

## *The end of the Age of Entitlement*

“We commit ourselves to sharing our lives in pastoral charity with our brothers and sisters in Christ . . . we will try to be as humanly present and welcoming as possible; and we will show ourselves to be open to all, no matter what their beliefs.– *the [Pact of the Catacombs](#) made by a group of 40 Bishops at the conclusion of Vatican II.* (November 16, 1965)

### *A culture of arrogance and hubris exposed.*

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Australian Truth Justice and Healing Council, apparently frustrated with his employers’ evident lack of courage, candour and transparency, has recently voiced the reasons for his rapidly growing impatience and discontent:

“This miserable history cannot be denied, nor can it be rationalised away. The very fact that a faith-based institution would perpetuate such evil is incomprehensible. But it has – and now the time for reckoning has well and truly arrived”

Sullivan went on to use even more direct language:

“At the end of another confronting and shameful public hearing for the Catholic Church the heavy sense of failure pervades our community. It is becoming an all-too-predictable scenario in that, in every case study, ineptitude, maladministration, cover ups and corrupt practices have been revealed.” (1)

Sullivan has obviously lost patience with the bishops and has finally decided to do what most of them had failed to do. He has now personally and very publicly named and exposed the enormity of the clerical child sexual abuse scandal in Australia. Furthermore, he blames the bishops openly for compounding the scandal by complicity in systematically covering it up thereby actually facilitating the commission of further abuse. Despite his frustration, Sullivan continues in his job and presumably believes that progress has been made.

A few bishops seem to be listening to him. Recently, a number of bishops have clearly abandoned the pretence, dissemblance, and the mental-reservation games, and have come clean. Archbishop Denis Hart, followed by Peter Connors and Hilton Deakin both former auxiliaries bishops of Melbourne, appeared before the Royal Commission at the end of 2015. They demonstrated varying degrees of congruence in the ways they expressed their views of and sorrow for the systemic institutional nature of the scandal. Large numbers of Catholics are rightly cynical at the perceived tones of tokenism and shallow apologies of some bishops.

In addition to the admissions of Archbishop Hart, two other Metropolitan Archbishops have acknowledged, one two years ago, that the systemic failures in Church culture and governance which were/are compounded by an astonishing mix of naïveté, presumption, and clerical indifference.

Perth Archbishop, Timothy Costelloe SDB, has been candid about the scope and consequences of the clerical child sexual abuse scandal:

It is just a terrible thing. Many people have lost confidence in the Church. Many people are angry with the way the Church responded to these issues in the past, sometimes in the present. I think many people are watching very closely to see whether all of our wonderful rhetoric about how we're trying to do better will be matched by action. I understand that absolutely. (2)

Archbishop Costelloe recognised that it is the bishops themselves who are now the subjects of close scrutiny. Even now many bishops or their assistants continue to trot out the standard scripted message that the clerical sexual abuse of children is traceable to the behaviour of a few rogue clerics, the deviants, 'the rotten apples', effectively denying the role of the institutional Church in furthering the abuse through cover-ups and protection of known paedophiles.

In late 2014, Brisbane Archbishop Mark Coleridge addressed more than 100 priests of the Auckland diocese in New Zealand. Rowena Orejana writes:

'... there is a "whirlpool effect" in the Australian Catholic Church, and the two powerful cross-currents at work are: the Royal Commission, and Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*. A strange point of convergence [between the two cross-currents] is ... what is often called clericalism. [Clericalism] is somehow central to the cultural difficulties, or the cultural phenomena that enabled abuse to happen. Somehow, we thought the law doesn't apply to us.

Coleridge went on to say:

Both the Royal Commission and Pope Francis seem to me to be summoning us to be what, in fact, we're called to be. How odd that the Royal Commission is doing that. The only way forward is the kind of authenticity that the people sense in the Pope and to which they do respond.

..... "**what is needed is a change in the Church's culture.** "If all you do is to change policies, practices and procedure, we are only going to find the same things because we haven't gone to the root of it. **The hardest thing to bring about is cultural change,**" he said.' (3) (bolding added)

The Archbishop's comments sound uncannily like what *Catholics for Renewal* has been talking about and writing about for years.

Melbourne Auxiliary Bishop Vincent Long OFM. Conv. has also been brutally honest in his assessment of the damage clerical child sexual abuse had done to victims, their families and to the entire Community. In his homily at the annual Red Mass in Melbourne on February 1, 2016, Bishop Long said:

“With the ongoing Royal Commission into sexual abuse, the spotlight has been shining on the church’s dismal failure. The spotlight which is also the title of the current film on the subject, has revealed just how far we have drifted from the vision of Jesus, in Boston, Melbourne and elsewhere. Instead of demonstrating that fundamental ethos of care for the victims, the church has been shown to have cared primarily for its own security and interests. It is a shameful indictment not simply on the perpetrators and their enablers but the Church’s collective systemic betrayal of the Gospel. We cannot regain our moral credibility without first reclaiming the innocence and powerlessness of the humble Servant-Leader, and making it the cornerstone of all that we do and all that we are as the church.” (4)

Up till now, the bishops have not admitted unambiguously that the systemic and systematic institutional cover-ups on their watch have created a vastly more appalling scandal than by the sum total of the individual perpetrators. Some members of the hierarchy have been complicit in structural sin. It is they and those to whom they are accountable in the Vatican who have become the stumbling block causing the innocents and all God’s People to be tripped up and scandalised. The Bishops and the Holy See have by now almost entirely exhausted their moral capital.

Worse, the Holy See is continuing to prevent bishops from meeting a grave moral obligation to report criminal paedophiles to civil authorities. Bishops are required to treat all cases of clerical paedophilia as ‘pontifical secrets’, reporting only to the Holy See unless there is a State law requiring civil reporting – presumably to keep bishops out of gaol. Despite so many regrets expressed by popes and bishops for the devastating effects of clerical child sexual abuse on children, the cover-ups continue on the canonical instructions of the Holy See. The Holy See has refused a request from the UN Committee against Torture that bishops be required to report child sexual abuse by clergy to civil authorities, irrespective of whether or not there is a State civil law requiring it. Instead, the Holy See continues to protect paedophiles from the law and thus expose further children to abuse.

The Magisterium of the Catholic Church has formally, since Pius XI in 1922, placed into Canon Law a number of provisions which protect and safeguard the institutional honour and dignity of the priesthood above those of innocent Catholic children raped and brutalised by paedophile clerics. That Canon Law is still in effect; children continued to be abused, their families devastated while the crimes of rapist clerics are still covered up by bishops and religious superiors.

Even the increasing acceptances by bishops of the institutional Church’s complicity in the scandal of child abuse fail to recognise the real cause namely the underlying failure in the Church’s governance, which demands radical reform of its structures and its culture of clericalism and secrecy.

With little more than ten percent of nominal Catholics still participating regularly in Church life, our Church is fast running out of people to disappoint, to scandalise and alienate any further. John Henry Newman warned bishops over a century and a half ago that when they project an air of detached self-satisfaction and wrap themselves in their doctrinal certitudes, they run the risk of creating a Church environment in which “the laity should be neglected and relegated to an audience, or at best, playing a supporting role.” (5) Few, it seems, have listened to Newman and heeded his counsel.

### ***A new style of leadership is needed***

From the outset, Pope Francis has made the reform of the episcopate a key priority. This was quite evident from what he had to say to the bishops before, during and after the two synods on the family over 2014-15. He had already signalled in unambiguous terms just exactly what he is asking, even demanding, of them. He expects that they should be listeners, open to the ideas of others, to be men committed to dialogue, to listening, and to accepting advice, even the uncomfortable variety:

In his (the bishop’s) mission of fostering a dynamic, open and missionary communion, he will have to encourage and develop the means of participation proposed in the Code of Canon Law [Canons 460-468; 492-502; 511-514; 536-537] and other forms of pastoral dialogue, out of a desire to listen to everyone and not simply to those who would tell him what he would like to hear. Yet the principal aim of these participatory processes should not be ecclesiastical organization but rather the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone. - *Evangelii Gaudium* 31a

This is understandably a huge challenge for bishops. The majority of the current bishops were appointed by John Paul II or Benedict XVI. These two Popes were regressive in their theology of the Church. Both had effectively archived key teachings of Vatican II. Among the casualties of their partial non-reception of Vatican II were Episcopal collegiality and the legitimate rights and responsibilities of the local Church. Furthermore, the most that Francis’s two immediate predecessors permitted by way of collegiality were thirty years of Roman synods marked invariably by contrived and predetermined outcomes.

Pope Francis spent the past three years attempting to shake the bishops out of their inertia and amnesia. From 1978 to 2013, they were indoctrinated and socialised into supine compliance and blind obedience. They were also conditioned as a matter of course to accept bullying, humiliation and micromanagement of their dioceses at the hands of clerical bureaucrats in the Roman Curia. The curriculum taught at bishops’ school is not something entirely new. The instructors have been refining it for centuries. Popes and bishops have long believed and taught that the Church enjoys a special place of pre-eminence and divine entitlement in the world. Francis is attempting to re-educate his fellow bishops into an evangelical form of leadership wherein its moral authority is validated by the quality of its service. Francis wants bishops to snap out of the clerical sub-culture of infantilisation of the laity and to treat their people as adults and partners in the Gospel.

With this in mind, Catholics for Renewal will closely support Pope Francis by committing its energies and resources to two areas of advocacy in the immediate years ahead:

1. the reinstatement of broad based consultative processes for the selection and confirmation of candidates for episcopal ministry, and
2. the development of regular effective forms and processes of engagement involving bishops, priests and laity in an atmosphere of partnership, collaboration and co-responsibility, consistent with the emphasis of Vatican II on the *sensus fidei fidelium*, (the sense of faith of the faithful).

### ***Selecting our Bishops***

Pope Francis is calling Church leaders to emerge from their clerical cocoons into what he calls the *peripherias existenciales* ('the extreme outer limits of human existence'). He challenges them to become engaged with their people in all aspects of their lives, to demonstrate solidarity with them and thereby to consolidate the bonds of ecclesial trust. Nicholas Cafardi, former chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People, writes about Francis' job description for bishops:

“Pope Francis says that he wants a special kind of bishop for our church—he wants ‘shepherds who smell of their sheep.’ Let us take our Holy Father at his word: Who knows how the sheep smell better than the sheep themselves? No one.”

So then why not let the sheep make a modest proposal and ask that we laypeople have a significant say in the choice of our bishops. This proposal is not as radical as it may seem. Once the office of bishop was clearly established in the early church, it was filled by the choice of the local people and priests and ratified by the neighbouring bishops as a sign of the unity of the church.” (6)

From the earliest days of the post Pentecost Jesus Movement this is how it was. All were rightly convinced that all members of the community, not just Jesus' inner circle, had been energised, gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit. After the demise of Judas, it was necessary to fill the ranks of the Twelve. Significantly, it was not Peter who did the choosing but the entire community. Together they all prayed, all voted and all confirmed Matthias as Apostle.

There is abundant and extensive evidence from early to contemporary Church writers, theologians and historians who bear witness to the involvement of the whole community in the process of discernment, selection, election and confirmation of candidates for the episcopacy:

“Pope Celestine I (433 – 432 AD) stated emphatically: “The one who is to be head over all should be elected by all.” This is another way of stating the Roman law principle: “What touches all should be approved by all (*quod omnes tangit ab omnibus debet approbari*).” Celestine added: “No one should be made a bishop over the unwilling: the

consent and desire of the clergy, the people and the order (Christian secular authorities?) is required.” (7)

The accepted tradition continued more or less in tact into the Church’s second millennium:

The Council of Rheims in 1049 AD, for example, decreed “that no one should be advanced to the rule of a church without election by clergy and people.” (c.1) The tradition of lay involvement in the selection and confirmation of bishops continued for almost two centuries after Rheims. At the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 AD, the electoral procedures of Innocent III recognised the Cathedral canons as the sole electors of bishops.

While Francis has not so far flagged the reinstatement of the ancient traditions of episcopal appointments, he has challenged his fellow bishops to keep foremost in their minds that their ministry only makes sense, has significance and is validated in so far as they live as authentic servants of their people:

“Lay people are, put simply, the vast majority of the People of God. The minority—ordained ministers—are at their service. ... A clear awareness of this responsibility of the laity, grounded in their baptism and confirmation, does not appear in the same way in all places. In some cases, it is because lay persons have not been given the formation needed to take on important responsibilities. **In others, it is because in their particular churches room has not been made for them to speak and to act, due to an excessive clericalism which keeps them away from decision-making.**” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, #102) (bolding added).

The Australian bishops collectively have forfeited the automatic trust and confidence of their people. It is time for the local clergy and people of a diocese to reclaim their ancient traditional role in the selection and election of their bishop. Patrick Granfield, in his treatment of the historical claim to lay participation in the selection and election of bishops cites the teaching of Cyprian of Carthage (c200-258 AD):

“Cyprian’s consistency in recognising the popular voice in the election of bishops is particularly remarkable when compared with his teaching on the elevated status of the episcopacy .... No other early Christian writer, before or after Cyprian, has so championed the cause of community participation and has given us more details concerning the elective procedure. (He) felt impelled to employ the traditional and tested practice of electing bishops in order to preserve the stability and unity of the Church” (8)

This is the time, if ever there was one, “*to preserve the stability and unity of the Church.*” A certain way of guaranteeing that this happens is for the Pope to knock down the wall of clericalism and involve the people and their priests in the selection of their own local bishops. That kind of involvement must go far beyond the polite round of applause after a *fait accompli* of the papal letter of appointment is read.

## ***Ephphatha, “Be Opened”: Healing ecclesiastical deafness.***

Another priority in Pope Francis’ reform plan is to persuade Catholics to cut through mutual suspicions, listen to one another, to seek common ground and to arrive at consensus on the core issues. He believes strongly in the power and authority of consensus because it is essential for a community to journey together in the same direction which is the meaning of *synodality*. To support his vision, he calls upon ancient Christian wisdom:

“If we understand as St. John Chrysostom did, that “church and synod are synonymous,’ since the Church means nothing other than the common journey of the Flock of God along the paths of history towards the encounter of Christ Lord, then we understand that within the Church, no one can be raised up higher than the others. On the contrary, in the Church, it is necessary that each person be “lowered "in order to serve his or her brothers and sisters along the way” (9)

Listening is the key to success. The Pope put an end to the endless talk-a-thons at last October’s Roman Synod and actually forced the bishops to sit down in language groups to listen to one another and talk about the real situation of the Church. In an article on Pope Francis’ insistence on listening as a key to a healthy cohesive Church life, John Thavis writes:

‘A synodal church is a listening church. Listening begins with the “people of God,” who as a whole cannot err in matters of belief. That’s why the Synod on the Family was preceded by a worldwide consultation with local Catholic churches.

The ‘sensus fidei’ (sense of the faith) makes it impossible to rigidly separate between the ‘teaching church’ and the ‘learning church,’ because even the flock has a ‘nose’ for discerning the new roads the Lord is opening for the church,’ the pope said.

‘The synod itself should be a time of “mutual listening” between the people of God, the bishops and the pope. But the pope’s role is unique.’ (10)

It is time for the Catholic Church in Australia to re-embrace the challenges put by Vatican II specifically to continue the work of reform and revitalisation of Church life and structure. Good communication is essential if this work is to be optimised. There have been few synods in Australia, e.g. the last synod of the archdiocese of Melbourne was in 1916, a hundred years ago. This is despite a century of Conciliar and papal directives, demands of Canon Law which is astonishing especially when it is remembered that cohorts of bishops during the past decades have urged Catholics that they must be obedient to the Pope and the Magisterium.

Using the model of the Canonical synods might prove too restrictive for most people, including bishops. A solution is to bypass completely the rigid controls built into the Canonical provisions for Synods. A flexible, adaptable and very democratic alternative model is the parish, deanery or diocesan ‘Listening Assemblies.’

These gatherings are not at all new. They have been happening around Australia as well as elsewhere in the world. For example: Maitland-Newcastle had ‘Pastoral/Diocesan Assemblies’ in 1995, 1997, 2000, 2004/5 and 2007 and a ‘Diocesan Gathering’ in 2010; +Bill

Morris convened 5 Diocesan Assemblies or Gatherings in the Toowoomba diocese, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2011; Bishop Heenan held similar gatherings in the diocese of Rockhampton around 2009; Bishop Connors did the same in 2000 in Ballarat and Archbishop of Doyle of Hobart held a “Diocesan Assembly” in mid November, 2008. Wollongong Diocese had what was called In 2010, Wollongong Diocese held what were called ‘Diocesan Consultations’ in 2010; since +Paul Bird became the bishop of Ballarat in 2012, there have been around 20 “Listening Assemblies” on both diocesan and local area levels.

The structures and processes of these gatherings can, unlike the Canonical Synods, be readily and easily adapted to meet different needs. A further advantage of these assemblies is that they can take place without the threat of Vatican micro-managers red-carding, insisting on a strict ratio of clergy to laity and censoring out hot topics. People can freely and fearlessly speak their minds. Pope Francis has hinted that agenda items at the next Roman Synod will include the possibility of opening the priesthood to married men.

The Ballarat assemblies in 2000 were set up precisely in order to give Catholic communities opportunities to learn the unadorned truth about the consequences of the growing shortage of priests and to prepare themselves for the necessary adjustments. It is an education to read the rationale for those meetings as their challenges then, are everyone’s pressing realities now:

“Support for all faith communities regardless of size is a major concern in pastoral planning. An important means of assisting faith communities and parishes in pastoral planning is to encourage “Listening Assemblies” where a community can gather together and be supported in sharing their thoughts and feelings about what it means to be a church without the familiar presence of a parish priest. .... sharing concerns about dwindling numbers, expressing the desire to continue to gather as a faith community, looking at ways in which the faith can be kept alive, raising the consciousness for the need for more people to accept roles of leadership, voicing the need for new structures that will provide security, discussing the possibilities of ecumenical cooperation in smaller towns, and becoming aware of the need for encouragement, support and direction in taking responsibility for lay-led liturgies.” (11)

Ironically, +Bill Morris was reported to the Roman Curia by clerical and lay conservative fellow Catholics. On the basis of the sheer volume of lies and distortion, Morris was sacked by Benedict XVI. He was suggesting very similar things in his Lenten pastoral of 2006 as the Ballarat and other assemblies discussed before and after the bishop’s was removed. +Morris enjoyed the strong and genuine warmly support of his people for his collaborative form of leadership, deep Christ-like pastoral care and his trust in the *sensus fidelium*. As Fr Michael Whelan SM of Sydney’s *Aquinas Academy* once said, “Bill’s worst mistake was that ‘he took his people seriously.’

### ***Some Concluding thoughts***

Pope Francis has called upon Catholics to reappropriate and whole-heartedly respond to the vision, challenges and power of the Second Vatican Council. His own papacy is thoroughly grounded in and inspired by the pastoral vision of the Council which, in turn, deeply

informed the groundbreaking statement of evangelical intent issued by *CELAM*, the Latin American Bishops Conference, in Aparecida, Brazil in 2007. That document later provided the conceptual framework and pastoral perspective for Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si'*. Together, these documents act like a window into Francis' soul and provide a penetrating insight into the pastor's aspirations and dreams for the People of God.

Since his election, Francis has mightily endeared himself to Catholics everywhere. One reason for this is that they have been longing for a Pope to articulate and affirm, prophet like, their deepest aspirations for the renewal of Catholic life, the Church and the ways it is governed. Another reason is that he has made it a top priority to stress, affirm the importance and integrity of the people of God in their local Communities. Francis implicitly trusts the people, their faith instinct and their wisdom. Consequently, as part of his renewal plan, he is calling for genuinely consultative communities in which the great Council teachings on the *Sensus Fidei Fidelium* ("the sense of the Faith of the Faithful") assume priority and are expressed in genuine collegiality, shared responsibilities and accountability in governance.

It is time to give Francis all the support he needs to realise his main objectives. Catholics can best accomplish this in two highly important areas of local Church life:

- 1) to reclaim and secure the ancient rights and duty of clergy and laity to select their own local Bishops
- 2) to follow already proven practice in many dioceses for regular local and national "Listening Assemblies". These gatherings have demonstrated their effectiveness in providing and safeguarding opportunities for the voices of priests and laity to be listened to, taken seriously and become the central planks in the platform of the Church's pastoral plans.

### *Endnotes*

- 1) *TJHC Blog*, 17 December, 2015 (Linked [here](#)); Jack Waterford, "Cardinal George Pell and Catholic Bishops have seriously overdrawn their moral credit," *Canberra Times*, March 29, 2015. (Linked [here](#));

Francis Sullivan wrote again on December 17 2015:

"At the end of another confronting and shameful public hearing for the Catholic Church the heavy sense of failure pervades our community. It is becoming an all-too-predictable scenario, in that in every case study, ineptitude, maladministration, cover ups and corrupt practices have been revealed. This miserable history cannot be denied, nor can it be rationalised away. The very fact that a faith-based institution would perpetuate such evil is incomprehensible. But it has – and now the time for reckoning has well and truly arrived. As witness after witness fronts the Royal Commission the pretence falls away. At times the Commission's patience is clearly tested but at least the stark realities are made plain for all to see.... Many have said that this Royal Commission is vitally important for the future of the Catholic Church in Australia. Quite clearly the Church has not been able to be as honest with itself as it has had to be in these

hearings. Now the challenge is to explain why this tragic scandal occurred and how it can be prevented from ever happening again....”

- 2) Angela Pownall, “Crisis is taking a toll on church: archbishop,” *The West Australian*, December 12, 2015 (Linked [here](#));
- 3) “Australia Archbishop links Clericalism to Abuse,” *New Zealand Catholic*, Sept 2014 (Linked [here](#))
- 4) Archdiocese of Melbourne website, [cam.org.au](http://cam.org.au) (Linked [here](#))
- 5) The Newman Rambler commentary on *Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, # 205. (Linked [here](#));  
Newman again: “The episcopate, whose action was so prompt and concordant at Nicaea on the rise of *Arianism*, did not, as a class or order of men, play a good part in the troubles consequent upon the Council, and the laity did. The Catholic people, in the length and breadth of Christendom, were the obstinate champions of Catholic truth, and the bishops were not.  
Speaking of the laity, I speak inclusively of their parish priest (so to call them), at least in many places; but on the whole, taking a wide view of history, we are obliged to say that the governing body of the Church came short, and the governed were pre-eminent in faith, zeal, courage and constancy.” – *Arians in the Fourth Century*.  
For another context, see: David Timbs, “The Reinvention of the Fisherman,” *OMG. A Journal of Religion and Culture*, April, 2014 (Linked [here](#)); Massimo Faggioli, “The Question of the Synod’s Reception,” *Commonweal*, November 4, 2015 (Linked [here](#)); Massimo Faggioli, “Where Bishops and Theologians still talk,” *Commonweal*, December 14, 2015 (Linked [here](#)).
- 6) Nicholas Cafardi, “Should laypeople have a role in choosing their bishops? It's time for the flock to have their say when it comes to selecting the shepherds of the church.” *U.S. Catholic*, January 2014 (Linked [here](#))
- 7) Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *Electing Our Bishops* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007) 27.
- 8) *Op.cit.*, 53.
- 9) Patrick Granfield, “Episcopal Elections in Cyprian: Clerical and Lay Participation,” *Theological Studies* 37 (1976) 41-42, 44-45.
- 10) “Pope says synod is a ‘listening’ event; as guarantor of unity Pope has last word,” *John Thavis* blog on Pope Francis’ Address at Commemorative Ceremony for the 50th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops, October 17, 2015 (Linked [here](#))
- 11) “Diocese of Ballarat: “Listening Assemblies.” National Church Life Survey with National Pastoral Planning in cooperation with the Diocese of Ballarat Pastoral Planning Office, November, 2000. (Linked [here](#)); Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle assemblies and gatherings: “Assemblies and Gatherings,” (Linked [here](#)): “Planning and Exploring,” (Linked [here](#)); ‘Listening Evenings’ are scheduled in the Lakes Catholic Parish on the Warringah peninsula in Sydney (Linked [here](#)) details published February 4 Bulletin [here](#))

### ***Some further reading:***

Christa Pongratz-Lippitt , “Synodality must once again become a structural practice in the church,' German cardinals and theologians insist,” NCR, *Dec. 15, 2015* (Linked [here](#))

Pope Francis on a synodal Church including greater participation of the laity in ecclesial governance: Nicole Winfield, "Pope calls for a Church which is far more decentralized," *Crux*, October 17, 2015 (Linked [here](#))

On the damage done to the Laity's confidence and trust in the bishops, see Living a Myth," *Questions from a Ewe*, December 27, 2015. (Linked [here](#))

Nicholas Cafardi, "Should laypeople have a role in choosing their bishops? It's time for the flock to have their say when it comes to selecting the shepherds of the church." *U.S. Catholic*, January 2014 (Linked [here](#))

Robert Mickens, "Mercy, Vatican II comes alive," *NCR* Dec. 7, 2015. (Linked [here](#))

Kaya Oakes' review of Gary Wills' *The Future of the Catholic Church with Pope Francis*, *The Guardian* 10 March, 2015 (Linked [here](#))

Alexander Stille, "Holy Orders. A determined Pope Francis moves to reform a recalcitrant Curia." *The New Yorker* September 14, 2015 (Linked [here](#))

William M. Portier, Review of Garry Wills "The Future of the Catholic Church *Commonweal* March 5, 2015 (Linked [here](#))

Editorial, "Eight ways Pope Francis is changing the Catholic Church," *New York Times* July 6, 2015 (Linked [here](#))

Editorial Analysis: Pope Francis plan for reform: convert the Church." *Religion News Service* March 5, 2014 (Linked [here](#))

Ross Douthat, "A Crisis of Conservative Catholicism," *First Things* January 2016. (Linked [here](#)). Douthat makes some very frank admissions about the weakness of the Conservative agenda as well as the enduring theological and psychological strengths and resilience of the supporters of Vatican II and its reforms. His candour has not been greeted warmly by Conservatives nor by the so-called 'progressives' who consider Douthat as extraordinarily naive in his assertion that, despite their overall lack of cohesion, Conservatives continue to be the *real* gatekeepers of orthodoxy and offer the best hope for the future of Catholicism.

Final report on the Synod of Bishops to the Holy Father on the Family, Rome 2014 (Linked [here](#)) 'The *sensus fidei* prevents rigid separation between "Ecclesia" (Church) and the Church teaching, and learning (*Ecclesia docens discens*), since even the Flock has an "instinct" to discern the new ways that the Lord intends.'

Massimo Faggioli, "Renewal, Reform or Revolution? Pope Francis' pontificate has been, without a doubt, a period of change in the Church." *Global Pulse*, January 18, 2016 (Linked [here](#). NB: Pay wall).

David Timbs, "Looking forward, not backwards, in the Year of Grace," *Cathnews* 20 December, 2012 (Linked [here](#)). An excerpt is offered:

"John Henry Cardinal Newman had much to say about the relationship between the Teaching Church (*ecclesia docens*), the Church taught (*ecclesia docta*), between the governors and the governed. We could learn some important lessons from him. Newman wrote that the teaching and governing roles of hierarchy and laity although distinct, are complementary and

interdependent. There no sense of authentic apostolic faith, right ecclesiastical order, or practice, without both. He called these roles, the *seal* (Magisterium) and the *wax* (Laity).

Newman also wrote extensively about the essential partnership between hierarchy and people in determining what is essential to the Tradition. In *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, he called this relationship, *Conspiratio* – Co-spiritedness: “*Conspiratio*, the two, the Church teaching and the Church taught, are put together, as one two-fold testimony, illuminating each other, and never be divided”. Newman also taught that the hierarchy can only know itself, understand itself and function as it should only in relationship with the people it serves. He affirmed that the laity is like a mirror in which Bishops see themselves and that they see things about themselves, in that mirror reflection, that they would not otherwise see.”

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