
THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

Top worship official says current liturgy does not conform to spirit of Vatican II

Philip Crispin

THE NEWLY appointed Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship said this week that some liturgical reforms that followed the Second Vatican Council have not been true to the council's decrees. Archbishop Albert Patabendige Don accused a human-centred "spirit of total liberty ... without roots or depth", of too often usurping the divine mystery – which should be at the heart of the liturgy – in the post-conciliar liturgical reforms.

"The Vatican II decree *Sacrosanctum Concilium* ... was about making the liturgy the entry point to the faith, and liturgical changes were expected to emerge organically, by taking account of tradition, and not precipitately," said Archbishop Patabendige Don. But there had been drifts away from this spirit. "The direction of liturgical prayer in the post-conciliar reform has not always reflected the texts of Vatican II, and in this sense, we can speak of a necessary correction, of a reform of the reform. We must regain the liturgy in the spirit of the Council," he added.

Today, the problems concerning the liturgy turned upon language (vernacular or Latin), and the position of the priest, (facing the congregation or God), said the Archbishop in an interview with *La Croix*,



**Archbishop
Albert
Malcolm
Ranjith
Patabendige
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Secretary
of the
Congregation
for Divine
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a French Catholic daily newspaper, on 25 June. "Nowhere, in the conciliar decree, is it laid down that the priest must henceforth face the congregation, nor that the use of Latin is forbidden. If the use of modern languages is accepted, notably for the Liturgy of the Word, the decree clearly specifies that the use of Latin will be maintained in the Latin rite. On these subjects, we await the Pope's instructions," he added.

The archbishop noted how much young priests in Rome liked celebrating the Tridentine rite. "I must make clear that this rite, that of the Missal of St Pius V, is not 'outlawed'. Should we encourage it more? The Pope will decide. But it is certain that a new generation is demanding a greater emphasis upon mystery."

In another interview with the I Media news agency on 23 June Archbishop Patabendige Don said that due to the Lefebvrist schism, the Tridentine rite "has taken a certain identity that is not right". He emphasised the need for a liturgy that was "more beautiful, more transcendent" but cautioned that it was imprudent to press for quick decisions.

In a television interview broadcast in Poland last October (*The Tablet*, 5 November 2005) the Pope invited Catholics to re-read Second Vatican Council documents and urged "all believers in Christ" to "keep alive the spirit" of the council. He said documents written by his predecessor, John Paul II, were "the authentic interpretation of Vatican II".

In suggesting that the documents be read again, the Pope appeared to some to be suggesting that there is ample room for a less "liberal" interpretation of the teaching.

Meanwhile, the Pope used the occasion of a Sistine Chapel concert of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sacred music last Sunday to call for the preservation of the Church's heritage of sacred music. He said genuine renewal in Catholic music "cannot be achieved except by following the great traditions of the past, of Gregorian chants and sacred polyphony". He added that this musical tradition is "a priceless spiritual, artistic, and cultural heritage".

UNITED STATES

Wuerl installed as Archbishop of Washington DC

Agostino Bono

Catholic News Service, in Washington

ARCHBISHOP DONALD Wuerl began his ministry as head of the Washington Archdiocese by pledging to make the Church's voice heard in public debates and by recognising the multiethnic nature of Catholics in the area.

At his 22 June installation Mass attended by nine cardinals as well as Government officials and foreign ambassadors, the new archbishop called on archdiocesan Catholics to help him carry out his responsibilities.

Each Catholic has the "weighty charge" of living the Gospel and unfolding "its implications for the issues and circumstances of our time", said Archbishop Wuerl in his homily during the Mass celebrated at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

"God's wisdom must impact on the life of

society. The wisdom of God is a thread that needs to be woven through that fabric in order to create a truly good and just society," he said. "This aspect of ministry will bring the Church into relationship with many in the cultural, educational, social services and political world."

During his entrance procession, the archbishop shook hands with Democratic Senators Edward Kennedy and John Kerry of Massachusetts, seated side by side in the third row along the centre aisle.

"The bishop's role is also to sanctify," the archbishop said in his homily, noting that he will have to do this in an archdiocese "where Sunday liturgy is celebrated in over 20 languages".

These Masses show that one faith is "mirrored and echoed in a vast array of cultural manifestations," he said.

Archbishop Wuerl, 65, was named head of the Washington Archdiocese on 16 May,

after spending 18 years as bishop of Pittsburgh.

He comes to Washington with the reputation of being a teaching bishop because of his many catechistically focused pastoral letters, the college classes he taught, the catechism he wrote and the television show he hosted.

The archbishop said in his homily that in Washington he plans to be "the voice of the great teaching tradition rooted in God's word and God's wisdom."

His post places him on the Church's front line regarding the relationship between faith and politics and the relationship of the Church with public officials whose stands sometimes oppose Catholic teachings. This often involves looking for the fine line that separates influencing policy from becoming involved in partisan politics. It includes being pastoral to controversial Catholic politicians while not signalling support for any positions they may have contrary to Church teachings.

AUSTRALIA

Amnesty 'losing ability to distinguish human rights'

Mark Brolly
In Melbourne

CHRISTIANS WOULD be compelled to resign membership from Amnesty International if it accepted that abortion was a human right, Cardinal George Pell has warned, saying the humanitarian organisation was "on the brink of working for a universal right to kill".

The Archbishop of Sydney said that the notion of human rights had become so twisted that the claim that every woman had the right to abort her baby was "double-speak at its best".

"Amnesty now has 1.8 million members around the world but any decision that a woman's rights to physical and mental integrity include her right to terminate her pregnancy will mean that gospel Christians in every mainline denomination will be compelled to resign," the cardinal wrote in his weekly column in Sydney's *Sunday Telegraph*. "Much of the group's energy and enthusiasm will be drained from it."

Noting that the organisation was founded in 1961 by a Catholic, Peter Benenson, Cardinal Pell said it was a "tragedy" that after 45 years Amnesty risked "losing its capacity to distinguish a genuine human right from a totally bogus claim".

Cardinal Pell wrote that a woman's reproductive right to choose could not suppress the more basic human right to life itself, citing Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

He praised Amnesty's record, but warned

that the UN declaration was now under threat.

"Formerly, Amnesty had a neutral position on abortion because there was no generally accepted right to abortion in international human rights law."

Cardinal Pell wrote that New Zealand and Britain had adopted pro-abortion positions, with Amnesty's Australian branch due to vote within days.

The cardinal noted that in every country where Amnesty's intentions had been made public, Christian leaders had objected strongly. Amnesty had gone "particularly quiet" in the United States because pro-life awareness and sympathies were more developed there.

"Pope John Paul II said that an inability to distinguish good from evil is the most dangerous crisis which can [affect] man," Cardinal Pell wrote.

"Let us hope there will be sufficient clear-minded humanitarians in Australia, and throughout the world, to prevent Amnesty making a terrible mistake and betraying its origins."

ZIMBABWE

Mugabe 'prayer day' divides church leaders

Ellen Teague

ZIMBABWE'S POLITICAL polarisation was mirrored in its mainstream Churches last Sunday when a National Day of Prayer addressed by President Robert Mugabe was supported by some church leaders and boycotted by others.

Senior Government officials joined church leaders and thousands of Christians from all over the country in a stadium outside the capital, Harare, and heard Mr Mugabe urge the Churches to support state efforts to revive the country's ruined economy.

"We cannot do without each other as the Church and the State, and we must combine our strengths in rebuilding our economy," he said. He had harsh words for his critics within the Churches who were not present. In what was interpreted as a reference to Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo, Mugabe warned: "When the church leaders start being political we regard them as political creatures and we are vicious in that area." He added: "The bishop is not dearer to God than the President."

The prayer meeting was organised by the Ecumenical Peace Initiative (EPI), a newly formed alliance of Churches, including the Anglican Church, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and sections of Zimbabwe's Catholic Bishops' Conference who take the view that working with the Government is the best way

to find a lasting solution to the country's political and economic trauma.

Fr Frederick Chiromba, Secretary General of the bishops' conference, attended the meeting, but no Catholic bishop did. Fr Chiromba told *The Tablet*: "We must do something in the present situation that helps people." He felt the communal prayers offered a healing experience for many. He understood the concern of others – such as Archbishop Ncube and the Christian Alliance, an alternative grouping of Protestant and Pentecostal Churches formed last year – who felt that Mugabe's policies have caused widespread suffering in Zimbabwe and the Churches should clearly say so.

Archbishop Ncube said last week: "This Government has no heart for the suffering of its people and the church leadership should be aware that to join hands with those who have caused such great suffering leaves many victims feeling betrayed."

He said the Government had no commitment to serious dialogue. "It is therefore with a heavy heart that I react to the fact that church services will this weekend be held, not in solidarity with torture victims and refugees, but in the presence of the perpetrators," he said.

John Makumbe, a political analyst at the University of Zimbabwe, said the prayer event demonstrated the Government's success in driving a wedge between the Churches.

ROME

Scola centre backs dialogue in Cairo

Robert Mickens
At the Vatican

A VENICE-BASED research centre that promotes dialogue between religions, especially in the Mediterranean world, says its recent two-day conference in Cairo will help already warming relations between Christians, Muslims and Jews.

More than 65 representatives of the three monotheistic faiths gathered in the Egyptian capital on 19 and 20 June to discuss fundamental rights in democratic societies. The Oasis International Studies and Research Centre – an institute founded in 2004 by Cardinal Angelo Scola, Archbishop of Venice, and funded by Communion and Liberation, the ecclesiastical community of which Cardinal Scola is a member – sponsored the gathering. Participants included prominent church figures from the Vatican, Egypt, Algeria, Syria and Pakistan. Also on hand were representatives of the World Jewish Congress.

A spokeswoman for Cardinal Scola, Marialaura Conte, told *The Tablet* that the gathering was not given high public visibility because of security concerns. However, a statement released this week said that the two days of discussions were frank and constructive.

PHILIPPINES

Pope praises Arroyo for abolishing death penalty

Vincent McKee

THE POPE congratulated the President of the Philippines, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, for abolishing the death penalty in her home country during a private audience at the Vatican on Monday.

Though a practising Catholic, the beleaguered President remains a divisive figure both for the Philippines Church and with the public, not least as a result of electoral fraud allegations from the 2004 presidential contest and ensuing human rights concerns.

The discussion between Pope and President is said to have included the troubled Philippines economy, Muslim secessionism in Mindanao and Mrs Arroyo's planned constitutional changes. Among the changes being discussed are a proposal to abolish the Senate – an independent-minded body that has frustrated successive administrations – and create a parliamentary-style system.

Mrs Arroyo extended an invitation for Benedict XVI to visit the Philippines, the world's third-largest Catholic nation in the next 18 months, after the late John Paul II cancelled a proposed 2003 visit due to ill health.

Mrs Arroyo, who signed a bill abolishing the death penalty on 24 June, thereby halting the possible executions of 1,209 death-row convicts, assured the Pope “of the love and devotion of the Filipino people”. She claimed to have received explicit papal endorsement for “ensuring that Christian values, recognised by the majority of Filipinos, find expression in state laws”.

Mrs Arroyo's visit aroused heated comment back home. Additional to charges of junketing, a prime critic, Archbishop Oscar Cruz of Lingayen-Dagupan, warned her “not to try manipulating the Pope for the sake of her own political survival”.

VENEZUELA

Church speaks out on killings in lawless frontier state

Colin Harding

MORE THAN 50 murders have been reported so far this year in just one district of Venezuela's frontier state of Apure. But, according to Raíza Cepeda, who runs a local church radio station, the security forces in this heavily garrisoned area have taken little action, and are not even keeping a proper record of the incidents.

“The military are running around like headless chickens, organising pointless operations,” she told *El Universal* newspaper this week. Local people organised a “March for Life” in Guasdalito, the region's main town, earlier this month, after a 16-year-old schoolboy was kidnapped.

Further north, in Zulia state, also on the Colombian frontier, church representatives joined cattle ranchers, farmers and local businessmen last week to launch their own “Crusade for Life”, in protest at what they said was the security forces' failure to control spiralling violence, much of it brought across the border from Colombia by left-wing guerrillas, right-wing paramilitaries and armed drug-traffickers.

Dressed all in black, some 600 people held a demonstration outside the National Guard base in the town of Machiques, in the lawless Sierra de Perijá region, to call for action against a wave of kidnappings, extortion and murder. The outcry was provoked by the

killing of the local ranchers' leader, Luis Elías Martínez, in an ambush that ranchers said was carried out by guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) inside Venezuelan territory.

The Colombian Government has accused Venezuela's President, Hugo Chávez, of giving covert help to the FARC, but he denies any links with the guerrillas, and his Government insists that most of the violence in the frontier region is caused by Colombian right-wing paramilitaries.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that Zulia is regarded in Caracas as a hotbed of opposition to Mr Chávez's “revolutionary” Government.

SLOVAKIA

Cardinal asked to mediate in coalition talks

Jonathan Luxmoore

In Warsaw

A SENIOR Slovak cardinal has been asked by anti-clerical politicians to help mediate in the formation of a new Government, according to local reports.

The Direction-Social Democracy party (Smer-SD), whose programme includes total Church-State separation, took first place in the country's 17 June parliamentary elections with 29 per cent, well ahead of the previously governing Union of Democratic Christian Parties (SDKU-DS) of the former prime minister, Mikulas Dzurinda.

The result appeared to defy a pre-election bishops' conference pastoral letter, urging Catholics, who make up 69 per cent of Slovakia's five million inhabitants, to back politicians “supporting the family, opposing abortion and showing regard for religious freedom”.

However, the Slovak news agency SITA said Smer-SD's leader, Robert Fico, had now requested help from Cardinal Jan Chrysostom Korec in the hope of forming a coalition with two small opposition parties, the Christian Democrats (KDH) and Union of Hungarian Parties (SMK).

A spokesman for the cardinal,

who retired as Bishop of Nitra in 2005, said the cardinal was “now a private person whose statements are not the standpoint of the Church”. However, Church sources said the proposed coalition could help temper Smer-SD's “well-known anti-clericalism” by forcing a compromise with pro-Church Christian Democrats.

The election was called early following the resignation of Christian Democrat ministers in protest at the Dzurinda Government's failure to complete an accord with the Vatican establishing a “conscience clause” to allow doctors and lawyers to opt out of duties violating Christian principles.

BOSNIA

Vatican cautious on Medjugorje anniversary

AS MANY AS 100,000 pilgrims converged on Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina last week to mark the 25th anniversary of the shrine's first reported Marian apparitions, writes Jonathan Luxmoore. But a local bishop cautioned that the Catholic Church had not officially accepted the allegedly miraculous events.

Six local teenagers claimed to have seen the Blessed Virgin on 24 June 1981 while herding sheep and have continued to report regular messages from Mary at Medjugorje, which has since been visited by over 30 million people. The village, which was promoted internationally as a pilgrimage centre by the Bosnian Franciscan

order, now contains numerous hotels and tourist facilities and was largely untouched by the 1992-5 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

But Bishop Ratko Peric of Mostar, who has repeatedly criticised the Medjugorje cult, warned that the Pope himself had recently also expressed doubts about the centre.

IN BRIEF

Indonesian flooding kills hundreds

Church agencies have joined the humanitarian effort in the Indonesian province of South Sulawesi to respond to a flooding disaster which has killed at least 200 people, with hundreds more missing under mud or swept out to sea by teeming rivers. The flash floods and landslides were triggered by incessant rains since 21 June, and the Government has promised an investigation into claims by environmentalists that much of the forest cover in the area – which would normally absorb some of the rain and prevent the hillsides from slipping – has been cut down in recent years, contributing to the disaster.

A gift to Bethlehem

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, has responded to an urgent appeal from the Governor of Bethlehem for aid to avert a deepening humanitarian crisis by giving a financial contribution to the Naaman Trust, a UK charity that provides medical supplies to the city. Lambeth Palace has become increasingly concerned about the humanitarian impact of the town's isolation due to Israel's security wall. The Archbishop said "restrictions on the movement of Bethlehem's citizens limit their capacity for self-help".

Vatican officials in China visit

Two Vatican officials, often sent as quiet envoys to countries where Catholics survive with difficulty, were visiting China last week, *AsiaNews* reported. Archbishop Claudio Celli, Secretary of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, and Mgr Gianfranco Rota Graziosi of the Vatican Secretariat of State arrived in Beijing on 25 June for unannounced talks with Government officials, said the report.

Cardinal confers with Pope

Venezuelan Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino, Archbishop of Caracas, has been at the Vatican for the past two weeks, during which he has held a private meeting with Pope Benedict, apparently to discuss the state of the Church in Venezuela and relations with the government of President Hugo Chávez. The Cardinal was formally recognised as Archbishop of Caracas at a ceremony last 29 June.

Heroic nun dies

Sr Imma Mack, the German nun who helped ease the suffering of the inmates of the Nazi concentration camp Dachau, died on 21 June at the age of 82. Born in 1924, and into a family which opposed Nazism, Imma Mack was only 20 when she would frequently risk her life by smuggling food, medicine and communion wafers into Dachau in southern Bavaria – at a time when she was still preparing to enter the religious life.

Letter from Rome

The gin fizz days in the gardens at the Villa Drusiana have sadly come to an end. Britain's ambassador to the Holy See, Francis Campbell, recently hosted the final reception at the villa, which has been the residence for him and his predecessors over the past quarter of a century. The gathering on 23 June was a celebration of the official birthday of Elizabeth II, who is 80 this year. It was a celebration, all right. Even some of the more distinguished guests walked away visibly merrier than when they arrived. One of them complained that the suffocating heat wave in Rome was the reason she had replenished her fluted glass beyond the usual limit. Indeed. Among those spotted mingling alongside the foreign diplomats and journalists were a flock of monsignori: Nicholas Hudson, rector of the English College; Rod Strange, rector of the Beda College; Gabriele Caccia, assessor at the Secretariat of State; Pietro Parolin, undersecretary for relations with States, and Tommaso Caputo, the Secretariat of State's chief of protocol.

Almost everyone sighed with regret that Ambassador Campbell would soon be vacating the sprawling residence adjacent the ancient Porta San Sebastiano to move to a large rooftop apartment near the Quirinal Palace. "The truly horrible thing," one ambassador's wife confided to a group of us, "is that the Brits are giving up this lovely villa to pay even more money for a flat!" I was assured, however, that the new residence is nothing to look down one's nose at. And there's no guarantee there will be good neighbours, either. Up to now that has been no problem. The Canadian Ambassador to the Holy See occupies the adjoining Villa Laurier, another magnificent place for entertaining guests. In fact, Ambassador and Mrs Donald Smith hosted an advance celebration of Canada Day this week and most of the conversations I had with the Anglophones there echoed those of 23 June: "Isn't it a pity that the Brits are giving up Villa Drusiana." O, Canada, we stand on guard for thee!

Municipal offices in Rome and the Vatican closed down on Thursday to celebrate the Eternal City's patronal feast of Saints Peter and Paul. An open-air concert and variety show was arranged in Piazza del Popolo, while a huge festival with food, drink, games and entertainment was mounted at the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls. Several years ago a friend and I got trapped in the middle of St Paul's annual carnival and after only barely keeping my wits in all the chaos I vowed I would never return for the event. Things were only slightly quieter – but a lot more orderly – at the Vatican where Pope Benedict XVI marked 29 June just as he

did last year, and as Pope John Paul II did the years before him. He celebrated a special Mass in St Peter's Square, during which he conferred the pallium (a stole symbolising authority and union with the Pope) on 27 archbishop-metropolitans who he had appointed over the past 12 months. The day's festivities then ended in a great display of fireworks. This marks the beginning of summer for the Romans. For the next two months the pace will slacken, folks will knock off work earlier in the day to catch some sun at the beach; weekends will find people at small retreats in the hills or along the coast. However, the Pope still has a few things to take care of before he begins his formal summer holiday. Next weekend he will make a brief visit to Valencia, Spain, to close the Fifth World Meeting of Families. Once he gets back he'll have just enough time to pack for his 11-28 July visit to the mountains in northern Italy. Then it's off to Castel Gandolfo. The real resumption of work will begin on 15 September.

San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, at the end of the Via Giulia, is one of my favourite churches in Rome, probably because the ledges of its tired-looking eighteenth-century façade are wistfully overtaken by wildflowers and weeds. This church once served as the "national" parish for the Florentine community living in Rome – people like Michelangelo and Antonio da Sangallo. But the Florentine connection is all but gone these days, highlighted by the fact that San Giovanni dei Fiorentini recently became the titular church of the Archbishop of Bologna – Cardinal Carlo Caffarra – a conservative moral theologian who founded the Pope John Paul II Institute for Marriage and the Family. That's why it seemed ironic that while the 68-year-old cardinal was formally "taking possession" of his church last Saturday some 30,000 people were marching for gay rights near Rome's Colosseum.

The theme of the twelfth annual Gay Pride Parade was "Di tutto di più" (All that and more) and focused on the battle for legal recognition of same-sex unions. Along with the drag queens and musclemen in tank tops, the parade included heterosexual friends and supporters of gays, lesbians and transgender folks. An association for homosexual Christians – Nuova Proposta (new proposal) – was only one of a number of "special interest" groups that marched with large banners. Naturally, an anti-clerical and anti-Vatican sentiment was also on display. "Vaticano-Talibano" said one placard. But one of the cleverest slogans played on the acronym of France's law for same-sex unions. It read: "Pax Vobis, PACS Nobis".

Robert Mickens