

*The Catholic Church in Queensland  
on the Eve of Vatican II*

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**I. Introduction**

This essay is about that interesting era between the announcement of a second Vatican Council in 1959 and its convocation three years later in 1962. Though I was born a few years after Pope John XXIII's death he has always loomed large in my reflection on modern Church history in general and this transitional period in particular. My older brother, who had the look as a baby of a pugilistic Sydney Greenstreet, was thought back then to resemble Good Pope John. As a teenager I wore for a time a medal blessed by John in Rome in the early 1960s and, though he'd been dead for more than a decade by the time I received my First Communion at St Vincent's in Rockhampton, there he is hovering on the commemorative card with Paul VI, both pictured as heaven-dwelling saints imparting a joint blessing from above. This was presumptuous as regards the still-living Paul and incongruous for the portly Roncalli. The first religious book I read was John's *Journal*. It was amongst my family's small collection of books, between racing novels, cookbooks and boys'-own adventures. As a young student, I wanted to know how a holy man lived and what he thought as he grew into manhood and maturity. I can still remember the smell of that book and the impression it left on me that spiritual recollection in the midst of worldly concerns was somehow the key to religious life. Perhaps if I could not emulate John's saintliness - so it seems to me now - I could at least imitate his profound interest in Church history, especially in the reception of Trent. These are just a few instances of the cult of John for me - and relatively trivial ones at that. I'd like to begin this article, then, by discussing the importance of this most extraordinary man, even for the Church in Queensland - far away from Rome in a part of the world about which John himself probably knew next to nothing. I will then move on to an analysis of the suggestions Queensland bishops sent to Rome in 1959-60, useful official sources for understanding the people and preoccupations of that time.

## II. The First Reception: Of John XXIII and News of a Council - 1959-60

The precise chronology of the inspiration for, spiritual testing of and consultations about John XXIII's idea of a Council may not be written for many years, if at all with any degree of exactitude. Most Councils of the past had more explicable origins within the context of heresies and imperial politics and some came about quite regardless of what particular popes thought. A novelist might imagine John being awoken by the stuffiness and stillness of a hot Roman night and deciding to open some windows. To be awoken by a metaphor would be a contemplative thing but to act on it, that would be a properly mystical one. Decades of practice in a cherished spiritual recollection, detachment from natural human pride, and openness, as he saw it, to the will of God made John act where others might have busied themselves on the morn with more immediate duties. If he did throw open the windows of the Church - it's now a cliché - some small measure of credit should be given to Pius XII for drawing the curtains just a little. For throughout his enigmatic papacy, Pius did offer important encouragement to the renewal of the liturgy, to biblical studies and to religious institutes. If he was a Luddite on scientific developments he never showed it, preferring to use his office and his ability to speak *ad hoc* on diverse matters to give to the world the impression of a modern Church whose faith had nothing to fear from reason. But in an era when so many great figures sustained their greatness by their embodiment of their nations' characteristics - Churchill, Eisenhower, de Gaulle, Menzies and so on - Pius was by the mid 1950s an embodiment of all that was proud but also all that was tired in the Church. It is probably as difficult for modern Catholics to appreciate just how Pius XII was perceived by their erstwhile co-religionists as it would be for them to imagine his eponymous predecessor, Pio Nono, refusing to leave the Vatican on principle. He was considered a saint in his lifetime, he had immense moral authority, he was aloof in an almost otherworldly way and was a natural and lifelong ascetic. He wanted "executants, not collaborators", he once declared.

The purpose of such a sketch, itself familiar, is to bring into relief the extent to which the reception of Vatican II was presaged not just by reception of the announcement and eventually the documents but also by the reception of John XXIII himself. His was and remains a most remarkable, international *cultus*, one intertwined inseparably with the Ecumenical Council he called. By leaving the Vatican, visiting prisoners and looking for all the world like a man who enjoyed life and people, John became loved in a way altogether different to the awe-struck respect afforded by the world to Pius. His portliness in a televisual age only increased the sense people had that here was a Pope who was human and simple. They might also have sensed from his eyes that this fat old gentleman was

immensely shrewd and no less holy than Pius in this century unusual for many things, not least for its succession of comparatively saintly popes. Among his admirers were certainly very many Queenslanders. To the staff of *The Review*, perhaps the most advanced in their efforts to educate the people of the Rockhampton diocese about the *nouveau theologie* and this new pope, John was a man after their own hearts. In the articles they wrote or chose from news services, stories were retold emphasising how much he was friendly, naughty, informal and in no way bound to pre-conceived notions of how a pope should behave as regards tradition. *The Review's* editor, Dr Grove Johnson - then a keen student of Hans Küng among others - was responsible for bringing the new thinking and vignettes on Pope John to his readers' attention. Learned, internationalist in outlook and 'conciliar' before the adjective became widely known, his own articles, not infrequently written by the light of the midnight oil, were written under the pseudonym 'John Woods.' Such traits were consonant with how Australians liked to see themselves. If guests were late or indisposed in any way, John would sit down for lunch with Vatican gardeners; he could joke that his family had connections with the Roman prison he once famously visited.<sup>2</sup> There was even the charming story that as Patriarch of Venice, John ordered the lion on his coat of arms re-drawn with a less aggressive, more friendly face. He inspired trust and affection in simple people and admiration in the learned.

This was important for theological and practical reasons. It was said with a perhaps unintended perspicacity in relation to John that "we all try to please those whom we love by doing what they would wish."<sup>3</sup> His decision for a Council for the universal Church was the clearest and least arguable demonstration of the Petrine ministry exercised in this century. In a theological sense - however much the local Church has captured the attention of today's Catholics - that decision brought to bear locally something of the weight of a universal Church. Local Catholics had to respond in a supportive and hopeful way, they had to "try to please" even if the consequences of a Council were largely matters for speculation between 1959 and 1962. Because the awesome charism of the papal primacy was exercised by 'Good Pope John' rather than by a remote and ethereal figure, Catholics at a local level felt assured that their long-standing inclination toward obedience in this transitional phase of history was right for the times. John was Bishop of Rome but he was also *their* Supreme Pontiff. Future historians will be able to make more sense of Pope John in a century's time but it would be surprising if they did not discern an important intermingling of his international *cultus* with a charismatic local manifestation and appreciation of the Petrine ministry which occurred for reasons explicable in theological as much as personal terms.<sup>4</sup> Here emerges an irony apposite and enduring for the study of Vatican II in the Queensland Church: the Council is seen today as the Magna Charta for a participative, at

least inchoately democratic revolution, but the success and rapidity with which its reforms were implemented relied on a key element of the *older* dispensation - namely, obedience to authority.

Along with the thrill deriving from what was thought to be the Holy Spirit at work in the modern Church, the Council Pope John called also gave rise to a Pentecostal confusion: originally there was a need in Queensland to explain just what an Ecumenical Council was. In 1959 many believed Vatican II was called “principally to discuss the union of the Orthodox Churches with the one true Church.”<sup>5</sup> This is one reason why many who would before long grow disillusioned with the Council initially regarded it as an exciting prospect. To the archly conservative Bishop William Brennan of Toowoomba, for example, the prospect of a rapprochement between Rome and the Eastern Orthodox would have been unobjectionable, not least because of the East’s beautiful liturgies, gorgeous costumes, reverence for tradition and impressive devotion to the *Theotokos*. Bishops of his and Townsville Bishop Hugh Ryan’s predispositions were less open to the notion of ecumenicalism where Protestant and Anglican communions were concerned. To Ryan, his Anglican counterpart in Townsville was ‘the local Protestant bishop.’ Niceties based on an appreciation of how simplistic a description this might be or on the complicating factor of Tractarianism in the Church of England in Queensland, would have been irrelevant to Ryan and arcane to Brennan. Despite initial enthusiasm for the Council, both would eventually become confused with subsequent developments, although Ryan found some of the new ideas interesting in his own reserved way.<sup>6</sup> Neither spent the 1950s reading Congar, Gilson, Marrou or Bananos or Green, Mauriac and Claudel.<sup>7</sup> In the looming revolution in the Church - a spiritual revolution certainly but an intellectual one too - their ignorance was unremarkable in the Australian Church. ‘Spiritual reading’ in 1959 still meant for most a large degree of the transcendental; it involved books and reviews of them which could ask Catholics whether they still believed in the devil or whether they thought Freud had banished him for good.<sup>8</sup> These were no longer the questions most worth asking at a time when personal devotion was about to take a secondary role behind deliberations of a more universal, ecclesiological kind. But it was still widely thought that Therese of Lisieux, Fulton Sheehan and the younger Thomas Merton were all the intellectual nourishment most Catholics required in the course of their lives. In that time before parish and pastoral councils and surveys of Catholic opinion, Merton’s *The Silent Life* would have sounded like a book most appropriate for lay men and women.

It was partly because so many fell “under the spell of the Pope’s magnetic personality”<sup>9</sup> and hopefully misunderstood both the Council’s timeframe and its ‘ecumenical’ function that so much hope and expectation existed for it in the

three years between its announcement and convocation. To soldiers in the Blue Army, talk of conciliar reconciliation with the Orthodox may have seemed a divinely ordered means by which the Church responded “to the plan sent us direct from Heaven through the medium of Our Lady to the children of Fatima”, a means they thought by which Russia might be converted.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, outreach was conceived then very much in terms of conversion. The Council might bring about a ‘return to Rome’ or mark the opening of an era wherein unbaptised heathen might be brought with renewed zeal into the true fold. Even someone as theologically advanced as Augustin Bea - former confessor to Pius XII and therefore someone with a vicarious authority beyond the norm even for a Prince of the Church - could be cited as an advocate for a renewal of conversion. Local Catholics could read the gist of an observation made by him, that “Christianity has only reached a third of mankind in nineteen centuries and of nine hundred million who have been baptised only five hundred million are Catholic.”<sup>11</sup> More needed to be done - that was the message. Enthusiasm for an imminent Council is somewhat unusual in ecclesiastical history; these notions of what Vatican II might mean for the Church really derived from models of piety, obedience - to an episcopate representative of the ‘one true Church’ and vigorously opposed to communism - and to the still tenable belief that the history of Church and world were at once characterised by progress and conflict. And so astonishment, confusion, delight and encouragement formed only an amorphous grey swirl of expectations in that brief period after the Council’s announcement. Form, results contestation and disappointment came later.

### III. The Queensland *Vota*: 1959-60<sup>12</sup>

As mentioned already, Catholics’ desire to please those whom they loved “by doing what they would wish” had both theological and practical implications during the early, ‘ante-reception.’ For the announcement of Vatican II and the Petrine charism of John XXIII brought the universal Church to the doorsteps of the local Churches; the submission of the latter’s *vota* was a practical, dialogistic response. They too had to please - not by saying what they thought others would wish to hear but by speaking frankly and authoritatively about local needs - for the first time, in a sense, as Council Fathers. Their suggestions, available to historians for many years now, call into question - or, at least, instructively qualify - the often repeated contention that Australia’s bishops were unprepared for Vatican II.

This assertion results from an analysis of the *vota* based on their general openness to reform. That the need exists to explain what some would regard as too generous a lowering of the theological bar from the higher mark of openness to *renewal* points toward the content of the apologia: that it is ludicrous to judge

pre-conciliar bishops according to post-conciliar criteria. A simple enough observation to be sure but one worthy of occasional restatement. One speaks objectivity of whether bishops were aware of developments in the liturgical and ecumenical movements certainly but, even then, those movements were portents of the Council as we see them now but not necessarily as Church leaders saw them then. Are economic liberalism, French poststructuralism and Latin American protestantism harbingers today of Vatican III? Are bishops unfamiliar with Hayek, Friedman, Derrida and Foucault unprepared for the next Council? Put in these terms, one can readily appreciate how talk of being 'prepared' for any Council must be rigorously qualified.

Surprisingly, the first Bishop to send a *votum* to Rome was not Thomas Cahill of Cairns (1 October 1959) but his episcopal neighbour, Hugh Ryan of Townsville. Like Pius XII, Ryan was a man more comfortable with executants than with collaborators. He never called his priests by their Christian names until his retirement and relied on the image of episcopal authority to shield a probably reserved nature. Not considered progressive enough by those who would change the world quickly as if by decree, he nevertheless had great priestly and administrative qualities and is the model still for some priests in the Townsville diocese who remember him respectfully. Ryan's *votum*, which he submitted on 1 September 1959, reflects the limitations inherent in a man of his background and training and the necessarily unpredictable nature of the then distant and nebulous Council.<sup>13</sup> Even in Ryan's own career we can see the weaknesses of embracing simplistic assessments about bishops' views on the Council too hastily. When he first went to Townsville this man later known for his "dressings-down" of clergy was considered by old hands soft and delicate. Anyone familiar with Northern and Western norms - they are occasionally adopted contrivedly by the 'cabbage-tree hat boy'<sup>14</sup> still found in many Australians - would know just how imprudent it was for Ryan to speak of getting by on a trip to the West with 'just some chicken and asparagus.' But this was a sub-species of prudence beyond the experience of what he might previously have encountered. It was an aspect of Queensland prudence, of that unstated code of conduct which rules out personal comfort, soft appearances, aloofness and familiarity in equal measure and, needless to say, chicken and asparagus. Times changed for Ryan and for the way others perceived him, that is the point. He ended up fulfilling Northern expectations precisely by becoming a no-nonsense man of the North himself. To his credit, he achieved this on his own terms. Anyone new to the North or to the West in Queensland must expect the requisite number of humiliations and, if he lives through them, can belong to that brotherhood of those humbled by hardship who may licitly scoff at the soft. The innate nature of Ryan, however, perdured 'till the end for those willing to observe him carefully enough. In his later years he had occasion once

to visit a school where a suitably scruffy boy offered him a lolly from a dusty and sweaty personal stash. Some may have turned down the offer as gently as possible. In what could almost be a metaphor for the Australian episcopate's response to the sometimes hard-boiled reforms of Vatican II, Hugh Ryan accepted it anyway and ate it for all to see.<sup>15</sup>

Mindful of his "total ignorance and folly" and careful also not to submit too lengthy a list lest such verbosity "confuse the matter or engender boredom", Ryan offered some suggestions for "the good of religion and souls." First among these in a section on doctrine was a brief and relevant request for elucidation of the doctrine of the Body of Christ which is the Church. There follow requests on 'ecumenism' and on Mary's role in the work of redemption. With that lack of tenderness for which Ryan was noted when it came to inter-denominational matters, he supports clearly enough a discussion concerning "the means of inviting or helping heretics to return to the unity of the Church." Placitum (a) - "concerning the Body of Christ which is the Church (by its own definition and verification)" - may have a simple ecclesiological context insofar as Ryan's definition of non-Catholic Christians as heretics would have depended on a traditional exclusivist conception of the nature of the Church. The ecumenical orientation of John XXIII, clear even in 1959-60,<sup>16</sup> would have caused some confusion as to how 'heretics' could be converted if their communions were at the same time being afforded an unprecedented degree of respect. This key issue - the nature of the Church in the context of ecumenism - was a matter which was beyond the understanding of many older bishops and laity. Yet in nominating it as a possible agenda item for the Council, Ryan and his collaborators were not too far off the conciliar mark. Moreover, placitum (c), also phrased in an unclear manner, seems to ask for elucidations concerning the nature of the papacy, how it is "conjoined to the Roman [Catholic] episcopate" and on the use of the Roman voice (*de usu vocis Romanae*) in the description of the Church as One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.<sup>17</sup> How much *integrity* did the Church have according to its own doctrine, both as concerns its authority and its pre-eminence among denominations as the one true Church? This question would seem to be at the heart of section one. On Mary, he considers it useful for the Council to deal with the duties and prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin concerning 1) her universal mediation; 2) her participation in the work of redemption; and 3) the dispensation of the graces of Christ. No other Queensland *votum* mentions any kind of doctrinal development in Mariology.<sup>18</sup>

The three part section on discipline speaks of the necessity of instilling a better spiritual formation in priestly candidates. This may reflect in ever so slight a manner both Ryan's longstanding interest in seminary education - he had strong views on management, the structure of courses and even such matters as the

demarcation between juniors and philosophers - as well as another reflection on the culture of Queensland vis-a-vis his own training and background in Bendigo. Regional variations in the nature of the Australian priesthood are probably only slight: a 'contemplative in action' *modus operandi* might be said to characterise the Queensland clergy and this does not differentiate them much from priests of other provinces. Spirituality is by no means unimportant but it is not paraded through too conspicuous a degree of either learning or asceticism. It is something lived, familial, persevering and manly. Now it may well be so everywhere else too but in Queensland, especially before the Council, this kind of culture was deeply ingrained as a tested model for praxis amongst Queenslanders themselves. Ryan is known to have had misgivings about being too demonstrative personally and he probably supported a greater degree of presbytery study and traditional piety as remedies for the loss of spirituality through constant building, travelling and doing. With the Apostolic Delegate, Romolo Carboni, he supports a kind of novitiate for secular clergy whereby candidates might receive the basic rudiments for developing a personal spirituality for their priestly lives. Recognising also the importance of material independence in the priestly life - something Duhig always believed in strongly - Ryan submits one of only two requests from an Australian concerning the distribution of the offerings of the faithful among the pastors of souls.<sup>19</sup> Pursuant to the 1958 Townsville Synod, he proposes "with the greatest humility" that canon 1410 of Canon Law be rewritten to the effect 'that the total of the gift, in fixed and voluntary offerings of the faithful be determined in the diocesan synod.' (This is one of the earliest instances of a local Australian Church suggesting a Universal reform based, in this case, on the statutes of an unremarkable local synod. Only a faint echo of Irish assertiveness to be sure but, if nothing else, it suggests Ryan took the responsibility of contributing suggestions seriously). The usefulness of reciting the Breviary in the vernacular is also supported by Ryan as it was by many other Australian bishops.<sup>20</sup> Subsection B on discipline, like the *vota* of a few other bishops, concerns the reformation of those canons relating to confessors for women religious and the necessity for changing religious superiors. Especially for isolated communities of women religious, the need for a talented confessor and, periodically, for an extraordinary one, was an important matter. The advice of a good confessor in both cloisters and teaching convents would have been an occasion not only for repentance but for a sense, moreover, of the worth of an individual's spiritual story amidst many, varied and necessarily anonymous duties. Both issues were occasions for little known but sometimes troublesome disagreement.

On matters pertaining to the laity, Ryan - a keen supporter of the Movement - calls for the promulgation of necessary canons on Catholic Action. Specifically, he requests rules concerning its nature and scope and the authority of the Bishop



“in the works of Catholic Action strictly so-called.” By “strictly so-called” (*strictae dictae*) Ryan certainly meant a model of Catholic Action organically linked to episcopal authority. However much he supported lay involvement in the Church’s institutional life - and he did, without too much accompanying rhetoric - he would not have been inclined to support a Catholic Action characterised by lay independence in public affairs. This is of course the conundrum at the crux of the whole Movement question of the 1950s. An organic connection between bishops and lay action gave the latter an official status and a degree of vicarious authority. When this caused controversy after Dr Evatt’s denunciation of the Groupers in 1954, that connection needed to be re-assessed. In judging that official episcopal support should be withdrawn from Santamaria, Rome is thought by many to have extricated the Australian hierarchy from a very difficult political situation. Today the question would seem to be not whether or not communism was a serious threat to unions and therefore to the Australian polity - for this has been definitively answered in the affirmative - but whether the lesson to be learned from those years is that episcopal support for specific kinds of lay action should be assessed and re-assessed continually according to circumstances. Ryan, like others, therefore subscribed inadvertently to a somewhat confused view of Catholic Action: on the one hand, he believed in the centrality of episcopal authority; yet in supporting Santamaria over against the Gilroy policy, he supported also a non-hierarchically directed style of lay action. This is why Ryan like other Australian bishops felt so strongly that this matter needed canonical resolution.

In “openly and sincerely” exposing his thinking to Rome, Ryan exposed views which at one and the same time indicated an interest in reform (in disciplinary matters), a curiosity about where the Church was going (on doctrine) and confidence in speaking on a practical matter (proposing an addition to canon 1410). Finally, there is a degree of rigid conservatism just for good measure: it is on the question of discipline concerning impediments to matrimony that Ryan speaks most strongly. “It seems to me that the impediment of mixed religion (canon 1060) ought more rarely to be conceded.” This reflects closely what Maguire writes of Ryan in *Prologue* - that he could be archly conservative but also creative, distant but also warm, not exactly a ‘Council man’ subsequent to its conclusion but also one who found the Council’s new ideas exciting. The second Townsville Synod of 1958 reflects more of Ryan’s conservatism than anything else, being wholly an exercise in the enforcement of ecclesiastical norms.

So confusing was the issue of Catholic Action in the late 1950s that Bishop Andrew Tynan limited himself entirely to a call for its resolution by Rome.<sup>21</sup> Despite his well known interest in other practical and pastoral matters - notably the Catholic Enquiry Center and the increased number of mixed marriages - it

was the role of the laity in public affairs that concerned Tynan most in 1959. Sent on 7 April 1960, his submission is briefer than Ryan's, Cahill's and O'Donnell's and is really the only single issue *votum* from Australia. No mention is made of liturgy, ecumenism, the Breviary, religious institutional or doctrinal questions. Does this indicate Tynan was essentially an immobilist, one who believed his local Church was, in the words of Bishop O'Collins of Ballarat for example, "sufficiently healthy"?<sup>22</sup> This question can only be answered in the affirmative if we make the mistake of ascribing to liturgical and ecumenical matters the totemic conciliar importance these later acquired. It would be more accurate to say that this man, whom Monsignor John English thought had a will of steel<sup>23</sup>, was the opposite of an immobilist, believing in a Church truly militant on social questions. He asks that just four things be clarified: 1) the functions of societies of the apostolate of the laity; 2) their juridical relation to the Ordinary and sometimes to the Church in general; 3) the permissibility of establishing these societies independently of the authority of the Ordinary, with a title not specifically catholic but in the minds of all, belonging to the Catholic Church; 4) the participation of priests in their activity: a) if it is established by the authority of the Ordinary; b) if they do not have the permission of the Ordinary but nevertheless are governed by catholic principles and an altogether catholic goal.

In the year of his consecration as sixth bishop of Rockhampton he made plain to all that it was communism that crystallised in a special way the religious, cultural and political responsibilities which were central to his view on the nature and role of the Church in the world. It was in the wider cultural struggle that he believed the Church must perforce be involved: "All serious minded people know that at present a determined effort is being made to undermine the very foundations of society. We are living in constant strife and uncertainty. This effort is being directed by men and women who are professed atheists and according to a set plan to create unrest and discontent amongst the masses and finally revolution."<sup>24</sup> There is something of the simplicity of the council of Jerusalem in Tynan's contribution to the Second Council of the Vatican. He saw it as the opportunity for the "settling of controversies" - he uses this phrase twice to emphasise the importance of this question to the Australian Church. This reflects the courtesy and the iron will, the tender faith as also the practical streak that characterised Tynan. Moreover, while the anti-communist rhetoric may make some moderns blush, his opposition to communism and his interest in lay Catholic Action together constitute essentially ecclesiological concerns. What is the Church? Who comprises the Church? What is the nature and extent of authority in the Church, not least in controversial times? How might controversies arising from these questions be settled? These were indeed the questions being asked throughout the world in the 1950s. In a certain sense the whole cast of characters in that era of the Cold War and the Red Scare

may seem intellectually incongruous with the *dramatis personae* who brought the 'new theology' to the European Church. But the interaction of Mannix, Santamaria, Evatt, Calwell, Gilroy and the others created a certain temper which rendered the Australian Church ready for the settlement of controversies, if not for the full panoply of conciliar changes that were to come. In this most basic sense, Tynan too was 'prepared' for the Council. His *votum* may also be seen as somewhat enigmatic. He supports an agenda, not reforms by name. He may well have been unsure where the issue of lay autonomy was heading.

The Diocesan Synod of August 1959 over which he presided was the first diocesan synod held in Australia after John XXIII's announcement of the Council. There is nothing in its book of statutes that prefigures the Council or the need for any kind of renewal in the spiritual lives of the local faithful. It restricted itself to a process of tightening up existing norms and diocesan customs. This is of course to be expected. Synods, episcopal/legislative rather than properly conciliar events, were held subject and always pursuant to canon law and the decrees of plenary or national councils. From a wide variety of existing canonical and plenary rules such synods merely re-emphasised particular ones thought to have some local relevance at a particular time. Little more could be said of liturgy in those days but that "the Dialogue Mass should be encouraged in the forms approved by the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites"<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, there was perhaps scope even then to bring to priests and people a degree of encouragement or to embellish proceedings with some didactic references to Scripture in order to provide a thematic focus for the whole diocese.<sup>26</sup> This, of course, would become common years later in clergy conferences, modernised retreats and diocesan programmes like Renew. In the section on the laity of Rockhampton's 1959 Synod the faithful are instead reminded - through their priests, because statutes were not actually addressed to lay people - that "no strong drink is permitted at any Catholic public function" and elsewhere that "reasonably close friendship can be regarded as a sufficient reason for passive attendance at non-Catholic funerals and weddings." Priests, for their part, were expected to cultivate the same degree of zeal and accountability as their Townsville brothers. Oddly, in a section on 'Parish Life', they were also forbidden to own race horses or dogs or "to attend race meetings which are attended by bookmakers under the auspices of a registered race club unless such race meetings are held for Church purposes." An interesting addendum, however, advises that "'Bookmaker' - Decree 54 of the IV Plenary Council - does not include the Totalisator or an unregistered starting price bookmaker." This indicates a degree of cognitive flexibility.

What encouragement that was offered was of the old folk Catholicism, of the Pioneer Association of the Sacred Heart, Devotions of the Forty Hours, the Litany

of the Virgin and the Rosary, of Prayers to St Joseph, Acts of Reparation to the Sacred Heart and Benedictions. And all of that, after all, was quite a lot to be going on with for most Catholics. These were the means by which sacred realities were culturally commingled with the temporal realities of work and family, to the slow life, dreary surrounds and hot climate of Central Queensland. Today's orthodoxy on those years, that lay Catholics then were 'excluded', does, after all, need to be somewhat qualified. John XXIII loved the traditions of folk Catholicism and it is very likely he would have been disappointed if told his Council would come to be seen by some to have heralded their decline among Western Catholics. Traces of renewal might not be evident in synodal proceedings of the time - nor do even the early synods in Church history tend to stress the positives of ecclesiastical life - but the grand though prosaic theme of continuity is. The means by which it was expressed were admirable even if continuity as an end in itself became increasingly reactionary and theologically unacceptable in the years of the Council and beyond. The sacred reality even more central to Tynan's view of the Church comes out in the Synodal Sermon delivered by his Vicar-General, the formidable D. G. Tiernan. The address also provides insights into how Tynan may have responded to an expanded understanding of lay autonomy.

Monsignor Tiernan's address provided some of that embellishment and explication so lacking in the 1959 Synod itself. It concerns the divine institution by Christ of the episcopate and the centrality of the bishop's authority to the exercise of priestly and diaconal ministry. He also expatiates on St John Vianney's definition of a priest and agrees with the *curé d'ars* that "if I were to meet a priest and an angel I would salute the priest before the angel, for the angel is a friend of God but the priest holds his place."<sup>27</sup> "Yet great as is the dignity of the priest, there is one in our midst whose dignity is greater and more exalted still." That, of course, was the bishop. Echoing sentiments expressed by Thomas Cahill in his *votum* (see below), the Monsignor denounces the notion that "in their private lives, in their homes, in their places of work, in their social, industrial and political associations, men have the right to be their own judges and that their conduct is their own private affair and not the business of the Church." In the context of the 1950s this emphasis on the authority of the bishop, "not circumscribed by any man made limitations", is different in both tenor and substance from Archbishop Mannix's support for the autonomy of extra-hierarchical lay action - excepting matters related to faith and morals. It is likely, in other words, that however vigorously Tynan opposed communism and supported the Industrial Groups, he would not have been inclined to countenance the action of lay people in social and industrial situations without a clear, organic and accountable connectedness to the hierarchy. This is why Tynan expresses an interest in his *votum* for clarification on whether societies not explicitly Catholic but in the minds of all

belonging to the Church may be established independently of the Ordinary. The *Animadversiones* of Dr Mannix on *De Ecclesia* indicate that those who might have considered themselves supporters of the Melbourne Archbishop may in time have changed their minds when the full implications of lay autonomy were realised. Cahill did in fact change his mind and it is likely Ryan would have too given his authoritarian style. Tynan's high view of the centrality of episcopal power indicates that the campaign against communism would not have entailed an accompanying transformation in his self-understanding as a bishop either.

It is surprising Thomas Cahill's *votum* was not the first submitted by a Queensland bishop to the ante-preparatory commission because Cahill evidenced throughout his life the veracity of the saying that 'if you want something done, ask a busy person.'<sup>28</sup> One who knew him well repeated to me an observation made once about Cahill, that purgatory for him would be to look through a grill at a desk of papers in need of urgent attention. "Thank God for the Swiss", he once wrote on a matter related to liturgical publication. 'Thank God for Cahill', the Church's less administratively inclined prelates must often have whispered during his distinguished career as he worked with a suitably Swiss precision on Delegation matters, synods, Bishops' conferences and in other secretarial capacities. After being requested with the other bishops of Australia to respond to the Council's ante-preparatory commission, Cahill saw to these particular papers relatively promptly. Topically and for its relative length amidst his brother bishops' brevity, his *votum* may be compared with submissions from elsewhere but it is more efficient than imaginative and bears the hallmarks of something penned hurriedly. Cahill's certainly cannot be numbered among those *vota* which said only that their writers had nothing to say. Moreover, it has to be pointed out that the request for suggestions on the Council's agenda would have been received in some dioceses as just another set of forms from Rome to be filled out as efficiently as possible. The model of an ecclesiastical secretary of the old school, Cahill would have been least inclined of all to exaggerate the likelihood of an antipodean suggestion changing the course of ante-preparatory history.

Like most Catholics who had given thought to the Council since its announcement in 1959, Cahill referred first of all to the possibility for reunion between Churches 'since all hope that the fruit of the Council will be that quarrelling brothers might be returned to the unity of the Church of Christ' (No.1).<sup>29</sup> Such a reunion, however, was not for the Cahill of 1959 conceived of in properly ecumenical terms but as a process of clarification for the sake of those estranged from Rome. Matters dealt with by Trent and Vatican I should be referred to the Council 'so that the faith might lie open to all with no ambiguity.'<sup>30</sup> Whether that would be a good or a bad thing in irenic terms is not made clear, merely that such

matters might have a place on the agenda. Cahill supports a simplification of the rubrics of the Mass and liturgical functions to that of the norm of the restored Holy Week and an expansion of the use of the vernacular. On the question of episcopal authority, he favours an increase in a bishop's autonomy over against power delegated from the Holy See and deplors what he sees as the tendency among some lay people and priests to diminish episcopal authority 'from a certain spirit of false democracy which holds all in the Church as though equal' (No.6). It is a truism in Church history that complaints of this latter kind are never theoretical observations but almost always arise from actual events or from attitudes thought to be gaining support among the faithful. With so few forums in 1959 for the expression of dissident views and given the unlikelihood of man to man dialogues in which such libertarianism might have been expressed to Cahill, it is not unreasonable to read this opinion as a generalised observation on the egalitarian culture of North Queensland, as much as to any nascent liberality among Catholics. Egalitarianism was one thing for which his experience and training did not prepare him. Moreover, Cahill came to adhere to the Sydney policy on the Movement which was an assertion of episcopal authority over Santamaria's version of Catholic Action. Counter-assertions from Movement supporters of autonomous lay control over their industrial and social agitprop as an ongoing campaign did not meet with Cahill's approval, however much the earlier more purposeful campaign in trade unions did. (As with the other Queensland *vota*, communism is not mentioned by Cahill). He may therefore be seen as a bell-whether for those bishops caught between the rock of episcopal authority and the hard place of socially volatile counter-communism. With Ryan and Tynan, then, Cahill too was torn between episcopalist and anti-communist *conservatisms*; these exerted a mutually countervailing force on each other of the magnetic kind and left many bishops hovering suspended in the void between. Cahill knew better than most that in such circumstances orthodoxy could be found along with safety, in numbers. And in a Church still ecclesiologically gerrymandered by a hierarchical theology, Rome always *had* the numbers. Strongly anti-communist, pro-Mannix bishops like William Brennan and others found it difficult to follow Cahill's lead on this nuanced issue and eventually retreated into the humble silence of the confused or the wilful obscurantism of the inflexible. Brennan's confidante in Bendigo chose the anti-communist face of the conservatism Janus: Bernard Stewart supported Mannix's policy on lay autonomy at the Council itself. He went to the trouble to make plain his belief that "in choosing temporal affairs and civil affairs, [lay people] enjoy full liberty, both in the ends to be attained and in the means for attaining those ends."<sup>31</sup> Full liberty - *plena gaudent libertate*: the same phrase and the same sentiments are to be found in No. 4 of Mannix's animadversion *De Laicis* Part II. Stewart's later publication of a decidedly Petrine model of the Church for catechetical reasons<sup>32</sup> may thus be seen as the means by which he counterbalanced

with ultramontanist this earlier *de facto* vitiating of his episcopal conservatism. This was strategically logical but, in a way, too adept by half. By the mid-1970s, belief in the merits of an Ultimate Authority on everything was obsolete theologically and counter-productive culturally.

On liturgical matters, Cahill's suggestions have the ring to them of a pragmatic resignation to circumstances rather than to enthusiastic acceptance of imminent innovations. That the rubrics of the Mass should be simplified "appears to be desirable"<sup>33</sup>, while the "question of the vernacular language in the liturgy of the Church could be treated, because it would be seen to benefit the salvation of souls if the vernacular language could be used in those functions in which the faithful ought actively to participate, such as in the administration of the sacraments, funeral rites, blessings, processions, and in the first part of the spoken Mass for Catechumens."<sup>34</sup> The bishop who would eventually be responsible for so much of the administrative and publicational minutiae of the *Novus Ordo* Mass in Australia also speaks of things which "could be" done: treatment of the new edition of the Breviary and of the Roman Missal with a revision of the festal calendars and work on a single version of Sacred Scripture (new and improved publications were a favourite, albeit eventually burdensome, area of interest for Cahill); the elucidation and defence of episcopal authority; clarification of relations between the bishop and men and women religious in dioceses and of the extent of episcopal authority over them<sup>35</sup>; a treatment of the causes of religious defection, problematic "in nearly all regions" (No.9); and a study of what continues to and what no longer constitutes servile works for the sake of a proper observance of the Sabbath (No.10).

A decade before the announcement of Vatican II Cahill participated in the third diocesan synod of Sandhurst as Chancellor of that diocese and secretary of the proceedings. In that year, 1948, an Australian - almost certainly Cardinal Gilroy - was consulted by Pius XII about the possibility of an Ecumenical Council.<sup>36</sup> This was 'the Council that never was.' Just how fortunate it was that such a Council never took place at that particular time is demonstrated at the local level by the statutes of the 1948 Sandhurst Synod.<sup>37</sup> It deals predictably enough with clerical and lay responsibilities, the sacraments and parochial administration. It was meant to achieve no more than a consolidation of the norms and canons then operative and could not have made any significant innovations even if its participants so wished. But local perspectives come through in the language of the statutes and show how control, order and discipline were central to the ecclesiological thinking of men like Cahill and his contemporaries. Priests are given a list of 15 'shoulds' and 'musts' which make no attempt at all to offer encouragement or to present their ministry in any kind of scriptural or pastoral light, let alone one to illumine their own humanity or their sense of fellowship with either parishioners or one

another. "No priest shall accept an organised presentation from the faithful without previous permission from the Bishop"; "Priests shall submit their census books for inspection by the Bishop each year at the time of the retreat." The laity are invisible even in those 'statutes' promulgated for their benefit: "Priests shall exhort the faithful..."; "Priests shall promote and encourage ... Catholic Action movements"; "parish priests should ... provide extraordinary confessors..."; "Priests should take a special interest in converts..."; "The faithful are forbidden to be present at non-Catholic marriages"; "Catholics may never act as witnesses at non-Catholic marriages"; "Parents who send their children to state schools without sufficient reason are guilty of a grave sin." Would-be restorationists, some of whom are contemptuous of their bishops in concrete local situations, must honestly ask themselves whether this kind of Church - of strictures and judgements, of 'statutes' and reprimands - is really the ecclesiological model worth getting sentimental about. But, to be fair, reference is made to the Sandhurst Synod of 1948 to demonstrate that what degree of innovation a man like Cahill could support may not have come easily or naturally. The seemingly unenthusiastic acceptance of the apparent need for liturgical change amongst just a few other things must be appreciated in this context.

The penultimate *votum* to be discussed here is that submitted by Bishop William Brennan of Toowoomba. Brennan represented a type of those bishops who would have been comfortable with a Council of reunion with the Eastern Orthodox or one intended to return separated Christians to the one true Church on Roman terms. This is a speculative opinion, there being no indication historically that Brennan had any understanding of the Byzantine vicissitudes of Church history. It is based on the contention that in one committed to a triumphalistic view of the Church, there would be no objection to the 'submission' of the Orthodox to Rome. In 1959-60, such reunion was still widely considered to be the Council's pre-eminent if not exclusive purpose. In very few Australian *vota* is there to be found evidence of intellectual awareness of the growing importance amongst theologians for returning to sources - to Scripture and to the Fathers - or of the liturgical and ecumenical movements. The tremors which were starting to break up the old paradigm of Tridentinism occurred in Australia mostly through inchoate, almost unintentionally ecclesiological rumblings resulting from the Movement imbroglio. (The whole affair, then, was not without a positive dimension. The tremors, however, did not cause what could be considered an ecclesiological awakening, rather, a kind of stress-induced somnambulism). There were not to be felt here the rude tectonic jolts which reduced old notions to ruins elsewhere somewhat earlier. That was beyond Bishop Brennan's mountain. Atop it, no movement was felt until quite a few years after the Council.



Apart from the merest acknowledgment of what others in the Church were hoping for the Council, those hopes were not ones about which he himself was enthusiastic. He does not say as Bishop O'Collins of Ballarat does that the Church in Toowoomba was "sufficiently healthy." Nor does he say with O'Collins that for the Council's agenda "nothing comes to mind." Brennan's *votum* belongs to a category within the Australian submissions which may be characterised as largely indifferent. (And to a sub-category of the *intentionally* indifferent). The Ballarat version, however, is best understood by the words of "a certain most wise priest" whom O'Collins quotes at the end of his non-committal submission: "to make judgement and censure concerning the rule and administration of the Church is something new and unheard of for us." (*pro nobis aliquid novum et inauditum est*).<sup>38</sup> Brennan's *votum* could also be seen as belonging to a yet smaller group: to an axis of immobilists made up of Bernard Stewart and Thomas Fox. To follow the former in his conservatism as well as other Bishops who adapted to the new post-conciliar dispensation - or shrewdly pretended to - would before long constitute an impossible task for Brennan. He is known to have subscribed to Stewart's conservative ultramontanist and his *votum* indeed is almost identical to the Sandhurst Bishop's and to Fox's.<sup>39</sup> All three *vota* begin with the usual acknowledgment of having received a request for submissions, immediately disavow being able to contribute anything whatsoever, communicate an intention to attend the Council God willing and conclude - in the case of Brennan's and Stewart's - with almost identical salutations, naturally enough, professing devotion and fidelity to the supreme Roman See. Future historians may prove otherwise but what slight differences do exist between these submissions almost seem like the kind a school-boy employs to ensure his copied homework is not *quite* the same as the clever boy's. Stewart's *votum* is dated 2 March and Fox's 11 April 1960 while Brennan's is the only undated *votum* submitted by a residential Australian bishop. Perhaps that would have been too obvious.<sup>40</sup>

The unanswered question insofar as the 'axis of immobilists' is concerned is why these three were so disinterested in the future Council's agenda. After all, there was no indication in 1959-60 that the Council was going to be revolutionary or threatening to their model of the Church. They do not even ask for a condemnation of communism or advocate the formulation of a new Mariological dogma, both topics a few other Australian bishops took the trouble to mention. It would seem that they had the slightest of suspicions that the Council might be one of reform and that was enough to arouse their indifference - if one can thus speak of indifference. In commending Pope John for "applying his hand so bravely", Fox perhaps gives a hint that he was aware of how the curia would react to an Ecumenical Council. In his student days, Brennan prepared a 'doctorate' on how the sacrament of penance had essentially never changed throughout the Church's

history, a notion which would have been questionable even to the examiners who provisionally passed his thesis.<sup>41</sup> In this, one can discern at least part of the reason for Brennan's immobilism in the conciliar years. He believed the Church had never and should never change. He also may be seen as what a spy novelist might call a 'sleeper': encouraged to adhere to an immutable, monarchical view of the Church, he received an education which was probably intended to develop nothing more sophisticated in the years to come than loyalty to Rome. Ultramontanism became in Brennan, as in others, a kind of poor man's *Romanità*, similar to the 'deferential conservatism' of working class supporters of Mrs Thatcher. The latter also supported an elite to which they did not belong because that was what well bred humility demanded. To be sound meant to be silent when demands for change became importunate. This, of course, represents a political naivete unremarkable in the personalities of inflexible conservatives. What is considered 'sound' can change. The formula which makes good sense for the Holy See and which is not without its advantages to all Catholics - *nihil innovetur, nisi quod traditum est* - was out of place in the mindset of a remote local bishop like Brennan but it does not seem entirely fair to blame him for this personally. Vatican II became for him a pilgrimage where the Church in all of its glory would be on display for the entire world to see. He brought back a silk portrait of John XXIII as a memento of the great occasion but no commitment to conciliar renewal.<sup>42</sup>

Brennan's opposition to reform may also be contextualised by reference to his predecessor in Toowoomba, Basil Roper. Distinctly outside the norm of the Irish-Australian Church, the Tasmanian of English extraction was an intellectual whose frailties were less acceptable to Irish-Catholics than Brennan's and who was inclined to put his own opinion forward quite regardless of what others thought. (During the war, he disagreed with Archbishop Duhig's advocacy of a curfew for teenage girls<sup>43</sup>; that would have been regarded as both novel and indelicate). Fortrightness, occasionally, was one means by which manliness, talent and courage could be demonstrated in a personality rendered increasingly sensitive by a very human weakness. Archbishop Simonds of Hobart regarded him as "the only member of the Hierarchy with whom I feel quite at ease."<sup>44</sup> Simonds could himself display a certain openness to reforms and even to what the theologians call *theologoumena* and it was undoubtedly this quality - as well as the shared connection to Tasmania - that made Roper companionable in Simonds's eyes. At the First Diocesan Synod of Toowoomba in 1948, meant to "bring us into closer contact with the universal Code of Canon Law, and in a peculiar manner, to the practical questions of the day," Roper demonstrated rather more commitment to liturgical reform than was common at the time.<sup>45</sup> He believed "the practice of having the whole congregation (if possible) answer the Latin at every Low Mass is to be accepted as normal"; that it was preferable to have ecclesiastical music

sung in the body of the Church rather than in a gallery “in order that the whole congregation may share actively in the sacred liturgy”; and that “the custom, now in vogue in some parishes, of singing an Invitatory and suitable hymns before and after Mass is highly recommended for general adoption.”<sup>46</sup> (If one imagines the words as Bishop Brennan’s and the reforms being spoken of as those enunciated in Vatican II’s *Sacrasanctum Concilium* then Roper’s remarks seem laudably relaxed about innovation). It is somewhat unusual to come across such positive observations in the old synods. Moreover, his reference to “practical questions of the day” was almost an inversion of the then predominating model which tended to emphasise timeless norms and the largely salvific, rather than practical, secular dimensions of the Church and its canons. Decree 25 on marriage also seems addressed to lay people directly rather than through parish priests. He speaks of contraception - itself unusual (and unique among the post-war Queensland synods) - in a nuanced way that seems somewhat different to what Brennan might have said twenty years later. “Tragic is the position of those who act with false or uncertain consciences concerning the limiting or spacing of the family or the morality of medical or surgical treatment in special cases.” Tragic is the false or uncertain conscience. It is impossible to know whether this is a Newmanesque encouragement of the supremacy of conscience even where contraception is concerned or a lamentation on the practice *per se*. It admits of either interpretation which indicates that Roper here anticipates that vagueness which became official policy in the years to come. He was also ahead of his time in the equally subtlety-laden field of canon law and matrimony. Certainly, “Catholics should marry Catholics, for this is the simplest and surest way to secure the graces of matrimony.” Nevertheless, “due respect must be paid to those honourable non Catholics who, having made the mistake of contracting a mixed marriage, set themselves *bravely to keep their promises in spite of every difficulty*.” (Emphasis added). Roper echoes the thinking of the time by attaching an addendum to the widely understood primary purposes of marriage: “...we depend on Christian Marriage for the Priesthood, for Religious Life and for the preparation of Saints to live with God.”

Rather like Burke and Wills, the Roper episcopate’s demise is thought to have occurred under a tree in a conference of local priests with Duhig. Certain irregularities were discussed and his episcopate came to an end soon after. It could be argued that the Roper episcopate gave an undeservedly bad name to all ‘unsound’ behaviour, to intellectualism, to independent thinking and to the acceptance of that capacity for nuance found in genuine Churchmanship. Roper believed his consecration at the hands of Mannix “placed him in the line of St Patrick and, through him, in the line of Pope St Celestine and so of the Apostles.”<sup>47</sup> More Basilian than Josephian - though Joseph was his first name - it was not Celestine I whom he was to emulate in at least one respect: the manner of his leaving.

Rather, it was Pope St Celestine V, the hermit pope who abdicated and was honourably confined thereafter by Boniface VIII. His replacement would be of sturdier, simpler and more sceptical stuff. He certainly would not encourage liturgical customs 'now in vogue.' The contention that his nominators chose to promote - and Brennan himself felt the need to exude - such a personality after Roper's enigmatic era is one best addressed by local experts. It is here proposed simply as a way of interpreting events, not as a datum of historical truth. It would have the advantage of allowing us to better understand an episcopate - Brennan's - which it has become customary to criticise rather harshly.

Another undated *votum* was that submitted by Archbishop Patrick O'Donnell. In different historical circumstances one would have good reason to begin with an analysis of the Metropolitan's submission. In 1959-60, however, Archbishop Duhig was too old to take a sustained, detailed interest in the Council. The *votum* sent from Brisbane was prepared by his coadjutor in his capacity as titular of *Pelusiotanus* and therefore is not to be found in the *Acta et Documenta* in Brisbane's alphabetical place but rather with the *vota* of auxiliary and titular bishops at the end of the Australian section.<sup>48</sup> This is odd in the sense that O'Donnell could have prepared a *votum* and had it approved by and sent under Duhig's name or submitted it conjointly with him but obviously chose not to.<sup>49</sup> This was his right as an Archbishop but, symbolically, it means that technically no Brisbane prelate submitted a *votum* precisely as Archbishop of Brisbane. In his more robust days, Duhig would not have supported this sort of ecclesiastical inconspicuity for his beloved See. For this reason the *vota* of Queensland's suffragans have been discussed according to seniority with O'Donnell's left till last in order to highlight some remaining points.

Believing the Council would be a "canonical jamboree of legislation and niceties of law", the former Vicar-General of Sale in Victoria made seven suggestions, six of which are indeed entirely canonical.<sup>50</sup> They may be seen as the common sense and pragmatic observations of a practised and able canonist with the hint in No. 2 of pastoral intent and more than a touch of ecumenism in No. 7. The first, supported by the other Australian *vota*, is that there should be a complete overhaul of those canons governing excommunication. These should be reduced numerically for they "seem in fact to be useless for the intended effect since, on account of ignorance of the penalties they are most often not incurred." Making the common mistake of assuming more staff will improve the operation of a bureaucracy, he also suggests there be an increase in the number of those devoted to service in the Roman Tribunals for expediting matrimonial cases (No. 2). Duhig would have wholeheartedly supported No. 3. Unique among Australian suggestions, it points out that the delay involved in communications between

Australia and the Holy See means permission for transferring goods for the use of the Church is delayed to the detriment of progress. So often is it required due to the small sum above which permission from abroad is needed that Rome must recognise the fact that in Australia "the progress of the Church is abreast with civil progress" and should therefore increase the sum "lest often and more often recourse must be had to the Holy See." An eirenic suggestion perhaps: proof to Duhig the self-taught financier from O'Donnell the self-taught canonist that legal minutiae are not altogether impractical. Liturgy is only briefly and arcanelly referred to in No. 4 which suggests a more critical selection of readings of the second nocturn in the offices of certain saints. O'Donnell, perhaps repeating suggestions made to him by men and women religious, asks for corrections of what are perceived to be irregularities in elections and in matters pertaining to novitiates (No. 5) while No. 6 deals with a question raised by many bishops, that of the settings and circumstances for the confessions of women religious.

It is only in his final suggestion that O'Donnell takes an archiepiscopal lead by referring to ecumenical relations with the Anglican Church. This he does in an altogether more insightful way than Cahill and Ryan:

The time seems opportune for exploring the possibility of entering into discussions, at least informally, with certain ones from that sect of the Anglican church which is called 'High Church'. There are present in that sect outstanding men who sincerely desire union with the Holy See. But because the sect is split - and more or less in autonomous ways - into different regions, discussions ought to be held in each region. With the consent of the Holy See, the Synod of Bishops in these regions - for example, in England, Australia, Canada, North America - might judge concerning the suitability or usefulness of initiating such discussions.

Duhig was no ecumenist in the modern understanding of that word. Which is to say, he did not believe in - indeed, he could not have been conscious of - that concretisation and symbolisation through interdenominational dialogue of a type of Christian unity whose eventual extent, form and nature remain uncertain still. He was nevertheless a long way ahead of his confreres in the Church, priestly and episcopal, on inter-church relations. His magnanimity in this respect, as in so many others, was a trait natural in one with so just and Christian an estimate of his own worth - however much this trait had as its predictable aberration an occasionally imperious egoism. Without knowing it, Duhig had set the standard for what we now describe as 'social ecumenism' which is always the foundation for more mature interaction. Not only may his coadjutor's final suggestion be

seen as a reflection of his principal's generous eirenic spirit, however, but also as something new - the most basic assertion of the local Church's role in the fulfilment of ecumenical responsibilities. O'Donnell's proposition, then, reflects both old and developing sentiments: it is positive certainly, there being no Ryesque references to 'heretics' or Cahill-like proposals for the revisitation of Trent and Vatican I. It is antiquated for moderns because it foresees not tolerance of diversity but conversion of those thought to be dallying wistfully on the banks of the Tiber. O'Donnell asserts, however, that it is local bishops who are best able to coax amenable High Churchmen ashore.<sup>51</sup> "Entering into discussions, at least informally" with certain Anglicans had occurred before in the Malines Conversations of 1921-26 but that was largely due to the zealous commitment of Lord Halifax and the Abbé Portal, not to any effort expended by Rome. In facilitating the conversations, Cardinal Mercier acted with local authority in a way which seems comparable to what O'Donnell suggests in his *votum*. Like Mercier, he knows Roman permission is crucial; in distinction to Malines, however, O'Donnell correctly judges that deliberations with the Anglican communion must proceed at regional levels whereby local knowledge might be brought to bear on the relevant issues. Archbishop O'Donnell, then, like his future suffragans in Cairns and Townsville (and like Tynan) was not unwilling to envisage change or contribute something, however modest it might seem now, to that process of development whose pace and scope in the years to come he could not then predict.

Brisbane's synod that never was, that prepared by O'Donnell and Rockhampton's Dr Cec Ballard in the late 1950s, like those others mentioned above, did not reflect anything more than a belief that reform occurred only through reminding the faithful of the sacredness of their religious duties. The coadjutor's *votum* therefore constituted something new in its preparedness for a wider set of priorities. Lengthier than the documentation for the other synods (at nearly 50 pages), the Brisbane version did begin with a very slight attempt to provide an intellectual basis for its many declarations. It quotes from the Council of Trent, still powerfully normative in the 1950s but destined of course to be culturally eclipsed by an entirely different kind of Council. "There is nothing which more effectively attracts others to a devoted worship of God than the life and example of those who have dedicated themselves to the Divine ministry."<sup>52</sup> The passage is from Trent's Decree on Reform (Canon I, Session 22). Alberigo translates this passage as "there is nothing that more constantly *trains* others in devotion and the worship of God..." but 'attracts' would have had more relevance four hundred years after Trent in the comparatively secularised world of mid-twentieth century Brisbane.<sup>53</sup> As with any synod of that era, such a foundational reference was altogether in keeping with what followed: rules and regulations for parish priests and lay people thought to be worthy of restatement.

There is tradition to be sure, and of the most awesome kind, in its reminder to priests that, newly arrived in their parishes, they much recite the Profession of Faith and the oath against Modernism before the Dean of the District. They and their parishioners must show deep and sincere devotion to the Vicar of Christ and due honour and reverence to his Apostolic Delegate. Reflecting local tradition, priests are forbidden from participating in “secular politics” - the adjective may or may not be redundant - and any acts or statements which manifest partisan political views. Likewise, they are not to “take part in public debate with any person or persons on any matter, whether religious or profane”, a statement reflecting Queensland’s peaceable policy during secular controversies. Unlike a Rockhampton priest who apparently could have a bet at least ‘on the nod’, his Brisbane brother could not indulge in the “scandal of betting” nor purchase with illicit winnings “a car of such expensive model as to scandalise the faithful of his district.” More positively, priests are enjoined to treat their assistants with kindness and liberality and to give them “responsibilities proportioned to their maturity.” The presbytery is not the private house of the parish priest but is “the common home of all the priests assigned to the parish, in which the assistants ... are equally considered and cared for.” Outside of the presbytery, priests should, like their Archbishop, “make acquaintance, wherever possible, with those outside the fold, for these too are commended to him in the Lord.” At Mass, finally, they should avoid both undue haste and wearisome slowness.” The last injunction would later become an informal statement of policy as well as a nearly unrealisable goal in Queensland and not just in liturgical matters.

Trent loomed large in the 1950s in the way a shadow lengthens under a once brilliant but slowly receding light. For it is easily forgotten just what a reforming, illuminating Council Trent had been. To read its impressive defence and elucidation of Catholic doctrine, its admonishments of wayward clergy and bishops, its decrees against superstition in the liturgy and its hard words about simoniacal greed and worldliness is to be reminded that once before the Church had embarked upon huge and hazardous reform. Archbishop O’Donnell’s may well have been the last local reference to Trent as the normative manual *par excellence* for the management of a Church interested to maintain a timeless normalcy. All of the Queensland bishops of 1959-60 were fortunate to see the dawn of a new Ecumenical Council. All but Andrew Tynan would dance awhile with its post-modern lights and shadows, synodal statutes on sober conduct notwithstanding.

#### IV. The Death of Andrew Tynan and the Beginnings of the Rush Era in Queensland

On 3 June 1960 Bishop Andrew Tynan died of a heart attack in London en route to Rome. Many people remember the sense of shock and sadness this caused to the Church in Rockhampton. A time of *sede vacante* is one of uncertainty in the life of any diocese. For a bishop to die so suddenly and so far from home only exacerbated such feelings. It was “to say the least, a stunning blow.”<sup>54</sup> He was only 52 years old. Cardinal Tardini, to whom he had addressed his *votum* on Catholic Action just two months earlier, sent expressions of Pope John’s grief with the paternal Apostolic blessing. Perhaps nobody knows how conscious Tynan was of his own state of health but if he did persist with the burdensome responsibilities of episcopal office while unwell he could be numbered among many strong willed and religious people in history whose health deteriorated due to their dedication to duty. The doctor who performed the autopsy told Archbishop Young at the time that Tynan very probably “had some indication that his heart was not good about two or three years ago.”<sup>55</sup> The requiem for Tynan at Westminster Cathedral was in some ways a forerunner of Archbishop Duhig’s funeral in 1965. It was not of the same scale of course and in no way did it mark the end of a giant’s era, as Duhig’s so obviously did even to those who witnessed it. But it does constitute for the historian a distinct turning point for the Queensland Church.<sup>56</sup> As he lay in state that day, gathered around him were men who in their own ways would help promote conciliar renewal in the years to come: Archbishop Young, a member of the liturgical Concilium and one of few Australians to address the Council; his successor, Fr Eric D’Arcy; Dr Percy Jones of Melbourne, a consultor on sacred music to the preparatory commission and the Concilium; Dr Grove Johnson, who would take a leading role in providing the necessary intellectual formation for Catholics in Queensland and elsewhere as the Council approached and subsequently. Is Tynan himself, one appointed to the episcopate at just 39 and a very practical bishop the odd man out in this gathering at Westminster? Not necessarily. Industrious and innovative, he did perhaps have both the capacity and the youthful adaptability to effect change. On the last day of his life he visited the local Catholic Enquiry Centre, an idea he brought to and actualised in Australia the previous year. This was a simple prototype of that concern for evangelisation in modern settings which was the very reason for the Council. As already discussed, moreover, he was not necessarily wedded permanently to the paradigm of anti-communism and he certainly believed in the efficacy of lay apostolates. If anything, he lacked only the ability - almost a charism really - to be the figurehead for something so intangible as change and renewal. He too, through no fault of his own, had what Bishop Freeman had called “a bureaucratic look” but even that he had rendered attractive through his strong and



devoted character. A friend thought he was as prepared “to make his *ad limina* and report directly to Christ in Person” as he was to Pope John. When bishops die such encomiums are commonplace but the historical sense of the faithful in his diocese would tend to regard the panegyrics for Tynan as fully earned.

The man who replaced him did have that certain something which approximates a gift, the ability - which must also be the *willingness* - to personify and articulate a rhetoric or grammar of change. Like Tynan, he had studied in Rome and been ordained there soon after the Coronation of Pius XII - the pope who preferred “executants not collaborators.” Moving beyond that sort of leadership style would take many more years. For his role in that process no less than because of the juncture at which he was consecrated, Francis Rush became, in a sense, the first modern bishop in Australia. Even on the day of his instalment at St Joseph’s on 8 February 1961 there was to be seen that “mixture of the familiar and the unfamiliar” which Chesterton believed Christendom “rightly named romance” but which today we might even associate with postmodernism.<sup>57</sup> From Chesterton’s age there was Bishop Rush’s oath against Modernism - a heresy not problematic locally - but a departure from such imposing tradition when he greeted the Anglican Bishop of Rockhampton after the ceremonies. To the local Catholic press, this simple gesture was an “unusual” and “memorable” event.<sup>58</sup> Some years before, in the 1950s, the Anglican curate of Bundaberg and one who would also become an Anglican Bishop of Rockhampton had begun to think the Church needed a new Francis, one to demarcate through his own witness a new age free of the old divisions.<sup>59</sup> In a way, that is what Rush, every subsequent bishop and all modern Catholics would in fact have perforce to do in their various local Churches in the years to come.

But Rush was the first.<sup>60</sup> He demarcated a new era indeed, initially through a new rhetoric of inclusion. His very first speech as Bishop demonstrates how things had already changed and what was still to come:

From what I hear of you, you, the people of Rockhampton diocese, have learnt that lesson from your bishops and priests. You haven’t the mistaken idea that the Church is a loose association of Pope, bishops and priests, with the rest of you tagging along lending a little moral support. You have the conviction that you are the Church, united by grace, charity and obedience - united to the Holy Father, your bishops and your priests in that living thing which is the Catholic Church. You are the Church, and the well-being and the growth of the Church are your responsibility.<sup>61</sup>

In the course of my research, I have often been surprised by the incredulity of those who would see nothing in local history worth writing about, let alone analysing theologically. This typically Australian intellectual notion - that everything romantic and profound happens in a Great Elsewhere - should have no place in the thinking of modern Catholics. Lest ideas like 'local Church' and '*sensus fidelium*' calcify due to a theology disinclined to refer to our own living history, the dictum should be adopted which holds that just as the personal is political, so also the local *is* theological. In this speech, Rush himself impliedly localises the Church's focus. He displays, moreover, those basic ideas and methods which were to ensure that however troubled times became in the future, he himself was not widely thought to have been personally to blame. Of course, many Catholics *did* have that 'mistaken idea' as he well knew. Rhetorically, Rush does not seek to cajole people into modern modes of thinking; rather, he implies ingeniously that local Catholics are *already* moving with the first currents of ecclesial modernisation. This ensured that many responded to Rush in the way they had to Pope John: they sought to please one they loved by doing what he seemed to wish. By stating that wish from the outset in terms learnt from Cardijn long before, Rush committed himself and those around him to a spiritually new, positive outlook on the Church in the modern world. This too constitutes the use of episcopal prestige in order to promote reform but it is presented as a natural element of the people's own wishes and tendencies. Gone forever is the wonderful Tynan's rhetoric on contemporary society's ever encroaching evils. Allied to the cosmopolitanism to which, not infrequently, provincials are more powerfully drawn, was a participative philosophy on the laity deriving from Rush's adherence to Cardijn's model of Catholic action. Free from the Movement's potentially troublesome preoccupation with controverted industrial questions, such a philosophy was well suited to peaceable, evolutionary renewal.

The Movement has ceased but that same evolution continues.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Jeffrey Murphy is a graduate history student at Griffith University. He wishes to thank Mr Russell Davies for the Latin translations on which part of this article is based.
- 2 See 'Hero of the Council' in *The Review*, November 1962.
- 3 *The Review*, December 1961.
- 4 An excellent demonstration of such a discernment can be seen in Jan Grootaers' 'Ebb and Flow Between Two Seasons' in Giuseppe Alberigo (ed) (1996), *History of Vatican II*, Vol II, p.514.
- 5 *The Review*, April 1959. Bishop Goody's *votum* suggests that even he believed reunion with the Orthodox was the Council's number one priority. He makes four references to Eastern sensitivities of which Catholics ought be cognisant.
- 6 J. Maguire, *Prologue*, p.211, *passim*.
- 7 There is anecdotal evidence that Brennan could mention an avant-gard author conversationally.
- 8 *Townsville Catholic News*, March 1959.
- 9 *The Review*, December 1961.
- 10 *Townsville Catholic News*, March 1959
- 11 *The Review*, August 1961.
- 12 *Vota* were the offerings, the suggestions sent by the world's bishops to Rome. Invitations to submit *vota* were sent from the Cardinal president of the Council's preparatory commission, Domenico Tardini, on 18 June 1959. Answers were expected by 1 September. This proved impossible owing to the time required for the letters to be received. A follow-up invitation was sent out on 21 March 1960 stipulating a new April deadline.
- 13 *Votum* of Hugh Ryan, 1 September 1959, pp. 605-06, *Acta et Documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II Apparando*, Series 1 (*Antepreparatoria*), VOL II: *Concilia et vota Episcoporum ac Praelatorum* (PARS VII - pp. 577-669). Hereafter, *AD*.
- 14 The cabbage-tree hat was popular among Sydney youths in the mid-nineteenth century. With its other sartorial accompaniments, it imitated what was thought to be the raffish, ready-for-anything kit of genuine inlanders. (This would be known, of course, by admirers of Russell Ward's *The Australian Legend*).
- 15 Rev Fr Mick Mullins to author (personal interview).
- 16 eg. "...union with all Christians (indeed with all people) is dear to the heart of the August Pontiff John XXIII of happy reign..." *Votum* of John Toohey, *AD*, pp. 595-96, 6 April 1960.
- 17 Ryan's phrase is '*De natura iuris quo Primatus Summi Pontificis cum episcopatu Romano coniungitur...*' The phrase in parentheses - *de usu vocis Romanae* - could make this a possible reference to the theology of collegiality. Alternatively, it may be a request for clarification of the papacy's 'ordinary' or 'episcopal' power - that is, *over* local bishops. These senses of the putative power of the pope were employed,

- critically, by the French Gallicans and well before that in late antiquity. The pope has also been referred to as Ordinary of the Universal Church. The words “*de usu vocis Romanae*”, regarding the Church’s description as one, holy, Catholic and apostolic, probably refer to infallibility. That is, Ryan may have wondered how ecumenism should proceed in view of a potentially dogmatic definition of the Church, one seemingly founded on the exclusivity of Catholicism. For the same reason, Beovich and Doody seek clarification on the saying, ‘outside the Church, no salvation.’ This is another indication of the extent to which John XXIII’s apparent openness to ecumenical dialogue did filter through to Australian bishops and challenge long-held assumptions.
- 18 It is often convenient to see a Mariological emphasis as a sign of an overarching conservatism but the nature and extent of Mary’s redemptive role has been an intellectually legitimate theological question for a long time, not least since the dogmatic definition of her Immaculate Conception. The question in the conciliar years was one of *opportuneness*.
- 19 Bishop Farrelly of Lismore argues “adequate remuneration for priests is required for enjoying public esteem.” *Votum* of Bishop Patrick Farrelly, *AD*, pp. 593-94.
- 20 Ryan uses *lingua vulgari*; Cahill, *linguae vernaculae*.
- 21 *Votum* of Andrew Tynan, *AD*, p.598.
- 22 *Votum* of James O’Collins, *AD*, p.583: “...*statum Ecclesiae hoc in loco sat sanum esse.*”
- 23 Quoted by R. J. Manning (ed), *Spanning a Century 1882-1982*, p.49.
- 24 Pastoral Letter of Andrew Tynan, 18 July 1946, Rockhampton Diocesan Archive.
- 25 *Diocesan Statutes enacted and proclaimed in the Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Rockhampton*, 19 August 1959.
- 26 “Leaving doctrinal questions to those who are wise”, Bishop Farrelly of Lismore was one of only two Australian bishops to begin his *votum* with a contemplative reference to Scripture, a brief and very fitting exegesis of St Luke: “Preach the Gospel to every creature.” (Bishop Freeman cited Acts 6: 2 to lament the “bureaucratic look” of bishops weighed down with administrative responsibilities).
- 27 Monsignor D. G. Tiernan, ‘The Authority of the Bishop’ in *The Review*, September 1959.
- 28 The former Bishop of Toowoomba, Basil Roper, submitted a *votum* as titular of *Elusanus* in August 1959 but “even after having consulted quite a few experts and wise people” he had “nothing to say on the matter.” *AD*, p.619.
- 29 Here and below I convert Cahill’s alphabetical sequence to a numerical one.
- 30 *Votum* of Thomas Cahill, 1 October 1959, *AD*, pp. 587-88.
- 31 See Appendix - ‘De Apostolatu Laicorum’, Number 49, Bernard Stewart, *Acta Synodalia*, VOL III, PARS IV, p.761,
- 32 Bernard Stewart, *The Catholic Religion: With Peter and Under Peter* (1970) & *Grounded in the Faith: Handing on the Deposit of the Faith* (1975).
- 33 “*Optandum esse videtur...*” (No. 3).

- 34 “*quia saluti animarum proficere videretur...*” (No. 2).
- 35 As the second bishop of Cairns and the first secular-priest Ordinary since the Fortuni Vicariate of 1882-84, Cahill had to deal with a vestigial Augustinian ethos in Cairns. It is at least worthy of contention that one reason Cahill and Ryan were appointed to their Northern sees was to guard against too Australian, too egalitarian, too informal an ecclesiastical culture taking root. Cahill was given serious responsibilities at a very young age, was familiar with Augustinians and Ryan had been considered especially pious since his school days and beyond. Their combination of authoritativeness and piety may have been considered the best combination for a part of the world which Romans and even Victorians would have regarded as a backwater.
- 36 See P. Hebblethwaite (1993), *Paul VI*, Fount pb. ed., p. 229f.
- 37 *Statutes of the Third Diocesan Synod of Sandhurst*, 1948, Sandhurst Diocesan Archive.
- 38 Bishops were permitted to seek the advice of *virī ecclesiastici periti et prudentes*.
- 39 *Votum* of Bernard Stewart, AD, p.601. *Votum* of Thomas Fox, AD, pp. 607-08.
- 40 There is no archival evidence of consultations between the three. Stewart refers only to discussions with unnamed “brother bishops.”
- 41 I am grateful to Mr Peter McEnery for information regarding Bishop Brennan’s Roman studies.
- 42 “silk portrait”: Bishop William Brennan of Wagga Wagga, nephew of the Toowoomba Brennan, to author.
- 43 See T. P. Boland (1986) *James Duhig*, St Lucia, p.313.
- 44 Justin Simonds to Basil Roper, 1942, Toowoomba Diocesan Archive.
- 45 Quoted by J.J. Wiemers (1979), *West of the Range*, Toowoomba.
- 46 *Decrees of the First Diocesan Synod of Toowoomba*, 18th & 19th February 1948, Fryer Library, University of Queensland. It should be pointed out that part of Roper’s encouragement of participation extended to occasional, rather severe, admonishments to inattentive parishioners. The ‘Mr Bligh’s Bad Language’ thesis would not be without relevance in any summary of Roper’s style, only he could be both Bligh *and* Christian.
- 47 From a memento of Bishop Roper’s consecration, quoted by Wiemers, op.cit. p.71. Roper shrewdly chose Mannix the Irish chieftain as consecrator, Australians Terence Maguire and Hugh Ryan as co-consecrators. Thomas Cahill assisted Ryan. For a future bishop of Toowoomba this was symbolically adept, as the Irish braggadocio that actually dominated the speechifying when Roper arrived in Toowoomba demonstrates.
- 48 *Votum* of Patrick O’Donnell, AD, pp. 621-22.
- 49 Archbishop Eris O’Brien and his auxiliary, John Cullinane, submitted a joint *votum*; No *votum* was sent from Melbourne by either Mannix or his coadjutor, let alone conjointly.
- 50 T. P. Boland., op.cit. p.366.
- 51 “*Annunte Sancta Sede, iudicet Coetus Episcoporum in his regionibus...*”
- 52 From a draft of the planned Brisbane synod. This draft took hundreds of hours to complete. Duhig was never canonically precise or even interested in legalistic matters.

O'Donnell - the self-taught canonist whose attention to exactitude could resemble scrupulosity - thought the Brisbane Archdiocese needed tightening up. Nothing could have been more likely to convince Duhig that his coadjutor lacked the necessary persona and gravitas to succeed him than a preoccupation with canonical verbiage. The planned synod was overtaken by events and forgotten.

- 53 Tanner, N. P. (Ed), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, VOL II, p.737.
- 54 *The Review*, July, 1960.
- 55 Archbishop Young to Monsignor D.G. Tiernan, *The Review*, July 1960.
- 56 "Bishop-elect Rush becomes a member of his Church's hierarchy during one of the most momentous phases of religious development in modern times throughout the world, and it is not improbable that viewed in later perspective his elevation will be found to coincide with the beginning of a new era." *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin*, quoted in *The Review*, March 1960.
- 57 G. K. Chesterton (1908), *Orthodoxy* in 1986 Ignatius *Collected Works* pb. ed., (VOL I), p.212.
- 58 *The Review*, March 1961.
- 59 Most Rev Sir John Grindrod to author (personal interview).
- 60 Goody and Young were certainly modern in their thinking and intellectual outlook but both were figures who bridged the old and modern eras rather than ones whose episcopal careers began in the very midst of a renewing phase of Church history. This at least partly explains why they could occasionally surprise admirers with stances seemingly at variance with their liberal credentials.
- 61 Rush at the Rockhampton School of Arts on the night of his consecration, from *The Review*, March 1961.