



Brian Doyle

**BRIAN DOYLE (1915-2003)
HIS VISION AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE
CATHOLIC PRESS APOSTOLATE IN AUSTRALIA**

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Brian Doyle began his term as Associate Editor at *The Catholic Weekly* in Sydney in 1944. He was also editor of *The Catholic Fireside*, a monthly intellectual magazine in Sydney, from approximately 1940 to 1945. In 1959, after almost fifteen years as associate editor of *The Catholic Weekly*, Doyle was ready for change. His family was growing and with it the financial obligations to secure their well-being. His Sydney years had been full of fruitful activity, not without challenges; but it was becoming obvious that a move forward in his own career within the Catholic Press Apostolate, to which he had shown such strong commitment, was necessary. He could see that promotion was unlikely to happen in Sydney with its climate of clerical dominance.

At this time, Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane was looking for a capable person to take on the load of *The Catholic Leader*, the Catholic newspaper of the Brisbane Archdiocese where Duhig had been active for many years with his distinctive leadership style. Doyle was offered the position of Editor of the paper and in 1959 he accepted. Two years later he became Managing Editor.

Moving to Brisbane also presented challenges. It was an upheaval for the family but they soon settled into a spacious home at Holland Park (with some extensions added for the growing family). It was close to Loreto Convent conducted by the Sisters of Loreto, for the Doyle daughters, with Villanova College conducted by the Augustinian Fathers, for the boys.

Doyle looked forward to the challenges of the job and putting into practice the principles he held for the role of the Catholic Press in the life of the Church. But things were soon to change in the Church.

On January 25, 1959, while Doyle was still in Sydney, Pope John XXIII announced the Second Vatican Council to take place in Rome, opening on 11 October 1962. Few people could have foreseen the impact of this time of ‘aggiornamento’, its deliberations on the Church and the renewal and revitalisation it instigated. It was a momentous time, beyond the full comprehension of the generations who came after Vatican II. From this distance of time, it is easy to say that surely not even Brian Doyle—in all his wisdom—could have foreseen what was in store for the Catholic Church, as the 1950s and its difficulties and struggles were left behind. Or perhaps he did have an inkling. Perhaps the thought of what the Council might mean firmed up his decision to ‘cut and run’ from a milieu where he experienced an hierarchical church structure that was not favourable to the ideas he held for his Apostolate.

Whatever thoughts were in Brian Doyle’s mind as he drove towards his new life in the north, he brought an enthusiasm for the task and a determination to show what the Catholic Press Apostolate could really achieve. It was inevitable that his professionalism and knowledge would bring immediate results. He quickly lifted *The Catholic Leader* towards its recognition as the leading Catholic newspaper in Australia. He became, as Dr Bruce Duncan noted, ‘the most important gatekeeper in Australia for interpretations of the Second Vatican Council’.¹ Years later, the noted Queensland Catholic historian, Dr Tom Boland, was to pay a rare compliment:

In 1959 Mr Brian Doyle of the *Sydney Catholic Weekly*, with impressive academic and journalistic experience, became editor. A new era of professionalism had arrived. In spite of constant financial difficulties, Mr Doyle made of *The Leader* the vehicle of Catholic news and comment that for so many years Archbishop Duhig had struggled to provide.²

The Catholic Leader on June 4, 1959, ran a front-page story headed ‘Archbishop Announces Plans to Reorganise Leader’ in which it quoted Archbishop Duhig as saying that the ‘first step is the appointment of a leading Australian Catholic journalist as Editor’. The story continued:

The new editor is Mr Brian Doyle, who in recent years has been the Associate Editor of *The Catholic Weekly* in Sydney. Plans that will vitally affect the paper’s future were ‘being worked out’. Mr J. T. Mulcahy remained as manager.³

Doyle began his appointment as *Leader* editor that week, and immediately set about working to produce the ‘brand new paper in modern format, with a greatly enlarged range of contents and a completely new approach’. One of his first assignments was the editorial for the June 11 issue. Under the heading “The Catholic Press Exists to Serve”, editor Doyle noted that:

Catholicism in Queensland has a rich and reassuring history. The Catholic effort here, in relation to both Church and State, has been large and influential. Nowhere in Australia does Catholicism enjoy a more helpful and fruitful situation. At no point do the prospects of Catholicism appear so agreeable and encouraging. Clearly then, there is a magnificent setting in which the Apostolate of the Catholic press, provided it reaches the required standards of worth and competence, and is therefore entitled to ask for support, should thrive and prosper.⁴

It was an optimistic start. On the same page was Brian Doyle’s account of his first experience of the annual Corpus Christi procession at Brisbane’s Exhibition Ground which, he wrote, ‘...for several hours became a virtual open-air Catholic shrine. I was given striking evidence of it...’. This ‘heart-warming, stimulating, inspiring’ occasion was, I believe, an eye-opener to the new Queenslander, the new Editor. He ended ‘this little impressionistic study’ on a personal note:

I was glad to be a Catholic at the Exhibition Grounds last Sunday. I was glad to be a Queensland Catholic. I was glad that I had come here to Queensland to live and work. I hoped I could measure up.⁵

He quickly got into stride at the editor's desk, adding new sections to the paper. *The Pope Speaks* each week included current comments of Pope John XXIII. *Notes and Comments* covered a wide range of topics from all over—way beyond Queensland. He wrote punchy editorials. It was as if he were revelling in a new-found freedom to widen the horizons of the Catholic community and awaken an interest in world affairs that impacted on the whole Church and the Catholic media's role in those events.

But he really made waves during that first year in Brisbane after Tom Truman, a University of Queensland lecturer in political science, published *Catholic Action and Politics*. It was dedicated to 'the Free Society in general, and Australian Democracy in particular'. It is interesting that in the foreword to the first edition, Truman said that the book was written:

...mainly for intelligent laymen, not those who are either expert in Catholic teaching and its application or are professional students of these matters, but those who are bemused by the partisan and sectarian controversy concerning the relation of the Catholic Church to politics and would like the subject illuminated by an objective enquiry based on evidence instead of the usual biased statements of the controversialists.⁶

Truman did not bargain for people such as Brian Doyle who was probably the very kind of person Truman did not want included among those for whom he wrote his book. In an 'Open Letter to Mr. Tom Truman of The Queensland University'—covering two pages, including page one of the Thursday, 26 November 1959 edition of *The Catholic Leader*—its Editor Doyle was scathing of this commentary on a subject in which he was so well-versed and had promulgated so ardently throughout his own career.

Doyle praised where praise was due, acknowledging that ‘we would be the first to agree with the notion of subjecting aspects of the role of the Catholic element in society to top-level academic scrutiny and analysis’. But [and it was a very big ‘but’] there was so much of his argument that was flawed and did not display the ‘...moderation, integrity, balance and depths of inquiry in the products of the academic sphere’.⁷ and so on. The writer showed no understanding of ‘The Mind of the Church’ in the matters he was addressing; an area with which Doyle was very familiar after many years of study and being immersed in the idea.

Such was the flurry of interest and criticism that followed the publication of Truman’s book, in Australia and abroad, that a second edition was published in 1960. The author’s ‘Note on the Second Edition’ contained interesting comments by way of justification. The two-page response from *The Catholic Leader* Editor had no doubt caught Truman by surprise. Throughout the eight chapters of his first edition, he had made no mention whatsoever of Brian Doyle, a major player in the development of Catholic Action in Sydney from the 1930s to 1959.

Truman wrote in the second edition note that the first edition text was being revised ‘to correct some errors of fact and some inaccuracies’, and that an Epilogue had been added ‘to deal with important developments in the affairs of the Catholic Church and in Australian politics which occurred after the first edition went to print’.⁸ He was careful to include the words ‘All the Catholic authors on sociology and politics that I have read, e.g. Messner, Rommen, Cronin, Haas, Maritain, etc., also put forward a point of view in their works’.⁹ This is an interesting inclusion since Doyle had specifically mentioned these names, among others, when he asked what Truman knew of the writings of these authors in the fields of political philosophy and political science, available in English, Italian, French and German.

Truman's response seemed to be equating his opinion with that of the notable philosophers mentioned in Doyle's list, as though they were merely their opinions and that therefore readers of Truman's book did not need to read them because this new opinion had at least as much validity.

Nor did Truman mention Doyle's name in his second edition note, referring simply to 'one Catholic editor [who] borrowed a copy of the book from the author as he was in such a hurry that he could not wait a few days for a review copy to reach him'. Truman noted that in his review he [the 'one Catholic editor'] spoke of calming 'the agitation' in the minds of his readers that the book had caused.¹⁰

Clearly, while he did not mention Doyle by name, he was referring to the introductory paragraph in the *Leader* story where Doyle explained that he was addressing Truman's writing because he felt 'newspaper references last week to passages in your recently published book, *Catholic Action and Politics*, may, to one degree or another, have caused agitation and confusion in the minds of some people'.¹¹ Nor did Truman retreat from making it clear that the thesis of his book was:

that the Catholic Bishops, though denying it, were deeply involved in politics and that this position reflected the importance attached to politics as a method of furthering the cause of the Church by the Vatican.¹²

It was not surprising that Doyle reacted so strongly to the thrust of Truman's book. It was contrary to all that Doyle believed Catholic Action should be. He had upheld the independence of Catholic Action as the action of Catholics as individuals independent of Church authority. He had written in his response to Truman that:

the Mind of the Church is completely definite that this is the official mandated form of the lay Apostolate, and as such it cannot be an activist in the party political sphere.¹³

This had been, of course, the core of the battle between the fields of Catholic Action in Sydney and Melbourne, where Robert Santamaria was muddying the waters with his involvement in so-called Catholic Action movements as adjuncts of the Catholic Church anti-Communist campaigns. It had been Doyle's idea that the Maritain philosophy was a worthy course to follow; that the Mind of the Church, which was his key concept, was to be found in papal pronouncements and encyclicals. He firmly believed and followed Roman directives that 'Catholic Action was not to become involved in strictly political affairs'.¹⁴

Nor was Doyle alone in challenging Truman's claims. Bruce Duncan in his study of *Catholic Action and the Movement*, Max Charlesworth writing in the *Catholic Worker* and Fr James Murtagh in *The Advocate*, rejected the version of Catholic social thought presented by Truman, Murtagh saw it as 'a travesty and a caricature of the aims of the Catholic Church in politics in Australia'. Charlesworth claimed that Truman 'remained in invincible ignorance' of the matters on which he wrote; while Prospect gave Truman's book the 'award for the year's most confused book'.¹⁵

Those exchanges came a few months after Doyle began his work in Brisbane, and for Queensland. In that first year he was ready and rearing to go. As suggested above, he would have been aware of the significance of the forthcoming General Council of the Church that had been summoned by Pope John XXIII, although he, like most people with a deep interest in such an event, would have had little idea that the Council that was to become known as the *Second Vatican Council* was to have such a revolutionising impact on the Catholic Church.

The year after Vatican II ended in 1965, Doyle was appointed the first layperson to become president of the *Catholic Press Association of Australia (CPAA) and New Zealand*; a position he held until 1968. He hosted the 1967 annual CPAA Conference in Brisbane. It was a career highlight and came as the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council were beginning to be implemented.

Major Directions in *The Catholic Leader* in the Doyle Years

But bigger things were in store and, for Doyle, the 1960s were largely taken up with coverage of the Second Vatican Council in Rome, with the death of Archbishop Duhig in 1965 and with the fallout from the enormous social changes during the 1960s; culminating in the year of revolutions and social ferment of 1968—part of what has been called the ‘turbulent decade 1963-1973’.

Which decade hasn’t had its turbulence, it might be asked, but there was something unprecedented and explosive happening in the world during the 1960s, distanced as they were by the 15-plus years after World War II—the war after the war to end all wars—ended, and heading into the controversial Vietnam conflict. There were the Beatles, the Flower People, the hippies, drugs, love-ins, the protesting and demonstrating youth all over the world. There were “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland and Martin Luther King. There were the confusions in the Catholic Church over the Vatican II changes that were gradually being implemented.

Doyle was a master of the special feature issue and there were many of them over the years. The first had been a Centenary Supplement in the 20 August 1959 issue, marking the centenary of the Catholic Church in Queensland—a supplement written and published within the first two months of Doyle’s arrival in Brisbane. Many others followed and many pertinent topics were addressed. This centenary issue contained a wealth of information on the Church in Queensland. Archbishop Sir James Duhig wrote *The Epic Story of the Catholic Faith in Early Queensland*. On this page, Doyle included the poem *Queensland*, by ‘Eva of the Nation’, one of Queensland’s early Irish Nationalist poets.¹⁶

There was also *Early Chronology of the Church in Australia*, a summary of principal events in the history of the Catholic Church in Australia before 1859 (the year the Brisbane diocese was established)

plus biographical articles on Dr James O'Quinn, Bishop Robert Dunne and histories of each Queensland diocese. These were written 'by a special correspondent'—obviously Brian Doyle.

(a) Conscription and the Vietnam War

Other special issues addressed in the new *Leader* included the Vietnam War. Doyle did not see it as comparable to the situation of World War II. It did not satisfy the requirements of a Just War Theory—developed from St Augustine into contemporary theology by Pope John XXIII and his successors—that Doyle knew thoroughly. He had no doubts that Vietnam did not fit that category; certainly not when it came to the conscription by ballot introduced in Australia and the United States. His editorial headed 'A Rushed Move to Introduce Conscription in Australia' ended with the words:

is there not a case for saying that, even in today's circumstances, the issue should be put to an outright referendum or a full mandate sought in a general election? ¹⁷

Letters to the Editor disagreeing with this policy began pouring in. The 26 November 1964 issue featured not just another editorial, 'Catholic Principles and the New Move for Conscription', but a letter from John Boden of Dorrington who disagreed 'that any breach of morality exists or that any questionable practices are being employed by the Federal Government as suggested by you'. The editorial of that same week outlined 'a few basic propositions' on conscription and conscience:

As one eminent Catholic authority has put it: 'No element in the nature of the State points unmistakably to an unconditionally existing right of the State to conscript young men into the armed services for a given period under threat of severe penalties in case of refusal. The right of the State to conscript can arise only from the special circumstances of a concrete situation in which the State has to fulfil its function of self-defence'.¹⁸

(b) *The 'Superstar' Debate*

With a family of ten growing up during this decade, Brian Doyle took a keen interest in the developments within the music industry; fired by the impact of the Beatles and the pop revolution that came with this phenomenon. Doyle was fascinated but I felt he was also bewildered by the new-style musicals with their wider social implications. Gone were the romantic confections of the 1940s and '50s from Rogers & Hammerstein, Lerner & Lowe, Bing Crosby *et al.* In their place came a more potent musical force spiced by mesmerising rhythms and fed by the drug culture.

A stream of articles in *The Catholic Leader* explaining these creations caused more than a minor ripple from readers. From my observation, not even Doyle expected the outcry that followed their publication. He felt all parents must have been as perplexed as he was about these happenings in which their children were becoming enveloped. He was trying to understand what it all meant, and he wanted to help other parents get a grip on these dynamic developments. In those heady early post-Vatican II days, few parents were probably prepared for the upheavals that were about to explode, or were already exploding, among the younger generation of post-war baby boomers. Doyle once quoted that song of the sixties, *What's it all about, Alfie?*—then gave his little chuckle.

We can look back on those accounts, see Doyle's point and ponder how much deeper is the chasm between what young people believe now and how and if they worship their God at all. Doyle did see beyond what some called the blasphemy of the pop music environment. Pre-Vatican II he saw the crack opening between the old and the new; and in the sixties and early seventies, the burgeoning pop culture of the Beatles era. He wondered if there was a faith dimension to this trend of the pop musical with a religious theme.

The Superstar Debate: Blasphemy or Genius? by Father J. T. Nolan, 'Superstar' - *Distorted but it's not all Bad* by Father Bob Hailstone¹⁹ and one by Rev. R. Elliott:²⁰ *Is There a Place for 'Pop' Music in Modern Workshop for Christians?* were among many articles by various contributors that Doyle featured.

(c) On a Hundred Hills - Stone and Glass

One of the first special series that Doyle published in *The Catholic Leader* over the years was *On a Hundred Hills, the Life and Times of Archbishop Sir James Duhig of Brisbane*. It ran for about 20 episodes from August 6, 1964, to January 14, 1965. I once heard this project derided for placing so much emphasis on Sir James as 'the builder', when his faith and devotion to his priesthood should have been lauded as his greatest achievement. Which was not only unkind and a trifle churlish, but it also missed the point that Sir James Duhig **was** a prolific builder because he **had** to be.

Queensland was growing rapidly, and churches and schools were needed. Sir James Duhig was living his faith in a practical way, doing his best to build a faithful, praying community. The pages of *The Catholic Leader* were littered with reports of openings of churches, schools, presbyteries and hospitals during his episcopate. He would be opening a church at one side of the city in the morning, and then go to the other end of the city to open a school in the afternoon. He was a living example of making his faith live in every detail of his life, hardly something to deride. That is how things were at that time. It seems more than likely that Duhig was totally mindful of the cultural dimension that, where urban communities gather, the infrastructure must follow or we end up as many Australian States have ended up in our own 21st century times; where little or no attention is paid to this important facet of society. And where it was an issue of faith, the need was the more crucial.

In the September 3, 1964 issue of the Duhig series *On a Hundred Hills*, Doyle included an excerpt from a published chronicle by Father J. O’Leary covering ‘the phenomenal building achievement of Archbishop Duhig in his first seven years in Brisbane’ from 1912 to 1919:

Father O’Leary said future historians would call the decades of Church history, of which he wrote, ‘Queensland’s Golden Era’, and added: ‘Archbishop Duhig’s programme . . . represented a colossal task. To him it was a duty, a work of love and his enthusiasm became contagious . . . The old landmarks of our Faith shine with a new lustre, because their glory is reflected and multiplied on a hundred hills, from which the divine light of faith and charity shine out brightly, telling of the presence of noble Catholic institutions, churches, convents, schools and presbyteries’.²¹

Thus, it was O’Leary, not Doyle, who created the title to this series. Today we may boast of more modest attentions to such material matters but Duhig faced the situation he found in his time—meet in the open air, in the bush, or create something beautiful for the worship of God. Duhig would have been mindful also, that he grew up in a land where the Mass had been forbidden and priests lost their lives if they were found saying Mass for their communities at “Mass Rocks” in hidden places outside the towns and cities, that dot rural Ireland. Wouldn’t he strive to right the wrongs of those days given the opportunity and needs he found in Queensland?

Whatever Duhig’s human shortcomings, whatever the difficulties Doyle would have encountered with the ageing Duhig when he came to Brisbane for *The Leader* task (obviously with the Archbishop’s approval), the buildings Duhig instigated and the splendid sites he chose for them bespeak a faith expressed in glass, brick and concrete; good, solid and—in the case of glass—beautifully transparent and in blazing colors of stained glass images. They served the church well and Doyle was percipient and gracious enough to acknowledge them.

It would be churlish to suggest that perhaps they served better than some of Duhig's—and Doyle's—critics. Doyle **did** admire Duhig. *On a Hundred Hills* was not simply some obsequious panegyric of employee to employer. Difficulties aside, Doyle spoke admiringly of the strapping, upright cleric who worked his vineyard like a faithful—albeit canny—pastor during his long, hard years of service. In a *Leader* editorial, Doyle recognised that:

there is ample evidence around us to appreciate why vision and foresight have come to be regarded as synonymous with Archbishop Duhig's name—but a study of his life and career reveals many other extraordinary features, as our articles will demonstrate with chapter and verse evidence. They include, for example, personal characteristics like selflessness, perseverance, determination, energy and disregard of obstacles, apart from other outstanding qualities reflected in the Archbishop's long and rewarding life.²²

Another pertinent reference to Notre Dame Cathedral in Chartres, France, comes from Edmund Campion's book, *Rockchoppers: growing up Catholic in Australia*. Campion was discussing Charles Peguy, the 'sometimes radical secularist' who returned to the church in an ambiguous fashion. At the centre of Peguy's spirituality was 'a defiant medieval celebration of the Blessed Virgin, especially as it was localised in her cathedral church at Chartres'.

As it happened, Jacques and Raissa Maritain, converts to Catholicism, shared this love of Chartres. In her memoirs, Raissa Maritain told how, having been converted, they went to Chartres to learn Catholicism as the men and women of the past had learnt it, from the stone and glass of the cathedral. She called the cathedral 'a mistress of theology, sacred history and exegesis'. Campion and his mates were enthused by a Father C. B. Keogh to read about Chartres 'and memorise pictures of it until we had built up in our heads a fair representation' to serve them until the day they could visit it themselves.²³

Even the 19th century Bishop Quinn was faced with the urgency of building—in stone and glass, or timber and tiles—as Father Neil Byrne has noted in his biography of Archbishop Robert Dunne. Building was an indicator of pastoral achievement; but it was more, as Byrne acknowledges:

Buildings were a matter of urgency in Queensland's rapidly expanding pioneer church but the question of style and number remained. Quinn's passion for building was excessive. Within ten years he had added thirty churches and twenty-eight schools to the diocese.²⁴

Words of a hymn penned much later, bear relevance to buildings and what they tell us about a faith community:

*What is this place where we are meeting, only a house, the earth
its floor.*

*Walls and a roof sheltering people, windows for light, an open
door?*

*Yet it becomes a body that lives when we are gathered here, and
know our God is near.*

*This is the place where we can receive what we need to increase:
God's justice and God's peace.²⁵*

(d) Toiling over Trays of 'Hot Metal' Type

In the years when *The Catholic Leader* operation was situated at the Ann Street building beside All Hallows Convent and School, the job had involved Doyle standing by the hour, day in day out, over long trays of metal; one piece for each line of type which had to be read mirror reverse—alongside the hand compositor Graham Geraghty. Such was Doyle's commitment to workers and their rights that when this employee suffered epileptic fits he did not have him dismissed, but sought to prevent his falling into the pit of huge machines grinding out the papers on their webs, by installing strong railings for his safety.

Graham was a skilled and dedicated compositor, and the two worked well at the stone.

So it came as a disappointment when Doyle had to contend with a strike from his own workers. He strove to lift working conditions in the printery from the day he began work in the building, and was hurt that they seemed to have forgotten the gains he had made for them.

In their very human way they turned on him. The force was still there in his fighting spirit and in his debating skills—but he was older. Yet he faced down the union reps and, even though it took its toll, he seemed to enjoy the old cut-and-thrust.

But the hot-metal days were coming to an end. The industry was changing in the mid 1970s as it moved from traditional ‘hot metal’ to ‘photo-composition and offset’ technology. With Laurie Hobbs as his colleague-accountant, Doyle had to make huge decisions about how this could be achieved. There were endless talks with industry experts and printing union officials. Doyle and Hobbs researched the various systems that had to be part of the industry’s move forward. As managing editor of a newspaper and commercial printing operation he had to assess what this involved in terms of a suitable building, equipment and above all, of staff training and expectations.

It was a time of immense change for the long-term employees at *The Catholic Leader* premises in Ann Street. It was a draining experience on Doyle. He turned 60 in 1975.

In the late 1970s, *The Leader* moved to a new location in Berwick Street, Fortitude Valley, beside St Patrick’s Church and presbytery. It was more comfortable than the Ann Street premises. The work was computerised. No more standing ‘at the stone’ for hours on end.

(e) The End was Coming

As already stated in Part I of my paper I presented previously, I feel Doyle's best work came during the 1960s. By the time the revolutionary and troublous 1970s decade had ended, he was tiring. The workload was taking its toll; his heart was not allowing him to keep up the pace he needed to achieve all that he saw still needed to be done.

He had undertaken to go to Sydney to cover the 1970 visit of Pope Paul VI and, while he enjoyed being back in the midst of the fray he had left eleven years previously, it was a tiring project and he came back exhausted. He was sending copy—hand written—back from Sydney regularly, and I was typing it up for the then sub-editor, Peter Knight, to prepare for publication. Doyle was very impressed and moved by the presence of the Pope; fascinated too by the enthusiastic reactions of the Italian community as they shouted out, 'Il Papa. Il Papa'.

Doyle was to take his first journey to Europe in the early 1970s when he led a group of 'pilgrims' on tour through places of pilgrimage and into the Holy Land. He came back with entertaining anecdotes.

But the end was coming. In 1981 Doyle refused to bow to Episcopal orders that Catholic newspapers were to refuse advertising from World Vision relief agency. He resigned.

As Michael Foster—a New Zealander who had worked for a short time as sub-editor at *The Leader* after Peter Knight moved to Sydney—wrote in *The Canberra Times*: 'Editor Doyle refuses to compromise'.

Strong words from Doyle were quoted:

The bloody Australian hierarchy, every last mother's son of them, has no right to interfere with the Catholic Press...They have destroyed my career...a 40-year aspiration which produced the best Catholic newspaper in the English-speaking world, according to Vatican sources.

What right do they have in these days of ecumenism to be the critic and, I suppose, the punishers of a world-recognised charity, one which the Prime Minister himself, and the Government, recognises on the advice of experts.

The bishops' condemnation is not well-founded and, even if it were, they do not have the right to butt in . . . the legal and moral code, the theology, of Catholic newspapers has been that the clergy does not interfere with the Catholic Press.

Foster continued that:

...the outburst was uncharacteristic, and therefore especially forceful for those who know Brian Doyle. He is the man who resigned his 22-year managing editorship of *The Catholic Leader* recently after the Australian bishops, meeting in their twice-yearly Australian Episcopal Conference, determined that Catholic newspapers would not accept advertising from the international relief agency World Vision, and must never publish any editorial matter submitted by, or concerning, World Vision.

He is a compassionate and sincere man, firm but not rigid in the observance of his faith and a professional in his calling. His action in resigning rather than compromising his principles is its own testament to them.

Doyle had left Sydney—Foster reported—‘to escape, until now, the “abominable atmosphere, the censorship, the interference” which he abhorred’.²⁶

A certain irony is to be found in Father Neil Byrne's comments in an article in the centenary issue of *The Catholic Leader*. The educated laity of the 19th century, he wrote, were ‘becoming more and more convinced that the Catholic Press was a lay Apostolate and should be entirely free from domination by ecclesiastics’, and that Archbishop Robert Dunne, Brisbane's first Catholic archbishop, agreed. Dunne had ‘witnessed the difficulties faced by the priest-editor in 1859 when Newman (Cardinal John Henry Newman, of England) reluctantly took over as editor of *The Rambler*, a liberal Catholic paper which actively sponsored lay theological opinion’.

Newman had been reported to Rome for publishing an article *On Consulting the Laity in Matters of Doctrine* and was forced to resign as editor.²⁷

In 1981, Doyle was facing the end of his long career over these very same issues. The unkindest cut of all was that the news was delivered to him by Archbishop Francis Rush of Brisbane. He had been Doyle's friend, and Doyle thought highly of the Archbishop, as he certainly had of Archbishop Patrick (Mary) O'Donnell before him.

Rush told Doyle he would not censor him, that he had never censored him, and that the present unpleasant situation had 'been an embarrassment to me', as Andrew Stone reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. 'I did not want him to be in an awkward position so I just packed up and got out', Doyle replied.²⁸ The directive to sack Doyle came from the Australian Catholic Relief Organisation, of which Bishop John Gerry was chairman. It saw World Vision as a huge threat and opposed its presence in *The Leader*. 'He put it to the bishops, and certainly put it to [Archbishop] Rush, and Rush had to act', Michael Sullivan recalled.

Stone pointed out in his report that the Sydney-based *Catholic Weekly* newspaper had banned advertisements from World Vision after complaints were received

...from Filipino sources about World Vision's work in the Philippines. It was alleged that recipients of aid, many of whom were nominally Catholic, were encouraged to attend birth control clinics. It was also claimed that there were subtle pressures on those aided by World Vision to attend Protestant worship.²⁹

World Vision subsequently admitted that some staff 'had acted improperly', but promised that such cases 'would be immediately rectified'.

Archbishop Rush, too, was to acknowledge that ‘it is impossible to estimate the value of Mr Doyle’s long years of service to the archdiocese. As a man and a journalist, he has earned our immense respect and gratitude’.³⁰ They were kind words for Doyle’s untiring efforts, but the gratitude was less manifest in any substantial way. It was recognition, albeit minimal, given his enormous contribution to the Catholic Press in Australia. Little else has followed, either from the Brisbane archdiocese, or from the Australian Catholic Press Association.

So the dream was over.

Brian Doyle died quietly on 17 September 2003, in a simple basic facility at the Clem Jones Home at Bulimba. Requiem Mass was concelebrated by [the now late] Father John Nee, with Archbishop Rush, at St Joachim Church, Holland Park, on 19 September 2003.

By the time he retired, Doyle had amassed a unique and extensive personal library, a collection of files, clippings and documentation. Doyle had summed up his life’s work as a professional journalist and member of the Australian Journalists’ Association who had lived and worked in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, with more than forty years of editorial work, which included special article writing, reviewing, editing, sub-editing, public relations, political research, pamphleteering, report writing.

(f) ‘Doyle Moments’ Remembered

At the start of this paper, reference was made to Doyle’s sense of humour. He was a wonderful conversationalist with a bountiful supply of entertaining anecdotes and snappy, pertinent comments. He enjoyed watching Keating at work in the Federal Parliament, not so much for what he said as the way he delivered. ‘He is a head kicker’, he would say. He really liked the Keating style. Which probably explains his devotion to Rugby League. He ran a ‘Brothers’ column in *The Leader* for many years, contributed by Frank Mellit.

He watched the young Wayne Bennett rise to fame. When the season was in full swing, nothing that needed attention for *The Leader* stopped him from gathering his bag, and with one or two of his family, he would be off to Lang Park, rugged up and rearing to go.

When Sheffield Shield cricket was at the “Gabba” (Woolloongabba, the inner-city suburb that was home to cricket in Brisbane for many years), Doyle was there too. He was not happy when Kerry Packer began the one-day series; although, much as he disliked what the man stood for, he wondered if it mightn’t be such a bad idea after all. It did promise to bring new life to the game.

Another great love was his cars; be it an Austin 7 Ruby, a 1934 Straight 8 Buick, or the six other Humbers—and a hearse. Of his two Humber Pullmans, one had been brought to Australia for the 1954 coronation tour by a young Queen Elizabeth, and later bought by Doyle.

One of the funniest ‘Doyle moments’ is the story he often told, with his wicked laugh, of the day he was driving the family through the city in one of his favorite cars—on the very day a member of British royalty who was visiting Australia, was due to pass by. Barricades were erected. Along the cheering lines of spectators awaiting royalty came the Doyle ‘limo’. Seeing the big black Pullman packed with Doyle children approaching, the duty policeman waved the Doyle VIPs through, to the mortification of the family and Mrs Doyle who ducked for cover.

I end this account with two personal recollections.

When *The Leader* was produced at the Ann Street premises, Doyle would come up the steps after an exhausting session in the printery standing by that ‘stone’ where Graham the compositor worked under his direction; then go into his office and—worn out—just slump in the squeaking chair where he would enjoy just talking; letting his mind wander.

I listened. He always told fascinating tales and I wish I could remember every word he said. Some I have never forgotten.

One day, somehow the topic turned to ‘truth’. In *The Catholic Leader* editorial on the introduction of scholastic philosophy at The University of Queensland (already quoted), he wrote twice of the ‘search for truth’. It was foremost in his mind then and it remained so throughout his life. As I wrote in my article, *To Touch the Face of God: the Doyle Years*, requested by the then editor, John Coleman, for *The Leader’s* centenary issue in 1992, truth meant much to Brian Doyle:

I don’t believe ‘the great grey gloom’ he often joked about ever fully overcame Brian Doyle’s spirit and thirst for truth. The full significance of Pilate’s rhetorical ‘what is truth?’ recorded in St John’s Gospel became clear to me only after Doyle uttered the words as he sat gazing out his office window, as if the answer might be held in the far universe, beyond the moon that man landed on in 1969 to Doyle’s fascination.³¹

Previously those gospel words had little import for me; they were just words, a momentary thought from Pilate. But after Doyle spoke them, they took on a new dimension. For the first time I really thought through the implication of those three little words and why Pilate should have been quoted as saying them. It was not surprising, of course, that this sense of truth came through his attention to the writings of Jacques Maritain, perhaps the greatest human influence in his life. Maritain pondered the same Truth while reflecting that:

people have simply ceased to believe in Truth, and believe only in verisimilitudes pinned to some truths (that is, statements or verifications of observable detail) which moreover grow obsolete overnight. Truth with a capital T, what does that mean? Quid est Veritas? We should recognise that Pilate got the picture, and that this procurator was a good ‘progressist’.³²

The second recollection was the day he talked about a poem he loved, fervently, reverently. It seemed to mean so much to him. He was enthralled by it.

He had always been fascinated by space exploration. At *The Leader* we had all stopped work to watch telecasts when astronaut Neil Armstrong, commander of the Apollo II mission, became the first man to set foot on the moon, with his famous declaration, ‘One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind’. It was July 20, 1969.

Doyle had found the poem by John Magee, a 19-year-old fighter pilot, that reflected this achievement in space. He showed it to me; again fascinated by the concept it expressed of being so close to God, so far up in that ‘high untrampled sanctity of space’. Fanciful, he knew, but it touched a chord for this believer in, or wonderer about, Truth.



High Flight

‘Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I’ve climbed and joined
the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds
and done a hundred things you have not dreamed of
wheeled and soared and swung
high in the sunlit silence.

Hov’ring there
I’ve chased the shouting wind along and flung
my eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long delirious burning blue
I’ve topped the windswept heights with easy grace
where never lark, nor even eagle flew,
And, while with silent lifting mind I’ve trod
the high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.’

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She later became an arts writer and music critic for “The Australian”, “Opera Australia” and “Brisbane Courier Mail” and is a graduate of Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology and the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music (Sydney).

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