

**Governments in Australia are actively promoting the culture of death** with abortion, contraception and sodomy, and with euthanasia on the way.

Yet in two years St Paul successfully evangelized many immoral lives in the sin-city of Corinth, and the Roman Empire was a hell, but Christ was triumphing:-

O Galilean, thou hast conquered! O Sin, thou hast failed me.

Julian the Apostate on his death bed, A.D. 363. He worshipped the sun.

#### 4. SEMINARIES

Seminaries in the strict sense are the houses of formation for the priesthood. In some places the seminary includes the theological faculty or institute (e.g. Wagga Wagga), in others the latter is a quite separate institution (e.g. Sydney and Melbourne).

**The reform of the both seminary and theological faculty is essential for any convincing vocation campaign.** Thanks to Bishop William Brennan opening his seminary and theological faculty in the teeth of ferocious opposition in Wagga Wagga, vocations have started to increase throughout Australia.

Moreover, the old wisdom still holds: the seminary rector is even more important for the future of the priesthood than the diocesan bishop.

#### 5. THEOLOGICAL FACULTIES/INSTITUTES

The lecturers must be **orthodox in faith and priestly piety** - whether they live in the seminary or are parish priests as well. If some are Religious or laity, it is vital that at least a goodly number be priests.

A seminarian's vocation depends on his spirituality. False spirituality, defective doctrinal and moral teaching, lax discipline, intrusive and manipulative psychology, confusing the internal and external forum, softness on sodomy, doubts on the male priesthood and celibacy, destroy spirituality, vocation and even the faith itself.

#### 6. PARISH MASSES and other liturgies

At the 1985 Extraordinary Synod, the Bishops said:

It is evident that the liturgy must favour the sense of the sacred and make it shine forth.

It must be permeated by **the spirit of reverence, adoration and the glory of God.** FR p. 34

Abolition of dancing, clapping, guitars, overheads, and all antics, plus the restoration of boys, youths, men as altar servers, are essential to the vocation campaign.

#### 7. FAMILY LIFE

Big families suit the tutoring of children in:-

- proper preparation for marriage and for life in society
- vocations to the priesthood and Religious Life
- taxpayers to pay pensioners and avoid euthanasia.

A significant feature of big families and also home-schooling families is the way that children from other families like their company, and enjoy going to play there. They are much more interesting...

**Family prayers** are vital; **family catechetics** is essential, yet **example** is more important than precept. There is an important book for spiritual reading called *The Soul of the Apostolate* by Dom Chautard. Pope St Pius X paid its author an amazing tribute: "I have made it my beside book," he said.

Moreover Dom Chautard himself quotes St Pius X:-

With his deep understanding of the needs of the Church, Pius X often had views of rare accuracy.

Happening one day amidst a group of Cardinals, the Holy Father said

to them, "**What is the thing most necessary at the present time to save society?**"

"Build Catholic schools," said one. "No."

"Multiply churches," replied another. "No."

"Increase the recruiting of the clergy," said a third.

"No, no," replied the Pope: "**What is MOST necessary at the present time is to have in each parish a group of laymen at the same time virtuous, enlightened, determined and really apostolic.**"

Dom Chautard's footnote adds, "When we compare certain passages of the first Encyclical of Pius X with various speeches of his at a later period, we see that in the conversation just quoted that it was *the fervour of priests* that he counted on for the training of the chosen ones that he mentions; and on these latter he counts on afterwards (more than on any other means) for the increase of the true faithful. **Once this result is obtained, the recruiting of the clergy is assured**, as well as the multiplication of schools and churches. When the quantity *does not possess the quality*, great risks are run of getting naught but a display of noisy, empty, delusive, religious feeling."

#### VISION STATEMENTS

Many of the vision statements need a tidy-up, though the original idea is good in itself, indeed quite Scriptural: -

Where there is no vision the people perish.

Proverbs 29:18 (King James Version)

Their prophets see no vision from the Lord.

Lamentations 2:9

Sometimes, however, the vision statements of schools and education offices, or of parishes and dioceses, express the self-centred psychology of self-worship and ignore **Our Lord's vision statements for His Church** found in the Bible, the *Documents of Vatican II*, *The Code of Canon Law*, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *Catholic Family Catechism* both *Apostles'* and *Disciples' Editions*, and *Heart Speaks to Heart*.

We must keep an eye on "**the vision statements by the Devil**", for we are at war "with the spirit of wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). See *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis; *Letters from Hades, A Devil's View of the Church Today*, by Peter Marius on the Devil's campaign in the Church in Australia; and *Australia's Catholics Today: LOST!* by Michael Gilchrist.

False **ideas** on self-esteem and false **ideals** like self-fulfilment seem at first only slight deviations from the straight and narrow path. But they are quite lethal.

Trendy parents/schools do not pass on trendiness to the young. They do not reproduce trendies but beget unbelievers, sceptics, atheists. Not surprisingly, trendiness is sterile and cannot hand on its "convictions".

We should set before our families and young people:-

- the Catholic world-view: the revealed plan of God.
- Catholic spirituality: prayer, Sacraments, good works.
- Catholic support groups.

**The Cardinal Newman Faith Resources Inc. stocks reading against the cult of self-worship and the ego-philosophy; and many books, Handouts and News-letters on the true lay apostolate of the Magisterium.**