

Transformed by a boring Brussels Mass <i>Benedict Coleridge</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">1</a>
How to fix anti discrimination law <i>Moirra Rayner</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">4</a>
Bedtime flatulence and marital bliss <i>Tim Kroenert</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">7</a>
Declaring war on the r-word <i>Moirra Byrne Garton</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">9</a>
Rock's radical Australia Day message <i>Donna Mulhearn</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">11</a>
Julie Bishop's pall of duty <i>Max Atkinson</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">13</a>
Love poem to a Hills Hoist <i>Kevin Gillam</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">15</a>
Incompetent dealing with priestly paedophilia <i>Frank Brennan</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">19</a>
Vein hope for Pakistan's minorities <i>Irfan Yusuf</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">23</a>
Not judging Ned Kelly and Lance Armstrong <i>Michael Mullins</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">26</a>
Rape and restorative justice <i>Ellena Savage</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">28</a>
Secular scrutiny can save the Church <i>Michael Kelly</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">30</a>
Using poor language in the liturgy <i>Andrew Hamilton</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">32</a>
Stories about God and monsters <i>Tim Kroenert</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">34</a>
Winter of Greece's discontent <i>Gillian Bouras</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">36</a>
Family drama reveals detention contortions <i>Fatima Measham</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">38</a>
An infinite number of Tasmanias <i>Brian Doyle</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">40</a>
The bankable brats and buffoons of Australian sport <i>Michael Visontay</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">44</a>
Coal mining, civil disobedience and the public good <i>Michael Mullins</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">46</a>
The unknown unknowns of the sexual abuse royal commission <i>Ray Cassin</i> . . . . .	<a href="#">48</a>



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## **Transformed by a boring Brussels Mass**

EUROPEAN DIARY

*Benedict Coleridge*

In Brussels it's snowing and the cold drives everyone indoors, to bars, offices and warm apartments, but inside the talk goes on.

Brussels is a talking city. In the bars outside the European parliament the young bureaucrats and staffers gather and 'network' over two euro pints of Belgian beer. Leaning back on their heels and stroking their cashmere scarves they will tell you with a glow of satisfaction that they 'simply adore the policy process', that they could talk all day about wheat subsidies and clean energy technology. They read fact books rather than mere novels and they keep up to date with the details of Canadian politics as an exotic hobby.

These fearsomely focused Eurocrats seem to have the same ruthless attitude as my Russian teacher in Yaroslavl some years ago — a terrifying woman who once sat me down and pronounced 'Bwen, you are a man and philosophy is for dreamers.'

But on the other hand Brussels is full of dreams — encapsulated in schemes, political movements, party politics and the ambitions of those hordes of interns who flood the city. The European project is of course the great dream and the young people who come here to work are animated by it — in one way or another.

The life of a young expat in Brussels is full of people, parties, work and daily drama — an endless stream of events, news and new faces. Life is as fast paced as Byron described:

Here was a sound of revelry by night,  
And Belgium's capital had gathered then  
Her beauty and her chivalry, and bright  
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men.

The other night a group of us were having dinner in a noisy restaurant. The conversation turned from football to politics and then, as the dishes crowded the table and the wine flowed, to spirituality. We came to talking about being young and Catholic in Brussels, and our conversation made apparent a common experience: we're all swept up in the fast stream of life here while at the same time trying to make space for 'the world of the spirit'.

The philosopher Charles Taylor has a phrase for it: religious faith, he writes, points us towards 'a deeper transformation' in our lives, an uncovering of buried intuitions. What we're all trying to work out is where the transformation can be found, how it can be effected.

After dinner we slip and slide our way over the icy pavement, throw a few snowballs, hug each other goodbye and part ways, off to bars or to meet friends. But Taylor's words stay in my head — 'a deeper transformation'.

Sunday mass couldn't stand in starker contrast. It's a quiet, snowy morning and the fair women and the brave men are asleep — and every inch of my body tells me I should be too. The music begins and a tiny old woman gurgles behind me, in squeaky broken tones *le seignue-e-e-er!* interrupted by rasping coughing fits.

I try to focus on the cross and in my mind I repeat Thomas Merton's words: 'to learn to know the Christ of the burnt men' — what did he mean by 'burnt men'? But the coughing is getting worse, and between muttered prayers it sounds like the pew behind me is hosting a cardiac arrest.

At first it seems like the deeper transformation isn't to be found here — compared to the excitement of everyday Brussels life, the atmosphere at mass, the slow music, the warbling elders, can seem rather underwhelming. But English theologian James Alison wrote that 'when people tell me that they find Mass boring, I want to say to them: it's supposed to be boring, or at least seriously underwhelming. It's a long term education in becoming un-excited.'

For Alison, becoming 'unexcited' allows us to dwell 'in a quiet place', a place that 'increases our attention, our presence and our appreciation for what is around us'. And in a place like Brussels with all its excitement, becoming 'unexcited' seems important.

The French poet, Phillipe Jaccottet, expresses beautifully this movement from motion to stillness, from excitement to calm, from skittish life to a deeper transformation:

We live in a world of motion and distance.  
The heart flies from tree to bird,  
from bird to distant star,  
from star to love; and love grows  
in the quiet house, turning and working,  
servant of thought, a lamp held in one hand.

As it happens, my work in Brussels demands an increase of attention. Over the coming months I'll be working with the Jesuit Refugee Service European office here in Brussels on a report on migration control policies in the Western Balkans. I'll be travelling to Macedonia and Croatia to interview asylum seekers detained in those countries. And I'll be writing in this column every month, reflecting on some of the themes above, and on what I learn from my work here.

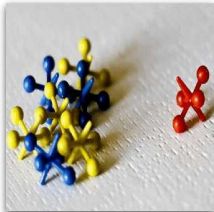
Throughout I hope to be able to explore further what Taylor means, in the context of busy political life, by being 'transformed', and open to the

transcendent: something that runs deeply and quietly beneath everything else.

## How to fix anti discrimination law

### POLITICS

*Moira Rayner*



A spokesman for the Australian Catholic Bishops got stuck into the Government's 'failure' to protect religious freedoms on Thursday because its new human rights consolidation bill didn't give the Church new freedoms to discriminate. This was brave, because other commentators have asked why big church institutions should enjoy any exemptions at all.

Everyone has an opinion, and this is mine, as a workplace law practitioner for 40 years.

Anti-discrimination acts are meant to protect vulnerable and marginalised people, not corporations or dominant ideologies. The employers I represent reap the benefits of understanding that diversity and inclusion are brilliant for business and productivity. Equality of opportunity breeds respect for the rule of law and the common good.

The bill has missed simple opportunities for real improvement. It does not, for example, fix up the messily inadequate response to racial and religious vilification. I'd rather see a no-fault, taxpayer-funded, independently crafted media response in the victim's voice in response to vindictive, stupid or lazy misrepresentations about race and culture inflicted upon readers of the likes of Andrew Bolt or those who listen to the likes of Alan Jones.

Public trials, fines and injunctions don't change bigots' minds. We have moved past Reg Ansett's view in 1978 that equal opportunity for a woman pilot would be an impediment to business success, to the understanding that avoiding discrimination and fostering diversity is all about balance.

I would like to see three additions to this bill.

First, a provision to make religious institutions and schools accountable for their claim of privilege.

Just as we protect a person's right to hold or decline to believe in state-approved or unpopular or controversial religious or spiritual beliefs and practices, we set limits on it: that they don't interfere with the rights and liberties of other vulnerable people.

So, if a 'religious' school seeks to discriminate on the usual grounds against women and de factos and gays, I think they should:

(a) state in a very public way why this is a reasonable and proportionate means of achieving a legitimate end, the protection of religious freedoms

(b) only be entitled to make that claim if it is actually under the spiritual

direction and overview of a disciplined faith group, and

(c) be obliged to do so, if it is in receipt of government funding to provide services.

The bill already prohibits discrimination by religious service providers in aged care settings, but this should extend to all government funded service delivery to vulnerable groups, such as gay and lesbian young people and families or single mums and same-sex dads, in housing and homelessness services, schools and indeed any social or community service.

I also rather like the somewhat cheeky submission by Human Rights Law Centre that religious organisations that run schools or services should be required to give written notice to any of their actual or potential customers, employees or students that it plans to or already discriminates on particular grounds that might affect them, and should be obliged to disclose this to its funders, at least if they are publicly funded.

This would ensure accountability to the community. Would you shop in an op-shop that will not employ gay women or people of another faith? I wouldn't.

Second, the Human Rights Commission needs teeth.

In some states, state-based anti discrimination bodies haven't really investigated complaints for years. In Victoria the Commission may now do no more than offer an aggrieved, vulnerable person the opportunity of entirely voluntary mediation. If that doesn't work, or the other party tells the commissioner to take a running jump, she must tell them to pop off to VCAT and prove their case in a real court all by themselves.

The Australian Human Rights Commission should have the right to instigate investigations into systematic discrimination, without the approval of the Attorney-General or a court. And it should have real powers.

For instance were it to find systematic, sex-based harassment or discriminatory bullying in a particular industry, it should be able to issue the equivalent of an OH&S 'PIN' notice, requiring an organisation to stop doing anything at all until it has taken urgent action to amend a dangerous practice or, like the Fair Work Ombudsman, have the power to enter into an enforceable undertaking that a party will take particular steps to comply with a law.

It should have the power to refer an unresolved matter and seek a court-ordered resolution of identified problems. The critical point is that the system should not rely on brave or desperate complainants, but on an authoritative and respected source of best practice for good governance.

Thirdly, the Commonwealth must be brave enough to ensure through legislation that its human rights watchdog cannot be abolished, bled to death with budget cuts or staff freezes, or afflicted with political interference.

A human rights commission may change attitudes and behaviours through negotiation and mediation and education only if it has the respect of its community. No earthly power can set its own rules and legitimately claim infallibility, and this applies to royal commissions, human rights commissions, religious orders and schools and, I dare say it, Catholic bishops as well.



## Bedtime flatulence and marital bliss

### FILMS

*Tim Kroenert*

***This Is 40 (MA)*. Director: Judd Apatow. Starring: Paul Rudd, Leslie Mann, Albert Brooks, John Lithgow, Melissa McCarthy, Jason Segel, Megan Fox. 134 minutes**

2007's *Knocked Up*, about an unlikely couple and an unplanned pregnancy, defined the modern-day Hollywood 'comedy for grown-ups' noted for their frank portrayal of adult relationships. It featured a subplot about married couple Debbie (Mann) and Pete (Rudd), whose marital woes served as a cautionary example for their younger counterparts. Five years later, that film's writer-director revisits Debbie and Pete as they approach 40.

*This Is 40* finds Debbie and Pete on the brink of this ominous milestone and still struggling to 'make it work'. There are pressures from within the family unit — familiarity is testing their physical intimacy; their daughters, one of whom is newly a teenager, are testing their own boundaries and their parents' patience — and from without — self-made music executive Pete's label is going down the tubes; his mooching father (Brooks) is a pro at emotional blackmail; Debbie's dress shop appears to have fallen victim to a staff member's sticky fingers.

Apatow explores the tensions and occasional blow-outs caused by these various factors, and the minor reconciliations and moments of intimacy in between, in a characteristically laconic manner. Like most of his films, *This Is 40* sprawls to more than two hours, with the actors given plenty of space to improvise both in pursuit of laughs and in order to explore every corner of the characters' emotional make-up, psyche and relationships.

In a way it does the film a disservice to note that Mann is Apatow's wife, and that their daughters Maude and Iris Apatow play Pete and Debbie's daughters Sadie and Charlotte respectively. It makes it seem like a vanity project in a way that distracts from the convincing and naturalistic performances of the two girls, and from Mann's own comedic and dramatic range; she and Rudd certainly nail the intense if weary chemistry of a long-wed couple.

Don't be put off by reviews deriding the film's preponderance of fart jokes. There is one, but it's barely a joke. Pete's bedtime flatulence highlights a certain affable insensitivity on his part, and exacerbates Debbie's unease at the shape intimacy has taken in their relationship. Apatow's comedies are characterised by unified bittiness; each 'bit' develops a character or riffs on the main theme. And that includes 'the bit where Pete farts in bed'.

In truth *This Is 40* is a cut below *Knocked Up* and Apatow's other crass, heartwarming gem, *The 40 Year Old Virgin*. It just doesn't add up to more than the sum of its 'bits'. Apatow probably hopes its episodic nature will reflect a certain

everydayness. But Debbie's relationship with her until-recently estranged father (Lithgow), and her trainer's (Segel) coital pitch to one of her employees (Fox) make the film seem flabby, not leisurely.

It is difficult, too, to feel much sympathy for this educated, affluent white couple's financial difficulties. They possess an irksome sense of entitlement that seems to be shared by Apatow himself. This is epitomised in a scene where they meet with their daughter's principal to address a number of incidents — namely, 'the bit where Debbie verbally abuses a young boy' and 'the bit where Pete abuses the boy's mother' Catherine (McCarthy).

The incidents reveal the depth of Debbie's and Pete's neuroses, and show them in a bad light. But they escape reprimand by dint of their attractive exteriors. The frumpy Catherine describes them as looking like a couple from a bank commercial; she, on the other hand, loses her cool during the meeting and ends up looking unhinged. The scene is funny (McCarthy could elicit laughs in her sleep), but whose corner should we be in here?

Boiled down, Debbie and Pete's matrimonial angst revolves around the tension between Pete's 'selfish' desire sometimes for space from his family, and Debbie's 'controlling' desire for Pete to be more involved. This is encapsulated by the perfectly contemporary, recurring image of Debbie bursting in upon Pete as he sits on the toilet playing games on his iPad. Each character's behaviour frustrates, and feeds the insecurities of, the other.

It is a tension that can be relieved, of course, but not without honest communication. Predictably, the importance of communication in relationships is the main 'take-home' from *This Is 40*, and while it may be a trite message, no doubt for many married couples it is a timeless one that bears repeating.

In fact, despite its moments of crass humour, the film is centrally moral and even conservative in its elevation of 'heteronormative' family unity. It stands as a nuanced riposte to the simplistic and cynical assessment made by one character in *Knocked Up* regarding Pete and Debbie, that they 'aren't right for each other'. Marriages are complex creatures, Apatow seems to be saying, and even troubled ones may not be easily dismissed.

## Declaring war on the r-word

### POLITICS

*Moira Byrne Garton*

The Australian community has made encouraging strides to address abuse of a racial or sexist nature. It is time to jettison other words in our lexicon that invoke hurt and exclusion to marginalised people.

Earlier this month in New York City, Councillor David Greenfield proposed to [remove](#) the term 'mentally retarded' from City publications. The words 'developmentally disabled' would be used instead, due to widespread derogatory use of the word 'retarded' in the United States.

Indeed, a particularly appalling social media incident in the US election campaign last year was a Twitter message by high-profile conservative commentator Ann Coulter. During the presidential candidates' debate on 22 October, Coulter [tweeted](#) , 'I highly approve of Romney's decision to be kind and gentle to the retard.'

Following its denunciation, she argued the r-word is a long-term colloquialism for 'loser', and labelled protestors as 'aggressive victims', compounding her offence.

One protestor was John Franklin Stephens, a 30-year-old man with Down syndrome who [addressed](#) Coulter's pejorative language in an open letter. He understood Coulter's intention to disparage the President by 'linking him to people like' himself, because many see comparison to someone with intellectual disabilities as a smear.

He went on to suggest three alternative interpretations of the 'r-word'. It could imply President Obama found ways to succeed despite bullying; was thoughtful in speech; or possessed a worldview of life 'as a wonderful gift', despite susceptibility to poor social outcomes. Stephens embraced these interpretations.

While Australia has assorted derisive terms for people with disabilities, anecdotally, local use of the r-word is prevalent, perhaps prompted by continuing American cultural influences. Variations substitute prefixes: rancorous online Australian political debate regularly mocks 'rightards' and 'leftards'.

These are not the only minority group descriptor idioms used to injure. 'Mental', 'psycho' and 'gay' are often employed as negative replacements. Labels such as 'bogan' and 'westie' buy in to class stereotypes based on geography, income and education, while remarks about 'senior moments' reflect ageism.

All are bigoted terms devaluing those they reference, and gloomy evidence of defining people by 'otherness'.



The language of exclusion is used so frequently that many do so without thinking. Understanding its affront to those with intellectual disabilities, autism, or physical disabilities; mental illness; a homosexual orientation; and those that love others fitting these descriptions leads to more prudent word choices.

Ideally, I endeavour to point out the degrading effect. Nine times out of ten, people don't mean to offend. They don't realise that for people relating to a particular term, hearing others use such words negatively can be intimidating. I find that most people, when challenged, apologise and undertake not to do so again.

Other times, it is more difficult to call people to account. I've heard work colleagues refer to people, processes or decisions as 'retarded', personalities as 'on the [autism] spectrum' or 'a bit special', and behaviour as 'OCD' or 'schizo'. I hoped, perhaps naively, that my silence and discomfiture would adequately express disapproval.

In contrast, after countless reminders, a friend announced on Facebook that she would defriend anyone who used or linked to such expressions. Though some may judge this as heavy-handed political correctness, seeking to eradicate such words from discourse is a natural extension of a respectful, inclusive society.

The Coulter defence of long-term use does not bear scrutiny. The word 'nigger' was used to refer to African-American people for over a century. In Australia, equally offensive words for Aboriginal people were used for decades. Prolonged usage doesn't mitigate indecency.

Certainly, language evolves and words previously denoting one meaning now represent another. 'Idiot' was once an accepted word for people with intellectual disabilities, and became an insult via the '[euphemism treadmill](#)'. Regardless how intellectual disability is described, over time it is perceived negatively because few view those with intellectual disabilities as like themselves, or as offering gifts to their communities.

With around 250,000 [words in use](#), the English vocabulary provides countless adjectives to accurately portray intended meaning. How about awkward, boring, conventional, difficult, extreme, flamboyant, graceful, hapless, implausible, joyful ...? Multiple alternatives eliminate any reason to tolerate terms that cause hurt and offence.

## Rock's radical Australia Day message

### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

*Donna Mulhearn*

As a social and political activist since my teens, people often ask me what motivated me so early on. A few factors shaped my values: my Irish Catholic background; my public housing upbringing by a widowed mother on welfare ; and, later, my discovery of a radical message about love and stuff.

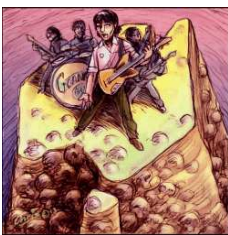
But it was a rock song that brought it all together. It was 1982 and I was 14. I was watching *Countdown* with my brother, when the song came on. It was catchy, had a haunting chorus, rich harmonies, and a great guitar riff. But there was something more. It gave me goose-bumps, though I couldn't explain why.

'That'll be a hit,' my brother predicted.

The song was 'Solid Rock' by Australian band Goanna. It is now 30 years since I first saw that clip, but when I hear the song today, I still get goose-bumps, and the chorus still haunts me.

I couldn't wait until the repeat of *Countdown* the following week. As soon as I had saved up \$9.99 I took a bus to town and purchased my first record with my own money — Goanna's *Spirit of Place*. I soon memorised the words to 'Solid Rock' as well as every 'ooh', 'ah', and grunt — but it was a simple phrase, sung almost under the breath of lead singer Shane Howard, that had me mesmerised.

'Someone lied ...'



What? Someone lied? As a teenager, already angry about a few things, I wanted to know who lied, what did they lie about and why did they lie about it.

But Howard went further.

'Someone lied,' he repeats, and then whispers: 'Genocide.'

Genocide? Wow. At that point to link genocide to Australia's Aborigines was not done on prime time television — but there it was on *Countdown* and repeated countless times on radio for the next 30 years.

'Solid Rock' has moulded itself into the consciousness of many Australians like myself. As a schoolgirl it prompted me to ask questions, to challenge the narrative of history I was receiving at school, to think. I wrote to the band — the only fan letter I've ever written — and received a reply, which I've treasured. It encouraged me to read further about Aboriginal issues and politics. I followed Goanna, and later Howard's solo career.

In 2006, I was thrilled to meet Howard (I approached him during a break at a concert) and tell him of the influence his songwriting had on me. At the time I was

in the midst of a legal trial for breaking into Pine Gap military base to draw attention to its war-making functions, which I mentioned to him.

He listened intently, went back on stage, re-told the story to the audience and dedicated a song to me (I almost fainted!). He supported the Pine Gap action by donating a song, 'Rise Up', to a fundraising CD for the trial.

I was delirious at making the connection to a childhood hero and realising he was as authentic and committed as I had perceived all those years ago.

And so it is that as Australia Day approaches I want to pay my tribute to 'Solid Rock', for it was this song that taught me, as a teenager, to question the narrow, white, European narrative that accompanies the flag-waving on this day. It encouraged me to begin to dig deeper and challenge the well-spun myth that Australia Day is something to celebrate when in reality it marks an invasion, occupation and attempted decimation of a culture.

Indeed 'someone lied', and the lies continue.

## **Julie Bishop's pall of duty**

### POLITICS

*Max Atkinson*

Late last year Liberal Party Deputy Leader Julie Bishop [complained](#) in Online Opinion that Foreign Minister Bob Carr had undermined the Prime Minister's authority on the UN vote on Palestine . He had 'run a guerrilla campaign' among the backbench to 'get his way' in Caucus, so as to 'roll her' in Cabinet. Such treachery must be condemned because 'a prime minister without authority cannot function ... for very long'.

As a politician and lawyer she knew Carr infringed no constitutional rule or convention; it was, in fact, common or garden Westminster politics, with members free to discuss proposals and compete for support. She was, it seems, committed to a view which goes further than doctrines of party unity and joint cabinet responsibility — ministers must support a prime minister's views even before Cabinet addresses them.

This view of politics helps explain why there has been so little controversy in the Liberal Party on issues such as the Iraq War, the Apology, refugees, same-sex marriage, gambling reform etc. which divide the nation. It explains why there were only five 'conscience votes' during Howard's reign and why 'crossing the floor' is so rare.

But this impressive record of loyalty is also a history of moral self-subordination and, contrary to the Deputy Leader's views, a matter for shame rather than pride. She is, in effect, taking to extremes a doctrine of unity which is responsible for much of what is wrong in politics.

To understand why, consider reconciliation. The Liberal Party denied an apology during the years of the Howard administration, but changed its policy as soon as a new leader made it expedient. No one sought a 'conscience' vote when the policy began or was rejected but all members, with the exception of Howard, joined in the celebratory sitting in Parliament House.

Likewise with Labor, whose members sign a pledge of loyalty. It seems astonishing now that, despite opposition to the Iraq War, no member would support a formal inquiry into the evidence said to justify it, including claims now known to have been fabricated by Rafid al-Janabi, known as 'curveball' by US intelligence officials.

It is hard to dismiss the conjecture that this was because Labor leaders were wedded to the alliance and back-benchers were sworn to unity. They were against the war, but an inquiry might offend US sensibilities.

On the present issue — should Australia support a higher UN status for Palestine — it is clear that Bishop sees herself and fellow shadow ministers as

obliged to accept Tony Abbott's opinions, regardless of the nation's interests, much less those of Israel and Palestine. It gives his views priority over principles of international law as well as a need to defuse tensions and secure a lasting Middle-East peace.

In Bishop's political world these matters are not determinative; whether they play any role at all will depend on Abbott's wishes.

This is why her theory of duty must be rejected as profoundly irrational. When people take a stand on a matter of principle, to oppose a war or racial discrimination, or to support reform of gambling or election finance laws, they do so for reasons of fairness, humanity, justice etc. that they believe are important, and see themselves as sharing with the community.

But their case rests on a judgment of these values and how they apply. The fact that it is their opinion is no part of it; even less is it relevant that someone they admire — be it Mahatma Ghandi or the leader of the Liberal Party — has a view. To cite this as a reason is to misunderstand the logic of argument — it treats opinions as values when it is the opinion itself which must be justified.

To put this in general terms, a moral system based on values is inherently personal in that no one can justify a judgment on a matter of principle by citing someone else's opinion. When politicians do this under a doctrine of party unity they abdicate their duty to defend community values — they violate, to use Edmund Burke's language, a sacred trust 'for the abuse of which they are deeply answerable'.

Someone whose politics is guided by values will assess opinions in light of principles of humanity, justice, benevolence, fairness, human dignity etc., and respond accordingly. In considering the apology he will look to the merit of Howard's arguments that past officials did what they thought best, and that a government is not responsible for the wrongs of its predecessors. He will judge these claims for himself, not defer to Howard's view.

This leaves a puzzle: how can an accomplished politician and lawyer, indeed a prospective prime minister, criticise Carr for doing what anyone who cares about the substance of politics — to serve the interests of the community while respecting its values — takes for granted?

The only explanation which comes to mind is a deep and abiding scepticism about values. It suggests the greater danger is not the growing religious and political fundamentalism, but a deep conviction that there is no such thing as moral truth, only the shifting sands of opinions.



## **Love poem to a Hills Hoist**

POETRY

*Kevin Gillam*

### **Nannup Diary**

do you see the river as spittle?  
silence, staves unplayed,  
bracken its own language  
tuarts in their ragged tweeds,  
small birds plucking.  
see the river as spittle?  
leaves shushing their names,  
light gone sepia, hinting at moisture,  
bracken's lyrics in slang  
car roars across what was.  
thinking with bark?  
settles, yes, the river  
these unwet days, hankering  
for rain, sky closing,  
bracken sounding between  
necessity here, sanctity,  
where ends the understory?  
bracken's the hours unheard.  
river sits, rippled

### **dear hoist**

dear hoist,  
still standing? still spinning?  
still lapped by buffalo?  
we loved you. weren't allowed to  
of course. but we did.  
draped over, swung from,

cranked up and down,  
merry-go-round on green sea.

Mum's peeling carrots voice piercing  
the flywire. we loved you  
you arthritic backyard myth

**when a grasshopper**

when a grasshopper landed on my study window last summer  
I looked at it for long enough to leave the page and  
climb inside and fly and feel the thrill of wheat rippling  
beneath my wings and the beauty of panoramic vision  
and wonder of touch through antennae and joy at  
being able to jump two hundred times my height and  
rub my thighs behind my back and oh  
if only my yoga class could see me now, but  
the couch diet got so tedious and  
overnight flights so wearisome and my rear legs ached  
and male sensibilities protested at  
being left to do all the clicking and mating displays  
so I climbed back through the study window  
because writing is much easier

**wheatbelt**

from the wicker chair on the verandah  
lift your eyes above  
the balustrade, see how heat  
whitens the day,  
hear the easterly stirring the peppermint leaves,  
the screech of pink and grey galahs as they  
feed in the shade of the ghost gum.  
hold this tree.  
feel its smooth cool torso, then rise

and drift across fields brown as lager,  
follow the rumble of trucks into town  
where sun glints off rusted tin and  
the wind works like sandpaper on the bricks  
in the old silo. now lift again  
and rest on the burnt bones of the tuarts  
on the ridge as a raven scapes its cry  
then drowns in blue.

finally, run your hands across these wheatfields  
and remember the blanket of fabric scraps  
under which you slept on this verandah  
and know that this land won't bleed if  
you cut it, and it won't cry  
when you leave

**a vertical moment**

laying bricks. all the  
drunken things, everythings.  
ritual is physical  
rhyme, but, upside down  
in the dark, all the  
consonants dancing.  
a much younger plant, more  
supple. mother's words? don't like  
home for house. but still  
a seminal text, yes?  
more drinking sky. things kept from  
me. drained as those  
pressed flowers. a vertical  
moment. laying it down

**every colour makes yellow**

rarely shining — not for crows  
no, the envelopes are more  
while to drive up into dawn  
before rain, the air tintured  
stolen from the lane of own  
lifting lid, piano teeth  
may take sides in homes of rest  
RO G BIV isn't complete  
but jaundiced were the streetlights  
thunks, yes, the hue for that past  
who sailed the seas, submarine  
just that, the re-membling  
then mustard and sepiaed  
but amber wasn't the sun

## Incompetent dealing with priestly paedophilia

### THE MEDDLING PRIEST

*Frank Brennan*

If Bishop Harry Kennedy (pictured) were alive today he would be 97 years old. He became a bishop 41 years ago and retired 21 years ago. Chances are that, like others of his fellow bishops, he was a man of his times.



Thirty-one years ago he ordained a new priest, 'Fr F', and sent him to Moree parish in the Armidale Diocese. Two and a half years later, Kennedy abruptly terminated Fr F's appointment and sent him on 'what was euphemistically called 'sick leave' to use the language of retired judge Antony Whitlam who has conducted a thorough inquiry into the case of Fr F. A psychologist gave him the 'all clear' for continued ministry.

Three years after the termination of Fr F's Moree appointment, he was arrested and charged with serious sexual offences against a boy, Damien Jurd, who had been an altar boy for Fr F in Moree. The magistrate improperly dismissed the charges. Fr F continued to serve as a priest.

Kennedy being long dead, we will never hear his side of the story. But Whitlam has been scrupulously fair in concluding on the evidence available to him that Kennedy's later treatment of Damien's parents was a disgrace, Kennedy's failure to look into various matters was 'utterly inexplicable', and his record keeping was abysmal.

If the spotlight of a retired judge were not thus applied to the issues which arose once Fr F was moved from Moree to various other parishes in the dioceses of Armidale and Parramatta, it is unlikely that the present bishop of Armidale would have publicly acknowledged that Kennedy 'failed in his duty of governance [of the diocese] and, more importantly, in his duty to the pastoral care of its people'.

It will be no surprise if the McClellan Royal Commission highlights such failings by some other bishops of that generation. The judicial spotlight is welcome.

The *4 Corners* program [Unholy Silence](#) which led to the Whitlam inquiry made much of a meeting on 3 September 1992 between Fr F and three still serving senior clergy — Frs Usher, Lucas and Peters. According to the *4 Corners* reporter Geoff Thompson, 'What happened at the meeting is crucial to understanding the major flaws in the way the Catholic Church deals in-house with allegations of sexual abuse'.

This was the first of three such meetings between September and November 1992. The letter of Fr Peters to his bishop eight days after the first meeting which was said to be 'a short report on the meeting', disclosed five distinct admissions by

Fr F to sexual interference with children.

Having interviewed all three senior clerics and reviewed all available documentary evidence 20 years later, Whitlam concludes, 'Notwithstanding the honest differences in recollection, I do not disbelieve Fr Lucas and Mgr Usher. Accordingly if 'F' made no admissions that either of them considered could and should be reported to the police, then there was no 'cover-up' back in 1992.'

Whitlam observed that 'There is nothing sinister in that situation. Nor do I consider that [the Peters letter of 11 September 1992] must necessarily be accepted as a more accurate record of the discussion.'

In *Unholy Silence*, Cardinal Pell's edited remarks gave the impression that there was a contemporary file note relating to the meeting of 3 September 1992. He said, 'The file note of that meeting ... does not show that [Fr F] made any admission'. Whitlam observed, 'It would be unfortunate if that statement gave the impression that Fr Usher's briefing note was a contemporaneous record of the meeting in question.'

In fact the file note provided to His Eminence was drawn up on 6 June 2012. Speaking for Fr Lucas on the program, Cardinal Pell said, 'I've reported what the file note says and what he said about what happened at that particular meeting.' Two days after the program, the Archdiocese of Sydney issued a media statement pointing out that the Peters letter did not reflect the 'notes of the meeting held by the Church's Professional Standards Office'.

Those notes were presumably not the file note to which His Eminence was referring. Unfortunately those notes do not appear in the Whitlam report.

Kerry O'Brien introduced *Unholy Silence* with the question, 'why has this man (Fr F) not been brought to justice?' He said the story would focus 'on the failure of the Church at very senior levels, right up to the present day, to deal adequately with allegations of serious and predatory crimes, including the apparent failure to alert police'.

Having inspected all available materials and interviewed all key players still living, Whitlam provides a more complex tale. It's not just a matter of out of touch clergy failing to act justly, compassionately and transparently.

It is gratifying to see that Whitlam finds that 'had procedures for reporting child abuse laid down in [Towards Healing] been in force in 1984 and observed in Moree at the time, 'F' would have been stopped in his tracks', and that 'if those procedures had been in place in 1989 and followed in 'F's' case, there is no chance that [the Bishop of Parramatta] would have agreed to take him on'. Daniel Powell who became one of F's victims in Parramatta would have been spared F's depredations.

One of the matters for the Royal Commission will be to consider what should be the liability of the Church as an unsuspecting employer for the criminal acts of 'an

employee' like Fr F who preys on an unsuspecting child like Damien Jurd. This will entail consideration of legal and moral questions about vicarious liability of employers for criminal acts of employees committed outside the scope of their employment and without knowledge of their employer, even if the employer be cautious and diligent.

Another matter will be consideration of the strict liability of any employer, including the Church, for permitting a renowned offending employee to be placed in a position of threat to children.

It is gratifying that Whitlam had no substantive criticism to make of any of Bishop Kennedy's successors in Armidale nor of either Bishop of Parramatta with whom Fr F dealt.

Even the late Bishop Kennedy could have been helped if he had better counsel available on the psychology of child sex abusers. Back in those days, it was possible for a psychologist to write to Kennedy in July 1988 after assessing Fr F and saying that 'he no longer presents any problems for children or yourself' and 'I would hope that 'F' will be given every opportunity to move beyond the cloud that still appears to hang over his head and receive the care and support he justly deserves after all this time'.

After interviewing Fr F himself, Mgr Usher wisely counselled that another assessment be sought, noting, 'I gained the impression that he was unable to understand the seriousness of the matters with which he had been charged and was arrogantly dismissing the whole affair as a figment of other people's imagination'.

After Kennedy's retirement, the new bishop took Usher's advice and sought an alternative professional opinion. The bishop was advised in 1992 that 'F' will be an ongoing risk', 'a high risk of recidivism' and 'the prognosis is not good'. The new bishop acted promptly to have F withdrawn from all ministry.

The late Bishop Kennedy's incompetence might not have wrought such damage, especially to Daniel Powell, if the prosecution of F had been more competent. Whitlam found that the reasons of the magistrate in discharging F in 1988 were 'plainly unsatisfactory and provide no support for his stated conclusion' and 'reflect a flawed approach to the exercise of his jurisdiction to discharge'. Whitlam says 'it is difficult to see how a decision was made not to continue the prosecution of 'F' on an *ex officio* indictment'.

There will be many complex lessons from the royal commission, and not just for Catholic bishops. Bishop Kennedy was not the only one out of his depth in the saga of Fr F; practitioners in law and psychology were found wanting. Other than Kennedy, most of the senior clergy involved with F appear to have done their job credibly according to the values and practices of the time.

It is now for the royal commission to recommend how contemporary values and

practices can be improved for the protection of children like Damien Jurd and Daniel Powell.



## Vein hope for Pakistan's minorities

### RELIGION

Irfan Yusuf



Nations can be likened to human bodies. Injury or pain to one part can affect the rest. Key arteries and veins often lay hidden among more visible skin and bones and are only visible in our most vulnerable locations; when cut, the blood flow is almost always fatal.

The most vulnerable and largely hidden parts of Pakistan are its minorities. Pakistan's founder Mohammed Ali Jinnah, himself from the Shia Muslim minority and Pakistan's first governor-general, guaranteed the rights of minorities. In his speech of 11 August 1947, Jinnah declared: 'You are free ... to go to your temples ... to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship ... You may belong to any religion or caste or creed — that has nothing to do with the business of the State.'

If Pakistan is to remain a nation with something resembling a soul and true to the vision of its founding fathers, it must protect its ethnic and religious minorities. But as with its neighbour India, it continues self-harming by bleeding its minorities. It isn't just extremists engaging in the self-harm. It happens at all levels of society.

In theory, Pakistan is a democracy with free elections, functioning political parties and a free and diverse press. Minorities are represented in public life. The recently retired Chief Justice of Pakistan's Supreme Court, the highest court in the land, was a Hindu. Hindus and Christians have allotted seats in the Federal Parliament.

But Pakistan was a nation carved out of British India at the beginning of the Cold War, a time when any enemy of communism was seen as a good friend. Muslim fanatics in Pakistan intolerant of non-Muslims were courted and funded because of their intolerance of the Kremlin.

The phenomenon became acute when Soviet forces entered Afghanistan. The US, its Arab allies and Pakistan's military dictator General Zia-ul-Huq encouraged fervour for anti-Communist jihad and introduced a process of 'Islamisation' that saw the partial introduction of sharia criminal law and major changes to the education system.

The position of minorities has worsened as the *letter* of Sunni Islam (but not its *spirit*) has transformed Pakistan. Key institutions and personalities allied with the sufi-inspired South Asian Sunni traditions *deobandi* and *barelwi* have used domestic and overseas provocation to attack Pakistan's Christian, Hindu, Ahmadi and other minorities.

An amateurish YouTube video produced by a Californian in 2012 somehow led a crazed crowd to attack a Hindu temple on the outskirts of Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi.

Pakistan's *Dawn* newspaper [reported](#) that the attack 'took place in late September on the Day of Love for the Prophet, a national holiday declared by the government in response to an anti-Islam film made in the US ... Pakistan's Hindu community says it faces forced conversions of Hindu girls to Islam, a lack of legal recognition for their marriages, discrimination in services and physical abuse when they venture into the streets.'

And where do we start on Pakistan's Christian minorities? A demented version of religious law, in the form of an amendment to the Pakistan Penal Code designed to punish blasphemy, has now [encouraged](#) the collective punishment of Pakistan's tiny Christian communities.

The case of Asia Bibi, an illiterate farmhand from Punjab, illustrates this phenomenon. Charged with blasphemy and facing the death sentence, her most powerful supporter was the Muslim Governor of Punjab, Salmaan Taseer. His support led to Taseer's own bodyguard pulling the trigger.

As if to underscore just how far the bodyguard's fanaticism had reached, supporters at his hearing included lawyers who only recently had marched in favour of the Rule of Law and the reinstatement of the Chief Justice of Pakistan's Supreme Court. Religious leaders and even respected mainstream journalists and commentators accused Taseer himself of blasphemy.

But non-Muslim minorities are not exempt from this kind of murderous hysteria. Sectarian and ethnic minorities such as the Hazara, an Afghan Shia community settled largely in the north western city of Quetta, have been the subject of an organised campaign of killings.

Given the scale of the attacks and the fact that they target a single community, one wonders how, as Pakistani journalist Kiran Nazish [explains](#), 'the media, particularly television media in Pakistan had been ignoring the issue' when smaller-scale loss of life, cricket scores and Bollywood starlets are readily reported.

The Lashkar-i-Jhangwi, a Sunni militant group outlawed in Pakistan, has been carrying out these attacks for months with complete impunity. Little has been done by the provincial government to protect the victims. In the most recent attack, over 100 Hazara citizens were gunned down in Quetta.

Hazara community members are conducting a constant vigil with the coffins of the dead. For these devout Muslims, whose faith requires almost immediate internment of the dead, refusal to immediately bury their martyrs is a powerful symbol of protest.

The Hazaras, like their Christian, Hindu and other Pakistani brethren, are

bleeding thanks to the intolerance (or at least the silence) of the majority. The nation is dying as a result. Perhaps this is why the Hazara of Quetta chose to brave sub-zero temperatures and sit with coffins they have draped in Pakistani flags.

It was only after nationwide protests that the federal government in Islamabad agreed to Hazara demands for the provincial government to be sacked. Only time will tell whether such steps will stem Pakistan's bleeding.

## Not judging Ned Kelly and Lance Armstrong

EDITORIAL

*Michael Mullins*

At lunchtime on Friday, Ned Kelly's Requiem Mass was finally celebrated in St Patrick's Church, Wangaratta, in north-eastern Victoria. The bushranger was sentenced to death by hanging in 1880 and denied the religious rites he requested. His bones were recently rediscovered and identified, and his family has been able to organise a belated funeral and reburial.



On Friday, commentators and bloggers took the opportunity to pass judgment on Kelly. [One](#) called him a 'psychotic and dangerous' criminal 'with a pathological hatred of the police'. [Another](#) deplored the 'dishonest folklore and revisionism' that has made him a hero for many Australians.

But they missed the point, as did members of the public who directed abusive phone calls and emails to Monsignor John White, who presided at the Requiem Mass on Friday.

White [explained](#) : 'The life that Ned lived is not the point today... We have a church of saints and sinners and we are not here to say which category Ned fell into.'

Coinciding with Ned Kelly's Requiem Mass on Friday was quite a different ritual, the broadcast of Oprah Winfrey's interview with cyclist and now self-confessed drug cheat Lance Armstrong. The interview was seen by many as a calculated bid on the part of Armstrong to harness the positive power of Winfrey's brand to induce public judgment that he is morally fit to resume his sporting career.

But like the Ned Kelly requiem, judgment should not be the point here either, however self-serving Armstrong's own agenda may have been in doing the interview with Winfrey. It doesn't serve any useful purpose to dwell on whether we think Armstrong should be condemned or excused. If we're interested in the common good, we will instead be discussing how drug policy can be changed to ensure there is a level playing field for cycling and sport in general.

As ethicist Julian Savulescu [put it](#) in the Fairfax press on Saturday: 'Rather than excoriating Armstrong, wouldn't it be better to ask why everyone is cheating, and why the rules are failing?' Savulescu does not share the Catholic religious world view of Monsignor White, but they are both urging us to look at the big picture.

Ned Kelly killed three policemen, and that was a serious crime. But a reading of his [Jerilderie Letter](#) manifesto suggests his actions were a symptom of a system of British colonial rule that was stacked against Irish Catholics. In the same way, Armstrong's behaviour is a product of what Savulescu calls an 'ideology' of zero-tolerance against performance enhancing drugs in sport, which he argues

should be examined. Armstrong's deplorable treatment of informers such as his former aide Emma O'Reilly is comparable with the way Kelly dealt with those who informed on him.

There are arguments to both condemn both Kelly and Armstrong as psychotic criminals, but also to recognise their achievement as trailblazing reformers, though Armstrong is still a work in progress. However judgment of whether they are right or wrong is best left to their own soul-searching, when they face their God or ultimate reality. As the agnostic Armstrong has [said](#) : 'If there was indeed some body or presence standing there to judge me, I hope I would be judged on whether I had lived a true life'.

A true life or a deceitful life might be inspiring, or discouraging, for us to think about, depending upon how we view the behaviour of the individual concerned. But it is not something we can know unless we are Ned Kelly's God or Lance Armstrong's body or presence. The business of the rest of us is to consider how best to reform the rules by which we live our lives, and play our games, in a civil society.

## Rape and restorative justice

### THE SAVAGE MIND

*Ellena Savage*



While some friends and I sunned our legs on the back porch the other day, our conversation turned to mortality. We're deep like that. One woman recounted the tale of her almost-death which completely altered the way she lived her life. When she was 20, she had been raped by a stranger at knife-point.

When the police finally found the perpetrator, she discovered that he had raped other women in the area, and had murdered some of them. While he was being charged, she decided to opt out of the proceedings. They had enough evidence to 'put him away' for a long time, which is presumably what some of the survivors wanted. But my friend didn't believe that prison would rehabilitate him, nor that it would aid her own survival.

Her perspective, which came from her deep pity for the misery which led to his awful deeds isn't mainstream, but it might help us understand [this disturbing graph](#) which circulated in social media last week.

There are, of course, many barriers that discourage women from reporting abuse to the police. In a legal context, sexual assault is incredibly difficult to prove, often boiling down to one person's testimony against another's. Long and gruelling court proceedings are unlikely to deliver the remedy the survivor needs. Survivors can endure social victim-blaming, and risk retraumatisation in the process.

As an advocate of restorative justice, my friend recognises the shortcomings of the criminal system which does more to impede justice for survivors than it does to enable it.

Yet I somehow still feel vindicated by the law. It could be that I watched too much *Law and Order* in my formative years, or that the idea of giving up on the belief of legal protection is all too scary.

I recently reread Helen Garner's 1997 book *The First Stone*. In it, she laments the ease with which two young women reported an alleged incident of sexual harassment to the police. She sees the legal system as damaging to everyone involved in such a case.

While I admire the book for many reasons, I read it a couple of decades after it was published, at a time when it seems reasonable to believe that the law can remedy any injustice. I grew up in the age of litigation, the age of suing those who bother you. I couldn't see what Garner was talking about.

During incidents when I've felt threatened by men, I've crudely invoked the law

to remind the threatening character, and perhaps myself, of my right to safety and security. Things along the lines of 'I'll call the cops!' and once, bizarrely, 'I'll sue you!' which is gen-Y for 'you're out of line'. These adolescent defences simply articulate that my rights are inalienable, and that the state will protect them.

Of course, sexual violence being one of the least reported and least convicted crimes, the state is actually quite incapable of protecting my rights in that department.

A new taskforce initiated by Defence Minister Stephen Smith will spend the next 12 months addressing more than 1000 sexual assault claims within the Australian Defence Force over the past 60 years. Following Smith's official apology to the survivors of these abuses, the primary aims of the taskforce are acknowledgement and compensation for survivors, rather than immediate punitive action for perpetrators.

The head of the taskforce, retired West Australian Supreme Court judge Len Roberts-Smith, told ABC that the proceedings would not be 'a civil liability-type scheme, where people have to establish damages and liability and to go to great lengths of proof to establish a claim'.

The compensation of up to \$50,000 per applicant (from the existing military budget) will not prohibit them from further legal action outside the taskforce. The taskforce will attempt to identify abusers, and will also refer relevant cases to police and the military justice system.

This framework shows more sensitivity to the needs of survivors than many other state responses. It follows in the vein of a truth commission, where really hearing claims and providing a context for perpetrators to take responsibility are more important than retaliation. While it probably won't lead to a royal commission, the taskforce is an important recognition of a failed bureaucracy.

Where the law doesn't have the scope to deliver justice for any of us when we need it most, we are compelled to reassess our blind faith in the institution.

## Secular scrutiny can save the Church

### RELIGION

*Michael Kelly*

On Wednesday Peter McClellan, the NSW Supreme Court Judge leading the royal commission into child abuse in institutions, told the media that the commission's task will be long and complex. No surprises there.

His point was to contain expectations among the media that the commission would be anything other than a hard slog, and that he expected that one of the outcomes, apart from legal proceedings that would not be the work of the commission, was the prospect of greater rigour in the execution of child protection procedures.

The following day brought the publication of the findings of Antony Whitlam QC into the handling of 'Father F', a serial abuser in rural NSW and then suburban Sydney.

Whitlam found Father F's ordaining bishop, Harry Kennedy (now deceased) to be culpably negligent, for failing to act on advice from those responsible for Father F in seminary days or to follow up complaints and allegations against Father F when he was acting as a priest.

Game on. This sort of scrutiny will only intensify.

There is little doubt that the perceived inadequacy of the Church's response to child abuse is the trigger for this commission. Alleged cover ups and the claims of a NSW police officer that Church officials obstructed investigations and protected child molesters were the immediate context for the calling the for the commission.

Many see 2013 as a miserable prospect for the Church in Australia, maybe the worst in its history. It is numbed and bewildered. Its leadership has its back to the wall, unable to say much except sorry.

But no approach to history is adequate without a sense of irony. In the long term, if handled properly, this period may well be seen as the circuit breaker that triggers many of the things long hoped for in the Church. And it will be freedoms of a secular liberal society rather than the freedom of the Gospel that could liberate the Church.

It will put a nail in the coffin of clericalism, that 'them and us' culture that fosters an elitism which is the very opposite of Christian discipleship, and which nurtures all those things that mark closed societies: secrecy; the power of the *cognoscenti* who use their access to information as a power over others; the habit of deception and obfuscation predicated on a belief that outsiders are not entitled to know things decided on by insiders.





It will display lay expertise as the salvation of the Church. Only expertise in law, communications, public advocacy, pastoral care and psychology can help the Catholic community again to hold its head up. Lay people will deliver the expertise or it won't be seen.

It will dismantle any remaining confidence anyone has in Church status as a carrier of anything but a role description. Church leaders will find their authority and ability to be persuasive in the way they lead their communities and witness to the Gospel. Invoking the authority of their position won't cut the mustard.

This period will reveal what the Church is and isn't. It isn't a command and control army or a football team doing what the captain and coach tell it to do. It is a community of faith at the service of the world and therefore must be subject to the accountabilities that are expected of such an ambition in the contemporary world. Transparency and accountability will be externally imposed because the Church is not capable of delivering them of itself.

Too often, public Church utterances against 'evils' and 'abuses' — especially in areas related to sex and gender relations and the right to life — fail to recognise the actual society we live in, which doesn't start where Catholics do. The campaign is conducted as if Catholics have a right to legislate their morality for everyone else.

Now the boot is on the other foot and Catholics are being told their Church has to smarten itself up, bring its practices into line with best practice accepted by everyone else, or suffer not just opprobrium but prosecution. Trust has been strained and only external intervention will address why.

It won't be the first time in the life of the Australian Church that external intervention has produced far more than was initially intended. I've long believed Gough Whitlam has had the largest single impact of any individual on the internal life of the Catholic Church.

Along with Susan Ryan a decade later, he removed the need for a highly committed but under-trained and poorly paid workforce to operate the Catholic school system. He made it possible for Catholic school teachers to be paid a predictable and proper wage, while Ryan oversaw the largest period of growth in the Catholic school system.

This meant there was no longer a need for the battalions of religious to keep the largest single investment by the Church in Australia actually functioning. It also led to the largest ever investment in the theological education of Catholic lay people in the history of the Church in Australia.

Who knows what will come of all this scrutiny. But if honestly engaged with, properly managed and taken as a point of departure, the royal commission may result in a great deal more than the correction of child protection provisions.

## Using poor language in the liturgy

RELIGION

*Andrew Hamilton*



The most pressing issue for the Church over the last year has been sexual abuse. Given the Royal Commission and other enquiries, it will surely also dominate this year's news. So it is understandable that there has been no space to celebrate such anniversaries as that of the introduction of the New Mass Translation. But this bears reflection because language is the underlying canvas on which life and conduct in any community are painted.

One year on it is clear that the more dramatic hopes and fears about the new translation were not realised. There were no reports of widespread rebellion in the pews, of continuing cacophony as different versions of responses mingled, of mass defection.

But nor has the introduction of the new translation been accompanied by the great spiritual renewal, the fresh understanding of the liturgy and the heightened sensitivity to scriptural echoes within the liturgy that some promised. The reverence and sense of transcendence claimed for the translation seem to have been perceived by few of those exposed to it. Nor has it changed the way in which people conduct themselves in church.

The lack of spectacular consequence is hardly surprising. Few people attend church services simply for the beauty of the language. Their faith is more deeply grounded and has endured worse challenges. The ways in which they engage with the liturgy, combining variously participation in a ritual duly conducted, identification with a community gathered in prayer, space for personal prayer and reflection, and presence to memories and hopes, are unlikely to be touched substantially by a change in wording only half attended to.

Nevertheless, the new translation is important because it will shape in small ways the sense of what it means to be Catholic. It is hard to see that it will be helpful in the longer run. Any change from the familiar to the new inevitably makes new boundaries. In this case it divides regular participants who are familiar with the new responses from occasional church goers who are rendered silent. Such discriminations are not helpful at a time when links with the Church are already so strained.

But perhaps the more important challenge facing any community is to find words that its members can identify and own. In many churches, such as the Greek and Russian Orthodox, this language is associated with their national and cultural history. Even though the liturgical language is archaic and is not understood by many hearers, its resonances have been incorporated into common

language and people see it as their own.

The same was perhaps true of Anglican liturgy, when the language of Cranmer and of the King James Bible, brought together the memory and the experience of a people.

Certainly the language of liturgy needs to have purchase in the world of its time. It need not be demotic — the language of the King James Version was deliberately remote in its formality, but it was what people might imagine the speech of kings to be. Kingship was a central fact of Jacobean life, and its language could be stretched to other forms of communication.

Similarly, the language of the recently superseded English translation was deliberately plain, aiming at the rhythms and clarity of ordinary speech. Plain and sparse speech is part of our everyday life from newspapers to government forms. We can imagine it being stretched to become, if inadequately, the language of love, grief, passion, contemplation, and declamation. It is grounded in both senses of the word, but it could be given wings.

The experience of most Catholic celebrants is that the language of the new translation is not grounded. It is self-referential in that it belongs to no living part of our world. It suits neither prayer nor declamation nor passion nor love, nor wonder. To be understood it needs adaptation, but even then it remains ungrounded in any shared discourse. That of course is not the fault of the translators, but reflects their riding instructions.

This malady is not fatal. But at a time when Christians increasingly experience a gap between faith and their world, a language of liturgy that is disconnected from the ways in which people can speak about things that matter puts unnecessary lead in the Catholic saddlebag.

## Stories about God and monster€s

### FILMS

*Tim Kroenert*

***Life of Pi* (PG). Director: Ang Lee. Starring: Suraj Sharma, Irrfan Khan, Rafe Spall. 127 minutes**

*Life of Pi* offers two stories. Both concern a boy who survives a shipwreck and spends months adrift in a lifeboat. One is constructed from mundane albeit horrific facts; the other, from visual and mystical wonders, scenes of terror and transcendence that seek no less than to better understand God. The teller of these stories, Pi (Khan), the shipwrecked boy now a man, asks the listener to choose. One story might be true. The other concerns Truth.

It is the more mystical account that forms the bulk of Yann Martel's 2001 novel and now, Ang Lee's wondrous cinematic adaptation of it. The young Pi's (Sharma) travelling companions on the boat include a hobbled zebra, bereaved orangutan, sinister hyena, and a majestic but deadly Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. These animals are the remnants of a zoo owned by Pi's father who, with Pi's mother and elder brother, went down with the ship.

The food chain asserts itself, and soon Pi and Parker are the sole survivors. The perilous beast and imperiled boy gradually learn to share this space. In Pi's childhood his father warned him animals have no soul; that any depth Pi might see in the tiger's eyes is merely a reflection of his own humanity. This is true enough: gazing upon and living alongside Richard Parker enhances Pi's sense of wonder at God's creation, his compassion, and will to live.

*Life of Pi's* greatest attribute is its visual design. [Lee's films](#) are notable for their visual grandeur and sense of nature as beautiful, vast and dangerous. Here he has created, with cinematographer Claudio Miranda, imagery that far transcends the limited possibilities suggested by 'boy in a boat'. The ocean alone is richly black and full of reflected stars; radiant turquoise and awash with luminescent jellyfish; or whipped to a towering grey frenzy.

Pi is a religious pilgrim, in the lifelong sense. During the first part of the film he relates the childhood experiences that led him, to the chagrin of his rational father and sensible mother, to embrace not only Hinduism, but also Christianity and Islam, with the studiousness of a wise and curious child. Where these faith traditions offer Pi complementary ways of knowing God, his experiences on the lifeboat test and temper that faith foundation.

The storytelling theme is encapsulated by a framing narrative, in which the now adult Pi presents his fantastic account to a Canadian novelist (Spall). This device allows the filmmakers to occasionally step back from the shipwreck narrative to offer exposition. Usually this is seamless, the adult Pi's narration so nicely written and elegantly delivered by Khan that when Pi's journey resumes, we are easily

drawn back into the story.

But Lee seems at times too enamoured to the act of storytelling itself. The first part of the film contains accounts of Pi's resourceful method for neutralising school bullies; the sadistic swimming lessons he endured from a friend of his father's; and a brief romance between Pi and a young dancer. These are charming enough, and do help establish character, but ultimately do not resonate in Pi's journey the way his youthful religious excursions do.

After the shipwreck — realised here in terrifying scale and detail — the film's grip might tighten or slacken, but it never relents. Among its visual and metaphysical highlights are a hallucinatory trip by Pi to the depths of the ocean; Pi and Richard Parker's sedate but eerie visit to an island of carnivorous algae; and a hysterical Pi dancing in the face of another deadly storm sent by God to reveal himself. (Biblically speaking, Pi is part Noah, part Job.)

All of which is in stark contrast to the other story, offered by Pi in the film's closing moments with the purpose of providing a version of events that it easier to believe. But believing is not the point. Pi's story (and specifically Lee's cinematic telling of it) is, both visually and thematically, an immersive experience. Plunge into its depths.

## Winter of Greece's discontent

COMMUNITY

*Gillian Bouras*

I have not been in Athens for months. Then it was still warm, and people were able to convince themselves that things were much the same despite the effects of austerity, the increasing incidence of strikes, the onward creep of poverty and the rise of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party. But I, for one, was made abruptly aware of change.

I have always felt safe in Athens, but in September, while travelling in a crowded suburban train, I was jostled by several large young men. Jostled with intent. When I alighted, feeling more than a little shaken, I discovered that my wallet was missing from my bag. In central Athens now, I grip my bag as I have never gripped it before.

Today I reach a crowded Syntagma Square: some people are organising a protest march, while others are looking on. The police and the riot squad are here, but the protesters are quiet and calm. They bear notices that read: *When injustice is suffocating us, the struggle is obligatory.*

A succinct and sensible piece of graffiti catches my eye. Two sentences are scrawled on a wall, with one directly beneath the other:

*Capitalism is killing you.*

*Fascism won't save you.*

There have long been beggars in Greece, but now there are many more, and of a new type: able-bodied young men, and young women with babies and small children. There are also many more homeless on Athenian streets: a recent estimate put the number at close to 20,000.

At 4pm the temperature stands at 9°C, and street people are already arranging the pieces of stout cardboard, the thin, grubby blankets, and pitifully small cloth and plastic bags. Equally pitiful are the brave attempts to sell a few items: a Pakistani youth waits on a corner and tries to sell one of his four battery-operated toy dogs.

Charitable organisations help when and where they can, with free meals and provision of shelter, but it is difficult for them to keep up with increasing demand. Individuals make their small gestures, and a friend shares the distress I feel when I run out of the small change that I scatter, like unsatisfactory confetti, along the streets.

This afternoon, on my way out of central Athens, I am struck by the sight of a young woman and her baby: both are very thin, and the mother herself is scarcely more than a child. Suddenly a well-dressed Athenian matron stops. She has been

to a bakery. She squats down and gives the girl half of the pastries she has bought.

\*\*\*\*\*

Back in the Peloponnese, I meet a friend. We say *happy New Year*, but our wishes sound hollow. *What's next?* we ask, and know at least some of the answers: more scandals, more failure to bring the chief tax evaders to account, more blasts from the so-called Troika, and certainly more struggle for the average Spiros and Soula.

Anne has been in Greece much longer than I have. She is now a grandmother, has spent all her married life here, and I feel her sadness when I tell her about the loss of my wallet. 'Once upon a time you could leave your suitcase by the side of the road for hours, and it would be still there when you got back. Such changes.'

She then tells me that a well-dressed middle-aged man came up to her recently. 'He had tears in his eyes, and said he was hungry.' The next day a young father asked Anne's husband for some milk, or some money: he was unable to feed his child. 'When I was first here, all those years ago, no Greek ever begged. Gypsies were the beggars and were scorned because of it. And now look!'

And that is what I said to myself when the TV cameras rolled during the cutting of Golden Dawn's New Year cake. There on the cake, for all to see, was a swastika. In chocolate icing. Now look.

## Family drama reveals detention contortions

### POLITICS

*Fatima Measham*

The case of a young Sri Lankan mother has highlighted the legal and ethical contortions that have become a feature of our refugee process.

Ranjini had already been assessed as a refugee and was establishing a new life in Melbourne with her second husband, Ganesh, when she and two young sons from her previous marriage were abruptly taken to Villawood.



Until she was removed from the community in May last year, few people realised that around 50 refugees were already in indefinite detention due to an adverse ASIO assessment. These individuals could not access the information used in their assessment, much less challenge it. They were not entitled to an appeal or review.

They could not be returned to their country of origin, if it were to even accept them, because of the principle of non refoulement. But they were not allowed to live in the Australian community, either.

Ranjini's [situation](#) was particularly Kafkaesque. She and her family had turned up for what they thought was a regular catch-up with her caseworker. They were told instead that she was deemed a security risk and that she and her boys, then aged six and eight, would be detained indefinitely. Ganesh had five minutes to say goodbye.

This happened on a Thursday. The following Saturday, Ranjini found out she was pregnant. Last night she gave birth to that child, a son who will in fact be an Australian citizen, despite the efforts of Australian governments past and present to withhold citizenship from people for whom it prefers to hold no responsibility.

From 1949 to 1986, children born in Australia were automatically citizens under the principle of *jus soli*. This became conditional on at least one parent being a citizen or permanent resident at the time of birth. Ganesh is a permanent resident.

By some quirk of fate or grace, Ranjini and her baby are sharply challenging the authenticity of the values we claim to hold. The right to be heard, the right to live with dignity, the right to full realisation as a human being.

It is a story that accentuates the brittleness of our immigration detention system, as it highlights the legal and ethical traps of binding post-9/11 national security sensitivities with asylum rights. It leads to some majestic contortions. How have we managed to confer protection on a woman *from whom* we need protection?



The best guess anyone has as to why Ranjini is considered a security risk is that her first, deceased husband was a driver for Tamil separatists (despite the fact that the Tamil Tigers was [never listed](#) as a terrorist organisation in Australia and had been crushed by Sri Lankan government forces in 2009 after a 35-year insurgency).

If this were the basis for detaining her, the information was not available for challenge or review. At least not until the public outcry that last October moved Attorney-General Nicola Roxon to appoint former Federal Court judge Margaret Stone as an independent reviewer for such cases.

It is a welcome development, along with refugees finally having access to an unclassified summary of the reasons for their assessments. Yet in reality, this new layer of accountability merely involves providing an opinion to the ASIO director-general.

The policy of indefinite detention remains unless the 2004 High Court decision that facilitates it is rescinded. Until then, refugees like Ranjini — who had already spent two years in detention in Australia prior to obtaining her protection visa — must be detained while their case is reviewed.

Three months after an independent reviewer was appointed, she and her sons are still at Villawood. Now she will be looking after a newborn and two older boys by herself, her husband's availability being subject to the regulations of the detention centre.

How is it that far more people in Australia are not appalled; not pushing government to dismantle the appalling mechanisms that shove vulnerable people into such situations?

Ranjini's story is another indictment of a collective failure or refusal to imagine the injustice endured by others. We allow ourselves to be distracted by endless abstractions peddled by politicians and the media because if ever we acknowledge the humanity we share with refugees, then we may be compelled to treat them accordingly.

Still, sometimes, despite our best efforts, a name surfaces, photos of a smiling woman emerge. A baby arrives.

## **An infinite number of Tasmanias**

POETRY

*Brian Doyle*

**A**

You want proof there are no tiny moments, none?  
Only eyes too dim to see the vault of the moment?  
Here's one. My son, after a whole year of D and F  
On his report card, a steady river of D and F, *only*  
D and F, not even a plodding C, earned his first A.  
It doesn't matter what the subject was. Nor what I  
Said to him, or him to me, or even what his tender  
Mother said, or how his brother and sister crowed  
And made a big deal out of it, probably a little too  
Much, all things considered. All that mattered was  
His face as he flipped the card on the kitchen table.  
I don't have any words for that. But I was allowed  
To see his face, at that moment. The world ambles  
On, burly and hurried, but there are those moments.  
Maybe we are composed of exactly these moments.

### **An infinite number of Tasmanias**

If you are like me, which God forbid, but maybe,  
You have on your wall a map, or perhaps several,  
Of places you know you will never be; not in this  
Life, anyway. It's just not going to happen. Cash,  
Health, the time away from work and your family.  
The reasons are all reasonable. For me: Tasmania.  
It's as far away as you can get from where I exist;  
Perhaps that's part of the lure — and it's an island,  
That's important in my strange faraway dreaming.  
And it's dense and wet and confused and haunted,

Its history shot through with blood and stone; why  
This is attractive to me I haven't the slightest idea.  
Lately I think it is the one thousand three hundred  
Forty six lakes. I'll never see them, Lakes Tiberias  
And Rufus, Bull and Bill, Fanny and Fergus, Echo  
And Nameless, Sappho and Shadow, and the quiet  
Lake Lucy Long; but I *do* see them, somehow, not  
Just on my wall but shimmering in a kind of dream  
For which I do not have to sleep. We hold compass  
Points in our heads for which no travel is necessary.  
Perhaps we must. Maybe dreams are a crucial food.  
If we just lived in this world we would never reach  
Any others, and don't we know there are way more  
Than we can even yet imagine? An infinite number  
Of Tasmanias, you might say. An equation of lakes  
Beyond the reach of numbers, all wonder and sheen.

**On reading the Bible while sipping whiskey**

The King James, of course. You couldn't read any other translation,  
Not in good conscience. You *could* read the Good News translation,  
Of course, but then you would have to drink wine coolers. I suggest  
Irish whiskey, substantive but biting, like the prose. Also begin with  
Ecclesiastes. Sip language and whiskey; savour the thorniness therein,  
For our days are numbered, and full of glory in their wild procession;  
And it is the very labour and effort that define the shape of our talents,  
Not the result, or accolades, or applause, or encomia, or your storage  
Houses filled with money, and sacks of corn, and gleaming machines.  
How you did what you did is the measure of your soul. Do not starve  
For answers to questions that cannot be answered. God jots notes but  
Not letters. From those notes we compose books and concerts. We're  
The tools. Without the tools the notes wander freely, and are not read

Or ordered into songs and symphonies. Be an instrument for delivery.  
Accept the hints and make of them tales and epics; do not think yours  
Is the only epic. As soon as yours assumes or recruits power, choke it  
And try again. That which thirsts for power proves itself false to light.

The way to wisdom is wonder. The answer to all questions is mystery.  
Close the book gently, for it is a masterful concert. Wash the whiskey  
Glass gently, for it too carries hints and notes. His hints are profligate.  
Salute the stars before you sleep, for they have sung sweetly and well.

**On reading the works of Flavius Josephus which someone left in the  
Holiday Inn 'business centre'**

For reasons that we can only imagine and happily speculate about.  
I mean, probably the management got the book along with the rest  
Of the ancient unopened tomes flanking the fake fireplace; by god,  
There's a Collected Macaulay, and a motley lot of Trollope novels.  
Isn't that kind of dangerous, to leave Macaulay near the computers,  
What if someone started into his essays and got caught by the song  
Of that man's hewn sentences? But maybe Flavius Josephus didn't  
Come in an estate sale. Maybe the night janitor is reading the book,  
Two pages at a time. Or the housekeepers are taking turns. It could  
Be that they lunch with him and some call him by his Roman name  
And others call him Yosef ben Matityahu. Perhaps all Holiday Inns  
Are required to have a copy of Flavius, just as they are commanded  
To use the English spelling for Center. I am an editor by profession,  
And so I fix the sign, putting the word back into American, whereas  
Here we are in America, but then I cannot resist turning the page, to  
Find, delightfully, amazingly, that someone has underlined Josephus  
In the most gentle pencil: *everyone ought to worship God according  
To his own inclinations, and not to be constrained by force.* Outside  
Snow is falling gently. This is my country. The soul who underlined  
Josephus, that soul is my brother or sister. I will not meet him or her;  
Yet I know my brother and I know my sister. The false fire suddenly

Leaps. The night clerk tells me later that it is set to double at twilight.

## The bankable brats and buffoons of Australian sport

SPORT

*Michael Visontay*



In an era when nearly all human pursuits are globalised and commercialised, sport is driven by two competing forces: the pursuit of unrealistic achievement and the need to always be entertaining. Victory at all costs is dehumanising, yet entertainment without competition is passionless — either way, we switch off, emotionally, and then with the remote.

This summer Shane Warne and Bernard Tomic, both immature to a fault, have demonstrated the tension between these ingredients. Warne is in the twilight of his cricket career, Tomic is just starting out on his tennis adventure. Over the past few weeks they've reminded us how commerce has hijacked the competition in sport.

Warne highlights what happens when entertainment trumps the contest. Ten days ago he engaged in a heated argument with West Indian Marlon Samuels, in a T20 Big Bash cricket match. The Australian was clearly heard on television saying 'fuck you, Marlon' before throwing the ball into Samuels' midriff in the act of returning it to the wicketkeeper. In return Samuels tossed his bat in Warne's direction, sparking more angry exchanges.

Warne was fined \$3000 and suspended for one match for breaching a code of conduct rule. He was fined a further \$1000 for using obscene language towards Samuels, who was also charged over his role in the exchange. Both penalties were lighter than a feather duster.

Warne tweeted that he went 'too far' and accepted his punishment. But he then tweeted he had been harshly treated. 'I'm disappointed at the severe penalty I received!'

Would he have behaved like this in a Test match, wearing no microphone? Would he have shouted at Samuels like this ten years ago in a one-day match? No way. The smash and grab of T20, with its ephemeral character, electronic gimmicks and meaningless results, is driven by one simple rule: whoever makes the most noise wins — whether it's by hitting sixes, getting out strangely, swearing, banter with commentators or body contact.

Warne's behaviour, his tweets and the wave of support for his punishment, reveal the game as a false premise designed to elicit attention-seeking behaviour for the TV cameras. They are templates for testosterone, in all its expressions. And if that is misdirected, no problem. Return to Go and start again, with a slap on the wrist.

Tomic, on the other hand, shows how talent and ambition, driven by a

controlling parent, can turn ugly almost overnight. Tomic, just 20, is recovering from an *annus horribilis* in 2012. Having risen through the rankings, and shining at last year's Australian Open, he played too many tournaments, crashed out early in the big ones, and his world ranking plummeted.

Talent can only get you so far. Beyond that, success is about character, discipline and application.

How did Tomic respond to that learning curve? He threw his father/manager off the court after a falling out, he was publicly accused of tanking in the US Open, was arrested for hooning around the Gold Coast in his orange BMW and later dropped from Davis Cup selection by Australian tennis legend Pat Rafter over his lack of passion.

This summer he seems more level-headed. Yet while Tomic looks to have recovered his mojo on the court, having won his first ever professional tournament in Sydney on the weekend, he still bears the scars of a selfish teenager. Last week, he publicly told Rafter where he could stick his Davis Cup plans.

Yet Rafter's commitment to mentoring young tennis talent in the Davis Cup is exactly the sort of offer Tomic could benefit from. It comes from the same wellspring of modesty that made Rafter such a beloved and successful player, who won two US Open titles and was twice runner-up at Wimbledon.

In his heyday Rafter played a muscular serve-and-volley game, and sweated so much he almost lost clutch matches through cramping. He aimed high, never gave up and when he lost, invariably spoke from the heart after the match. It says a lot about his 'brand' that a decade after retirement, he can model white underwear and we admire his character, not his crotch.

Some sportsmen know how to handle their testosterone. Rafter did. Roger Federer does too. Warne has spent his career playing a buffoon-genius, and now cricket celebrates the buffoon over the genius. It remains to be seen if Tomic can escape the pressure of his own ego, and show he has the right stuff.

## Coal mining, civil disobedience and the public good

EDITORIAL

*Michael Mullins*

Commentators were [outraged](#) by activist Jonathan Moylan's fake media release that caused disruption to the stock market last week. But there was little concern about the the impact of coal mining on people's health and the climate, the issue that prompted what was called his act of civil disobedience.

Decades ago, industry and government were slow to listen to the message of activists about the dangers of asbestos, and we are now paying the price. The effect of coal mining on the health of local communities is probably far less significant, but nevertheless overseas evidence suggests it could be serious and far-reaching.

The Beyond Zero Emissions 2012 [study](#) *Health and Social Harms of Coal Mining in Local Communities* points to evidence of elevated mortality rates in Appalachian coal mining areas in the US. The authors stress the need to research the health effects of coal mining in the Hunter Valley and other regions. But instead governments appear to be granting mining licences indiscriminately and offering [favourable treatment](#) to the coal industry.

The study cites offshore evidence of excess deaths from lung cancer and chronic heart, respiratory and kidney disease related to living near coal mines. Its authors detail major expansion that is underway or planned in our coal mining industry, but point out that there is a 'glaring absence of local evidence to determine what impacts these projects will have on the health of surrounding communities'.

It seems governments do not want to know about the long-term health impacts of coal mining. Coal mining's short-term economic benefit is more attractive politically, and there is also strong [lobbying](#) from industry groups and others. Rod Campbell of the public interest advocacy group [Economists at Large suggests](#) government actions go beyond cavalier and are more underhand.

The Maules Creek community on whose behalf Moylan was acting approached Campbell's group to help make sense of the 2000 page environmental impact statement that was delivered just days before Christmas with only weeks to respond. He writes: 'Our assessment of the review is scathing. Gillespie Economics has overlooked the foreign ownership of the project and presented profits to overseas interests as benefits to the NSW community.'

Moylan did the wrong thing in undermining public confidence in the share trading system, which in turn underpins the stability of our economy. His actions were fraudulent and supporting them would amount to affirming anarchy and rejecting the rule of law, even if governments and the coal industry don't appear to be acting with integrity and in the public interest.



He was, as he [told](#) the ABC, only making 'the announcement that ANZ should have made, that it wasn't going to be investing unethically' in Whitehaven's Maules Creek Coal Project.

## **The unknown unknowns of the sexual abuse royal commission**

POLITICS

*Ray Cassin*

An old adage has it that governments only agree to hold an inquiry when they know what it will find. Yet that has not always been true of royal commissions, and it is certainly not true of the royal commission into the sexual abuse of children in institutions, whose members and terms of reference the Gillard Government announced last week.

At this stage all that can be predicted with any confidence is that the task of Justice Peter McClelland and his fellow commissioners will be long and expensive, and that the evidence they will gather is likely to shame profoundly many of the institutions that come under their scrutiny.

That the commission will cost many millions of dollars and may need to continue well beyond the three years initially allotted for it can be seen as obstacles only by those who think that a desire for quick fixes outweighs the obligation to expose fundamental injustice and acknowledge longstanding grievances.

The nearest equivalent to this Australian inquiry is the Ryan commission in Ireland, which submitted its final report nearly ten years after it began hearings. If that is what it takes here, too, so be it.

The commission's terms of reference are properly broad, allowing it to investigate allegations of the sexual abuse of children in all types of institutions, public and private.

Such abuse has never been restricted to agencies of the Catholic Church. It can hardly be denied, however, that the chief impetus for the creation of this royal commission has been the appalling record of concealment of abuse in Catholic institutions, and of the protection of perpetrators by bishops and major superiors. If that record did not exist, the royal commission would not exist.

And Catholics — especially bishops and major superiors — cannot evade this fact by complaining, as they sometimes do, about malicious reporting by hostile secular media. If the abuses had not occurred, the reports could not have been written.

Worst of all, the abuse and concealment have evidently continued long after the church adopted protocols intended to redress the grievances of those who have been abused, and to prevent further abuse.

That is the considered judgment of Professor Patrick Parkinson, of the University of Sydney's law school, who twice reviewed the Towards Healing protocols for the hierarchy. He has since ended that relationship, because he says the protocols

have been undermined.

The police submission to the Victorian parliamentary inquiry into child abuse and media interviews by Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox of the NSW police also asserted that church authorities have frequently stalled investigations of the sexual abuse of children.

These assertions are not rabid allegations by anticlerical, muckraking journalists; they are expressions of frustration and disgust by ordinary cops who have been prevented from doing their job.

Too many bishops and major superiors have failed to act in good faith in the matter of clerical sexual abuse, and in this respect the Catholic Church in Australia has replicated a pattern familiar overseas. Whatever else the royal commission may reveal, we already know there is an entrenched culture of concealment within the church, and public awareness of this culture is shredding the Church's credibility.

That is why the best response the official Church in Australia has yet made to the child abuse crisis, the creation of the lay Truth, Justice and Healing Council, has been greeted with undeserved but predictable cynicism. It is a step that should have been taken ten years ago, and now it has ten years of others' dishonesty and evasion to live down.

The question that the royal commission cannot answer, but which we must answer for ourselves, is why sexual abuse has been so prevalent in Catholic institutions. A facile, often-heard answer is that it is a consequence of clerical celibacy.

This is not true in the sense that is usually intended: the issue is not sexual frustration, for celibacy does not necessarily make a man a molester any more than marriage necessarily makes a man a rapist. But there is a deeper sense in which mandatory celibacy is indeed at the heart of the matter.

The culture of concealment arises because the institutional church's reliance on what may be called the mystique of the priesthood: on the appearance of the priest (and by extension, a vowed religious, too) as someone special, a man set apart.

In most places and at most times, it has been through manipulating that mystique, rather than by citing official pronouncements, that the church has sought to wield practical authority. How can it not threaten a clericalist church, then, when the mystique is revealed to be a sham?

