borrowed space, talking aloud to 'external eyes and ears' to help notice God's invitation into deeper intimacy.

Care of vocation: To rekindle the ashes of wear and tear from cumulative demands through days of reflection, retreats, spiritual readings, peer reflection groups, and formative education courses to renew and animate the call of ministerial priesthood. The invitation of 2 Timothy 1:6-7: I am reminding you now to fan into a flame the gift God gave you ... to keep alive its purpose, meaning and expression was a fresh reminder to them.

Care of self: Amidst the need to care for one's relationship with God and vocation, earthenware jars that hold the treasure (2 Corinthians: 4-7) need balanced diets, exercise, rest, relaxation, friends, a laugh without feeling guilty! A good heart within a healthy frame of mind and body is the basis from which the fruits of grace and labour flow. Care of role identity as priest: On-going conversations are required to explore what is the priest's core role and function in changing times, who do people say they are, what characterises them as priests and how they want to be known; how one is known and recognised helps to integrate role identity with function. Such inquiry as modelled by Jesus in Luke 9:18-21 who do the crowds say I am? Who do you say I am? - endorsed their view. Further discussion in future might consider such questions as how to avoid becoming an anachronism, what value might ministry mentoring and/or peer mentoring have, what is needed now to complete life well, thinking less about managing one's reputation, more on doing what is possible from the 'best place' within, to enjoy the contentment of old age?

LEAVE-TAKING
Different groupings were able to glimpse challenges into the future. There were no clear answers but an expanded awareness as a tool for further exploration. A wisdom gleaned was the need to plan for things that can be ascertained; as for uncertainties, it was necessary to live with sustained faith, trusting in Providence that the Lord Yahweh provides (Luke 12:22-32, Genesis 22:14). The collective experience deepened the belief that their plans and God's plans need to interlock more, that his plan is not to harm us, but peace and a future full of hope (Jeremiah 29). John of the Cross tells us that hope is in the very act (dynamic) of yielding unconditionally to God's future. What would help us towards that yielding was again, to continue opening up/our awareness among themselves, making room for God's future to unfold. The view from this borrowed space had both clarified and generated new clutter. They committed to borrow a different space, another day.

Rediscovering Our Catholicism
— the Wood and the Trees

Séamus O'Connell

Clichés and caricatures are part of our way of coping with reality. The summary and perspective they offer can provide a handle for confronting new situations and experiences we encounter. They work precisely because they capture a key dimension of reality. As a consequence, they are reductive and of necessity both true and untrue. In the crisis in which the Church in Ireland finds itself, we risk taking refuge in clichés and in caricatures of our faith. When we lose track of our faith we risk missing the wood for the trees. When we lose track of our faith, we risk replacing the Bread of Life by consecrated hosts, replacing repentance by confession, prayer by piety, theology by apologetics, and history by nostalgia.

Part of this confusion arises because we all, from time to time, lose sight of the realities at the heart of our faith in its Catholic expression. There are deep realities at the heart of how Catholics see the world, follow Christ and respond to what God has done in him.

THE ABSENCE OF A THEORETICAL APPROACH

Amazingly, in our reflection and debate about the crisis in Irish Catholicism, there is a singular lack of theological reflection. Maybe this is because of our deep-seated neglect of seeking to understand our faith. The last two centuries have seen us imprin Catholicism on the physical landscape of Ireland and spread 'the faith' across the globe. However, we have been better at building and spreading than we have been at seeking to understand what it was that we were so zealously seeking to enshrine in our new churches, chapels, convents, hospitals, missions, schools and sodalities. There certainly was more than the planting of our particular ethnic identity; however, as a people we have never been particularly concerned about trying to understand our faith in a way that is more than the episodic. In other words, fidere quaerens

Séamus O'Connell is a priest of the Diocese of Kerry. He is Professor of Sacred Scripture at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.
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intellectum ('faith seeking understanding') is St Anselm's definition of theology has not really figured in the life of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Theology is about as important in Irish Catholicism as is an iOS6 for users of the iPhone! For good reason we leave iOS6 to the experts; the same might apply to theology to Irish Catholicism: important but not important for us.

REVELATION AND IRISH CATHOLICISM

Though usually below the horizon, the most important document of the Second Vatican Council and the one with most far-reaching consequences for our self-understanding as Catholics is Dei Verbum, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. Far from simply turning our gaze to heaven, Dei Verbum asks believers to see the world in which we live and move in a new light. Its second paragraph reads as follows:

Through this revelation [i.e., through Christ and in the Holy Spirit] ... the invisible God out of the abundance of his love speaks to people as friends (see Exod 33:11; John 15:14-15) and lives among them, so that he may invite and take them into fellowship (societas) with himself.

Here is wood we often miss for the trees: Catholics believe that God speaks to people as friends. Put another way, according to the Catholic Church, God's fundamental stance towards us is friendship. Granted, we do not always preach this or live it; but it does define us. It is also foundational for huge swathes of Christianity across the globe ... but that does not make it any less defining for Catholicism.

God is on our side. Authentic Catholicism believes God is for us (see Rom 8:31). This foundational truth is frequently lost from our reflection, discourse and debate. Maybe it is so foundational that we cannot see it, but surely the renewal of the Church is permitting this fundamental truth to be heard and felt. The challenge for those of us who preach is to keep this God before us. If faith comes through hearing (see Rom 10:7), we could do worse in the Year of Faith.

Added to this, the invisible God is not only on our side, but dwells among people - not only Catholics or Christians, but all people. We have grossly misinterpreted this and in two ways.

First, we have tended to see being the People of God as over and against other peoples - thus, if we're the People of God, then others (Muslims, Hindus, even Jews, and certainly unbelievers) are not?

Second, we have tended to interpret God's presence among us in a very individualistic way: that God is with me as opposed to God being within us.

SCHEMA REJECTED

That may be difficult for us to imagine today, but it is essential that we engage with these realities. The long journey of Dei Verbum bears witness to this. Like all Council documents, it did not appear out of thin air. What we now have is the result of a long and difficult journey that began during the preparatory commission for the Council in 1960 and which came to a head on the Council floor with the rejection of the draft document (or schema) with the title De Fontibus Revelationis (on the sources of revelation) just days after its introduction on Nov 14, 1962. This rejection of the schema, De Fontibus Revelationis, by a 60% to 40% majority on November 20, 1962, caused such a furor among the Council Fathers that on the very next day, November 21, the Pope requested that discussion be halted "and the schema ... sent for revision to an as yet unappointed commission."

Striking is the speed of the schema's rejection. There were two principal reasons for this: first, the dissatisfaction of a significant

1. iOS is the operating system for the Apple iPhone. It is the computer programme which enables it to work.
2. Hoc tunc revelatione Deus invisibili (cf Col 1,15; 1 Th 1,7) et abundanti caritatis saepe homines tanguam amicos alloquentur (cf Ex 33,11; Is 15,14-5) et cum eis conversatur (cf Bar 3,38); ut eos ad societatem Scecum inviter in saepe suscipiat. Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum), §2

3. This also happens in a biblical key: the popular sense of the New Covenant implies that God has effectively cast the so-called 'Old' Covenant to one side. In our reflection, preaching and imagining, we frequently imply that the New Covenant has surpassed the Old. This betrays little awareness of God's faithfulness to himself and to his promises (see Romans 9:4-5, a text taken up by Vatican II in Nosstrae Aenacte §4). Throwing out the Covenant makes the same sort of sense as throwing out one's wedding album upon receiving the christening album of one's first child.
4. This happens here too in a biblical key: we never tire of citing Jesus' saying that 'the Kingdom of God is within you' (Luke 17:21) as an indicator of the integrity of the Kingdom. This, however, is to misinterpret the Lukean Jesus. In Luke 17:21 Jesus says, 'the Kingdom of God is among you' (in Greek, entos hymatos); the Kingdom is a reality within the community of believers. We could say that the Kingdom is the inner life of the Church.
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number of theologians with the circulated draft; and second, the
genuine empowerment felt by the Bishops who had assembled for
the Council. For Karim Schelkens, church historian at the
Catholic University of Leuven.

While John XXIII's conciliar opening address, Gaudet Mater
Ecclesia, was particularly influential in (determining the open-
ing atmosphere of the Council), a sense of liberation on the part
of the world Church from the Holy Office also predominated.
An episode like the postponement of the election of conciliar
commissions on October 13, 1962, bears clear witness to this
reality. The first days of the Council also facilitated concrete
contact and the exchange of ideas, observations, etc., between
bishops and theologians.

Again, there is more than the release of pent up energy. Unlike
Jonah's plant (see Jonah 4:10), the Council Fathers began to
express 'something that had been long desired and awaited during
the decades after World War I and especially since things had
begun to open with Pope John's announcement of the Council.'
The vast majority of Bishops began to express maybe what they
could not yet name, but would later call in the opening lines of
Gaudium et Spes.

The joys and the hopes, the sorrows and the anxieties
of the people of this age (hominum huius temporis),
especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted,
these are the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties
of the followers of Christ. ($1)

It is vital to name this. Giuseppe Ruggieri, in his observations on
the emerging theological awareness of the Council Fathers, interprets it as follows:

[T]he period from November 14 to December 8 [1962], and
especially the week of November 14–21, which was devoted to
discussion of the schema on the sources of revelation, repres-
ented a turning point that was decisive for the future of the

6. Among those who strongly opposed the schema was the 35-year-old Joseph
Ratzinger who already, on October 15 - four weeks before De Fontibus made its
appearance on the Council floor - presented a well-worked draft of the first chap-
ter of a new schema to Otto Semmelroth, Karl Rahner and Bishop Hermann Volk
of Mainz. See Semmelroth's diary, cited in Schelkens, 266, n.6.

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REDISCOVERING OUR CATHOLICISM

Council and therefore for the future of the Catholic Church
itself: the turn from [2] Church ... which was essentially hos-
tile to modernity and in this respect the heir of the nineteenth-
century restoration, to a Church that is a friend to all human
beings, even children of modern society, its culture and its his-
tory.

A NEW UNDERSTANDING

The aftershocks of two World Wars, the horrors of the Holocaust
and the realization of what we were capable of doing to ourselves,
but also a new understanding of what lay at the heart of human
life, a rediscovery of the Liturgy (in the liturgical movement)
and of the Bible (in the biblical movement), and the presence of vocal
non-Western bishops, brought the Council Fathers to recognise
that there was another way of perceiving the world and God. Its
unsung qualities notwithstanding, it was clear that the proposed
schema did not adequately engage with reality as the bishops now
perceived it. In this, their pastoral charisma came to the fore: they
were being shepherds, they were attending to their flock. With the
rejection of the first schema of the document on Revelation,

the Council had perhaps made one of the most important
changes in the doctrinal development of the Catholic Church:
the choice of a teaching that was 'pastoral.'

And in being pastoral it gave expression to its catholicity - its
openness to what God still does in creating us. Rather than cutting
ourselves off from the world, locking our doors (see John 20:19),
and building dividing walls (see Eph 2:14), authentic Catholicism
looks at the world and seeks to understand the world. Here too is
a call for Irish Catholicism in the Year of Faith.

The conviction of the goodness of creation (see Gen 1:31) and
its blessedness is the foundation of the Catholic way. 'The Word
became flesh' (John 1:14) is not just a statement about Jesus, it is
also a statement about the world. In and through creation God
makes himself known to us. God could not give himself to us, had
he not created us! From here come the sacraments. For example,
a Catholic theology of marriage is rooted primarily in our theo-
logy of the sacredness and character of human life. Rooting the
sacramentality of marriage in what is essentially a fundamental-
ist reading of the Bible is seriously to miss something basic about

9. Giuseppe Ruggieri 'The First Doctrinal Clash (of Vatican II)' in Giuseppe
2; Maryknoll: Orbis / Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 232

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the holiness of marriage and subvert the Bible. From this radical engagement with the world comes the Catholic commitment to education and to healthcare. A Catholic school cannot be a school whose horizon is the Catholic church. Catholic healthcare is concerned with all that is truly human, not just about when and where a particular procedure may be carried out.

This giving comes to its highpoint and goal in Christ. It is with him (see Mark 3:14) and from him and through him that we come fully to know God, the world and ourselves. And yet Christ too is curiously absent from our reflection, discourse, and debate. There is little mention of his mercy, his prophetic way of life, his welcome for those wrongfooted by the powers and dominions of their society and culture. A Christianity without Christ is like religion without God. And a religion without God is a very destructive reality - for religion! The Church, like a stranger in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God. In this Year of Faith, might we not do well to explore our own 'stranger-ness' and in so doing come home to the sources of our Catholic faith, and recover from being interlopers in a land we no longer understand. Can that be done without Christ? Can that happen without seeking God or each other? Can the word be heard if there is not silence?

11. See, for example, John Barton, Anglican priest and Oriel and Laing Professor of Biblical Interpretation at the University of Oxford: 'The Bible is not the be-all and end-all of the Christian faith. Attempts to make it so all too often twist it to ignoble ends, and mean that we do not hear it speaking with its own voice.' What is the Bible? (3rd ed.; London: SPCK, 2009), 106.

On the palm of his hand, Alzheimer's disease often arouses our deepest fears about forgetting and being forgotten. A faith tradition that teaches us about a God who will know our name even when we have forgotten every name we have ever known, including our own, can be a comforting reminder to both people with the disease and their caregivers. We can embody the presence of that remembering God in their lives and remind them that the God who created them will never forget or forsake them in this life or the next.


Renewal for Lay People

John Mangan

In my experience few lay people are fully conscious of the fact that through our baptism we are part of Pobal Dé, the 'people of God', of the 'priesthood of all believers', called to be followers of Christ. Moreover, we comprise over 90 per cent of the members of the Catholic Church. In the current controversies, many lay people criticize the 'Church' in ways that seem to suggest that it is a separate entity for which they have no real responsibility. This may explain why many of us lay people are not acknowledging our own frequent failures in responding to our Christian responsibilities which in turn may in part explain the decline in the religious practice of many of our children and grandchildren. These failings may also be contributing, for example, to many of the social and economic problems we, as a predominantly Catholic country, face and their impact on the most vulnerable in our midst and the generations that will follow us.

The future of the Church in Ireland is also to a significant degree in the hands of lay people. We are free to decide on the degree to which we practise our faith, raise our children in the faith, accept Church teaching, provide family support for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, volunteer for Church and related activities, provide financial support to the Church, and above all respond to our Christian calling in our daily lives. One of the fundamental issues for our generation of lay persons is the extent to which we want to be part of and positively contribute to the mission of the Church and its future. The recent Apostolic Visitors in Ireland may have had this in mind when they referred in the summary of their report to the need for a 'new focus on the role of the laity, who are called to be engaged both within the Church and in bearing witness before society, in accordance with the social teachings of the Church' (emphasis added).

VATICAN II – 50TH ANNIVERSARY
Over the coming year we will be commemorating the 50th

John Mangan lives at 42 Glendoher Avenue, Ballyboden, Dublin 16. He is Chairman of the Ballyboden Parish Council.