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ETHNICITY AND MULTICULTURALISM IN THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

I. INTRODUCTION

This national convention has been organized to commemorate and pay tribute to one hundred years of work by the Scalabrinian Order in service and pastoral care to migrants throughout the world. The convention title, however, is not limited to pastoral care of „migrants” but its scope is extended to include „multicultural Australia”. This change of focus is significant in two ways. It acknowledges that the pastoral care which the Order provides is no longer limited to the first generation of Italian migrants, but also includes their descendants. In addition, the title of the convention by referring to Australia as a whole, signifies that the sharing of languages and cultures embraces all Australians, irrespective of their ethnic origins and linguistic backgrounds. Indeed, it would be a pity if the work of the Order was limited solely to people who arrived in Australia from a non-English-speaking country. Instead, the theme of this convention would appear to envisage the special function of the Order in helping to shape the culture of the Australian Church as a whole, so that it reflects the diverse cultural heritage of all the faithful.

The assumption that the languages and cultures which migrants brought with them would not survive beyond the first generation has proved erroneous, and this error has been acknowledged, at least at the level of formal declarations, both by the Australian government through its adoption of the policy of lasting multiculturalism, and by the Australian Church. The concept of assimilation, which in 1957 was conceived, at best, in terms of „transitional pluralism”, to be tolerated as a necessary but temporary „burden”, has given way to an acceptance of the value of cultural pluralism. The recognition that languages and cultures which migrants bring with them can be transmitted to subsequent generations requires that the Catholic Church make provision for the pastoral care of the descendants in the cultural idiom of their ethnic heritage.

Such a policy is in line with Paul VI's 1969 letter, and the Bishops' Conference's Instructions *Pastoralis Migratorum* which accompanied it. These documents spoke of the rights of people to have their „own mentality, their own language, their own culture, and their own religion” as their „spiritual heritage”, which would „persist outside the homeland”. In commenting on Paul VI's letter, Fr. de Paulis (1984 p. 21) notes that, „the specific care of migrants is not to be limited by time or generation, but it is to last 'as long as usefulness indicates'.” In subsequent generations, even if the ethnic language proves fragile, the cultural identity of the people should receive special attention, so that their „own mentality” can be expressed even in the new language. This view has subsequently received further endorsement from the Pontifical Commission for Migration (1985) which reminds all churches that „the need for cultural identity extends to the descendants of migrants by taking into account their popular religious practices” (3.2).

The acceptance of the benefits of the pluralist approach, both for minority ethnic groups and for the country as a whole was slow to mature at the official government level, as well as within the Australian Catholic Church. But by the mid 1970s, however, the ideological climate had begun to change and the concept of multiculturalism was endorsed by the Church through its Social Justice Document (1977) and for the Australian government by the then Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser (1981), who said:

Multiculturalism is about diversity, not division – it is about interaction not isolation. It is about cultural and ethnic differences set within a framework of shared fundamental values which enables them to co-exist on a complementary rather than competitive basis.

The basis of multiculturalism has been even more clearly articulated by the present Pope who has frequently spoken of the need for the Church to respond to the cultural diversity among the faithful, by relying on its own tradition of pluralism and universalism. This tradition is seen by the Pope to reside in the shared values embodied in the Catholic faith – a faith which provides a unifying framework within which a great diversity of cultures can flourish. Indeed, no recent Pope has better understood the significance of culture in human life or spoken more frequently of the need to protect the cultural rights of individuals by accepting cultural pluralism.

The Pope has demonstrated his dedication to his beliefs not only by his words but also in his practice. This has been shown in his efforts to visit all parts of his world parish and to speak to the faithful in the language that they understand best. His visit to Australia too showed that he did not behave as an outsider but, while reminding Catholics of their common traditions that trans-

cended national differences, he was prepared to openly embrace aspects of local heritage, as he did when he stopped in Alice Springs to participate in a ceremony that incorporated aspects of Aboriginal cultures.

In his Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli* (par. 27), John Paul II has proclaimed clearly that, ethnic cultural heritages within each country must be respected and preserved, while remaining open to each other, so that each generation and each group has the liberty to use and re-interpret aspects of its own, as well as other groups', culture.

For full Catholicity, every nation, every culture has its own part to play in the universal plan of salvation. Every particular tradition, every local Church must remain open and alert to the other communion; were it to remain closed on itself, it would run the risk of becoming impoverished.

II. ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA

Australian pluralism dates from the time before European settlement, since the Aborigines who migrated to this continent some 50,000 years ago, were not culturally homogenous but spoke over 250 languages, of which 200 still survive and some 50 have a chance to be perpetuated (Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts 1984 par. 8.7 p. 81). The British migrants who arrived after 1788 contained a large number of Celtic peoples, some of whom still continued to speak the Welsh, Irish or Scottish Gaelic of their homelands. During the course of the nineteenth century, while Aboriginal numbers declined to the point where they constituted no more than 13% of the population in 1861, the proportion of the British and Irish taken together remained at around 90%, until the massive migration of continental Europeans after the Second World War, when that figure decreased to *ca.* the three-quarters mark (Price 1985). Over the same period the proportion of those of Irish ancestry *per se* fell from over 25% (or possibly even higher during the Gold Rush days) to approximately 18%.

As a result of the postwar influx of migrants from mainly Catholic countries, there is now over 8% of Australians whose ancestry (as calculated by Price on the basis of both paternal and maternal origins) lies in Southern Europe, including over 4% from Italy. The 4% of the population who originate in Eastern Europe include those of Polish, Croatian, Slovak and Slovenian backgrounds. Recently there has been an increased flow of migrants from the Lebanon and Vietnam. Migrants from some of these countries have been overwhelmingly Catholic. To take an example from South Australia, the 1981 figures (by birth-place alone) show that while for every 10,000 people in that state, the Italian-born constitute 244 persons, their proportion for every 10,000 members of the

Catholic community amounted to over 1,100, with corresponding figures from Poland being (53 and 209); Malta (17 and 73); Netherlands (83 and 137); Yugoslavia (71 and 194) and Germany (115 and 148).

Figures for the archdiocese of Melbourne, as given by Bernardi (1986 p. 26), provide a stark demonstration of the multicultural nature of the Church, at least in so far as the number of the faithful is concerned. Catholics born outside Australia from non-English-speaking backgrounds amount to 32.6% of the total Catholic population, and this figure rises to 63% when the second generation is included. Italians, who form the largest ethnic minority, show a deep attachment to their religion, which forms an integral part of their culture, so that „rejecting Catholicism is equal to rejecting one’s own Italian culture” (Bernardi p. 18). The same holds for Catholics from many other ethnic backgrounds for whom their religion is inextricably linked with their history and social life.

The significance of such cultural interpretations of data suggests that „objective” figures based on the birthplace and ancestry of modern Australians, need to be supplemented with cultural data on what present day Australians actually think and do – i.e. to consider people’s identification or cultural perceptions, as well as their activities. Hence any estimation of ethnic diversity by ancestry alone is more of a historical interest, while the computation of people by mixed ancestry which involves giving, for example, an Aborigine 0.5 allocation if only one of his parents is of Aboriginal stock, may ignore the fact that the person concerned feels wholly Aboriginal in terms of ethnic identification.

Ethnicity by identification refers people’s feelings, attitudes and desires concerning what group they belong to. The Australian census, unlike its Canadian counterpart, provides no information of this kind, but research investigations show that a large number of Australians, including many young people born in this country to immigrant parents, retain a sense of ethnic identity linked to their parent’s cultural group (Australian Ethnic Affairs Council 1977).

Our own research in depth on a sample of young people of non-English-speaking backgrounds educated in Australian schools and tertiary institutions has revealed the extent of their sense of ethnic identity and firm attachment to things that originate from their ancestral homelands. In their memoirs the writers have reiterated their pride in their heritage and a desire to see it continued and passed to future generations in Australia (Smolicz and Secombe 1981; 1985; 1986). Questionnaire studies on larger samples, such as a Catholic school survey in South Australia (n = 1756), also show a widespread acceptance of the idea of ethnic identity (Smolicz and Lean 1979; 1984). When given a chance, parents identified themselves as British- and Irish-Australians, or as members of minority ethnic groups such as Polish-, German-, Dutch- and Italian-Austra-

lian. The figures revealed some degree of persistence of Irish-Australian identity, in that 15% of fathers and 16% of mothers claimed to be Irish-Australian, whereas the figures for birthplace were only 1% and 2% respectively. The largest non-British group of parents was Italian, with 20% of mothers and 22% of fathers identifying themselves as Italian-Australians. The Italian-Australians were also the subject of a survey by Bernardi (1986 p. 26) who provides evidence that in Catholic parishes in Melbourne, „regular Italian Mass [...] offers an identity event to their faith and to their basically Catholic culture”. The young people’s use of the ethnic tongue during Mass, strengthens their family bonds as well as their Catholic faith, and at the same time reinforces their ethnic identity.

„Pluralism of identity” is therefore a widespread phenomenon in Australia, and to varying degrees it embraces all ethnic groups. Those who identify with the Anglo-Australian majority find that the mainstream culture and institutions of Australian society underpin their ethnic identity. In contrast, minority ethnic identity is frequently incomplete since it depends mainly on close family and ethnic friendship ties, and lacks the necessary cultural and educational support for its full development. In consequence ethnic youth often feel that they have been deprived of the chance to develop their full ethnic heritage, especially literacy in their home language. Schools (whether State or Catholic) are increasingly being questioned for having failed in the past to provide the necessary courses, as well as for having devalued minority cultures, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

As a result of this neglect, some of these young people from minority ethnic backgrounds become disillusioned or resentful at the denial of their right to develop their home culture. Attempts at assimilation may thus have consequences directly opposite to those intended, in that such youth may seek refuge in separate minority ethnic groupings, which could challenge the resilience of Australian society. Their predicament highlights the importance of the majority group’s response to minorities, including their treatment by Catholic Church. Indeed, provision of appropriate schooling, as well as liturgical services, which are in line with their own tradition, provides the way towards increasing „their participation in the life of the parish, as well as making them more generous and responsive” (Bernardi 1986 p. 26). As Bakalarz (1981 p. 101) reports on the decision of the Synod of Bishops, „The fundamental postulate of catechization is to instil the message of Salvation in the receivers’ culture.”

Ethnicity can, indeed, most effectively be judged on the basis of cultural criteria, such as language usage, and patterns of family relationships that are distinctive to a particular ethnic group. For example, empirical findings on linguistic usage and literacy in almost every minority language show that many

young Australians do speak their family tongue, although mainly in a domestic setting and, due to inadequate schooling, generally have only limited literacy skills (Smolicz and Harris 1977; Smolicz 1979).

The Commonwealth Department of Education (1982 p. 1) claimed that:

Today there are more than a million bilingual Australians who regularly use a language other than English when talking with friends and families or on religious or social occasions [...] The following languages other than English are spoken regularly by at least 45,000 people: Arabic, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Spanish and the languages of Yugoslavia.

Following the inflow from Indochina, Vietnamese and Chinese can be added to these minority languages. Our own empirical data on Catholic secondary school students in South Australia also shows a continued and sustained use of ethnic languages in the children's homes. The figures from the survey show that Italians and Poles have the greatest use of their ethnic tongue (88% and 85%), followed by the Germans (70%) and the Dutch (65%) (Smolicz and Lean 1979; 1984).

In terms of cultures and languages used in daily life, as well as identity and ancestry, Australia must, therefore, be regarded as a plural society.

III. JOHN PAUL II AND THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

For the Pope it is the cultural dimension of diversity that is of the most significance in the work of the Church. To ignore people's culture is to ignore them as human beings and as members of the Church – and hence to defile their faith. Long before his elevation to the office of the Supreme Pontiff, writing for a Catholic intellectual periodical „Znak” in 1964, Karol Wojtyła stressed that culture:

is one of those terms which are most intimately connected with man and define his existence, and in a sense, point to his very essence. Man makes culture, needs culture, and through culture creates himself. Culture consists of a set of meanings through which man expresses himself more than through anything else. He expresses himself to himself and others. All works of culture which last longer than man's life are witnesses to him. It is a testimony to spiritual life, and to the human spirit which lives not only on account of mastering all matter, but lives in itself by ideals accessible to him alone, and only for him meaningful [...] Man then, as a maker of culture, gives witness to his very humanness. (Quoted by (Woznicki 1982 pp. 10-11)).

The same theme has reappeared often in the words of the Pope since the beginning of his pontificate, as in his address to UNESCO (1981):

Man lives a really human life thanks to culture [and] culture is a specific way of man's 'existing' and 'being' [...] In the unity of culture, as the specific way of human existence, there is rooted at the same time the plurality of cultures in the midst of which man lives.

As His Grace the Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne Dr. E. G. Perkins (1980 p. 3) has noted, the Pope provides here „the philosophical link [...] between the dignity of the human person and a recognition and respect for his culture”. The Bishop points out that this is also in line with Paul VI's recognition of the interdependence between the fundamental dignity of the human person and his „essential, irreversible and universal right to preserve and develop his own ethnic, cultural and linguistic patrimony”.

Such a profound and largely philosophical approach to the concept of culture carries with it certain sociological implications which are best examined through the clarification of the complementary concepts of heritage and tradition, as well as further analysis of those fundamental aspects of culture (or its „core values”) which are closely associated with a particular ethnic or national group.

IV. TRADITION AND THE CORE VALUES OF CULTURE

Heritage can be defined as that aspect of actual behaviour „which has [...] been preserved from the past” (Szacki 1971). It is further interpreted as „certain patterns of muscular, emotional and mental responses which shape dispositions of group members and which are transmitted as heritage of the group” (Ossowski 1965). The concept of tradition can then be further refined as, „that part of the heritage which is being actively evaluated by those living today, i.e. it is that part of the heritage which excites feelings of approval and disapproval in the current generation by involving it in an act of identification or dissociation with predecessors” (Smolicz 1974). When defined in such terms, tradition represents a special kind of link between the past and the present, since it demands an active display of the sentiments of acceptance or rejection. Indeed, a living tradition must be continually revalued to meet the changing situation of the group, in order to survive as a tradition.

From this perspective, the possibilities of cultural modification under the impact of pluralism need not be restricted to the changes in the tradition of each particular ethnic group, taken in isolation from those of others. Each ethnic generation can select some specific part of its heritage and reformulate and adjust it, as it judges appropriate in relation to the cultures of other groups: some parts of it may cease to interest, others take on a new importance, while

valuations themselves can be reversed or replaced through the process of interaction with another culture. In this way each generation and each group – be it ethnic, national or religious – maintains its a culture, while at the same time introducing into it some new values and forms. This applies to the cultural aspects of even to the greatest community in the world – the Catholic Church.

To survive as an entity, group members must therefore both safeguard their culture by singling out some of its aspects as a living tradition, while at the same time modifying it to meet the social, economic and political demands of the day. In recent years the Catholic Church has changed its liturgy and other aspects of its organizational life, but without surrendering the fundamental doctrines of its faith. This illustrates that in every culture there are certain fundamental pivots that require special care in the face of rapid change. It is on the maintenance and modification of such pivots that the survival of the society, community or group largely depends. Those pivots can be referred to as the *c o r e v a l u e s* of the group (Smolicz 1981). It is our belief, for example, that despite very significant changes, the post-Conciliar Church has retained its core.

Ethnic groups vary in the values they regard as 'core'. These may range from a language that has been specifically linked historically with the group in question (e.g. Polish, Lithuanian, Croatian), to a particular type of family structure (Italian), religion or territory (Israeli). Like other aspects of culture, core values may also be affected by new valuations and external or internal influences, but their excessively rapid or forced abandonment threatens the disintegration of the whole cultural and social fabric of the group.

The concept of a changing tradition outlined above is compatible with the preservation of the core values that members consider essential for the survival of their group as a distinct collectivity, possessing its own identity that is transmittable from generation to generation. Tradition conceived in this way has a double application in Australia (both in general terms and ethnic plural dimensions) – it relates both to the Church *per se*, and to Australia as the country in which is situated.

V. THE CHANGING TRADITION OF AUSTRALIAN PLURALISM

From the time the country became a British colony, the ethnically diverse nature of Australian society has evoked a range of responses oscillating between pluralism and monism. The basis of these changes in tradition is to be found in the heritage of the British group which has played the dominant role from beginning of European settlement. That heritage has undergone a series of modifications, as successive generations either espoused a tolerant approach

to the cultural pluralism or, alternatively, succumbed to periods of xenophobia and ethnocentrism. The latter phenomena usually accompanied wars among the nations of Europe which almost invariably cast a shadow on ethnic and race relations in Australia (Selleck 1980).

Initially British settlers wished to make the new country as close to „home” as possible, burned the „bush” and tried to obliterate native vegetation, while diseases and dislocation from their traditional territory were almost as effective in diminishing the number of native inhabitants of the continent. Following this period of destruction, there was a phase of separation, when Aborigines were segregated in their reserves, while some selected aspects of the settlers’ European heritage was being implanted into them. The phase of „dominant separation” toward Aborigines contrasted with a somewhat more tolerant appreciation of cultural variation in relation to people from various parts of Europe who were escaping religious persecution or who were attracted to Australia by the lure of gold (Borrie 1954). Evidence of a more tolerant climate at the end of the nineteenth century is provided by the existence of a flourishing press in languages other than English, as well as the operation of over a hundred bilingual schools (Clyne 1985).

Reaction against pluralism, and a return to the British-Australian heritage as the only legitimate cultural source, came at the time of the First World War. As a result, all German language schools were closed down, and prohibitionist legislation making English the only language of instruction was introduced in education. Indeed, the use of languages other than English came to be viewed as verging on treason. This monistic trend in Australian society persisted into the years after the Second World War. To be an „Australian” meant to be British-Australian, at least in cultural terms, while those of other ancestries were expected to make valiant efforts to eradicate their former cultures and languages. This assimilationist expectation applied also to Aborigines who, even if they could not alter their physical appearance, or avoid the racial mark of „Aboriginality”, could at least aspire to become „real Australians” by forgetting their languages and heritage.

The assimilationist tradition began to wane in Australia during the late sixties, but formal acceptance of the policy labelled „multiculturalism” had to wait until the present decade. Only then it became more or less grudgingly acknowledged that an Aboriginal, or a person from a non-English-speaking-background could be a „real Australian”, while at the same time retaining core values of a culture that was different from the one brought over from Britain. The tradition of cultural pluralism, as opposed to the rhetoric of official multiculturalism, has been even slower to establish itself in practice. Indeed, even today it can hardly be regarded as fully accepted by all Australians, with

people showing a degree of ambivalence in looking to different parts of heritage for inspiration and guidance.

VI. PRINCIPLES OF AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM

In recent years the concern in Australia has been how to achieve stability or „cohesion” in a society composed of a number of ethnic groups, of which one is dominant. In this context, it may be preferable to follow the suggestion of the Rector of the United Nations University, Professor Soedjatmoko (1985) and place the stress on „resilience”, rather than on „stability” or „cohesion”, since these smack of authoritarianism and imposition of unity by force. The advantage of a resilient society is that it is capable of absorbing innovation and cultural change without the danger of fragmentation. This can only be achieved if the heritage of the dominant group is transmitted in a flexible way which permits it to be activated in a modified form as a tradition that is shared by all the groups, and to which other ethnic heritages can also make their contribution.

This type of resilience depends on the crystallization of an *over-arching framework of values* which is acceptable to members of the constituent ethnic groups. Such groups can, of course, continue to cultivate their own specific core values as a tradition for their own purposes, while at the same time making them available for interaction purposes with other groups. In this sense, such a pool of ethnic values remains in equilibrium with the over-arching frame, so that the latter can respond to the changing needs and interests of all Australians. It is fortunate that in Australia the process of cultural interaction has already proceeded far enough to permit the evolution of a set of values that over-arch most ethnic groups. These include shared beliefs in values such as those parliamentary democracy; the freedom of the individual; a „mixed” economic system that is partly based on private enterprise and partly upon state initiatives; as well as Australian legal institutions (Smolicz 1984).

Although up till now the over-arching framework has been largely British derived, it is already far from being identical with the British system. Australian federalism, for example, was born long before the post-World War II influx of non-British immigrants. Furthermore, unlike the situation in the U.K., there has never been an established State Church in this country. There is no doubt, however, that the post-War migration from non-British source countries has further contributed to the independent development of shared values away from the original model. Moreover, there is an increasing appreciation that if a multicultural perspective is to be a permanent feature of Australian society,

then those values of the dominant group which have percolated into the over-arching framework should no longer be regarded as the majority's own private domain, but as the common possession of all citizens, whatever their ethnic background.

There is, for example, an accumulation of research evidence that minority ethnic groups recognize the importance of English as an over-arching value, in the sense that it is indispensable for communication among all Australians and the principal vehicle for political, economic, and legal activities of society (Marjoribanks 1979, 1980; Smolicz and Secombe 1977, 1983). However, the acceptance of English by all ethnic groups is based upon the understanding that, for those who wish to preserve their native tongue, English represents an additional language, rather than the sole and unique means of communication, and that other community languages are not restricted to domestic concerns but, wherever possible, are taught in school and used in other public places, including Church worship (South Australian Ministerial Task Force on Multiculturalism and Education 1984; Smolicz 1986; Commonwealth Department of Education (Lo Bianco Report) 1987).

The insistence by many minority ethnic Australians on preserving their core values in order that their cultures can retain integrity, does not mean that one can expect any culture (whether minority or even majority) to be incorporated unchanged and *in toto* into a plural society such as Australia. In a modern multicultural state, modifications or even losses of certain institutional and cultural forms are to some extent inevitable, as the over-arching framework develops on the basis of the cultures of more than one ethnic group, and some particular values lose their relevance. The „contributing” groups are, of course, free to cherish their cultures within such a flexible over-arching frame, by activating those particular aspects of their heritages that they find indispensable in retaining their unique traditions. The values that are most likely to survive and develop are those that can be accommodated within the framework to which they can at the same time actively contribute.

VII. THE POPE'S COMMENTS ON MULTICULTURALISM IN AUSTRALIA

Appreciation of the Australian form of multiculturalism was expressed by John Paul II during his recent visit to this country. His own philosophical and spiritual approach to culture, as the very basis of human existence, leads him both to expect and accept plurality. The Pope condemns any wilful denial of cultural plurality, as it crystallizes within the over-arching framework of Australian society and the Catholic Church. Any such denial violates the inalienable right of all individuals to their culture, conceived as an exercise in free-

dom for individuals to build their own life by selecting from among the different cultural sources available to them in a plural society. In commenting on the process, whereby individuals construct their own personal cultural systems, the Pope, when still Archbishop of Cracow (1964), concluded that in this way, „culture as found in the innermost core of each particular person is different and unique”.

Speaking in Adelaide on the theme of „multiculturalism”, John Paul II referred to Australia as a „land of many cultures”, and of „different ethnic groups shaped by traditions, attitudes and hopes of so many people”. After recollecting the history of some of the immigrants, the Pope spoke about the „shaping of your culture as the people of Australia”, on the basis of these different heritages. He noted that:

The tensions, which sometimes arise when people of different history, traditions, cultures and faiths seek to live side by side, have to be overcome in a spirit of true openness and brotherhood.

In the Pope’s view the principle of „brotherhood” and „reconciliation” of differences is applicable even to people of different faiths. It holds even greater force for Catholics, united by faith and membership of the universal Church, a Church which provides them with its own over-arching framework of Christian values. In this way, the Church makes its own contribution towards the resilience and multiculturalism of Australian society. By providing spiritual bonds of shared faith that stretch across cultures, the Church helps in the integration of Catholic migrants who are not „strangers”, but members of the same religious community holding the shared values that were established long before migration.

John Paul II referred to the multitudes present at „this Eucharistic assembly” – as, in being itself, a „symbol” and „vision” of unity:

You are the people gathered from ‘every race, language and way of life’, made one in Jesus Christ and in his Church.

This concept of unity „in Jesus Christ”, is based on the twin principles which so often John Paul II links together: all people’s right to „self-respect and dignity” and to „love and value what is good in their own heritage”.

These words do not imply a blind adherence to every item of the vast inheritance that ethnic and national groups invariably receive from past generations. The heritage in question is qualified by the word „good”, which implies the need for its evaluation by each generation of the faithful, with a right to re-interpret the worth of each particular item in relation to their current situation. This re-interpretation has to be carried out, however, in an atmosphere of

freedom, with no overt or covert force being applied to coerce people into submission to the tradition of another, more powerful and aggressive group. Such cultural aggression is condemned by the Pope, in the words:

Every expression of hostility towards others builds a wall of tension between people and reveals a heart of stone. Every act of discrimination is an act of injustice and a violation of personal dignity.

VIII. THE TRADITION OF CULTURAL PLURALISM IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

These words of John Paul II spoken in Australia do not represent any sudden change in the pluralist tradition of the universal Church, either in relation to its own internal arrangements or in its approach to the societies where it fulfills its pastoral mission. Nevertheless, John Paul II's profound understanding of culture and his personal dedication to human dignity and the right of individuals to their heritage, make the Church's call for pluralism within the unity of faith particularly urgent, and demanding of attention. In this sense, the Pope's strongly pluralist stance in relation to migrants and ethnic minorities must be regarded as a further articulation of the message of Paul VI (1969) and the Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia* of Pius XII (1952). While the latter may be regarded as the fundamental document which treated the problem of pastoral care of migrants in a unified manner, the multicultural tradition of the Church can be traced back to the experiences of first century Christians. The Apostle Paul found it necessary to defend in the strongest terms the cultural rights of the Gentile Christians in the Greek and Latin cities of the Roman Empire against the demands of many of the Jewish Christians that all converts to Christianity should undergo the Jewish rite of circumcision. The question of cultural pluralism in the Church was already on the agenda of the IV Lateran Council held in 1215, which decreed that:

Bishops who in their cities and dioceses exercise pastoral care over people speaking a variety of tongues should avail themselves of the services of appropriate clergy who can minister in the language and rite of the given people (quoted by Zaba 1987 p. 51).

As in any institution with a very long history, however, the Church within itself has experienced the „ebb and flow” between a greater insistence on uniformity and centralized control, and periods that were marked by tolerance of variation and local autonomy. These changes in the Church's interpretation of its heritage can be observed, for example, in its relations with Christian Churches of the East.

Until the break between Rome and Constantinople in the eleventh century, the Church was demonstrably pluralist in its internal structure, since it was an heir to the traditions of the Eastern interpretation of Christianity, as well as to those of the West. In subsequent centuries the traditions of the East – of Antioch and Alexandria, as well as that of Byzantium – grew dim. But the Church never tired of its attempts to regain unity and succeeded in bringing back to the fold a number of the faithful of Eastern rites, while allowing, and in fact encouraging them to retain their traditional liturgies and usages (Janin 1929). The relative success of the „uniate” movements in Eastern Europe, India and the Near East regained for the Church at least a part of its former universality and diversity.

One cannot deny, however, that these periods alternated with times, such as that following the Reformation, when the Church was under pressure to require a degree of uniformity, which made it appear to the „Orientals” as standing for strict obedience to every usage of the Latin rite. Even at that time, however, unity of doctrine went hand with a large measure of inculturation of the Church to local traditions. The Polish Commonwealth, for example, saw the highly specific adaptation of the Latin Rite Catholicism to its own brand of „Baroque” culture, while its Orthodox Church united with Rome (Brest Union of 1596), but maintained its traditional Byzantine liturgy and Old Church Slavonic language. Nor were such instances of respect for local usages unique in the history of the Church. Already in the Middle Ages the work of S.S. Cyril and Methodius of Constantinople had helped to build the Moravian Church, which was initially permitted to keep its Slavonic liturgy, while continuing to be an integral part of the Church of Rome. Although at first encouraged by the Pope, the changing pattern of tradition saw the work of the two saints (now declared co-patrons of Europe), destroyed by Western secular rulers who looked upon Latin conformity as a prop to their own power (Obolensky 1974 pp. 181-217).

In its devotion to Latin the Church mirrored much of European society, although it continued to adhere to the ancient tongue as a symbol of its internationalism long after the newly emerging nation-states of Europe had supplanted it by their own native languages. But despite losses in the East, and the wound of the Reformation, the Catholic Church, as a supra-national body, continued to reassert its pluralist heritage at a time when Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox Churches often became no more than religious extensions of the power of the national states which they served. The Church’s pluralist tradition, alternating with its narrower Roman interpretation, continued to be sufficiently vital to warrant the appointment of a number of cardinals and bishops from non-Italian background, and to cause a multitude of holy men and women drawn from a variety of lands to be elevated to the altar as saints of the Church.

However, since the advent of Vatican II, this pluralist tradition has been further reasserted. The return to the early tradition of having Mass in the everyday language of the people extended the cultural pluralism within the Church in a most obvious and tangible way, without jeopardizing the Church's universal framework of doctrine and organization. The Council demonstrated the possibility of a change in tradition through a return to an even earlier heritage that had been neglected for a time, but which the present generation found appropriate to revive for its current needs. This is in keeping with the theory of tradition expounded earlier, whereby a living tradition must continually adapt itself to new circumstances, without at the same time losing its essential cores. Writing on this topic in relation to Vatican II, the special secretary of the Synod of Bishops, W. Kasper (1986 p. 97), noted:

To interpret the Council documents within the living tradition of the Church also means interpreting these in the light of the changing 'signs of the times'.

The Church in the twentieth century continues to insist on its doctrinal unity as the over-arching frame, which all Catholics need to follow in order to maintain Church tradition and avoid sectarian fragmentation. But within that arch of unity (this „umbrella” under which we shelter), there exist cultural variations which are in line with deeply felt traditions of numerous Catholics, who happen to be of Irish, Italian, English, Polish, Lithuanian, Croatian, Slovenian, Maltese, Lebanese, Spanish, Portuguese and many other ancestral origins and cultural backgrounds.

If the Catholic ministry of the world-wide Church is to flourish, the following two principles would, therefore, need to be upheld:

1. Unity of faith, as interpreted by the Church;
2. Support for cultural diversity within the Church, in order to reflect the cultural traditions of all Catholics, as they seek to make their faith alive and move in tune with their daily lives.

IX. INCULTURATION, LOCAL AUTONOMY AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

The support for cultural diversity within the Church has been reiterated by a number of bishops from the „Third World”, as well as from Australasia who, at the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops held in Rome in 1985, called for the greater „inculturation” of all religious activities by bringing local churches closer to the culture of each people that they served. This could be interpreted as an attempt at a further extension of the culturally pluralist tradition of ca-

tholicism. Speaking at the Synod, Cardinal Williams (1986 p. 38) of New Zealand said that,

A sincere acceptance of cultural diversity is a duty which corresponds to a human right. A wholehearted response to the challenge of inculturation will give a new dimension to the Catholicity of the Church.

According to the New Zealand cardinal, and a number of other bishops, these ecclesial adjustments to the culture of the people could not, however, be accomplished unless, „the world-wide episcopate has the responsibility to re-establish a right balance between the central authority [of Rome] and local autonomy.” The themes of „inculturation” and „greater autonomy” from Rome have thus been linked by some of the bishops, many of whom are irked at the „obligation to ask permission from Rome for all sorts of details”, e.g. adaptation of the liturgy to local cultural needs. In summarizing the work of the Synod, Professor Kerkhofs S.J. (1986 p.43) of the Catholic University of Louvain states that:

Without a far-reaching process of inculturation, the gospel message and the Church community will remain 'strange bodies' for many cultures.

It is not clear, however, whether the bishops who were asking for a fuller cultural expression for their local Churches would also recognize the need to apply this principle to the minority ethnic groups in their own countries, as well as for the dominant majority. Appeal to the pluralist tradition of the Church needs therefore to be considered at t w o l e v e l s, one concerning greater decentralization of the Church to achieve more cultural pluralism, and the other ensuring that subordinate or minority ethnic groups can also enjoy right to inculturation w i t h i n their countries. The question is whether the chances of developing this type of internal pluralism are greater at the hands of the local bishops and National Bishops Conferences, acting on their own, or jointly with the Holy See and the Pope.

The need for the Church to pursue further its twin goals of universality and pluralism is unquestioned, and there is a consensus that this can be best achieved by bringing faith as close as possible to the great array of cultures which contribute to the universal Church. The discussion centres solely around the best way to achieve this aim, while ensuring that the process of inculturation does not undermine the over-arching framework of the Church. In relation to Australia at least, the visit of the Pope demonstrated that the bishops here would not be impeded by Rome in their moves to integrate more readily the Aborigines and other ethnic minorities. If such integration is to take place in the spirit of inculturation, rather than that of assimilation or marginalisation

of the „ethnics”, the local hierarchy can invariably count on the support of the Holy See.

In this regard, the present Pope is particularly well aware of the need for the Church to respond to cultural diversity among its members. Past history shows that cultural minorities have frequently been neglected by the episcopates of their countries, and that migrants and their descendents have had look to the Holy See for protection from the ethnocentrism of local Churches which have identified themselves with the narrowly conceived needs of dominant groups. Speaking at the Synod, an Argentinean Archbishop, Cardinal Primatesta, warned that „excessive autonomy” along national lines, when accompanied by „scorn for the Pope”, far from enriching the local spiritual life, could lead to schism. When freed from responsibilities to the universal Church, local Churches, run by their dominant groups, might be tempted to trample on the rights of cultural and religious minorities, and justify their action in the name of „unity” of each particular national Church, acting as an agent for its nation-state. The Irish must surely remember the consequences of the separation of the Church in England from the Holy See, and the way Protestantism was forced upon Ireland in flagrant violation of the principle of inculturation and the rights of a people to express their religion through the medium of their own culture.

This is, of course, an extreme example from a rather distant past, but such historic memories haunt people and make them uncertain about the future. It is fortunate for the Australian Church that it can now follow a pluralist approach on the basis not only of age-old expectations of the universal Church, but also of post-Conciliar interpretations of tradition which have so strongly emphasized this „multicultural” strand of the Church’s heritage. In this regard, there is no disagreement between the Synod of Bishops and the Pope, since all concerned have spoken strongly in favour of pluralism. Furthermore, the Australian Church now finds itself in a secular environment which has accepted officially the principles of multiculturalism. This not only stresses the possibility of the co-existence of more than one heritage, but also attempts to provide for participation on terms of equality of Australians from all ethnic backgrounds, *w i t h o u t* first asking them to abandon their ancestral cultures. Furthermore, the secular authorities in this country have followed Paul VI by accepting his view that cultural pluralism does not automatically terminate with the first generation of migrants.

The new acceptance of *m o r e l a s t i n g* multiculturalism finds its reflection in government policies, both at State and Commonwealth levels. This is exemplified in the publication of government-commissioned reports which advocate far-reaching reforms to ensure greater teaching of languages in Australian schools, with English being supplemented with at least one other language.

„Community languages” (i.e. languages other than English spoken by Australians in their homes) were also singled out for special mention by Senator Ryan when spoke in her capacity as the Minister of Education in a debate on language policy in the Senate in April 1987. While endorsing the Commonwealth Department’s National Policy on Languages Report (1987) on behalf of the Government, she spoke about the need to teach the languages of minority ethnic communities so that their cultures become a part of the Australian heritage (by being accepted into the over-arching framework of the whole society). In this way, Australian tradition is now formally being extended by the official adoption of a policy of linguistic and cultural pluralism.

X. THE ASSIMILATIONIST LEGACY OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH

In view of such pluralist interpretations of heritage emanating both from government and Church authorities (including the Pope, and the Synod of Bishops), the Australian Church has a great opportunity to cut itself away from its former position, which during the 1950’s and early 1960’s was distinctly assimilationist. Catholics from ethnic minority groups need reassurance that when Australian bishops ask for more autonomy to achieve greater inculturation, that they have the concerns of all their faithful in mind, including those from minority cultural groups. Any residual misgivings on this account may be quite unfounded, but it is necessary to acknowledge that in many people’s minds there lingers a memory of the Social Justice Statements of 1951, 1953 and 1957 which quite openly gave their assent to the vision of Australia as a mono-cultural society, as well as to the need to perpetuate its assumed homogeneity. In the words of the 1957 statement:

It is the firm determination of the Australian people to prevent their own language and the traditions of their own country from being submerged in any future tide of foreign cultures.

The Church of that time could not envisage „integration” on any but assimilationist lines:

The problem of complete cultural integration will be solved only in the second generation or even later, so that during the period of active immigration we must be reconciled to a measure of cultural pluralism.

Thus „cultural pluralism” was seen as a burden, albeit only temporary, since the „problem” would be eventually eliminated, once the first generation had passed away.

The document, although obviously well intentioned, viewed attempts at the „forcible deprivation” of the first generation migrants of their culture as a „psychological blunder”, rather than as a violation of the human, and more particularly the Christian, rights of the faithful. It also appears more concerned with using the Catholic faith of migrants as a „national” instrument for furthering their assimilation, rather than regarding it as the over-riding pastoral consideration of the Church:

The fact that, in his new environment [the migrant] can continue to breathe the atmosphere of his ancient faith, is a powerful factor in promoting his contented assimilation.

From a Catholic point of view, the migrant surely needed no assimilation, since they were already members of the Church. Although assimilation to Anglo-Australian norms was the dominant orientation in the country at the time, one would hardly have expected it to cloud the Church’s own tradition of pluralism, and appreciation of the inter-dependence of faith and culture. Instead of „contented assimilation”, deprivation of their culture in worship often meant the alienation of immigrants from the faith, hardly a goal for the universal Church!

Cyril Hally (1980 p. 28) comments that the assimilationist views of these particular Justice Statements cannot be construed as policy statements of the Episcopal Conference. Yet there is no doubt that they reflected much of what was said and what was happening in the Australian Church at the time. According to Castigan (1986 p. 4), the bishops themselves in a Joint Pastoral letter expressed the hope that Australian Catholics could, by „genuine friendliness [...] make more easy and happy the assimilation of our new settlers into a way of life that is Catholic and Australian”. Castigan takes the view that, in spite of the „fact that [the Bishops] had to cope with many locally educated clergy and religious who were convinced of the inherent superiority of Catholicism in Irish-Australian style, [this was] hardly a satisfactory excuse”.

Memoirs of individual migrants pertaining to this period speak of the Church in Australia as „not having come across as a caring and understanding body, reaching out to people, particularly to those who needed help”. Instead, it was seen as invariably „wanting something” and, at the same time, „asking migrants to fit in with its own structures and requirements” (Vrielnik 1980 p. 5).

Such migrants could certainly look to *Exsul Familia*, and subsequently Paul VI’s Apostolic Letter and the Congregation of Bishops’ *Pastoralis Migratorum*, as providing a much stronger defence of their language and cultural rights, than that which was forthcoming from the „local Church”. Indeed, there must have been misgivings about the local Church’s response on the part of the Congregation itself, since its „instructions”, which accompanied Paul VI’s letter, warned

parish priests „on whose shoulders” fell „the spiritual care” of immigrant people, that they would „one day give account to God regarding the fulfillment of their duty” (chap. 4 par. 3). The new directive of the Vatican Congregation, by entrusting the appointment of migrant chaplains to the „local ordinaries”, placed upon them greater responsibility, as well as the need to seek closer collaboration between the migrants’ „church of departure” and the „the church of arrival”. Based on these instructions and the Church’s universalist tradition, Catholicism in Australia might have been expected to evolve its own interpretation of the country’s heritage that was independent of the assimilationist trends of the time, and to look instead to Australia’s own more pluralist past.

It is significant, however, that just as the much more centralized Church of Pius XII was unable to prevent its Australian branch from largely disregarding *Exsul Familia* and following an assimilationist pathway in relation to migrants, so the post-Conciliar increase in the autonomy of the local hierarchies (envisaged by Paul VI and his Congregation of Bishops) has had apparently little effect *per se* on the attitude of the Australian Church to the cultural pluralism within its ranks. It has been claimed, in fact, that instead of taking advantage of the decentralization in order to „initiate change”, the Church followed the „dominant social and political thought” of the secular society (Lewins 1980 p. 19).

Furthermore, the Australian Church appears to have adopted a minimalist interpretation of *Pastoralis Migratorum*. There was no granting to migrant chaplains of equal juridic status with that enjoyed by „territorial” parish priests – let alone appointing „episcopal vicars well versed in the language” of the new arrivals, either with or without „episcopal dignity” (as envisaged by *Pastoralis Migratorum* chap. 4 par. 2 p. 25). Even the Congregation of Bishops’ very modest and most basic request that services should be provided in the language of the faithful, has only been partially fulfilled, as shown by Bernardi (1986 p. 26) in relation to Italian-Australians in the Melbourne archdiocese. As to the wide range of structural provisions (including personal parishes) that local episcopates were empowered to offer, only the most rudimentary were actually put into effect. The „chaplains” serving ethnic minorities remained generally on the periphery of „mainstream” activities, and often in a subordinate or dependent position to the established parish clergy. The faithful of minority ethnic background, and the „ethnic” clergy who served them, were also given little opportunity to have any impact on Catholic life as a whole, since their existence was viewed as *t e m p o r a r y*, the basic assumption being that, „immigrant children, after mastering English, would eventually become ‘normal’ members of existing parishes” (Hally 1980 p. 24).

There are extenuating circumstances to explain this caution of the mainly mono-ethnic Irish-derived Church in Australia which has had to accommodate a much greater share of migrants from non-English-speaking-backgrounds (NESB) than the country as a whole. The proportion of overseas-born Catholics jumped from less than 10% in 1933 to 24% in 1971. At a time of rapid increase in NESB numbers in the country as a whole, Church membership showed a particularly large influx, with over 80% of the overseas-born Catholics originating from non-English-speaking-background, in contrast to just over 40% NESB among non-Catholic migrants. The Church has to cope with these numbers when its schools were not aided by the State, and at a time when its own newly acquired independence from its former European mentors made it specially sensitive to any influences emanating from „external” sources.

XI. IRISH ROOTS OF THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Excessive sensitivity and suspicion of others can spring from a number of sources, such as lack of experience with other cultures, insecurity about one’s own position in society, or belief in the superiority of one’s own culture over others. Hally (1980 p. 17) paints this background to the post-war ethnic demographic and cultural „explosion” upon the Australian Church:

By the outbreak of World War II, the Catholic community, out of its own resources, had built a network of institutions across the country serviced predominantly by Australian-born clergy and religious. Beginning in the 1930s the first generation of Australian-born and educated bishops had taken over [from the Irish-born clergy] responsibility for policy making. An Australian Catholic ethos or identity, even if somewhat fragile and unarticulated, had evolved.

This Australian Catholic identity was clearly a product of its Irish origins and, even though the name „Irish” gradually began to wane as a mark of its distinctiveness, the local Church tradition had an unmistakable and distinct „Irish ethnic” cultural imprint.

Any discussion of the Catholic ethnic majority in the Australian Church must take account of these roots. The Irish in their home island lost their native Gaelic as a spoken language over the two centuries preceding the independence of the Irish Republic (Clark 1934 pp. 310-311), and subsequent efforts to revive it as a national tongue have largely failed (O’Buachalla 1984 p. 76; Benton 1986 p. 53). This has been a big blow to Irish national culture and identity – although its negative aspects are perhaps insufficiently appreciated in Australia today. (The importance of language as a carrier of culture can be better understood if one studies the successful efforts of the Israelis to revive Hebrew, or

the possible state of Polish culture if the language had been lost during the partitions and replaced by either German or Russian) (Smolicz 1981). On the positive side, the adoption of English by the Irish people enabled them to follow the patterns of English imperial expansion and to settle in the colonies, whether it was America, New Zealand, or Australia. This was a boon to the Catholic Church since without the Irish there would have been very few English-speaking Catholics. The fact that Irish immigrants could speak the same language as the colonial authority enabled them to survive with greater ease than has been the case for other minority ethnic groups.

In the new countries of settlement the Irish were thus able to penetrate into various structures, such as trade unions and professions; participate in the political process, and enter the public service. But although they spoke the same language as the dominant Anglo-Protestants, they were often viewed as a subordinate minority of lower socio-economic status. During the days of religious intolerance, their religion was also held against them, since spiritual allegiance to the Holy See was seen as subjugation to a foreign influence, while ardent acceptance of the British monarchy was regarded as a sign of loyalty and „Australian-ness”.

The Irish initially retained both their religion and their identity, and strengthened both with a system of Catholic parishes and schools for which they had to pay themselves. They kept their Irish connections through the continued migration and importation of Irish clergy, including bishops (Phillips 1971 p. 601; Suttor 1965 p. 201). Gradually, however, as the Irish connection waned and migration and dependence on Irish clerics decreased, there evolved a Catholic Australian community which thought of itself simply as „Australian” and no longer Irish. Irish ancestry became a memory which some recalled with a degree of sentiment, while others preferred to forget. (Our empirical data reported on pp. 140-141 of this paper are a sign that a residual Irish identity still persists among some Catholics of Irish origin).

The gradual rapprochement of the formerly Irish Catholic population with the Anglo-Protestants was helped by several factors. In addition to a decrease in Irish migration, there was a general socio-economic mobility among Irish-Australians from the working class to the middle sections of the community. As the bonds with Ireland weakened over time, common interests with the English-speaking-Anglo-dominant group increased, through a broadening of political participation and greater acceptance of Catholics in the State education system and elsewhere.

The arrival of Catholics of non-Irish background found the Church unprepared for such a new cultural infusion. They threatened to infiltrate structures which the Irish-Australian community had built up over years and regarded as

its own. A solution was needed to integrate these new Catholics, and assimilation was seen as the only acceptable goal. Ethnic allegiance to the Irish-derived dominant Catholic group took precedence over religious sentiments and universal Catholic loyalties. Some Catholics found by then that they had more in common culturally with the English-language background non-Catholics than with Catholics whose origins were in countries such as Italy, Poland or the Lebanon.

Anglo-Protestant unease over the arrival of the new ethnic minorities made them accept Irish-derived Catholics all the more readily, since together they constituted approximately three-quarters of the population as the „Anglo-Celtic majority”. The Catholics who contributed to the „Celtic” part of this block found some comfort in escaping from the position of a looked-down upon minority and being accepted as virtual equals in a coalition of English-speaking peoples. In this way they were leaving the Catholic ghetto and entering the mainstream of society – in politics, government, universities, clubs and other places which some years earlier had been closed to them.

This „coming-out” was greatly aided by the Vatican II Council which encouraged ecumenical initiatives and changed the liturgy so that the Catholic Mass lost its mysterious and „foreign” qualities and became much more similar in ritual and language to Protestant services. The clergy and the religious too changed drastically in their outlook, as well as in their dress. The Church lost much of its external distinctiveness, and perhaps some of its former internal cohesion and self-assurance as well. It was no longer triumphalist, no longer a fortress to protect its community from alien English Protestant forces. Catholic schools opened their gates to numbers of teachers, who were lay, non-Catholic, or even of no religious persuasion.

All these changes made for greater acceptance and incorporation of the Catholic community, into mainstream Australian society. But there was and is a price to pay for this in loss of identity, decreased spirituality, falling of vocations and disuse of religious practices, such as confession (Flynn 1975; 1985). For a group which previously had lost its native language as its core values, and later its manifestly Irish consciousness, this weakening of Catholic identity could represent the fall of the last rampart against almost total engulfment in a mass culture dominated by a blend of secularized Protestantism and the ideology of consumerism and materialism.

Catholic structures still remain firm, but their cultural content is in doubt. It is at this juncture that the dominant Catholic group’s relationship to other sections of society is of importance. Is that ruling group in the Church likely to embrace cultural and linguistic minorities among the faithful, without first demanding their assimilation? Can it go even a step further and make use of

their cultural resources to revitalize the Church? The Papal pronouncements on the unity of cultural groups within the over-arching framework of the Catholic Church would distinctly point in that direction. On the other hand, the newly forged bonds with the Anglo-community, the satisfaction at being accepted by the formerly aloof dominant group on terms of virtual equality, make the desire to build specifically Catholic-inspired links with new and relatively powerless minorities seem less attractive. There is also the desire to retain control over the Church, for which the „founding group” feels certain proprietary rights, and a reluctance to accept other languages and cultures, in addition to English, as normal practice in Australian Catholic schools and churches.

But can the „old” Catholic founding group manage to preserve its position, and keep other Catholic groups on the periphery of the Church, while it attempts to retain its separate Catholic identity against the encroachments of religious indifferentism and secularism of the Australian mainstream society? There is little doubt that the implementation of the Catholic doctrine of cultural pluralism and the participation of Catholics of all ethnic backgrounds is required, if the Church is to resist the forces of materialism and retain its identity as the House of God which is open equally to Catholics of all cultural backgrounds, not only as parishioners paying their dues, but also as participants in policy decisions at all levels and within all branches of the Church’s activities. Such participation, leading to increased internal resilience of the Church, can only be achieved if integration is founded on pluralist principles of respect and understanding of the languages and cultures of all the faithful, so that no one need disown their heritage as the price of acceptance into the fold.

XII. CULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF PLURALISM

In a number of statements the Church in Australia has embraced the pluralist approach described above, although I am unaware of the existence of an authoritative and comprehensive document, similar to that produced by the Episcopal Conference of the USA, entitled *Cultural Pluralism in the Church* (1981). The current commitment to multiculturalism has been clearly expressed by the Social Justice Statement of 1977, with its declaration that, „a policy of assimilation as the basis of relationships between ethnic groups is unjust”, and that the spiritual heritage of overseas-born Australians „must not only be tolerated, but positively appreciated”.

In the long term, the proof of the willingness of the Australian Church to embrace the faithful from non-English speaking backgrounds and cultures will be reflected in its approach to the two principal pivots of the Church’s structural base – the parishes with their priesthood and laity, and the Catholic school

system. According to Gentiloni (1982 p. 14), the Papal view of the role of the Church is inextricably linked to the service of a dedicated clergy,

clergy close to the people, „popular” in the most exalted sense of the word, committed on all levels, from the press to caring for drug addicts, giving testimony of a poor and irreproachable life.

To achieve such a lofty but necessary goal of credibility, the clergy must be in close communion with the faithful, as well as interwoven into the administrative fabric of the Church. This should naturally apply to the „migrant” or „ethnic chaplains”, who would also be expected to be involved in the mainstream activities of the Church. This would allow the faithful to whom they administer to be more closely integrated, and at the same time legitimize the use of their languages and cultures, not on the margin of pastoral activity, but in its mainstream.

This kind of „pluralist integration” does not yet appear to reflect current reality. Instead, as Hally (1980 p. 29) noted, the policy of relying upon Australian clergy, „supplemented by the ministry of itinerant migrant chaplains [...] would appear never to have changed.” The *ad hoc* employment of such imported chaplains, without the status which a personal parish would supply, was already of doubtful value in the 1950s. It should hardly be allowed to persist, because of its marginality, precariousness and second class status.

Writing with American experience in mind, Fr. de Paolis (1984 p. 10), observed that unless chaplains are provided with a parochial structure „which enjoys the same rights and duties as territorial parishes”, migrants and their descendents would not be accorded the same care that the majority group members enjoy in their parishes. The granting of parochial status would remedy the kind of situation whereby minority ethnic school children attending Catholic schools are required to attend „territorial” parishes for their catechetical studies, First Communion and Confirmation (de Paolis 1984 p. 21). Similar difficulties have been reported by ethnic Australian parents who describe in their memoirs how their children had to fight for the right to receive First Communion from the hands of „their chaplain”, and the schools’ insistence that only the territorial parish priest had a right to perform this sacrament. The memoir writer in question reports how during the „multicultural” 1980s school teacher insisted that her child take „First” Communion for the second time, since the one from the „migrant chaplain” did not count! (Smolicz and Secombe 1987).

To remedy this type of situation, de Paolis argues for the concept of parish „which is understood more as a community of persons, rather than as a territory”. Such a development has been envisaged by the new *Code of Canon Law*, published in June 1983, which in its article 518 states:

As a general rule, the parish should be territorial and would embrace all the faithful of a determined territory. However, where it would be advisable, let personal parishes be set up based upon the rite, the language, the nationality of the faithful belonging to a territory, or even on the basis of other precise motives.

It should be noted that both „territorial” and „personal” parishes created on ethno-cultural lines still have many things in common, such a specific group of faithful who constitute the population of the parish, a parish priest of its own, as well as parish church for communal worship (Bakalarz 1978).

In the Australian context, it should be noted that the provision of territorial parishes for members of religious orders from countries outside the English-speaking world has at times been very successful. However, such ventures are dependent on the training that the priests receive in English and on migration experience in their seminaries overseas – an education which is supplied rarely, and then due to the effort of a few specialized orders.

It would seem that up till now the local Church’s assumption has been that services in minority languages and liturgical traditions are transient and limited to one, or at the most two, „migrant generations”. If multiculturalism is to be of lasting value to the Church, provisions need to be made for the spiritual care of minority ethnic groups on a more permanent basis, that allows for the preservation and development of certain crucial aspects of their cultures (usually their core values), and the modification of others over time, and hence for their integration on a pluralist basis into the mainstream of the Australian Church.

This would avoid the dilemma which at least some ethnic youth currently face, and which has caused them to lose their faith. On the one hand, they are given the option of abandoning their traditional „mentality and culture” and merging into the religious forms which have evolved in Australia from the Irish prototype. In adopting this course, they run the risk of cutting themselves off from their parents and the traditional „popular” type of devotion that united religious observances with everyday family life in their country of origin. The other option is to remain on the margin, attending ethnic masses at frequently inconvenient times, in somebody else’s parish church, where they are not allowed to change anything, and where they can feel more or less welcome guests. Furthermore, the newly arrived chaplain may not speak in a way that the second generation best understands, while his knowledge of English may be, at least initially, rather rudimentary.

There is an obvious need for young second generation Australians of minority ethnic background to enter the priesthood and help to serve the people with whom they share the same cultural background. But, in view of the marginality of their current position, it is hardly surprising that, „there is a general tendency for the first generation of the children of immigrants not to enter the minis-

try in adequate numbers" (Hally 1980 p. 17). Before making such a serious commitment in their lives, these young people would need to know the answers to certain questions, such as: 'Whose church are they to enter, and in what role?' 'Is it really their Church, and that of their parents'?

In the case of those who do decide to enter the diocesan seminaries, as some have, what type of „multicultural” spirit and education do they encounter there? According to the memoirs of seminarians of Polish origin that we have collected, such seminaries may consciously or unconsciously be more effective in obliterating the seminarians' ethnic language and culture than even an assimilationist school (Smolicz and Secombe 1987). Deprived of the influence of the home, with no books and no education pursued in the language concerned, the young men are educated, if not deliberately then effectively, to be unfit for any ministry to people of their own background upon ordination. As a result of cultural losses sustained during their theological education, they may be inclined to sever any remaining „ethnic” connections. And what of the few individuals who persist, despite odds, in preserving aspects of their culture, and in desiring to minister to their own group? It would seem that, at times, whatever their wishes, they are moved to „mainstream” tasks and parishes.

Is Australia therefore destined for ever to import „minority ethnic priests” as „itinerant chaplains” for pastoral work among minority groups? Up till now, this gap has been very ably filled (as far as they were able to do so) by religious orders from overseas, such as the Scalabrinian Fathers in the case of the Italian community. But the basic problem for the future of the Church in Australia remains. Lack of priests who are both Australian-born and knowledgeable about their own cultural and linguistic background makes it difficult for the Australian hierarchy to assume a more multicultural complexion, since imported priest can hardly be regarded as readily qualified for higher church appointments in this country.

From this perspective, Castigan's (1986 p. 4) criticism that „bishops of other than Celtic or Anglo-Celtic background are not appointed” is valid, but a more basic task still remains unfulfilled. This relates to the largely unchanged overall cultural image of the Catholic Church in Australia. When minority ethnic cultures are marginalised in the hope of their eventual demise, not only is the spiritual welfare of the minorities jeopardized, but the dominant Catholic group is deprived of channels whereby other cultural traditions can become part of their experience and enrich the Church as a whole. Such an extended and revitalized Church would be much more acceptable to the ethnic minorities, as well as more intellectually and culturally viable, and hence more effective in its mission in a country which is currently under the strong influence of agnosticism and materialism.

XIII. LANGUAGE AND THE CHURCH

One area where such expanded horizons of the Church are especially important is that of language. Unfortunately, whether in pastoral care, or in education, the question of the use of languages other than English still troubles some Australian Catholics, even though the Second Vatican Council should have made multilingualism manifestly acceptable in all parts of the universal Church. Until the Council, the Latin language had remained the visible and unalterable part of the over-arching framework that symbolized the unity of the Roman Church. During days of difficult communications, it was thought necessary to retain one single liturgical language, at least for the Western rite. But Vatican II, while not banning Latin in the Mass, permitted the use of vernaculars, i.e. languages which were spoken daily by the congregation concerned.

While this transition from Latin to the vernaculars was welcomed by most Australian Catholics, it placed certain additional obligations on the Church in a plural society. Latin had the advantage of being a language which was not associated with any one ethnic group (since there were no ancient Romans to claim it as their own native tongue). The imposition of English upon all Catholics, in a country such as Australia, would have been clearly contrary to the spirit of Council, as it was interpreted by Paul VI when he wrote that it is „not possible to fulfil effectively the pastoral care [of migrants, if their] special culture is not taken into due account” and that, in this connection, „the national language in which they express their thoughts, their mentality and their very religious life is of great importance” (*Pastoralis Migratorum* 1969 chap. 2 p. 4). In view of this, if the Church in Australia is to implement Vatican II and be loyal to the decrees of the Pope, it is *nolens volens* destined to linguistic pluralism.

Fortunately, however, language is an aspect of culture which is not exclusive, but *a d d i t i v e*. One can add languages to one's linguistic repertoire, without doing damage to those previously learnt. In sociological terms, this specific additive characteristic of language, (which permits multilingualism at *i n d i v i d u a l*, as well as group level), stands in contrast to the question of faith and doctrine, since these are not additive, but demand exclusive and complete allegiance. In the case of language, individuals can be bilingual or multilingual, but they cannot claim to be bi-religious or multi-religious in faith and doctrine. This is simply to say that one cannot be a practising Catholic and a pious Muslim at one and the same time. The strength and unity of the Catholic Church demands undivided commitment. In contrast, the use of diverse languages in the church by the faithful, does not hinder unity, but openly enhances it. The priest who says one Mass in English and another in Italian on the same Sunday, openly demonstrates that bilingualism, by being internalized

in the same individual, causes no division, no conflict, but rather bears witness to the universality of the Church.

This point is well illustrated by Bernardi (1986 p. 26) with reference to the Italian-Australian population of Melbourne and their pastoral needs. He argues that „the current regular religious services [in Italian] as events in which Italians can clearly identify and express their faith should be maintained and extended to other parishes through a wide distribution of Italian-speaking clergy”. It is claimed that in those parishes where such facilities already exist, „the faith of many has been preserved and strengthened”. Where regular Italian Masses exist, „the second generation is less alienated from the Catholic faith”. Another positive result has been „the widening of the participation of Italians in the life of the parish.”

Probably the best example of multilingualism which is not divisive but unifying, while emphasizing the international mission of the Church, is to be found in the person of John Paul II and his great facility with languages. While in Rome, and saying Mass for congregations composed of members of different nations, he generally uses Latin, but he addresses the pilgrims almost invariably in at least six major languages, and when the need arises (Easter, Christmas, special audience) in many others as well. His fluent use of English during his visit to Australia, did not make him any less effective in Spanish during his visit to Argentina earlier that year. And, of course, it caused no harm to his Polish expression during the subsequent visit to his home country.

This specific characteristic of language, namely that more does not mean less, and that we are dealing here with addition rather than subtraction, is still insufficiently understood at times, even among senior members of the Australian Church. An example of such latent doubts about multilingualism was provided to me by the principal of a large Catholic secondary school, when he claimed that the Pope’s use of a number of languages in his speeches served to inflame ethnic conflicts and create divisions in the world. When asked what language the Holy Father should use when speaking to the faithful drawn from many lands and cultural backgrounds, he was at a loss for a reply. Latin was out, since it was „old-fashioned” and not understood by the people. He was shy about advocating the use of his own language – English – as the only permissible papal tongue, so half-heartedly he opted for Italian. Clearly that principal’s own monolingualism and dislike of the use of the other people’s languages, whether in church or in school, was over-riding his judgement in relation to the needs of the country or the good of the Catholic Church.

In summary, the Australian Church’s use of languages other than English in the liturgy and pastoral care cannot be regarded as socially divisive. Both the second generation and their priest are most likely to be bilingual, and their use

of what Paul VI referred to as their linguistic „patrimony”, does not injure their ability to express themselves in English on other occasions. The story of the confusion caused by the multiplicity of languages in the construction of the Tower of Babel is surely sufficiently silenced by Pentecost – or the gift of tongues that the Holy Spirit bestowed upon Apostles.

In e d u c a t i o n this willingness both to maintain minority languages and cultures and to integrate them, whenever possible, into the school for students of all backgrounds has yet to be fully demonstrated – in practice, as well as in rhetoric.

It should be noted, in regard to the teaching of languages, that the Catholic education sector responded more readily to that challenge after the Commonwealth government provided funding, initially needed to administer Child Migrant Education (1970) and later Multicultural Education (1976) programs. Although some undoubted enthusiasm was generated by this programs in many parts of the Catholic education system, with Catholic schools taking the lead in teaching of community languages, such as Italian, much of the work appeared as rather derivative. As Hally (1980 p. 26) suggests, „it would seem that the majority of innovations [...] since 1970 have been determined by the flow of money from State instrumentalities.”

The accuracy of this statement may be testable at present, due to the premature termination in 1986 of the Multicultural Education Program which brought to an end federal support for the development of school curricula for the languages and cultures of minorities. The same applies to English as a Second Language programs, since those State governments, such as that in South Australia, which managed to provide some of their resource funds for the continuation of English programs, did so solely for the State schools, leaving the Catholic sector to cope with the problems on its own.

It is a hopeful sign that, in some States, Catholic Education Offices have developed language policies with a multicultural character. This has been demonstrated by the recently released „Policy Statement” of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools: *Catholic Education for a Multicultural Society in Australia* (1986). In a Foreword, the Archbishop of Adelaide, Dr. L.A. Faulkner, expresses his confidence that all Catholic schools in his archdiocese will show commitment to „Christian education for a multicultural society”. The Policy Statement echoes the Papal conviction that „faith and culture are intimately interwoven”, and hence that Catholic schools „are called to be vitally involved in the ‘creative’ interplay between the gospel and cultures”.

In agreement with the South Australian Government’s report on *Education for a Cultural Democracy* (1984), it states that among the „ideal goals” for children in Catholic schools, should be the opportunity to „retain and develop

their first culture and language”, and „acquire other languages, and develop an understanding of other cultures”. From these principles, the Statement draws a number of useful practical implications for the schools, including advice to administrators to „encourage students to develop and maintain their first language” and to „recognize the educational and social value of learning languages other than English”, as well as to „select staff with linguistic and ethnic backgrounds appropriate to the communities they serve”. At the same time, all parents are urged to „encourage the school to provide language programs other than English”.

Such a comprehensive second language program in Catholic primary and secondary schools would lay the foundations for extending into the seminaries the study of those Australian languages other than English which are used within the Catholic community. The adoption of a policy for preparing bilingual clergy, whereby all the seminary students would have the opportunity to study a second language, would be one of the most effective means of ensuring that a multicultural and multilingual Catholic tradition is permanently established in Australia.

In conclusion, it must be reiterated that unity is not threatened by the co-existence of more than one language, although one of them may gain currency as the principal *lingua franca* in the country. However, cultural pluralism requires respect for the other languages spoken in the community, a respect which must find its reflection in educational support for these tongues. No one single language, be it dominant or majority, has the exclusive property of bringing a man closer to God.

XIV. THE PAPAL VISION OF MULTICULTURALISM FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The importance of language as the carrier of a given culture, and hence the significance of its continued use in the Church has been emphasized by both Paul VI and John Paul II. It was also spelt out in detail by the Pontifical Commission for Migration in its document *Ecclesial Integration of Migrants as Exercise of the Right to Freedom* (1985) which stressed the „permanent character” of the migration phenomena. This recognizes the demographic and cultural realities of the continued existence of the ethnic minorities in the countries of arrival. The World Congress, which the Pontifical Commission sponsored, strongly urged that pastoral needs of minorities are to be met neither by separation and marginalisation, nor by forcible assimilation.

The Commission reassures migrants and their descendents that „the Church recognizes their original identity” and gives them every opportunity to „insert

themselves freely with their own language and traditions in the new community of arrival”; the new community, just like the one from which they originated, „is part of the same universal Church and of the same People of God”. The spiritual unity of the Church is thus shown to extend over all ethnic groups, while the national Churches, including their Episcopal Conferences, are reminded that they are simply „parts” of this universal whole. In the words of John Paul II, the Church, „as sacrament of unity, must give witness to the quality of integration which it develops”.

The Pontifical Commission clearly explains the nature of that integration. It is a far cry from attempts to strip the migrant of the essential elements of his cultural heritage in the name of the narrowly conceived „national” unity of a particular group, nation or tribe. Instead, „The Church recognizes socio-cultural pluralism as the basic principle of integration”.

Thus conceived, the process of integration is in accord with the humanistic sociological explication of cultural pluralism, as outlined in Section 6 of this paper. The unity of the Church represents an over-arching framework of values which is shared by members of all ethnic groups, whether majority or minority. Within that „umbrella” of shared values, different cultures can co-exist, with some values percolating to the over-arching frame, while others remain particular to the group in question. To give an example, the ancient tradition of holding a procession on the feast of *Corpus Christi* has survived most strongly in Polish Catholicism; this tradition is being continued in Australia and, through its encouragement by the bishops, may gradually spread more widely and become part of the shared practice of the Church in this country. Other specific traditions, such as the blessing of the Easter food, are likely to continue to be upheld by a more limited number of ethnic groups.

In a pluralistic society, each individual may build his own personal cultural system from a variety of ethnic sources to suit his own interests and needs. As Karol Wojtyła (1964 p. 1115) put it, „culture as found in the innermost core of each particular person is, in a certain way, different and unique”. Parts of these personal systems may be built by a process of synthesis, and involve the blending of more than one group’s heritage, be it in family structure, items of food, or folklore. Other parts would arise through a co-existence of different elements. For example as was noted before, languages are acquired by a more additive process, although this too does not totally exclude elements of linguistic borrowing and transfer. However, such additions enrich the cultural range of the individual and need not impoverish the language and culture of either the majority or the minority (Clyne 1985; Smolicz 1982). Changes in a significant number of the personal cultural systems of individuals can alter group values

and even exert an effect on the over-arching framework, as demonstrated by Vatican II.

The dynamism of such an interaction process is shattered if the nationalism of those in power prevents the free flow of cultural values. One such barrier arises when attempts are made to isolate the children of migrants from the cultural patrimony of their ethnic group, so that their personal systems, including language, are formed solely from the dominant group's values. This can be achieved not only by a totalitarian-style prohibition on the use of the languages and cultures in question, or by exclusion of such languages and cultures from the liturgy and the school, seminary and university curricula, but also more subtly, by denigrating the heritage of migrant children. Another kind of barrier to interaction is erected if the majority children (e.g. Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic children in the case of Australia) are denied the opportunity to partake of their neighbor's cultural treasures. In this situation the whole institutional edifice of the dominant group remains insulated, and hence insensitive to the culture of the other groups resident in the country.

Dangers of this type threaten the Catholic Church, as much as any other institution, since barriers to interaction impoverish its cultural, and hence pastoral, ministry by making it a less potent force in the work of salvation. Indifference, and possibly even hostility, shown to the cultures of migrant individuals undermine the unity of the Church. The Pontifical Commission (1985 par. 1.3) warns that the enforced denial of the ethnic identity can have most serious consequences for the faithful.

Experience has shown that the inability of expression in the mother tongue, and the elimination of the religious tradition and the cultural patrimony of the past greatly damage the conscience, impoverish the cultural surroundings, provoke separation and even schism, cancel not only memories but also religious convictions, and reduce the numbers of the faithful.

In order to avert such dangers, the Commission reassert the „theological vision” of integration that is „based on freedom and on respect for natural and Christian rights of migrants”. This vision has been confirmed by „Magisterium of the Church and of the Supreme Pontiffs, the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council, as well as the new ecclesiastical legislation” (2.6). It was upheld with „unmistakable clarity” by John Paul II in his *Message on World Migration Day* (1985):

Free, active participation, on equal terms with the faithful born in the particular Churches, without time limits or environment restrictions, constitutes the path for ecclesial integration for immigrant members of the Church.

The equality which the Pope speaks of here can be achieved without the necessity to renounce one's language or other aspects of native heritage. There is here a rejection of any barter arrangements, whereby the „faithful immigrants” are promised „equality” and the eventual possibility of „full membership”, provided they forsake their traditions.

The Pope is unable to detect social equity in any arrangement that is culturally unequal. Indeed, the threat of marginality as the penalty that minorities are required to pay for refusing to conform to cultural norms of dominant others, is totally incompatible with the Pope's emphasis on the significance of culture in the shaping of each individual. If man's entire humanity is expressed in his culture (UNESCO address 1980), and if respect for the inalienable rights of the human person is the basis of everything (*Redemptor hominis*), any attempt to deprive a migrant of his cultural patrimony must be considered as negating those rights. Pope John Paul II (1985) speaks instead about the need to give opportunity to migrants for „self-promotion”, so that they can incorporate into their „existential experience” those values that are „in the manner and style of their fundamental culture, in the pluralism of their identity”. Put in more sociological terms, migrant individuals should be given an opportunity to partake of whatever cultural values may be available in society, provided it is recognized that the process of interaction does not force them to abandon the core elements of their native cultures. Pope John Paul II makes this abundantly clear when he reminds the national Episcopal Conferences of arrival countries that:

The immigrant members of the Church, while freely exercising their rights and duties and being in full communion in the particular Churches [...] must be able to remain completely themselves as far as language, culture, liturgy and spirituality, and particular traditions are concerned, in order to reach that ecclesial integration which enriches the Church of God.

Since this vision of the integrating function of cultural plurality is now formally accepted by both the Pope and the Australian Bishops, any fears that Rome might impede local inculturation efforts in relation to the faithful from non-English speaking backgrounds appear as quite unfounded. The Papal visit of 1986 showed how close the Vatican and the Bishops stood on the principles of respect for cultural pluralism in the Church. At the same time, Papal pronouncements on the intrinsic significance of culture for all peoples, and their right to maintain them within the structure of one Church, served as a valuable reminder to all Australian Catholics, especially since the words were backed by the personal example set by the Pope.

At the Melbourne Cricket Ground, John Paul II (1986b p. 5) spoke in his native tongue, as well as in several others languages, to an audience made up

of many ethnic groups, including his own. In his homily he again stressed the importance of culture in human life and of tradition that preserves what is essential, while adapting itself to the new:

Man can live a truly human life because of his culture, and the first object of culture is a continual renewal of human memory so that he can undertake again and again the new duties which await him. It is for this reason that the present can never forget its debt to the past. An individual's homeland is not limited by the geographical dimension into which he was born, but also involves the spiritual dimension which includes those cultural values that are enshrined in his tradition and which give his life a meaning [...] Our faith is not identified with any one particular culture, but it provides to each man a basis from which he can rise above the horizon of the transient. For this reason we need to retain and refresh our memories. The present cannot exist without the past. There is no creativity without memory. Memory provides a guarantee of communality and unity, and safeguards us from melting away in to a nothingness.

John Paul II then asked young members of Australia's minorities to remember their past, and assured them that, „people who retain the memory of whence they originate and who value their traditions can contribute greatly to their new countries”. He then invoked the heroic memory of the former Polish Primate, who had asked Polish youth to be mindful of the way the Catholic faith has been an integral part of their nation's history and how it has sustained their culture in the past. Their Catholic faith and their culture will continue to sustain each other in the new land.

The Pope's words serve as a reminder that the substitution of the supposedly more „modern” dominant culture in place of those of the minorities is not, in itself, a contribution to Church unity or a way of keeping up with the „signs of the time”. In this regard, John Paul II is at one with the philosopher Popper (1963 p. 122) when he argued that „we could never free ourselves entirely from the bonds of tradition. The so called freeing is really a change from one tradition to another”. As the Pope himself demonstrates, it is the dynamic plurality of the Church's cultural traditions which contributes best to unity and represent the very substance of the Mystical Body of Christ.

XV. CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA: DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

It must be acknowledged that every country has a more or less chequered record of its past dealings with „strangers” or non-group members – ranging from tolerance and good will to dislike, domination and aggression. It is the obligation of every generation to re-assess its past anew from the standpoint

of what is most worthwhile in its heritage in relation to the needs of the present. With regards to the Church, that heritage is Catholic, universalist and pluralist, while in the case of Australia as a country, that heritage has also been founded upon the tenets of Christianity, with one of the most fundamental commandments to love one's neighbour.

In the achievement of this goal, the Papal vision of plurality is particularly applicable and complements the principles of multiculturalism that have been evolved for the country as a whole. The various ethnic groups that now contribute to the Church are linked by the all-embracing system of the Catholic faith – a faith which can continue its integrating role only when taken in its universal dimension, as manifested by the unity of local Churches with the Holy See. This over-arching Catholic framework, by linking peoples and incorporating their cultures – be they „old” or „recent” migrants, of English-speaking or non-English-speaking backgrounds, members of the small or large ethnic groups – represents an important constituent of Australian pluralism.

During his visit to Australia, John Paul II spoke in carefully couched terms, but he has indicated his sorrow at the thought of the minority cultures being whittled down and dispossessed of their core values, instead of contributing a new and vital force to the Catholic community in this country. Their disappearance would weaken the Church and subject it even more to the influences of the secularized mass culture which has little sympathy for spirituality or religion and provides no support either for Catholic cultural life or the structural forms of the Church.

One of the challenges to the Church which forms the main theme of his conference revolves around the issue of *who* constitutes „the Catholic community” in Australia. Many Irish-descended present-day Catholic Australians, although they may no longer identify with their ancestry in explicit terms, still retain certain bonds of commonality and mutual sentiment, and continue to be supported by the Catholic Church organization, and school system. It is this group which up till now has regarded itself as constituting *the* Australian Catholic community. The question arises, to what extent this original community has opened up to include the many other ethnic groups that make up the membership of the Church in Australia. Can one already speak of Catholic community which links third, fourth and fifth generation mainly Irish-derived Catholic Australians with first or second generation Italian, Spanish, Croatian or Polish Australians? Formally both these categories are united by the faith and structures of the Church, but frequently displaying varying cultural interpretations of what constitutes an „ideal” Catholic way of life. The possible rapprochement of these different Catholic traditions must be viewed against the

growing coalescence of the Irish-derived Catholic population within the mainstream of non-Catholic Australia.

As the growing secularization of society, and the simultaneous advances in the ecumenical movement have blunted the formerly clear demarcation lines between denominations, including Catholicism, the question of the future face of the Australian Church remains far from clear. Will the original Catholic group be prepared to implement the newly evolved concepts of official multiculturalism of the State, and the even more clearly defined pluralist ideology of the Church? Is this acceptance of pluralism only in name, or will this original group, which now occupies a position of almost total authority in the Australian Church, extend its commonality to other ethnic Australian Catholics on terms of equality and shared responsibilities, and allow them to make their specific cultural contribution to Australian Catholicism? Greater openness to the continued existence of the other languages and cultures is a pre-requisite to this acceptance so that cultural pluralism is not seen as a burden, as it was in 1957, but as a God-given offering from the universal Church to its Australian branch.

Should the principal Catholic community prefer to keep its distance, and count on the gradual dissolution of the other Catholic cultures by the affluxion of time and the passing of the first generation of migrants, it will not only dissipate the Christian cultural treasures which the Church has nurtured for centuries in Europe and in Asian countries such as the Philippines – but it will also find itself very much alone. What remains of ethnic minority Catholics, may find refuge in separation through the formation of enclaves, where they can persist on the periphery of Australian life. The main Catholic group would then be in danger of finding itself further diluted, until little remained of its specifically Catholic tradition, except for the structural facade for schools and parishes, which would continue to exist as empty shells devoid of most of their Catholic cultural meaning.

Structural differentiation of the Church, without real cultural pluralism supplied by the Catholic tradition, would not benefit Australia either, since such a loss would impoverish it both culturally and spiritually. This is precisely the situation that John Paul II wants so desperately to avoid, through the genuine acceptance of his doctrines of the *u n i t y o f f a i t h*, and the *p l u r a l i t y o f p e o p l e s a n d c u l t u r e s*. An opportunity exists for a Catholic renaissance in Australia through the evolution of a new Catholic tradition that is based on the contribution of heritages of all sections of the Church population in this country.

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* The initials „CIRC” recur in a number of references: they stand for, „Catholic International Resources Centre” and „Catholic Italian Renewal Centre” (same publishers).

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WIELOKULTUROWOŚĆ W AUSTRALIJSKIM KOŚCIELE KATOLICKIM

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Stosunkowo niedawno uznano w Australii za fałszywą opinię, według której rodzime języki emigrantów nie przetrwają dłużej niż jedno pokolenie. Konsekwencją tej zmiany stało się przyjęcie przez rząd australijski polityki trwałej wielokulturowości. W latach siedemdziesiątych przyjął ją także Kościół katolicki w Australii, rezygnując z dążenia do asymilacji. Zasady wielokulturowości najlepiej sformułował Jan Paweł II, wskazując na uniwersalizm, ale i pluralizm tradycji i kultur w Kościele. Socjologiczne badania na terenie Australii wskazują, że dla urodzonych w tym kraju kolejnych pokoleń dawnych emigrantów możliwość zachowania języka i kultury kraju pochodzenia jest bardzo ważnym elementem tożsamości duchowej, który pragną zachować. Stąd też zachowanie kultury etnicznej w Kościele traktują jako pogłębienie udziału w życiu parafii i wzbogacenie duchowe.

Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu ukazanie historii oraz znaczenia wielokulturowości w australijskim Kościele katolickim. Warto jednak przedtem zwrócić uwagę na kilka kwestii wprowadzających, a w tym na pojęcie kultury w wypowiedziach Jana Pawła II, podstawowe tradycje i wartości kultury, przemiany pluralizmu australijskiego, zasady australijskiej wielokulturowości oraz ich wyraz w wypowiedziach papieskich.

Zdaniem Jana Pawła II pluralizm kulturowy ma wielkie znaczenie w pracy Kościoła. Lekceważenie kultury jakiegoś narodu oznacza lekceważenie godności ludzkiej i praw jego przedstawicieli jako członków Kościoła, a tym samym wymierzone jest w ich wiarę. Poszczególne grupy etniczne uznają za podstawowe różne wartości. Mogą się na nie składać: język, specyficzny typ struktury rodziny, religia (wyznanie). Ich ocena w grupie może się zmieniać, lecz ich zbyt gwałtowne lub wymuszone porzucenie grozi dezintegracją całej kultury i rozpadem społecznym danej grupy. Australijski pluralizm kulturowy ulegał różnym przemianom. Istniał już przed przybyciem Europejczyków. Osadnicy brytyjscy chcieli początkowo stworzyć własny monizm kulturowy; dążenia te zostały potem złagodzone, ale odrodziły się znowu podczas I wojny światowej i trwały aż do okresu po II wojnie światowej. Być Australijczykiem oznaczało wówczas być "brytyjskim Australijczykiem". Od osób odmiennego pochodzenia oczekiwano szybkiego pozbycia się swojej poprzedniej kultury i języka. Tendencja ta zaczęła słabnąć w latach sześćdziesiątych i nieco później została zastąpiona przez politykę wielokulturowości. Miała na to wpływ liczna powojenna imigracja z krajów niebrytyjskich. Imigranci przyjęli pewne wartości grupy dominującej, np. język

angielski jako element scalający ogólną strukturę wartości, bez względu na pochodzenie etniczne, ale nie w tym znaczeniu, że jest on ich jedynym językiem.

Podczas wizyty w Australii w 1986 r. Jan Paweł II potępił świadome odrzucenie pluralizmu kulturowego i wskazał na Australię jako na kraj wielu kultur. Papież ten jest szczególnie świadomy konieczności odpowiedzenia przez Kościół na różnorodność kulturową jego członków i zna przykłady lekceważenia mniejszości kulturowych przez Episkopaty niektórych krajów. Sytuacja mniejszości kulturowych w australijskim Kościele katolickim uległa obecnie widocznej poprawie zarówno w teorii, jak i w praktyce, co nie oznacza, że jest zadowalająca. Na zmianę opcji wpłynęła pluralistyczna interpretacja dziedzictwa kulturowego Australii przez rząd i władze kościelne. Dzięki temu zaczęto w Kościele stopniowo odchodzić od koncepcji monokulturowej społeczności religijnej, w której „integrację” rozumiano jedynie jako „asymilację”. Irlandzka tradycja kościelna, dążąca bezwzględnie do utrzymania swej dominacji, ulegała bardzo powolnym zmianom. Wynikało to stąd, że historycznie nie była ona przygotowana do przyjęcia nowego elementu kulturowego w postaci katolików pochodzenia nieirlandzkiego.

Pomimo wielu różnych dodatnich zmian w sytuacji religijnej imigrantów w Kościele australijskim etniczne parafie presonalne nadal nie są zrównane w prawach z parafiami terytorialnymi. Nierówność ta sprawia, że część młodzieży etnicznej narażona jest na utratę wiary. Jeśli bowiem przyłączy się do irlandzkiego prototypu kościelnego, ryzykuje odcięcie od religijności swoich rodziców i jej codziennych praktyk. Z drugiej strony – etniczne życie religijne przez brak równości prawnej zepchnięte jest na margines życia Kościoła (niewygodne pory nabożeństw i ich odprawiania w obcych kościołach w sytuacji gości, a nie gospodarzy itp.). Ta marginalna pozycja drugiego pokolenia Australijczyków z rodzin imigrantów sprawia, że jego przedstawiciele nie wstępują do stanu duchownego, choć tu właśnie mogliby służyć tym, z którymi dzielą wspólną kulturę. Wiadomo też, że australijskie seminaria duchowne skutecznie zacierają znajomość języków etnicznych wśród alumnów. Kończy się to utratą przez nich własnych wartości kulturowych i zerwaniem związków z własną grupą etniczną. To z kolei pozbawia różne grupy należytej pomocy duchowej, której nie są w stanie zapewnić „wędrujący” kapelani. Podstawowym więc dla przyszłości Kościoła w Australii problemem jest brak księży urodzonych w tym kraju i znających swą kulturę etniczną, gdyż utrudnia to przyjęcie przez hierarchię wielokulturowego duszpasterstwa. Księża przybywający z zagranicy nie są bowiem przygotowani do objęcia wyższych stanowisk kościelnych. Gdyby Kościół katolicki w Australii czekał na śmierć kultur etnicznych, to czekałby także na własne duchowe zubożenie i naraziłby się w tej dziedzinie na straty nie do odrobienia.

Odpowiedzią na ukazane tu problemy jest wizja wielokulturowości w Kościele, jaką głosi Jan Paweł II. Przedstawił ją w wielu swoich wypowiedziach. Oto jedna z nich, skierowana do konferencji episkopatów krajów osiedlenia się emigrantów: „Emigranci, członkowie Kościoła – czytamy w niej – korzystający w pełni ze swoich praw i obowiązków i będący w całkowitej zgodzie z poszczególnymi Kościołami [...] muszą mieć możliwość zachowania własnej osobowości, określonej przez język, kulturę liturgię i życie duchowe oraz odrębne tradycje – po to, aby osiągnąć duchową integrację, która wzbogaci Kościół Boży”. Papieska wizja integrującej funkcji pluralizmu kulturowego została formalnie przyjęta przez biskupów australijskich. To przyjęcie nauki o jedności w wierze oraz pluralizmie narodów i kultur, jako podstawy do tworzenia nowej tradycji, opartej na wkładzie dziedzictwa wszystkich części katolickiej społeczności w tym kraju, tworzy szansę katolickiego odrodzenia w Australii.