

## 7. “The Matter of the Brothers”: The Suppression of the Institute of St John the Baptist

Perhaps even more troubling than the criminal and sinful acts of priests who engaged in abuse of minors was the failure of some bishops to respond to that abuse in an effective manner, consistent with their positions as leaders of the flock with a duty to protect the most vulnerable among us from possible predators . . .

*A Report on the Crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States, 2004*

“Gave prompt instructions.”

Matthew Beovich, 14 August 1942

On 14 August 1942 Matthew Beovich was told of “allegations of immorality” at a Catholic orphanage in Adelaide run by the Brothers of St John the Baptist.<sup>1</sup> Since the mid-1980s a series of scandals throughout the world has exposed not only the criminal deeds of some Catholic priests and members of religious orders, but the often inadequate responses of Church leaders to allegations of abuse. In 2002 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops established a National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People which commissioned the report quoted above. It highlights shameful leadership failings even more than the abuse itself, a reflection of the criticism directed at the hierarchy in recent years from within the Church as much as from without.<sup>2</sup> Bishops have been condemned for failing to investigate allegations properly and for allowing known perpetrators to remain in positions in which they still had access to children. There

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<sup>1</sup> Diary, 14 August 1942.

<sup>2</sup> National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People, *A Report on the Crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, February 2004), especially pp. 5-10, 91 ff. Writing from a therapist’s perspective, Mary Gail Frawley-O’Dea claims the Catholic Church is organized as a “male, medieval monarchy” in which bishops “even can come to think that the rule of law does not apply to them, that, as clerical royalty, they need not bow to the demands of secular authorities or lay people”. “Psychosocial Anatomy of the Catholic Sexual Abuse Scandal”, *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 5 (2004): 122-124. For a more dispassionate historical assessment, see Philip Jenkins, *Pedophiles and Priests: Anatomy of a Contemporary Crisis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). As it was published before the scandal intensified in the United States in 2002, Jenkins’ work is now dated, but it still stands as a rare attempt to understand the issue from a historical point of view. There is no comparable study for Australia. The burgeoning literature on the issue is still dominated by the stories of victims. For Australia, see Neil and Theo Ormerod, *When Ministers Sin: Sexual Abuse and the Churches* (Sydney: Millennium Books, 1995), and Barry Coldrey, *Religious Life Without Integrity: Addressing the Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Australian Catholic Church* (Como, W.A.: P&B Press, 2001). Donald Cozzens explores the clerical culture of secrecy in *Sacred Silence: Denial and the Crisis in the Church* (Melbourne: John Garratt, 2002).

seems to have been a tendency to forgive offenders or believe their professions of innocence. In retrospect, it is clear that too much confidence was placed in treatment programs and too little pastoral care shown to victims of abuse, while fear of scandal led to a culture of secrecy and concealment. Overall, the National Review Board in the United States concluded in 2004 that the responses of “too many bishops” were “characterized by moral laxity, excessive leniency, insensitivity, secrecy and neglect.”<sup>3</sup>

This chapter will argue that on the first two counts (laxity and leniency) and the last (neglect) Beovich must be acquitted. In fact, considerable ill feeling was generated by his supposed harshness toward the Institute of St John the Baptist. The impression that he treated the brothers unfairly took root easily because he never publicly revealed his reasons for seeking the Institute’s suppression. Like many other bishops, he strove to prevent damage to the reputation of the Church by keeping the matter secret. He was so successful that what has been written about the brothers has generally been sympathetic in tone, highlighting their charitable work and largely attributing the demise of the Institute to a decline in numbers, without explaining why this occurred.<sup>4</sup> The foolish and irrational attempt of one of Beovich’s predecessors, Laurence Sheil, to excommunicate Mary MacKillop in 1871 and disband the Sisters of St Joseph has always lurked in the background.<sup>5</sup> Beovich himself is reported to have remarked, with regard to the suppression of the Institute, “that in making his decision in the same office in which

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<sup>3</sup> National Review Board, *A Report on the Crisis*, p. 92. The Board commissioned a research study by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice which found that allegations of sexual abuse (not subsequently withdrawn or shown to be false) had been made against 4,392 priests in the United States between 1950 and 2002; that is, about 4.0 per cent of priests in active ministry in that period. However, no attempt was made to calculate the number of bishops who mishandled abuse allegations. In April 2004 the John Jay report, “The Nature and Scope of the Problem of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States”, was made available on the web site of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: [www.usccb.org/nrb/johnjaystudy](http://www.usccb.org/nrb/johnjaystudy).

<sup>4</sup> For a brief account of the Institute, see Margaret Press, *Colour and Shadow*, pp. 38-9; Pauline Payne, *Thebarton Old and New* (Adelaide: Thebarton City Council, 1996), p. 120; and Peter Donovan, *Between the City and the Sea: A History of West Torrens from Settlement in 1836 to the Present Day* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1986), pp. 92-3, 159-60. Two unpublished essays in the ACAA also treat the brothers quite gently: Tim Costelloe, “A Study of the History of the Institute of the Brothers of St John the Baptist” (BTh essay, undated but presented to the ACAA in 1986); and Anthony Moester, “The Salesians of Don Bosco at Brooklyn Park, 1943-1998” (1998). Anthony Michael Keenan takes a slightly more critical stance in “The Boys’ Reformatory at Brooklyn Park: A History 1898-1941” (M.Ed. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1988). There is only a passing reference to the brothers in Brian Dickey, *Rations, Residence, Resources: A History of Social Welfare in South Australia Since 1836* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1986), p. 160.

<sup>5</sup> For Sheil and Mary MacKillop, see Marie Therese Foale, *The Josephite Story. The Sisters of St Joseph: their Foundation and Early History 1866-1893* (Sydney: St Joseph’s Generalate, 1989), pp. 78-109; and Margaret Press, *From Our Broken Toil: South Australian Catholics 1836-1906*, pp. 182-187.

Bishop Sheil had decided to excommunicate Mary MacKillop, he wondered whether he was making a similar mistake!”<sup>6</sup> That was certainly the verdict of friends of the brothers.<sup>7</sup>

### **The History of the Institute to 1940**

Beovich linked the Brothers of St John the Baptist and the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart in a speech made a week after he arrived in Adelaide. He discovered that there was to be a charity carnival at Thebarton on Saturday, 13 April 1940, to raise money for the work of the brothers, and he made an unexpected appearance at the function to offer encouragement and support. In an impromptu speech, he paid tribute to Monsignor John Healy “who had founded a religious order of brothers . . . just as Father Tenison Woods had founded the Sisters of St. Joseph.”<sup>8</sup> There were some obvious similarities. John Healy (1852-1921) and Julian Tenison Woods (1832-1889) were both priests of the diocese of Adelaide who, in the second half of the nineteenth century, shared a concern for the welfare of the poor and an abhorrence of alcoholism. In 1868 Woods was involved in the establishment of a Catholic Temperance Society.<sup>9</sup> The movement had waned by the time Healy arrived in Adelaide from Tipperary in 1881, but as the dynamic new parish priest of Thebarton, he took over the local branch and transformed it into a lively society: the Total Abstinence Guild of St John the Baptist. The patron was chosen because of his traditional association with abstinence and atonement for sin. In the early 1890s Healy recruited a few members of the guild to form a new institute of consecrated religious life, still under the patronage of St John the Baptist. This came toward the end of the remarkable surge in vitality in Catholic religious orders in the nineteenth century, which saw membership of most established orders increase and many new ones founded, especially for women in Europe and North America.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Costelloe, “History of the Institute”, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> To Ray Lennox, a former novice of the Institute, Beovich seemed “a pig of a man”, selfish and dictatorial. Interview by author, tape recording, 16 September 2003.

<sup>8</sup> *Southern Cross*, 19 April 1940, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret Press, *Julian Tenison Woods: “Father Founder”* (North Blackburn, Vic: Collins Dove, 1994), p. 96.

<sup>10</sup> According to canon law, most were institutes or congregations, not technically orders, but I will follow the common practice of using order in a more generic sense.

Despite the similarities in the origins of the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph and the Institute of the Brothers of St John the Baptist, their subsequent histories were very different. Within five years of the foundation of the former in 1866, more than a hundred sisters were working in forty-seven schools and charitable institutions, and the fledgling congregation was expanding beyond South Australia.<sup>11</sup> The achievements of the Brothers of St John the Baptist were much more modest. They remained in the Thebarton parish where they taught in the parish school and ran a refuge for discharged male prisoners and a reformatory for delinquent Catholic boys. The latter officially opened in 1898 when Catholic boys from the government reformatory at Magill were transferred to the premises which Healy bought for the brothers at Brooklyn Park. The first decade was the “peak decade” when as many as forty boys at a time lived at Brooklyn Park.<sup>12</sup> The *Australasian Catholic Church Directory* reveals that in 1911 there were twenty-two boys and eight brothers. Thereafter the number of inmates rarely exceeded twenty and slipped below ten in the 1930s. There were only nine brothers in 1935.

In short, Healy was not able to persuade many men to embrace his vision of a life of austerity, obedience, celibacy, and hard work in atonement for sin. The most promising recruit was Francis Smyth (1884-1955) who joined the Institute in 1900 and then went to St Patrick’s College at Manly to train for the priesthood. When he returned to Adelaide in 1910 he became Healy’s assistant at Thebarton and succeeded him as parish priest in 1921. Although he was technically a diocesan priest and not a member of the Institute, Smyth lived with the brothers at Brooklyn Park as Healy had done. He was their spiritual director, financial administrator and superintendent of the reformatory. These roles may have fallen on him because few of the other men who joined the Institute could boast anything more than the most basic education. Their lack of education and training was noted in a study of the reformatory. It helps explain the severe and authoritarian methods they adopted to control their unruly charges.<sup>13</sup> Yet, as the reformatory received a government subsidy for each child, it was subject to annual inspections by the State Children’s Council (after 1927 the Children’s Welfare and Public Relief Department) and the inspection reports were uniformly positive.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Foale, *The Josephite Story*, pp. 34,43.

<sup>12</sup> Keenan, “The Boys’ Reformatory at Brooklyn Park”, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80 ff.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150 ff.

The Institute did not receive formal ecclesiastical approval until 1923, two years after Healy’s death, when Archbishop Spence issued a decree recognizing its existence. In the wake of this, a few more men did join the community, but most left not long afterward. In 1935 Archbishop Killian arranged for the establishment of a juniorate and novitiate adjacent to the reformatory in the hope that this would boost the numbers.<sup>15</sup> Killian also provided financial assistance as the brothers were heavily in debt as a result of expansions to the Brooklyn Park property and the parish school. He may have considered transforming the reformatory into an orphanage, but he died without making any further changes.

### **From Reformatory to Orphanage**

The development of the juniorate and novitiate helped attract a few more recruits (by 1940 the number of brothers had risen to fourteen), but the increase in numbers exacerbated internal tensions. Shortly after he arrived in Adelaide, Beovich found there was “dissension and even bitterness” in the small community of brothers.<sup>16</sup> In June 1940 he received a letter from Brother Stanislaus who had joined the Institute in 1932. Stanislaus complained about one of the boys in the reformatory who had been abusive and rude to him, but his main target was Father Smyth who had not done anything about the situation.<sup>17</sup> Stanislaus’s emotional outpouring was closely followed by a letter from the Institute’s oldest brother, one of Healy’s original recruits. Brother Thomas McCormack acknowledged that Smyth had been “rather raspy and harsh” in his dealings with the younger brothers, but dismissed Stanislaus as “a nervy boy” who had been “under almost constant medical treatment . . . [and was] extremely self-willed”.<sup>18</sup>

An election for a new superior was due. In a long and bitter tirade against the younger brothers, McCormack accused them of being too hot-headed and poorly educated for the role, and he exhorted Beovich to exercise his authority as “First Superior” and arrange for the reappointment of Brother John McMahan, another one of the senior

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<sup>15</sup> Killian to Francis Smyth, 7 August 1935; Smyth’s reply, 8 August 1935, ACAA.

<sup>16</sup> Beovich wrote an account of his dealings with the Brothers of St John the Baptist in 1948. It is in the ACAA. Hereafter it will be referred to as Beovich, 1948.

<sup>17</sup> Stanislaus to Beovich, 8 June 1940.

<sup>18</sup> McCormack to Beovich, 17 June 1940.

brothers. The elderly McMahon was duly re-elected, but Beovich concluded that at least some of the brothers' problems stemmed from Father Smyth's abrasive presence in the community and *de facto* leadership of the Institute. As Smyth was the parish priest of Thebarton, he insisted that Smyth live in a presbytery closer to the main parish church where he could be more accessible to his parishioners and less involved in the Institute.<sup>19</sup>

To make the transition easier, Beovich was generous in his praise of Francis Smyth and the Institute of St John the Baptist at the formal opening of the new presbytery at Thebarton on 1 December 1940 (“the more he knew of the Order the more he esteemed it”). Once again he compared it to the Josephites. He also took the opportunity to announce a major change: the reformatory at Brooklyn Park would become an orphanage. In fact, he used this as the excuse for Smyth's removal from Brooklyn Park, announcing that Smyth had volunteered to shift to give the brothers more room to expand their work.<sup>20</sup> An article in the *Southern Cross* in May 1941 gave the credit for the idea to the brothers themselves, in consultation with Archbishop Killian.<sup>21</sup> That may well have been the case, but in his 1948 account of his dealings with the brothers, Beovich took responsibility for suggesting the change.<sup>22</sup> Much of his work in Melbourne had been devoted to the better coordination of Catholic resources and it seemed illogical that an institution should exist for just four or five boys (the number living at the reformatory in 1940) while almost two hundred children were crowded into the orphanages at Goodwood and Largs Bay.

By mid-1941 the Brooklyn Park premises had been renovated and expanded. The institution was renamed “St John's Boys' Town”, the “Boys' Town” after Father Edward Flanagan's home for neglected and abandoned boys in Omaha, Nebraska. Founded in 1917, it was the subject of a popular film in 1938 which earned Spencer Tracy, who played Flanagan, an Academy Award. Initially eighteen boys were sent to Brooklyn Park from Goodwood and twelve from Largs Bay.<sup>23</sup> Within a year there were sixty-two in residence.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Beovich, 1948, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Southern Cross*, 6 December 1940, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 May 1941, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Beovich, 1948, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Report at end of the first six months (December 1941) in ACAA.

<sup>24</sup> *Australian Catholic Directory 1942*, p. 269.

Beovich also wanted to establish a diocesan technical school in Adelaide, as he had done in Melbourne. The brothers' school at Thebarton seemed the ideal location as it was in a sprawling working-class area not far from the city centre. It was envisaged that the boys from Boys' Town would progress from the technical school to suitable apprenticeships and paid employment.<sup>25</sup> The new school formally opened in July 1941 with Brother Laurence in charge.<sup>26</sup>

The St John the Baptist brothers thus experienced a quite dramatic increase in their responsibilities in a relatively short time. While Beovich publicly praised their work,<sup>27</sup> he must have privately harbored some doubts about their ability to cope with the changes.<sup>28</sup> Dissension continued. In February 1941 the archbishop received a letter from Brother Laurence complaining about Brother John's incompetence, Father Smyth's dictatorial and harsh behaviour, and Brother Thomas's hypochondria and childishness.<sup>29</sup> Beovich was entitled to make a formal visitation of the Institute but rather than undertake it himself, he asked the Rev. Dr. P. McCabe of the Sacred Heart Fathers to visit Adelaide. McCabe was the canonist to the apostolic delegation and superior of Sacred Heart Monastery at Kensington in Sydney. After living with the brothers for several weeks, McCabe reported on 30 March 1941 that “the Institute suffers from the lack of definite traditions of the religious life . . . The fact is that the Institute is governed to a great extent by what Brothers John and Thomas now think is ‘Father Healy’s spirit’, and the two good Brothers think whatever Fr Smyth tells them to think.” Paradoxically, while there was a lack of discipline with regard to such an important aspect of religious life as regular times for prayer, there was rigidity over such petty matters as what hat should be worn. McCabe observed a significant generation gap: there was at least twenty years between the youngest of the oldest brothers and the oldest of the youngest ones, and he noted that there appeared to be no-one with sufficient education and leadership ability to be the superior of the

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<sup>25</sup> *Southern Cross*, 11 April 1941, p. 9. In a letter to Beovich on 24 July 1942 Brother Laurence complained that the school was not developing according to this plan as most students were coming from relatively affluent families. It is not clear why this happened or what action, if any, Beovich took.

<sup>26</sup> *Southern Cross*, 25 July 1941, p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> For example, at the opening and blessing of the new orphanage on 22 June 1941. See *Southern Cross*, 27 June 1941, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> After the opening of the new presbytery at Thebarton on 1 December 1940, Beovich wrote in his diary that he had been “anxious” about the situation at Brooklyn Park. Father Smyth having shifted to Thebarton, “the Brothers of St John the Baptist will now be able to proceed ‘under their own steam’, either to succeed or fail”. That can hardly be described as optimistic.

<sup>29</sup> Laurence to Beovich, 7 February 1941.

community.<sup>30</sup> There was, however, no suggestion at this stage of the institute being suppressed, and McCabe agreed to work on a new constitution for it.

A month after McCabe’s visit, C.L. Whiting of the Christian Brothers inspected Boys’ Town, presumably also at Beovich’s instigation. Whiting was superior of the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage in Melbourne. He commented on the inadequacy of the facilities and “the great division of opinion” between the brothers over matters such as corporal punishment and the employment of women. Nevertheless, he concluded on a positive note that “the Brothers were a keen and zealous lot and I feel sure they will make a success of the institution”.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Crisis in 1942**

In 1942 the *Southern Cross* ran a weekly column, “Boys’ Town News”, with reports on the ladies’ auxiliary, men’s “busy bees”, a knitting circle, fundraising concerts, the development of a brass band for the boys, football matches, and so on. Yet, in spite of all this enthusiastic activity, it became clear to Beovich that Whiting had been too optimistic. Beovich recounted in 1948:

I visited the orphanage periodically. While the beginning was promising, it was apparent as the months passed that the place was deteriorating and that Brother Leo [the brother in charge] was not able for his task. Frankly in the whole community there was no one equal to the task. As a desperate and temporary measure I asked Father McGrath, the Chaplain, to reside at the Orphanage and help Brother Leo.<sup>32</sup>

McGrath may have been the author of a written report to the archbishop, unsigned but dated 7 August 1942. It concluded that the administration at Boys’ Town was very poor and record-keeping was practically non-existent. Only the garden seemed well tended, the boys certainly were not. They were dirty and their diet and health were poor. Rooms were untidy and in some cases unhygienic. A week later, on 14 August, McGrath went to see Beovich and informed him of “allegations of immorality” involving Brother Stanislaus and

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<sup>30</sup>“Report of Very Rev. P. McCabe MSC on Brothers of St. John the Baptist”, 30 March 1941.

<sup>31</sup> C. L. Whiting to Beovich, 1 May 1941.

<sup>32</sup> Beovich, 1948.



a number of the boys. That evening Beovich wrote in his diary that he “gave prompt instructions”.

What Beovich did was establish a “Committee of Enquiry” consisting of two of his most senior and trusted priests: Thomas Davis, parish priest of Kingswood and one of the diocesan consultors, and Osmund Thorpe, superior of the Passionist monastery at Glen Osmond. They visited Brooklyn Park and interviewed fifteen boys between the ages of nine and fourteen. They concluded that none over fourteen seemed to have been affected. Thorpe reported to Beovich that “it was common knowledge among a considerable section of the boys that Stanislaus had been interfering with the boys whilst they were in bed”. No complaint was made against any other brother, but Thorpe left with “a lingering suspicion that things might be even worse than was revealed by the evidence, for several of the boys gave a distinct impression that they had made up their minds not to talk too much”. Both men were disturbed by the “lamentable lack of discipline” at the orphanage, and Thorpe noted that “sexual immorality [seemed] prevalent among a considerable number of boys . . . loose and immoral talk was common”.<sup>33</sup>

Beovich discussed the situation with his consultors at a meeting on 21 August, and at some stage shortly after (it is not clear exactly when) he descended on the brothers’ residence at Brooklyn Park and informed Brother John McMahon. Another brother, Brother Baptist, admitted to the archbishop in private that he had also been “guilty of immorality”. Beovich promptly issued Stanislaus and Baptist with indulgences of secularization, including dispensation from their vows, and so they severed their connections with the Institute and left Boys’ Town.<sup>34</sup>

Thus Beovich acted swiftly and decisively in both investigating the allegations and removing the perpetrators from their positions. He cannot be charged with moral laxity, excessive leniency, or neglect. He did, however, strive to stop the “sorry matter”

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<sup>33</sup> On 21 August 1941 Davis sent Beovich a handwritten letter while Thorpe provided a typed report.

<sup>34</sup> Their letters to Beovich asking for a dispensation from their vows, dated 20 August 1942 and 25 August 1942, are in the ACAA, with replies dated 21 August and 25 August. They were evidently sent after private meetings with the archbishop. No record of the interviews survives to indicate what pressure they were under to take this course, but it could have been considerable (like that which led Smyth to “volunteer” to leave Brooklyn Park in 1940). Both men reveal that they had consulted their spiritual director, and Stanislaus also saw a doctor. It is likely that Beovich recommended or insisted that these consultations take place, but no evidence remains.

becoming widely known. To his dismay, McGrath spoke of it to “outsiders” with the result, Beovich wrote in 1948, that “I had to intervene personally to prevent a certain newspaper giving details of the scandal”.<sup>35</sup> Beovich also recalled in 1948 that “I discovered from a Catholic member of the Police Department about this time that this was not the first time that a scandal connected with the Brothers of St John the Baptist had been fortunately averted”.<sup>36</sup> Such collusion in suppressing a scandalous story was not uncommon in this period.<sup>37</sup>

It is only since the late 1970s that it has become a widely accepted medical opinion that sexual abuse can cause lasting damage to children. Philip Jenkins points out that “in questions of child abuse and child sexuality, a quite revolutionary gulf separates us from the thought of the 1970s and before”.<sup>38</sup> Beovich should not, therefore, be criticised for failing to send a team of counsellors to Brooklyn Park in 1942 as that was not the way abuse victims were normally treated then. What he did endeavour to do was improve the standards at Boys’ Town as quickly as possible. On 28 August he asked McMahan, technically the superior of the Institute, to take charge of the orphanage himself, as Brother Leo had manifestly failed to cope. Beovich warned McMahan that given the seriousness of the failings, he wondered whether the Institute had the capacity to run the orphanage at all, and he asked McMahan to discuss the matter with his brothers.<sup>39</sup> Visiting the orphanage over the next couple of months, he could see no improvement in either cleanliness or discipline.<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, on 28 October he met all the John the Baptist brothers and informed them that he intended to give the care of the orphanage to Salesian priests from Melbourne. At the same time, he expressed the hope that the brothers would continue to operate the diocesan technical school.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Beovich, 1948, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> See Jenkins, *Pedophiles and Priests*, pp. 33, 60-62.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16. Jenkins (pp. 83-88) gives a brief historical overview, with quotations from pre-1980s professional literature on sexual behaviour which minimize the long-term consequences of sexual abuse on minors. In *A Primer on the Complexities of Traumatic Memory of Childhood Sexual Abuse* (Brandon, VT: Safer Society Press, 1996), p. 18, Fay Honey Knopp and Anna Rose Benson also acknowledge the dramatic change in professional opinion in the last two decades.

<sup>39</sup> Beovich to McMahan, 28 August 1942.

<sup>40</sup> There are notes in Beovich’s handwriting in the ACAA of interviews with the matron, Sister McRae, dated 22 September, 2 October and 20 October 1942. There is also a letter to Beovich from a doctor (with an undecipherable signature) dated 28 September 1942. This concludes: “The general impression one gets of the place is filth, irresponsibility and entire lack of control . . . every hygiene law of the state is violated”.

<sup>41</sup> Diary, 21 October 1942.

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Beovich jotted in his diary after the 28 October meeting that McMahon “expressed a wish that no Brother who was dissatisfied with the Institute should remain as a member”. He thought it “a wise remark that should have been made a good few years ago”.<sup>42</sup> Beovich asked the brothers to let him know what they wanted to do. Most decided to seek entry into other religious orders, and so on 18 December Beovich appealed to the apostolic delegate, John Panico, on their behalf for permission for them to transfer elsewhere. He explained:

I do not submit that the Holy See would completely dissolve the Institute, unless Your Excellency thinks otherwise. I have in mind the history of the Sisters of St Joseph in South Australia and would prefer that Divine Providence would solve the problem, but I think that the future of the Institute is anything but hopeful . . . I would like advice from Your Excellency . . .

Panico not only granted permission for the transfers; he ruled on 24 December that the Institute should not be permitted to receive any new members. Existing postulants could either go to a new congregation or return to their homes.<sup>43</sup> As all the brothers working at the school left, Beovich arranged for Marist brothers to take it over in 1943.

### **The Salesians Arrive and the Brothers of St John the Baptist Depart**

By inviting Salesian priests to Adelaide, Beovich replaced the little home-grown institute of John Healy with one of the Church’s international success stories. Founded in Turin in 1875, the Salesians of John Bosco specialised in working with underprivileged boys and young men. The society flourished and spread around the world. The first community in Australia was established at Sunbury in Victoria in 1927. In 1936 Pius XI canonised Don Bosco and declared him Patron of Youth. Italian-born John Biloni was the first Salesian to arrive in Adelaide. He took charge of Boys’ Town on 13 January 1943.<sup>44</sup> Before that he had been rector of the Don Bosco Boys’ Club and Hostel in inner-suburban Brunswick, in the parish in which Matthew Beovich had grown up. Beovich later

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<sup>42</sup> A number of the brothers had already appealed to him for permission to move elsewhere. Four brothers wrote to ask for an interview on 13 September and one subsequently wrote to Beovich about the matter on 1 October.

<sup>43</sup> Beovich to John Panico, 18 December 1942; Panico’s reply, 24 December 1942. Three brothers chose to join the Salesians, two the Marist Brothers, one the De La Salle Brothers, and one eventually became a priest for the diocese of New Norcia. Costelloe, “History of the Institute”, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> Moester, “Salesians of Don Bosco at Brooklyn Park”, p. 10.

described him as “a lovable man with a youthful heart”.<sup>45</sup> Although only thirty-six of years of age, he brought more experience and training to the orphanage than any of the John the Baptist Brothers. Herbert Schultz, a John the Baptist brother who joined the Salesians, noted an improvement in discipline—it “became more effective but was practised with greater compassion and less brutality”.<sup>46</sup> Beovich was very impressed by Biloni’s “splendid work”.<sup>47</sup> He continued to take a close interest in “Boys’ Town”, making frequent visits (sometimes by prior arrangement, sometimes unexpected) and personally approved all the necessary expenditure for the upgrading of the orphanage.<sup>48</sup> He was shocked and grieved when Biloni was killed in a car accident on 31 July 1946.<sup>49</sup>

The Brooklyn Park Salesian House Chronicle indicates that the archbishop’s scrutiny of his work was the least of Biloni’s problems in 1943 as he strove to bring order out of chaos. In particular, while Beovich was encouraging and supportive, the new Salesian presence was resented not only by the last St John the Baptist brothers who remained at Brooklyn Park in 1943, but also by their supporters. Biloni was “virtually ostracised by the local clergy . . . since the general impression was that the Salesians were pushing in and somehow had engineered the ousting of the Brothers”.<sup>50</sup> The end of their era finally came on 4 January 1944. In his unpublished history of the Brooklyn Park Salesians, Anthony Moester SDB writes: “Some people still remember the sad moment with emotion when Bro. John McMahon, Bro. Thomas McCormack and Bro. Bernard Noonan left in a coach down the drive way, sad, disillusioned, waving to their old friends

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<sup>45</sup> *Southern Cross*, 9 August 1946, p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> Keenan, “The Boys’ Reformatory at Brooklyn Park”, p. 173. Keenan interviewed Schultz, who has since died, in 1985-6. Costelloe also drew on some personal recollections of former John the Baptist Brothers and early Salesians. One of the first Salesians to work at the orphanage recalled “some of the boys asking why it was that the new brothers didn’t fight each other in the courtyard, as the other brothers had done!” Costelloe, “History of the Institute”, p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> Diary, 24 July 1943; 14 March 1945; 20 December 1945.

<sup>48</sup> In “The Salesians of Don Bosco at Brooklyn Park”, Moester quotes extracts from Biloni’s entries in the Brooklyn Park Salesian House Chronicle: “Tuesday 19.1.43: (1) Morning in conference with His Grace. (2) Afternoon visit Boys Town with His Grace . . . (3) 7pm – 9 pm in conference with His Grace . . . 22.1. 43 (1) Morning: conference with His Grace (2) Shopping with Fr. Con McGrath (Carpets-Lino-Electric Cookers) (3) Afternoon conference with His Grace. Necessary initial expenses . . . Sat 23.1.43. (1) All morning spent about Adelaide driving from store to store endeavoring to secure kitchen equipment. (2) His Grace again approves of any necessary expense in equipment.”

<sup>49</sup> Diary, 31 July 1946; *Southern Cross*, 2 August 1946, p. 7 and 9 August 1946, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Ted Cooper, *Grateful Heirs: The Story of the Salesian Presence in Australia, 1927-1967* (Melbourne: Salesians of Don Bosco, 1999), p. 206.

and supporters.”<sup>51</sup> For fifty years they had worked quietly in the Thebarton parish, earning affection and respect. This is evident in Pauline Payne’s history of the Thebarton district:

The teaching order he [Healy] had founded, the Brothers of St John the Baptist, grew fruit and vegetables and kept poultry at Brooklyn Park to provide food for the boys’ home, the shelter and for needy people of all creeds. Firewood, funeral costs, groceries and other assistance were provided unobtrusively through trusted parish workers with money collected from generous parishioners “who did not ask what the money was for”. One parishioner said, “only the poor people know how much good was done”.<sup>52</sup>

### **The Fight to Save the Institute**

Beovich provided the three elderly brothers with accommodation in a section of Stradbroke House, a two-story building at Rostrevor which was used to accommodate senior students at the seminary. He exhorted them to retire and rest. When they refused to do this, he gave them permission to seek work in another diocese: “If it is God’s will that your order should continue and increase, He will make that possible, and you are justified in trying out all reasonable avenues”.<sup>53</sup> Eighteen months later they had still not found another bishop willing to accept them, and they complained about having to live with women at the seminary—a small community of Sisters of St Joseph was in charge of the domestic arrangements and cooked meals for the brothers, but did not actually live in Stradbroke House.<sup>54</sup> When Beovich bought a house for the brothers at Goodwood, they complained about being sandwiched between Protestant neighbours.<sup>55</sup> To Beovich, they blamed the downfall of the Institute on McGrath for broadcasting the scandal caused by one “rotten branch”,<sup>56</sup> and on a “coterie” of rebellious and disaffected younger brothers who had conspired to get rid of Father Smyth.<sup>57</sup> Frustrated by Beovich’s lack of response, they appealed to the apostolic delegate. They complained that Beovich had interfered in the internal running of the Institute by dismissing certain brothers and allowing others to

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<sup>51</sup> Moester, “The Salesians of Don Bosco at Brooklyn Park”, p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> Payne, *Thebarton Old and New*, p. 120.

<sup>53</sup> Beovich to McMahan, 1 August 1944.

<sup>54</sup> McMahan, McCormack and Noonan to Beovich, 24 January 1946.

<sup>55</sup> McMahan to Beovich, 15 April 1951.

<sup>56</sup> McMahan, McCormack and Noonan to Beovich, 24 January 1946. Lennox also recalls McMahan blaming McGrath. Interview, 16 September 2003.

<sup>57</sup> McMahan to Beovich, 29 July 1947.

transfer to other orders instead of insisting that they remain faithful (a different version of the meeting on 28 October 1942 from the account in Beovich’s diary). Archbishop Panico, who was still the apostolic delegate, responded by telling Beovich that the situation could not be allowed to continue:

Either the Brothers should be allowed to function as a diocesan religious congregation (with their novitiate) or Your Grace should expose the matter to the Holy See and ask for their suppression. To forbid them to have a Novitiate [as Beovich had done following Panico’s instructions on 24 December 1942] is really suppression under another name, and only the Holy See can suppress even a Diocesan Congregation.<sup>58</sup>

Forced to act, although he would have preferred the terminally ill Institute to die a natural death, Beovich appealed to the Sacred Congregation for Religious for the suppression on 30 March 1948. The reason he gave was that all the remaining brothers were over seventy. He acknowledged their praiseworthy conduct and self-sacrificing labours, but thought that none was competent to be superior, and “it would be impossible, humanly speaking, for them to train in time future leaders of an Institute, even if they had the ability”. On 26 August 1948 Beovich received a letter from the apostolic delegate which related that, after receiving further complaints from the brothers, the Sacred Congregation had decided to postpone the suppression. In the meantime, the brothers were forbidden to receive any aspirants and the Institute was placed under Beovich’s “special vigilance”.

The brothers had friends who came to their aid and provided the finance necessary for John McMahon to journey to Rome in September 1949 to petition the Sacred Congregation in person.<sup>59</sup> As Beovich made his first *ad limina* visit to Rome in 1950, he also had an opportunity to state his case.<sup>60</sup> Yet it was not until September 1951 that the apostolic delegate, Paul Marella, informed Beovich that it was the wish of the Sacred Congregation of Religious that the Institute continue to engage in charitable work.<sup>61</sup> Beovich again indicated his willingness to allow the brothers to move interstate if they

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<sup>58</sup> Panico to Beovich, 8 January 1948, enclosing the letter he received from the Brothers of St John the Baptist, dated 1 January 1948.

<sup>59</sup> McMahon to Beovich, 24 September 1949. According to Ray Lennox, the letter was not posted until after McMahon’s departure, so that Beovich could not stop the journey. Interview, 16 September 2003.

<sup>60</sup> He wrote on 5 January 1950 to Mons. Pasetto, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation, asking that he be allowed to respond on his *ad limina* visit.

<sup>61</sup> Paul Marella to Beovich, 7 September 1951.

could find another episcopal patron.<sup>62</sup> Two years later Mannix invited McMahon and McCormack (Noonan had died in 1952) to move to Melbourne to help the St Vincent de Paul Society run Ozanam House, a hostel for destitute men. Mannix also gave McMahon and McCormack permission to accept two aspirants, Ray Lennox and Edward Sullivan, and to send them to the Franciscan novitiate in Sydney.<sup>63</sup> McMahon died on 31 December 1955 and McCormack was incapacitated after an accident in 1956.

The transfer to Melbourne did not solve what had become a contentious issue: who owned the property at Brooklyn Park. It amounted to thirty-three acres, purchased in stages from 1893 to 1935, with the archbishop’s name appearing on the title deeds from 1899. In 1956 McCormack offered to cede the property to the archdiocese of Adelaide in return for £50,000 compensation.<sup>64</sup> Three months later, in a letter to the apostolic delegate, Romolo Carboni, he claimed that the property was worth over £100,000.<sup>65</sup> Carboni suggested to Beovich that he set up a tribunal in Adelaide to examine the matter. After considerable negotiation, a “Conciliation Committee” was eventually established with two men representing the Institute and two the archbishop.<sup>66</sup> It met on 28 July 1959. Three of the four members concluded that, according to canon law, the Institute was the owner of the property and it was, therefore, entitled to compensation. Darcy Woodards submitted a dissenting report, pointing out that it had never been clear whether Father Healy and the first brothers had used their personal funds to buy the original land or not, and that most subsequent donations had been made to the boys’ home rather than the Institute, and this home was still functioning on the site.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Beovich to Marella, 18 September 1951.

<sup>63</sup> Diary, 23 April 1943; Costelloe, “History of the Institute”, p. 13; Moester, “The Salesians of Don Bosco at Brooklyn Park”, p. 10.

<sup>64</sup> McCormack to Beovich, 4 April 1956.

<sup>65</sup> Romolo Carboni to Beovich, 28 June 1956, with letter from McCormack to Carboni.

<sup>66</sup> The Brothers’ representatives were Henry Jordan MSC and Rev. Leo Kelly from Melbourne; Beovich was represented by Rev. Vincent Tiggeman and Darcy Woodards. The report of the committee is in the ACAA.

<sup>67</sup> After reading this chapter in September 2005, Vincent Tiggeman recalled in a note to the author: “Although I sided with the two priests, Jordan and Kelly, representing the Brothers as original owners of the property and therefore entitled to compensation, I believe there was a general consensus that it was difficult to determine how much money was contributed for the purchase of land by Fr Healy and the brothers themselves, and how much contributed by the faithful to discharge mortgages on the properties bought from the beginning of 1935 and the buildings placed on them. It seems certain that Archbishop Killian contributed diocesan monies to help discharge the debts incurred at Brooklyn Park and the parish school in 1935 or so.”

## 7. “The Matter of the Brothers”: The Institute of St John the Baptist 227

By the time the Conciliation Committee concluded its deliberations, Thomas McCormack had died.<sup>68</sup> He was the last professed member of the Institute. There were still, however, two men in the Franciscan novitiate, due to take vows. On 17 September 1959 Beovich received a letter from two lay employees at Ozanam House. They alleged that McMahan had asked the two novices to leave after he found alcohol in their rooms. After McMahan died they decided to rejoin the Institute “because there was a good chance of gaining a large sum of money”. They were seen drinking in city hotels, were rude and abusive under the influence of alcohol, and refused to cooperate with members of the St Vincent de Paul Society.<sup>69</sup> At the time Beovich received this report, he was hosting important guests: Archbishop Romulo Carboni, Cardinal Pietro Agagianian, Pro-Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and Monsignor Saverio Paventi, a senior official of the congregation. Beovich noted in his diary on 20 September 1959:

Perturbed, had a long talk this morning about the matter with Mgr. Paventi. He was very definite. The two young men should not be permitted to take vows. He agreed that it was wise that I should see Dr Mannix next week and that Dr Carboni would take no action. . .

Beovich duly visited Mannix on 1 October 1959 and showed him the letter. He reported in his diary that Mannix said that “he wanted to have nothing to do with the young men”, and he asked Beovich to tell the Franciscans not to admit the novices to any vows. Beovich did this, without revealing any reason why.<sup>70</sup> No inquiry was ever made into the allegations against the novices, and the Franciscans who ran the novitiate were not consulted.

In mid-1960 a settlement was finally imposed by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith while Beovich was in Rome for his third *ad limina* visit. The Institute of the Brothers of St John the Baptist was formally suppressed on the grounds that it had no surviving members, and Beovich was authorized to transfer the property at Brooklyn Park to the Salesians, and what remained in Melbourne was given to Corpus Christi Seminary.<sup>71</sup> Beovich hoped that the unpleasant saga of the John the Baptist

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<sup>68</sup> *Southern Cross*, 5 June 1959. p. 1. McCormack died on 20 May 1959 at the age of 81.

<sup>69</sup> Hubert Hoy and George Eastwood to Rev. C.A. Hoy MSC, 15 September 1959. Cuthbert Hoy passed the letter on to Beovich.

<sup>70</sup> Beovich to Sebastian Day OFM, 2 October 1959. On 16 October 1959 Day wrote to Beovich acknowledging, without protest, that he would follow Beovich’s instructions.

<sup>71</sup> Agagianian to Beovich, 14 June 1960. Diary, 24 May 1960, 31 May 1960, 8 June 1960, 20 June 1960.



Brothers had at last come to an end.<sup>72</sup> However, back in Adelaide on 14 October 1960 he was confronted by the two ex-novices. Lennox recalls that they wanted to know why the Institute had been suppressed and why they had not been allowed to take vows, and they asked for money to seal Thomas McCormack’s grave at the West Terrace cemetery. The interview lasted only a few minutes as Beovich angrily terminated it and insisted that they leave.<sup>73</sup> Beovich, however, noted on the day that “the purpose of their visit seemed to be to ask for some financial assistance from the temporal goods of the suppressed institute”. They agreed that they were not legally entitled to compensation, but “they said they asked more in the nature of a gift because of their long association with the institute. I said that any such gift would concern the archbishop of Melbourne who had agreed to their stay at Ozanam House and had sent them to the Franciscan Novitiate.”<sup>74</sup> Lennox claims they had already had “a lovely interview” with Mannix, who had denied knowledge of Beovich’s actions and recommended that they take up the matter of the suppression with the apostolic delegate.<sup>75</sup>

## **Conclusion**

For two decades the Brothers of St John the Baptist were a thorn in Beovich’s flesh. Soon after he arrived in Adelaide, some of the brothers dragged him into the internal problems of their dysfunctional institute, and the crisis at Brooklyn Park in 1942 was one of the most unpleasant episodes during his time as archbishop. He handled the allegations of sexual abuse with a decisiveness at odds with the current stereotype of episcopal laxity and neglect. He was not one to shy away from wielding authority, and as the archbishop of Adelaide he accepted ultimate responsibility for the charitable institutions in his diocese. In retrospect, he made a mistake when he transformed the small reformatory at Brooklyn Park into a large orphanage, but whatever private doubts he harboured about the brothers’ ability to cope must have been eased somewhat by the report he received from Brother Whiting, and the problem of overcrowding at Goodwood and Largs Bay seemed to demand

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<sup>72</sup> “So at last the matter of the Brothers is finally solved. I’m sure the soul of Bro. John helped, strange as that may seem.” Diary, 20 June 1960.

<sup>73</sup> Ray Lennox, interview, 16 September 2003.

<sup>74</sup> Handwritten note, dated 14 October 1960, in the St John the Baptist file in the ACAA.

<sup>75</sup> Lennox, 16 September 2003.

a prompt solution. After the debacle in 1942 he worked closely with John Biloni to improve standards at Brooklyn Park.

The final suppression of the Institute of St John the Baptist and the distribution of its property seems to have been reasonable in the circumstances, which were far different from those which confronted Laurence Sheil and Mary MacKillop in 1871. On the whole, most of the decisions which Beovich made in relation to the Institute were wise; the problems lay in the way they were implemented. Much pain would have been avoided if Beovich had been able to persuade McMahan, McCormack and Noonan to retire gracefully in 1943-4 and give up their hopes of reviving the Institute. Similarly, if Lennox and Sullivan had been told why they could not take final vows, and given an opportunity to respond to the complaints made against them, their bitterness might have been assuaged. However, the elderly brothers were remarkably stubborn men, and it is easy to understand Beovich's frustration at receiving a visit from the ex-novices after he thought the “matter of the Brothers” had, after almost two decades, at long last been resolved. The fact that it took so long is an indication of the limitations on episcopal authority. Beovich could not simply disband the Institute. He had to negotiate with Church authorities in Rome.

It is not known what happened to the two brothers who left the Institute in 1942, whether the lack of public exposure of their criminal deeds subsequently enabled them to abuse other children away from the orphanage. It is also not known how Beovich would have handled similar accusations made against diocesan priests, men who could not have been dismissed so easily, as no evidence of any such allegations exists in the diocesan archives or in Beovich's diary. What is certain is that the archbishop's reputation suffered as the elderly brothers attracted sympathy in their quest to maintain the Institute. Ironically, the situation in Adelaide in the 1940s demonstrates that a policy of secrecy and concealment, so reviled by recent critics of the Catholic hierarchy, could work to the disadvantage of a bishop who practised it.



Figure 7.1 At Boystown in 1944



Figure 7.2 Boystown Confirmation Class, 1944

## 8. “A Dangerous Experiment”: The Movement

Mr Santamaria’s success in making the Movement a personal instrument is roughly proportional to the lack of political and theological sophistication of the Australian bishops. In the main, they allowed themselves to be swept along on a wave of hysteria and be so mesmerized by the Santamaria rhetoric that they could not even see clearly (or did not want to see) the theology of their own Church on the limits of Church intervention in politics . . . . The Movement was such a dangerous experiment, with its potential for inflaming sectarian feeling, that, in retrospect, it is surprising that the bishops could have given their unanimous approval to it.

Paul Ormonde, *The Movement*

*Mea culpa.*

Matthew Beovich

On 5 October 1954 the federal leader of the Australian Labor Party, Dr H.V. Evatt, publicly denounced the secretive Catholic anti-communist organisation (“the Movement”) which was led by B.A. Santamaria. His statement triggered a bitter schism in the Australian Labor Party (ALP) which cost the party government in Victoria and Queensland. The ALP did not return to power in those states until 1982 and 1989 respectively, and there was no federal election victory until 1972. “The Split” was a traumatic event for many Australians. For Matthew Beovich, it was intensely troubling as it directly involved the Catholic hierarchy. Initially one of the strongest supporters of the Movement, from 1956 he sided with Santamaria’s opponents in the Church. This chapter will explore his role in the controversy and the reasons for his apparent about-face. In the numerous accounts of the Movement and the Split, the bishops do not feature well.<sup>1</sup> As

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<sup>1</sup> There is considerable literature on the Movement, the ALP Split and the role of the Catholic Church. The most comprehensive recent work is Bruce Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2001). See also Ross Fitzgerald, *The Pope’s Battalions: Santamaria, Catholicism and the Labor Split* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2003); Gerard Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops* (Sydney: St Patrick’s College, Manly, 1982); Paul Ormonde, *The Movement* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1972); and Robert Murray, *The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1970). Edmund Campion used Beovich’s diary as a source for “A Question of Loyalties”, *50 Years of the Santamaria Movement: A Conference Held at the State Library of New South Wales, 2 May 1992*, Eureka Street Papers no. 1 (Melbourne: Jesuit Publications, 1992), pp. 7-21. Another collection of conference papers can be found in Brian Costar, Peter Love & Paul Strangio, ed. *The Great Labor Schism: A Retrospective* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2005). For Santamaria’s own account, see his autobiography, *Against the Tide* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1981) and the revised edition, *Santamaria: A Memoir* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Naomi Turner comments bluntly: “the Catholic bishops lost a great deal of credibility over the whole affair and have not yet regained it”.<sup>2</sup> What went wrong?

One of the issues which most obviously arises has dogged the Church throughout the centuries: the relationship between religion and politics. By the mid-twentieth century there was a substantial body of Catholic teaching which insisted that the Church should remain neutral with regard to party politics. Although “Catholic Action” encouraged Catholics to promote the Church’s social teaching in their workplaces and local communities, Popes Pius XI and Pius XII tried to draw a line between this and involvement in party politics. As the influential French philosopher Jacques Maritain maintained, the latter was acceptable as “action of Catholics” done independently of the Church, but not under the umbrella of the various Catholic Action movements which were under the control of the hierarchy. In their support for the Movement, the Australian bishops have been accused of being “extraordinarily naïve and ill-informed” about such teaching.<sup>3</sup>

The extent of episcopal control over the Movement is another contentious issue. From the mid-1950s Santamaria argued that the Movement was essentially a lay organisation, encouraged but not controlled by Archbishop Mannix in Melbourne.<sup>4</sup> In his memoirs, Santamaria asserts:

What was to happen between 1955 and 1960—in the course of the struggle between the Movement and a section of the hierarchy, headed formally by Cardinal Gilroy but in reality by his auxiliary, Bishop Carroll—centred on the issue of the real control of the Movement; whether the lay officials of the organisation were in final control of the Movement’s political and industrial policies, with the bishops maintaining a cautionary supervision in the field of morality of policies and action, or whether final directive control rested with the bishops. At every point the Movement fought for the principle of lay control of what was essentially a voluntary lay organisation merely linked with and supported by the bishops. Bishop Carroll, in the name of the Cardinal and originally supported by only a small group of bishops in New South

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<sup>2</sup> Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, vol. 2, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?* pp. 388-389, 405. Xavier Connor is also critical of the hierarchy in his chapter “Errors in Church-State Doctrine” in Paul Ormonde, ed. *Santamaria: The Politics of Fear* (Melbourne: Spectrum Publications, 2000), pp. 145-161. However, Gerard Henderson argues that Church teaching was not so clear cut: “this distinction between the action of Catholics as believers and the action of Catholics as citizens was casuistical. Consequently it was capable of many differing interpretations.” See *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, pp. 156-8.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, B.A. Santamaria, *The Price of Freedom* (Melbourne: 1964), p. 58; *Daniel Mannix*, p. 232; *Santamaria: A Memoir*, p. 76.

Wales, fought to impose the directive control of the bishops over policy and action, on the basis that the organisation was fundamentally ecclesiastical.<sup>5</sup>

Jack Kane, one of the founders of the break-away Democratic Labor Party in New South Wales, insists that “the real reason for the New South Wales bishops’ stand . . . was because the Movement was under the control, not of the bishops, but of a layman, Bob Santamaria. That is what certain New South Wales bishops could not stomach—an official and influential Catholic body was not under their control.”<sup>6</sup> Other writers have picked up this theme, most notably Patrick O’Farrell in a scathing attack on Gilroy’s and Carroll’s “authoritarian paternalism”.<sup>7</sup>

Santamaria’s version of history has not gone unchallenged. His own authoritarian style of leadership has been exposed by a former Movement insider, Gerard Henderson, who describes him acting like “a kind of quasi-bishop”.<sup>8</sup> Bruce Duncan is critical of the role of Mannix in the controversy, pointing out that the archbishop of Melbourne actually supported some laity against others, and was too indulgent toward Santamaria.<sup>9</sup> Yet, while Henderson and Duncan demonstrate that the major fault line in the Movement controversy did not erupt over the issue of Sydney’s alleged clericalism, they still acknowledged that state differences played a role. In New South Wales the ALP had greater experience of government, and memories of the damaging split during the 1930s were still fresh. As a result, Sydney leaders in both the Church and the labour movement tended to be more pragmatic and less ideological than their Melbourne counterparts.<sup>10</sup> The close ties which Gilroy and Carroll had with ALP leaders has often been noted, and their withdrawal of support for Santamaria’s Movement has been attributed, at least in part, to a desire not to

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<sup>5</sup> Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, p. 145.

<sup>6</sup> John Kane, *Exploding the Myths* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1989), p. 151. This extract is quoted approvingly by Luttrell in “Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy as Archbishop of Sydney”, p. 169.

<sup>7</sup> Patrick O’Farrell, *Vanished Kingdoms: Irish in Australia and New Zealand—A Personal Excursion* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1990), pp. 277-9. Santamaria, in turn, quotes O’Farrell’s “most perceptive summary of the significance of the affair” in *Santamaria: A Memoir*, pp. 177-8. See also Niall Brennan, *Dr Mannix*, pp. 281-4; Robert Murray, *The Split*, p. 336; Gerard Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>8</sup> Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, pp. 155 ff.; *Idem*, “B.A. Santamaria, Santamariaism and the Cult of Personality”, *50 Years of the Santamaria Movement*, pp. 43-58.

<sup>9</sup> Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, p. 389.

<sup>10</sup> See especially Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, p. 393; Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, pp. 164-6.

undermine the state Labor government led by their friend, Premier J.J. Cahill, a devout Catholic.<sup>11</sup>

Differences between Melbourne and Sydney do not, however, explain why Beovich became firmly allied to Gilroy and Carroll in 1956 after initially supporting Santamaria. He was, after all, a former Melbourne priest, and a bishop in a state with a well-entrenched Liberal and Country League government. Santamaria provides an answer:

Dr Beovich had been an old and close friend, who had obviously trusted me for many years, both officially and personally. Threatened by left-wing Labor parliamentarians with campaigns in which sectarianism would play a major role, in a state in which it was easy to ferment it, he had now become an opponent. I felt the loss greatly.<sup>12</sup>

South Australian ALP powerbroker Clyde Cameron claims he warned Beovich about the danger of arousing sectarianism.<sup>13</sup> Taking seriously this possibility, Malcolm Saunders and Neil Lloyd conclude that Beovich was forced into disavowing the Movement by the need to protect “not only the foothold the Catholic Church had established in South Australia but the enviable reputation the state had enjoyed for religious harmony”.<sup>14</sup> Beovich certainly cultivated good relations between Catholics and Protestants. Nevertheless, this did not stop him occasionally taking an unpopular stance, most notably during the Second World War when he protested against the bombing of his beloved Rome by Allied forces. He does not appear to have been disturbed by the predictable sectarian reaction in 1944. What then led to his change of heart with regard to the Movement a decade later?

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, O’Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, p. 402; Luttrell, “Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy”, p. 170; Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, p. 134. Brian Croke challenges the assumption that Carroll was “blindly partisan” in “Politics and Prelates: The Carroll Style”, *JACHS* 22 (2001): 31-45. Croke comments (p. 40): “The reality is that in the early 1950s the majority of Catholics supported the Labor Party and the majority of Labor politicians were Catholic. Inevitably, the party with the platform closest to Catholic social and economic policies was the Labor Party, but it was not, and could not be, a church party. Carroll could not get Mannix and Santamaria to appreciate that.”

<sup>12</sup> Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, p. 167.

<sup>13</sup> Clyde Cameron, *The Confessions of Clyde Cameron, 1913-1990*, (Sydney: ABC Enterprises, 1990), p. 104

<sup>14</sup> Malcolm Saunders and Neil Lloyd, “Remembering the Past and Hoping for the Future: why there was no Labor split in South Australia in 1954-56” in *The Great Labor Schism: A Retrospective*, p. 81.

### The Catholic Hierarchy Endorses the Movement, 1945

The Second World War raised issues of national importance and, as noted in Chapter 5, the Australian Catholic bishops occasionally attempted a coordinated response. Beovich warmly supported the issuing of an annual social justice statement. The first of these was drafted by Archbishop Simonds of Hobart and Santamaria in 1940. From then until 1956 most were written by Santamaria.<sup>15</sup> Beovich also initiated the protests which Gilroy made, on behalf of the hierarchy, against the bombing of Rome and the compulsory borrowing of Church property to support the war effort. However, not all bishops embraced the social justice statements or appreciated Gilroy acting in their name.<sup>16</sup> As Beovich had discovered during his work on the new catechism in the late 1930s, it was difficult to get the heads of twenty-four virtually autonomous dioceses to form a united front.

In retrospect, therefore, it is not surprising that the Movement ultimately split the hierarchy. It is more amazing that at a meeting in Sydney on 19-20 September 1945 the bishops agreed to fund a national body to organise a secret fight against communism. That they supported such a potentially explosive venture can be attributed not only to Santamaria's powers of persuasion, but also to the deep fear of communism which arose in the wake of the war, and to well grounded concerns about communist infiltration of trade unions and trades halls in Australia.<sup>17</sup> As the Cold War intensified, anti-communism became a mainstream phenomenon in western democracies. Gallop polls indicated that 67 per cent of Australians in 1948 expected another war within ten years, and 80 per cent thought that the Soviet Union wanted to dominate the world.<sup>18</sup> Catholics were particularly susceptible to this crisis mentality. Pope Pius XII strongly opposed communism, decreeing in 1949 that no Catholic could belong to a communist party. He also promoted the cult of

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<sup>15</sup> “I am glad you are interested in the suggestion of a more united front on the matter of social reform”, Simonds to Beovich, 10 September 1941, ACAA. For Santamaria's account, see *Santamaria: A Memoir*, pp. 38-40.

<sup>16</sup> As noted in Chapter 5, Gilroy sent a draft of his cable to Churchill and Roosevelt to all bishops before the final version was sent. The archbishops of Brisbane and Hobart and the bishop of Rockhampton dissented. Four other bishops did not reply. See Boland, *Duhig*, p. 307.

<sup>17</sup> See John Warhurst, “The Communist Bogey”: Communism as an Election Issue in Australian Federal Politics, 1949-1964 (PhD thesis, Flinders University, 1977), pp. 39-42; and Ross Fitzgerald, *The Pope's Battalions*, pp. 71-2. Fitzgerald claims that in 1945 some of the nation's largest trade unions were under communist leadership, including the Seamen's Union, the Waterside Workers' Federation, the Miner's Federation, the Federated Ironworkers' Association and the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

<sup>18</sup> Warhurst, “The Communist Bogey”, p. 38.



Our Lady of Fatima, helping it become one of the most popular forms of Marian devotion after the Second World War. The prophecies associated with the apparitions at Fatima in Portugal in 1917—the year of the communist revolutions in Russia—had a sharp political edge: “If [Mary’s] requests [for prayer and penance] are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace, if not . . . [Russia] will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church . . . various nations will be annihilated . . .”<sup>19</sup> The spread of communism through Eastern Europe in the wake of the war seemed to confirm this dire prediction. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s reports of the persecution of the Church in communist countries regularly dominated the front page of Catholic newspapers. Adelaide’s *Southern Cross* was no exception. As John Maguire comments, “in the atmosphere of the Cold War, passionate commitment to the anti-communist cause seemed a logical consequence of one’s Catholicism”.<sup>20</sup>

In a memorandum to the bishops before they met in Sydney in September 1945, Santamaria asked that the anti-communist movement be defined as part of Catholic Action, and he stressed that it would be “in all things subject to the will of the bishop”.<sup>21</sup> The outcome of the meeting was a compromise. At the insistence of Justin Simonds, the “Catholic Social Studies Movement” was not placed under the Catholic Action umbrella, but a motion was moved by Francis Henschke of Wagga Wagga, and seconded by Matthew Beovich, that it be controlled “both in policy and finance” by a committee of bishops. In practice, episcopal control did not amount to much because one of the three members, Norman Gilroy of Sydney, did not attend meetings, and the other two, Daniel Mannix and James O’Collins of Ballarat, were very close to Santamaria. Of greater significance was the funding. The bishops agreed to provide an initial grant of £10,000.

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<sup>19</sup> Katharine Massam, *Sacred Threads*, p. 92. See also Massam, “The Blue Army and the Cold War: Anti-Communist Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Australia”, *Australian Historical Studies* 24, no. 97 (October 1991): 420-428; Thomas Kselman & Steven Avella, “Marian Piety and the Cold War in the United States”, *Catholic Historical Review* 72 (1986): 403-424. The following chapter will consider Beovich’s promotion of Marian devotion in the archdiocese of Adelaide.

<sup>20</sup> John Maguire, *Prologue: A History of the Catholic Church as Seen From Townsville, 1863-1983* (Toowoomba: Church Archivists’ Society, 1990), p. 153.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in “The Social Studies Movement, Sydney, Australia, October 1956”, p. 6. This was the submission prepared for the pope and Vatican officials by the bishops who had become opposed to the Melbourne-based Movement in 1956. Beovich’s copy is in the ACAA. The ACAA also has James O’Collins’ version of events: “My own personal report of the connection between the Bishops and the Social Studies Movement from the time of its foundation until 1954, and my account of the dealings between some Dioceses in New South Wales and the National Executive from that time onwards”. Beovich wrote his own account, dated 9 October 1956, in response to a request from the apostolic delegate. For the 1945 meeting, see also Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, p. 73 ff

Thereafter their dioceses were subject to an annual quota to support the national headquarters of the Movement in Melbourne. They also agreed to fund regional offices in capital cities.

What the bishops approved in 1945 was an organisation which would take the fight against communism into the “industrial field” using some of the communists’ own tactics. Santamaria offered them “a national organisation as strongly disciplined as the Communist Party”,<sup>22</sup> in other words, one in which a high degree of commitment was expected from members and obedience to the leadership. Although Santamaria later claimed that “the Movement was about as secret as the Sydney Harbor Bridge”,<sup>23</sup> secrecy was also very much part of its ethos.

What Santamaria received from the bishops in 1945 was an endorsement which added a strong religious dimension to the fight against communism. Thereafter devout recruits to the organisation were left in no doubt that they was fighting on God’s side against the enemies of the Church.<sup>24</sup> Their branch meetings (referred to in the Movement’s 1948 handbook *Into Thy Hands* as “staff conferences with the Lord”) began and ended with prayer, and they were assured of the hierarchy’s support. Edmund Campion recalls how significant this was in the 1940s and early 1950s:

In the Catholic imaginative world the authority of the bishops was underpinned by Christ; to deny one was to deny the other; to disobey one was to disobey the other. Thus obedience to the authority of the bishops was not a mere notional assent, it bit deep into the emotions. Those who spoke with the authority of the bishops could count on a flow-on from this obediential psychology . . . Catholic critics of the organisation were told that their criticism made them disloyal to the church, at odds with ‘the mind of the hierarchy’, almost like traitors in wartime.<sup>25</sup>

As Ormonde concludes, the Movement was indeed “a dangerous experiment”.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> From Santamaria’s memorandum to the bishops in 1945, quoted in Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, p. 81.

<sup>23</sup> Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, p. 137.

<sup>24</sup> See Ormonde, *The Movement*, pp. 20-22, and Edmund Campion, “A Question of Loyalties”, pp. 10-12.

<sup>25</sup> Campion, “A Question of Loyalties”, p. 10,

<sup>26</sup> Ormonde, *The Movement*, p. 162.

### Beovich’s Early Support for Santamaria

In his memoirs, Santamaria pays tribute to the “invaluable” support at the September 1945 meeting of his “close friends” Archbishop Beovich and Bishop Henschke. As Mannix did not attend the meeting, they led the way in encouraging the other bishops to approve the Movement.<sup>27</sup> They were also very supportive of Santamaria’s work as secretary of the National Catholic Rural Movement (NCRM), one of the official Catholic Action movements approved by the hierarchy in 1941. At the third state conference of the NCRM in South Australia in August 1943, Beovich welcomed Santamaria with effusive praise: “Without exaggeration, he would say that, so far as the preservation of Christianity and the welfare of Australia were concerned, he doubted if there was a layman in Australia who had done more than Mr Santamaria”.<sup>28</sup> Two months later Beovich warmly thanked Santamaria for being the guest speaker at the Catholic youth rally on the feast day of Christ the King, the main event in the celebrations to mark the centenary of the diocese of Adelaide. Telling his young audience that “the standards of the simple, easygoing Catholic were not enough”, Santamaria urged them to become members of “the Church militant” in the “last and greatest battle between God and Satan”.<sup>29</sup>

It is likely that Beovich knew in 1943 of Santamaria’s involvement in a secret anti-communist organisation.<sup>30</sup> He was certainly aware of the Movement’s existence in 1944 when Santamaria wrote to him concerning Gilroy: “His Grace is emphatic that Sydney should work along lines of complete uniformity where the confidential work is going, and that it should be subject to the Commonwealth executive”.<sup>31</sup> Ironically, this letter was written on paper bearing the NCRM letterhead. Santamaria’s involvement in both official Catholic Action (through the NCRM and the National Secretariat of Catholic Action) and

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<sup>27</sup> Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, p. 74.

<sup>28</sup> *Southern Cross*, 3 September 1943, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 November 1943, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Beovich was a member of the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action, and there is a reference in the minutes of the committee’s May 1943 meeting to Santamaria reporting “on the special work he has been undertaking in the last six months”. “Special work” was one of the euphemisms used for the Movement. There is some confusion as to when the Movement actually began. Santamaria himself gave a number of dates ranging from 1937 to 1945. See Henderson, “B.A. Santamaria, Santamariaism and the Cult of Personality”, p. 46. Given the May 1943 minutes, Henderson concludes that the Movement most likely began in late 1942 or early 1943.

<sup>31</sup> Santamaria to Beovich, 22 July 1944, ACAA.

would be “bad tactics” to raise the matter for discussion—it would be better to assume that such political action was valid. The outcome was “most satisfactory”. The bishops’ “most cordial” reception of the report represented “a unanimous vote of confidence in the show” (i.e. the Movement). The only concern which was expressed was over “the use which some of our members and organisers make of the authority which the chiefs [i.e. the bishops] have reposed in us as a major weapon in spreading the work of the organisation, and, more important, of securing adherence to its policies”. Accordingly, it had now been ruled that:

A. We are entitled to invoke the will and authority of the chiefs as the basis for the existence of our organisation. (However, we should not invoke the authority of the chiefs too promiscuously even in this regard, using it only when it’s a matter of real necessity).

B. We are not entitled to invoke the authority of the chiefs as a method of enforcing compliance with every detail of policy which we adopt as an organisation. The chiefs are strongly behind our organisation and give a general support to the major lines of policy which it adopts. They cannot be expected, however, to be held responsible for every small item of policy and do not wish to be quoted as backing every item of policy we adopt . . .

On 29 July 1953 Beovich delivered a lecture on the relationship between church and state at the Newman Institute in Adelaide. The notes which he prepared for the lecture indicate that he intended to make a clear distinction between action taken by Catholics as members of Catholic Action organizations, and action taken by Catholics as private citizens: “Every active member of Catholic Action must recall that he is speaking for the Church and that there might be a danger of compromising her if any rash decisions were taken in matters political”.<sup>79</sup>

By November 1953 tension between the Catholic Action movements and the Movement had escalated to the point where the bishops had to act.<sup>80</sup> When the Episcopal

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<sup>79</sup> The typescript of the lecture is in the ACAA. A condensed version was published in the *Southern Cross*, 10 July 1953, p. 9. In that, the warning was omitted. At that time the paper was being edited by Father Patrick Kelly, a fervent supporter of the Movement.

<sup>80</sup> In the ACAA there is a memorandum from a meeting of national and diocesan chaplains of Catholic Action movements dated 21 October 1953. It states that “considerable confusion exists in the public mind and in the mind of many priests as to the real distinction between official Catholic Action and the Social Studies Movement”. This arose from the fact that the national chaplain for both organizations was the same priest, the headquarters of both organizations were in the same building, and the administrative officer was

the Movement, and the fact that both were effectively run from the same office in Melbourne, became one of the problems in the years ahead.

### The Movement in Adelaide

As the Movement’s regional officer in South Australia, Beovich appointed Edward (Ted) Farrell, a devout lay man who was the president of the Assisian Guild of Catholic Teachers and one of the organisers of the youth rally in 1943. His task was to “bring influence to bear on the trade union movement, on the ALP, and, by propaganda, on the community, especially the working community”. Specific aims of the Movement in South Australia were listed as follows:

1. To de-louse 4 or 5 trade unions.
2. To strengthen the local committees in Adelaide and the suburbs.
3. To extend in scope and volume propaganda both literary and viva voce.
4. To begin, by lectures and study circles, the education part of the work.<sup>32</sup>

“De-lousing” trade unions was to be achieved by a coordinated campaign of branch-stacking and vote canvassing. A document titled “Suggestions for Organisation”, presumably sent from the national executive in Melbourne circa 1945, recommended that small groups be established in each parish. Members were to draw up lists of the names and occupations of parishioners, from which possible trade union membership could be determined. They were to seek such information from parish census books, school rolls, parish societies, and such like. Such was the secrecy with which the Movement was shrouded that only as a last resort were they to ask the people concerned directly.<sup>33</sup>

It is not clear exactly what impact the Movement had on trade unions in South Australia. Numerically the organisation was smaller in South Australia than in Victoria,

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<sup>32</sup> “The Twelve Months Plan”, undated and unsigned document in Beovich’s papers, probably circa 1945.

<sup>33</sup> “Suggestions for Organisation”, ACAA. For one South Australian man’s reminiscences of his involvement in the Movement as the “census officer” responsible for collecting details of trade union membership, see David Shinnick, “Youthful Yearnings and Beyond”, vol. 1, p. 142. For another account of the Movement from a personal perspective, see Edmund Campion, *Rockchoppers: Growing Up Catholic in Australia*, pp. 104-123.

New South Wales and Queensland.<sup>34</sup> An internal review written circa 1957 observed that “amongst the several Cs [Catholics] in full-time trade union positions, there are only three who may be classified as M. [Movement] members”. Yet, “in a voluntary capacity, many other members hold executive and delegate positions”. They owed, it was claimed, these positions to the Movement:

In the final analysis, it is by the number of organised voters that the Communists have been defeated. It is by organising and persuading unionists to attend their meetings to vote that sound policies are pursued and the common good of members is protected. Experience over 12 years has taught that, except in isolated cases, a general appeal to the general body of Cs. has not raised union attendance unless accompanied by constant and unremitting organisation.<sup>35</sup>

In 1946 the state conference of the ALP in South Australia agreed to the establishment of “industrial groups” in trade unions to combat communist influence. The Movement operated within those cells, and is likely to have played a major role in the overthrow in 1953 of the left-wing leadership of the Shop Assistants’ Union (SAU), which included a well-known member of the Communist Party of Australia. A devout Catholic, D.S. Killicoat, was elected president. The following year Groupers took the credit for the defeat of the communist secretary of the Federated Ironworkers’ Association (FIA). There was almost a similar outcome in the Federated Clerks’ Union (FCU), but the left-wing executive of the FCU managed to remain in control of the union.<sup>36</sup>

However, in the 1950s the Groups operated under a significant handicap, the ALP state conference having withdrawn its endorsement of them in 1951. Clyde Cameron and Jim Toohey exerted strong control over the state branch, and with little evidence of a significant communist threat, were just as hostile to extreme right-wing interests in the

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<sup>34</sup> P. Duffy calculates that there were 5 groups and 22 branches in South Australia in 1950; 25 groups and 74 branches in Victoria, 12 groups and 100 branches in New South Wales; and 19 groups and 61 branches in Queensland. There was only one group in Tasmania and none in Western Australia. See P. Duffy, “Catholic Judgments on the Origins and Growth of the Australian Labor Party Dispute, 1954-1961 (MA thesis, University of Melbourne, 1967). Warhurst cites these figures in “Communist Bogey”, p. 78.

<sup>35</sup> Like many internal Movement documents in Beovich’s papers in the ACAA, this one is unsigned and has no date. It was probably written by Farrell to Beovich in 1957.

<sup>36</sup> For the struggles in these unions, see Malcolm Saunders, “The Labor Party and the Industrial Groups in South Australia 1946-1955: Precluding the Split”, *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia* 33 (2005), pp. 77-79.

labour movement as they were to the extreme left.<sup>37</sup> Santamaria himself conceded that “while the Industrial Groups were formally established in South Australia, they enjoyed a merely formal existence until their charter was ultimately withdrawn in October 1951”.<sup>38</sup> While this is at odds with the Groups’ success in the SAU and FIA, it was almost certainly the case that “the few enthusiastic Groupers in South Australia were constantly frustrated by the state executive’s—most notably Cameron’s—hostility toward them”.<sup>39</sup>

With limited opportunities for direct influence in the trade unions and ALP, much of Ted Farrell’s time was devoted to “the education part of the work”. His own background as a teacher, as well as Beovich’s interest in education, doubtless also encouraged this thrust. In 1947 Beovich asked Farrell to establish an adult education institute in the Diocesan Education Building alongside the cathedral. It formally opened in 1948 as the Newman Institute. Designed “to equip Catholic men and women with a knowledge of industrial and economic problems based on the social teachings of the Catholic Church”, it was particularly directed at the “young, keen intelligent Catholic youth who is not afraid to think, to read and to study”.<sup>40</sup> Significantly, while it was a cloak for the education wing of the Movement, the Newman Institute was under Beovich’s control, not Santamaria’s. During the following decade 417 adults attended classes on industrial relations, capitalism and socialism, trade unions, working conditions, and such like, with 57 of them being admitted as members of the institute after persevering for at least three years and gaining a diploma in Social Studies.<sup>41</sup>

The national headquarters of the Movement also organised speakers to solicit funds and warn of the crisis about to befall Australia in the form of a communist revolution. A letter written by Thomas Ormonde of the Sacred Heart fathers gives an insight into the Movement’s impact at parish level. In the early 1950s Ormonde was parish priest of

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73 ff. For Cameron and Toohey and their influence in the ALP in South Australia, see also Saunders and Lloyd, “Remembering the Past”, pp. 76-94; Dean Jaensch, “The Playford Era” in D. Jaensch, ed. *The Flinders History of South Australia: Political History* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1986): pp. 257-8. For the disbanding of the Industrial Groups in South Australia, see Cameron, *Confessions*, p. 92 and Fitzgerald, *The Pope’s Battalions*, pp. 83-4.

<sup>38</sup> Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, p. 86.

<sup>39</sup> Saunders and Lloyd, “Remembering the Past”, p. 84.

<sup>40</sup> *Southern Cross*, 16 April 1948, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 November 1957, p. 4.

Saddleworth-Manoora, a small rural parish in the archdiocese of Adelaide. In 1969 he wrote to his nephew, Paul, who was writing a book on the Movement:

. . . my friend Archbishop Beovich . . . sent a confidential letter to certain priests saying that Father Lalor would be coming to expound to worthy and trustworthy selected Catholic men things concerning an existing peril ‘to those things we hold most dear’. A list of names was given, these men were invited to this highly secret meeting, admission to be gained by production of the letter. The meeting had the atmosphere of a conspiratorial gathering . . .

Father Lalor’s thesis was the danger of the imminent takeover of Australia by the communists. He had possession of the plans, he was aware of the locations of the communist arsenals and the machinegun ammunition. The immediate aim of the meeting was finance for the Movement. Those poor sheep cockies whose fear was not of the loss of faith but the loss of farms and fleeces took out their cheque books and wrote Santamaria £800. A neighbouring parish wrote £1300.

Ormonde disliked Lalor’s methods and their result, but as Lalor came to his parish with Beovich’s backing, he could not publicly oppose him. He asked his nephew not to reveal his or Beovich’s involvement in the incident:

You can understand how impossible (it is) for me to associate my name with anything critical of Archbishop Beovich. However, if these facts were transferred to Queensland, they would be true. Poor Archbishop Beovich. You can guess how he felt that [the Labor Split]. He was Labor by instinct, been it all his life, followed for a time the Movement line, and then retreated faster than most others.<sup>42</sup>

The “Father Lalor” who addressed the meeting at Manoora was Harold Lalor, a Jesuit priest and one of Santamaria’s closest associates. His fiery, apocalyptic tirades, which stressed that time was running out, earned him the nickname “the five minutes to midnight priest”.<sup>43</sup> Beovich was more restrained in his anti-communism. He usually balanced his attacks on communism with condemnation of the abuses of unrestrained capitalism and—a more positive message—promotion of the Church’s social justice teaching.<sup>44</sup> In 1948 he heard American evangelist Fulton Sheen speak in Melbourne and was struck by Sheen’s remark that “just as we hated sin but loved the sinner, so we must

<sup>42</sup> In *The Movement* (p. 17), Paul Ormonde quoted from the letter without naming the bishop. He referred to the author as “a country priest”. He gave the full text in his chapter “The Movement—Politics By Remote Control”, in *Santamaria: The Politics of Fear*, p. 182. Ormonde’s father, James (brother of Thomas), was a prominent New South Wales Labor politician who became strongly opposed to the Movement.

<sup>43</sup> Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, pp. 125, 170; Fitzgerald, p. 77. See also David Strong, “Lalor, Harold”, *The Australian Dictionary of Jesuit Biography* (Sydney: Halstead Press, 1999), p. 188.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, *Southern Cross*, 15 August 1947, p. 7, a report of Beovich’s address to the Legacy Club of South Australia.



hate communism and any other false doctrine but love the communist”.<sup>45</sup> In 1944 and again in 1951 Beovich exhorted members of the Catholic Railway Workers’ Association to remember that the most effective weapons against communism were the spiritual ones recommended by Our Lady of Fatima: prayer (especially the praying of the Rosary) and penance. In passing, he encouraged them to become involved in their trade union, but that was not his top priority.<sup>46</sup> There was a wide gulf between his personal piety and the policies and practices of the Movement, but it seems to have taken him some time to realise the significance of that.

### Growing Tensions

Beovich still backed Santamaria when, in the late 1940s, Santamaria encountered considerable opposition from within Catholic Action circles. There were serious differences of opinion over what constituted Catholic Action, and what role the Melbourne-based National Secretariat should play. It had been founded in 1937 to inaugurate the Catholic Action movements. Once they were well established, some leaders wanted greater autonomy, especially those involved in the Young Christian Workers’ Movement. In 1946 and 1947 the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action (which included Beovich) affirmed the importance of coordination and unity, after lobbying from Santamaria who was in control of the Secretariat from 1946.<sup>47</sup> The issue was discussed at a meeting of the Australian hierarchy in 1948. On behalf of Mannix, who as usual did not attend, Beovich successfully presented the case for retaining the National Secretariat.<sup>48</sup> Problems, however, continued and in 1949 the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action further strengthened the National Secretariat’s role by decreeing: “The National Secretariat shall . . . between meetings of the Episcopal Committee—be the final authority in all that

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<sup>45</sup> *Southern Cross*, 28 May 1948, p. 1. For Fulton Sheen, one of the most famous anti-communist preachers in the United States, see Kathleen Riley, *Fulton J. Sheen: An American Catholic Response to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Alba House, 2004), especially chapter 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Southern Cross*, 22 September 1944, p. 11; 11 May 1951, p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> Minutes of the meetings of the episcopal committee are in the ACAA. A note from Santamaria attached to the 24 October 1946 minutes mentions the difficulties which had arisen over the previous two years between the National Secretariat and the Catholic Action bodies. See also Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, pp. 99-101.

<sup>48</sup> Minutes of meeting, 7-8 April 1948; also Diary, 8 April 1948: “A successful and very interesting meeting . . . Bishop O’Collins ably presented the case for the Movement (he did a splendid job and paved the way for my task—the saving of the Secretariat of Catholic Action . . .)”

pertains to the finances and administration of all the movements of Catholic Action, including the appointment of officials; and in all that pertains to the programs, campaigns, and general methods whereby these bodies seek to apply the policies of the Episcopal Committee."<sup>49</sup> This was a victory for Santamaria, but a pyrrhic one as much bitterness remained.<sup>50</sup>

Friction also arose in the latter half of the 1940s between Santamaria and some Movement officials in Sydney.<sup>51</sup> Compounding what Santamaria interpreted as interstate rivalry were divisions within the hierarchy and between some bishops and the apostolic delegate, John Panico. The tension generated by Panico's promotion of Australian-born priests to the episcopacy was exacerbated by Gilroy's elevation to the rank of cardinal in 1946. Beovich was delighted when he heard the news,<sup>52</sup> but not everyone was so thrilled, especially those who had hoped that Mannix would get to wear the "red hat". An elderly Irish priest in Melbourne spat out: "So the Dago's Pup has got it after all", a spiteful remark which sped around Melbourne clerical circles.<sup>53</sup> To Beovich's dismay, the matter achieved wider publicity, thanks to his old school friend Arthur Calwell who had become Minister for Information and Minister for Immigration in the Chifley government. Calwell dashed off a press statement which was scathingly critical of Panico, whom he blamed for the slight on Mannix.<sup>54</sup> Mannix's own feelings can perhaps be gauged from the public address he gave when Gilroy made his first visit to Melbourne as a cardinal in May 1946. A master in the use of irony, under the guise of flattery Mannix actually belittled Gilroy's career.<sup>55</sup> The incident highlights not only a lack of unity in the Australian Catholic

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<sup>49</sup> Minutes of meeting, 15 March 1949.

<sup>50</sup> See Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, pp. 130-2.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>52</sup> On Christmas Eve, 1945, Beovich heard the "wonderful news" that Pius XII intended to make Norman Gilroy a cardinal. He sent Gilroy a telegram of congratulations "with a full heart". Diary, 24 December 1945.

<sup>53</sup> Brennan, *Mannix*, p. 316.

<sup>54</sup> Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not*, p. 128: "While there will be congratulations for the new Cardinal, widespread consternation and bitter resentment will be felt that the honour which rightly belongs to the Archbishop of Melbourne, should have gone elsewhere, and to a comparatively junior member of the Australian hierarchy . . . Unfortunately, during the war years the Vatican has had to depend on a representative whose limited ability and equally limited knowledge of Australia and Australians has ill-fitted him to influence the destinies of the Australian church . . . I hope that Archbishop Panico's influence in Australian church politics, and in Australian affairs generally, will cease with his early return to Rome." Beovich wrote to Panico on 9 January 1946 deploring the "shocking injustice" of the attack on someone who had done such "good and outstanding work" for the Church in Australia.

<sup>55</sup> *Tribune*, 30 May 1946; Gilchrist, *Mannix*, p. 189.

Church but a lack of respect for Gilroy in Melbourne which would become even more apparent in the 1950s.

Gilroy received a much warmer welcome in Adelaide a week before his visit to Melbourne. Beovich basked in the respect shown to the new cardinal not only by the Catholics of the diocese but also by the state’s civic leaders and the general community.<sup>56</sup> His high regard for his friend from Propaganda days seems to have been reciprocated. Gilroy (vice prefect of the fourth *camerata* when Beovich was prefect in 1921) acted on Beovich’s advice during the war years,<sup>57</sup> and he turned to him again during the bank nationalisation controversy in the late 1940s. In August 1947 Prime Minister Chifley announced that the federal Labor government would nationalise the Australian banking system. Among the many critics of the plan was the outspoken Catholic cleric Archdeacon T.J. O’Donnell of Hobart. He maintained that all Christian members of the Australian Labor Party should vote against it. The front page of Adelaide’s *Sunday Mail* reported his comments on 13 September 1947, with a response from Beovich. Beovich was aware that that Pope Pius XII in 1944 had tried to steer a middle course on nationalisation. He had warned against an excessive concentration of power in the hands of the state, but recognised that in certain circumstances nationalisation could be in the interests of the common good.<sup>58</sup> Hence Beovich concluded that selective nationalism was not contrary to the teaching of the Church, and Catholics could, with good conscience, support or oppose it.

In Sydney a draft bishops’ statement was prepared which claimed, among other things, that the bill for nationalising private banks opened the way to a totalitarian state. In a hysterical tone, the statement finished up:

We state that if this Bill is intended as a first step towards complete socialism it is an immoral measure. We state that if it is intended only as an isolated instance of nationalisation it is fraught with danger to the foundations of civil society as ordained by divine law and that, therefore, it must be declared fundamentally unsound in the moral order. ACCORDINGLY, INVOKING OUR TEACHING AUTHORITY AS

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<sup>56</sup> Diary, 18-20 May, 1946. *Southern Cross*, 24 May 1946, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup> During the war he followed Beovich’s suggestions with regard to the protests over the confiscation of church property and the bombing of Rome, and he sought Beovich’s advice in 1943 on the issuing of a joint statement with the Anglican archbishop of Sydney.

<sup>58</sup> *L’Osservatore Romano*, 2 September 1944; *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 36 (1944), pp. 252-254; Jan Olav Smit, *Pope Pius XII* (London: Burns & Oates, 1949), pp. 268; Michael Chinigo, ed. *The Teaching of Pope Pius XII* (London: Methuen, 1958), pp. 335-6.

BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH, WE OFFICIALLY DECLARE THAT THE BANKING BILL IS ONE WHICH NO CATHOLIC IS FREE IN CONSCIENCE TO SUPPORT.

Gilroy sent Beovich a copy. Beovich replied on 4 November 1947 that he thought it would be unwise to issue such a “panicky and drastic condemnation”. If it forced good Catholics to leave the ALP, it would mean abandoning the party to extremists, and if there was another depression like that of the early 1930s, it would look as though the Catholic bishops had supported reactionary capitalism rather than considering the interests of poor workers. Moreover, with regard to the supposed nexus between nationalization and totalitarianism, Beovich reminded Gilroy that there had been private banks in Hitler’s Germany. It seems that Gilroy heeded Beovich’s comments as the statement was quietly dropped.<sup>59</sup> The nationalisation bill passed through parliament but was declared invalid by the High Court, a judgment eventually upheld by the Privy Council in London.

In calling into question the support which Catholics could give to the ALP, the banking controversy foreshadowed the Movement crisis of the 1950s. It also focussed attention on the decision of the ALP federal conference in Brisbane in 1921 to affirm socialization as part of Labor’s policy platform. In September 1948 the entrepreneurial Duhig, a strong opponent of the nationalization bill, warned in Queensland that “socialization is a much more plausible and subtle foe than communism”.<sup>60</sup> On 20 September the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Brian Doyle, a prominent Sydney Catholic layman, had commented that the socialization objective threatened Catholic involvement in the ALP. Gilroy sent Beovich a copy of a letter he received from Chifley which insisted that while the Labor Party supported collective ownership when it was necessary to prevent exploitation, it did not seek to abolish private ownership when it was utilised in “a socially useful manner and without exploitation”.<sup>61</sup> This was known as the “Blackburn interpretation” as it had been moved by Maurice Blackburn at the 1921 conference. According to Clyde Cameron, Beovich intervened directly in the controversy, offering to make a “helpful statement” if Cameron could get the ALP’s federal conference

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<sup>59</sup> A copy of the letter and the draft statement are in the ACAA. See also Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, pp. 112-121.

<sup>60</sup> Boland, *Duhig*, p. 327.

<sup>61</sup> Chifley to Gilroy, 4 October 1948, ACAA.

in September 1948 to reaffirm the Blackburn interpretation.<sup>62</sup> Cameron claims that he did this, although the official report of the conference reveals that he subsequently withdrew his motion and the 1921 interpretation was not formally reaffirmed.<sup>63</sup> Beovich, nevertheless, declared in his homily at the Labor Day Mass on 12 October 1948 that a Catholic could, in good conscience, subscribe to the present Labor platform.<sup>64</sup> It was a line which he would uphold throughout the 1950s.

Beovich was also a voice of moderation during the campaign leading up to the 1951 referendum to ban the Communist Party. The Movement publication *Newsweekly* criticized Labor politicians for campaigning for a “no” vote, but Beovich refused to direct Catholics how to respond. In fact, Duhig was the only member of the hierarchy to publicly back the “Yes” case.<sup>65</sup>

In 1949 Beovich mused in his diary that it was his “strong opinion so far as party politics is concerned: the Church does not take sides, but she assumes a benevolent neutrality to that side which is most concerned with the workers and the poor, and the less privileged of the citizens”.<sup>66</sup> There is no doubt that for him that party was the ALP. His Labor sympathies were typical of many Catholics of his generation. There were a number of Catholics in the state branch of the Labor Party, including the leader of the opposition (Mick O’Halloran) and his deputy (Frank Walsh), but none in the Liberal and Country League government. Beovich, however, was not blindly partisan. He enjoyed a cordial relationship with Premier Thomas Playford, and the fact that a Catholic lawyer was pre-selected for a winnable Liberal seat in 1953 has been attributed to his influence.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Cameron, *Confessions of Clyde Cameron*, p. 91.

<sup>63</sup> See Warhurst, “The Communist Bogey”, p. 126.

<sup>64</sup> *Advertiser*, 12 October 1948.

<sup>65</sup> Boland, *Duhig*, pp. 149-152. Cameron (*Confessions*, p. 81) attributes the defeat of the referendum to Evatt, Beovich, Gilroy and Mannix. See also Jenny Stock, “The Role of Religion in the 1951 Referendum to Ban the Communist Party: the South Australian Example”, *Australian Religion Studies Review*, 11 (Spring 1998): 49-51.

<sup>66</sup> Diary, 9 November 1949.

<sup>67</sup> Stewart Cockburn, *Playford: Benevolent Despot* (Adelaide: Axiom, 1991), p. 223. See also the following chapter on Beovich’s episcopal leadership in the 1950s.

### From Trade Unions to Party Politics

The influence of the Communist Party of Australia within the labour movement seems to have peaked about 1945 and thereafter waned.<sup>68</sup> A significant factor was the development in the mid-1940s of the ALP Industrial Groups to combat communist infiltration, especially in Victoria and New South Wales.<sup>69</sup> There was clearly “branch-packing on a widespread scale” as members of the Movement were encouraged to join the ALP.<sup>70</sup> Overall, as devout Catholics assumed important roles in the trade union movement, their influence naturally extended into the ALP. Santamaria was conscious in the late 1940s of the possibilities this offered. He spelt out to the members of the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action (including Beovich) his concern that Catholic Action could be reduced to small groups of Catholics trying to influence their own circle of friends and performing small acts of charity:

I will not disguise the fact that this view dooms Catholic Action to littleness and frustration . . . . It is, for want of a better word, ‘unexciting’ and does not grip the imagination. From the viewpoint of practical organisation that deficiency is fatal since any movement which fails to grip the imagination will not obtain mass support . . . . With few exceptions, it will simply rally a number of Catholics of the ‘devotional’ type . . .

I do not believe that the world will be transformed even by millions of individual acts of charity. The reform of social institutions is the key to the Christian situation today,

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<sup>68</sup> See Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, p. 172; Fitzgerald, “The Pope’s Battalions”, p. 95; Warhurst, “Communist Bogey”, p. 41. This was the opinion of the bishops who, by 1956, were opposed to the political activities of the Movement: “Gradually, successes were achieved in the work of defeating Communists who held trade union posts. Within eight years—by 1953—Communist control had been broken in many trade unions and the situation was radically different from that of 1945”, “The Social Studies Movement”, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> Murray (*The Split*, p. 18) and Henderson (*Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, p. 102) downplay the significance of both the Industrial Groups within the ALP and the Movement’s influence within the Groups. On the other hand, Fitzgerald (*The Pope’s Battalions*, p. 289) concludes that “the Industrial Groups were the only source of consistent resistance to the Communist Party’s strategy to gain control of the union movement, and Santamaria and the Movement were the intellectual force behind the Groups”. In *The Light on the Hill: The Australian Labor Party 1891-1991* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 269, Ross McMullin depicts the Groupers in the early 1950s as “a powerful force within the ALP as well as the union movement”. This was especially the case in Victoria, where seven of nine new members of the House of Representatives who were elected in 1949 were “Catholics known for their single-mindedness about communism” (p. 256). In “The Labor Party and the Industrial Groups in South Australia”, Saunders maintains (p. 74) “the driving force of the Groupers was always the Movement”.

<sup>70</sup> Ormonde, *The Movement*, p. 37. Shinnick testifies to this in South Australia. In “Youthful Yearnings”, p. 143, he describes involvement in the ALP as an “essential task” associated with Movement: “We [members of the Movement] persisted in trying to have an influence through the sub-branches. Each year, prior to state conferences, we assembled to consider the motions before conference. For nearly all of them, we were directed by the National Office how we were to vote. Only very few were left to our discretion.”

and this demands large scale action on legislative, political, economic and cultural lines . . . <sup>71</sup>

This was the antithesis of one of the most common themes in Beovich’s preaching—the importance of seemingly insignificant little acts of faith, hope, charity, humility and submission to the will of God—but he does not seem to have challenged Santamaria at the time.

In 1951, in another submission to the bishops, Santamaria recommended that “the Church in this country should set itself out to provide a trained, coordinated and disciplined band of citizens who will pledge themselves to what amounts to coordinated apostolic action in all civic organisations, with the express objective of securing in all of them the triumph of policies based on the common good . . . ”<sup>72</sup> Through his role as secretary of the NCRM and drafter of the hierarchy’s social justice statements, Santamaria had become a fount of policies “based on the common good”, some quite utopian, such as his vision for Australian rural life based on subsistence farming rather than commercial agriculture, along the lines of medieval peasant villages.<sup>73</sup> The Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action had enough sense to decline his proposal as “it could involve the Church in party politics”.<sup>74</sup> The minutes of the annual meeting of the hierarchy on 17-19 April 1951 record that:

The Archbishop of Adelaide said that in setting up the movement the Hierarchy had done a most important service to the Church and Australia by offering a very effective counter to the heresy of atheistic communism. It was essential, however, that great care be taken lest the Church and the Hierarchy be involved in purely party politics.

The meeting agreed that this could be achieved and that the movement could be properly directed by frequent meetings of the “Committee to control the Industrial Movement”.

There is no evidence that greater control was exerted. On the contrary, on 11 December 1952, after Labor’s victory in the Victorian state election, Santamaria

<sup>71</sup> Personal statement (undated) from Santamaria to members of the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action, including quotations from a letter from Mannix to Santamaria, dated 13 December 1948.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, p. 160.

<sup>73</sup> See Henderson, chapter 6. Santamaria himself acknowledged the irony of a Melbourne-based lawyer writing rural policies in *Santamaria: A Memoir*, p. 44.

<sup>74</sup> Minutes, 3 April 1951.

confidently wrote to Mannix that “the Social Studies Movement should within a period of five to six years be able to completely transform the leadership of the Labor Movement, and to introduce into Federal and State spheres large numbers of members who . . . should be able to implement a Christian social programme”.<sup>75</sup> A week later, Beovich reported in his diary that he had received “disturbing news” about the Movement becoming too party-political: “It may be so and I have feared this. Will need careful watching.”<sup>76</sup> In a paper delivered to a Movement summer school in 1953, subsequently published in the *Bombay Examiner* in 1955, Santamaria attempted to maintain a difference between “political action” (which he defined as working within a political party to promote policies based on Christian principles) and “party political action” (supporting one political party against another). The former, he argued, was acceptable for “an organisation effectively under the control of the hierarchy”.<sup>77</sup>

Concern must have been expressed about this policy, as on 13 May 1953 a missive from the Movement’s national headquarters was sent to the state office in South Australia.<sup>78</sup> It referred to a decision taken at a Movement meeting the previous January to mention the issue of “our acting in the political field” in the Movement’s annual report to the hierarchy “in a manner which would appear to be incidental to the main report, but which would nevertheless raise the point at issue for determination”. Subsequently the national executive, in consultation with the sympathetic Bishop O’Collins, decided that it

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<sup>75</sup> Quoted in Andrew Campbell, “Politics as a Vocation: A Critical Examination of B.A. Santamaria and the Politics of Commitment” (PhD thesis, Deakin University, 1989), pp. 197, 241-2; Phillip Dreery, “Santamaria, the Movement and the Split: A Re-examination”, *JACHS* 22 (2001): 53. In 1953 Santamaria claimed that 14 members of the Movement were in the Cain government. See also Fitzgerald, *The Pope’s Battalions*, p. 69; Paul Strangio, “The Split: a Victorian Phenomenon”, *The Great Labor Schism: A Retrospective*, p. 31.

<sup>76</sup> Diary, 18 December 1952. Beovich did not record the information he received. In 1979 he found, filed in one of the books in his study at Ennis, an undated and unsigned statement from a former Movement supporter. Rereading it, he noted at the end: “There were good points in its submission”. The main point was that Santamaria had shifted focus from fighting communism in the trade union movement to implementing “reactionary” and “foolish” economic and political policies: “A gigantic confidence trick is being played upon us. It cannot be challenged because it is never affirmed. The Movement that the Australian Hierarchy blessed and promoted has been given authority to do a certain work—to safeguard the faith from bloody suppression. The authority to do this work has been fully understood and has received practical acceptance. Catholics are now being made to understand by all means short of saying it that this authority extends to the promotion of various political and economic policies which are the private ideas of individuals in these matters.” The document is now in the ACAA.

<sup>77</sup> Extracts were included as an appendix to “The Social Studies Movement”. For the story behind the *Bombay Examiner* article, see Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, pp. 188-194, 263-6.

<sup>78</sup> The document is now in David Shinnick’s papers in the ACAA. Neither Henderson nor Duncan refer to it. It is one of the Movement’s internal communications which was once deemed so highly confidential that it was cut in half for posting to separate addresses and later stuck back together. For this tactic, used to ensure that a complete document never fell into “enemy hands”, see Ormonde, *The Movement*, pp. 19-20.



Committee on Catholic Action met on 17 November, there was open conflict between Simonds (coadjutor archbishop of Melbourne and episcopal chairman of the Young Christian Workers’ Movement), and Mannix over Simonds’ insistence that the Social Studies Movement be clearly separated from Catholic Action. Mannix refused to budge, and Simonds stormed out of the meeting. Beovich attempted to steer a middle course: “Archbishop Beovich, while praising the work of both bodies, thought there should be a definite distinction between the work of Catholic Action and the Movement”.<sup>81</sup> He moved that the national chaplain of Catholic Action should not also be the national chaplain of the Movement, a “bandaid” solution which ignored the deeper problem that the national headquarters of both bodies were in the same building and the most senior administrative officer was the same person: Santamaria.

Beovich was still, at this stage, an admirer of Santamaria. On 21 December 1953 he noted in his diary that he had met the new apostolic delegate, Romolo Carboni, in Sydney. He praised the work of the Movement in general and Santamaria in particular: “I thought the opportunity favourable and spoke well of Mr B.A. Santamaria, describing him as the best Catholic layman in Australia”. At some later date, after Carboni had become an enthusiastic supporter of Santamaria and the Movement and Beovich had rethought his position, Beovich wrote in the margin of his diary: “Mea Culpa”.

In his annual Newman Institute lecture in 1954, Beovich again reiterated the distinction between Catholic Action and the action of Catholics, and he recommended that the students read Jacques Maritain’s *The Things That Are Not Caesar’s*.<sup>82</sup> He was uncomfortable with the proposed Social Justice Statement on “Commonwealth and States”, which Santamaria drafted in 1954, because it seemed to bind Catholics too strongly to its viewpoints.<sup>83</sup> At the hierarchy’s annual meeting in April, Beovich moved that “the bishops confirm the principle that there is a definite distinction between Catholic Action and the Industrial Movement”. After much discussion, the motion was carried by sixteen votes to

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same person. The meeting recommended to the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action that the chaplaincy, headquarters and administrative positions be separated.

<sup>81</sup> Minutes, 17 November 1953. In his diary on 17 November Beovich reported that “the meeting was interesting and Dr Mannix seemed his old self”.

<sup>82</sup> The typescript for the lecture is in the ACAA.

<sup>83</sup> Beovich to Arthur Fox, April 1954. For the dispute over the 1954 statement, see Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, pp. 85-91.

ten.<sup>84</sup> Beovich reported in his diary on 30 April: “After the long discussion the Movement survives, but while the Bishops thank it for its fight against Communism, it cannot invoke the name of the Bishops to persuade its members”. He was pleased with the spirit of “fraternal charity” among the bishops: “Men spoke with feeling on diverse viewpoints; at the end the spirit of unity was not harmed”. Five months later, at the meeting of the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action, he successfully moved that all prior regulations of the Episcopal Committee on the legal dependence of the Catholic Action movements to the national secretariat be rescinded, and that the staff of the national secretariat be transferred to the national headquarters of the Catholic Social Studies Movement.<sup>85</sup> However, while this seemed a reasonable solution to the tension between the Movement and Catholic Action (or, to use the term which became increasingly common in the 1950s, “the lay apostolate”), the underlying issue of the Movement’s relationship to the hierarchy was not addressed and confusion persisted.<sup>86</sup> With the closure of the National Secretariat of Catholic Action, the Movement’s financial support from the bishops actually increased. The quota for the Adelaide archdiocese rose from £390 to £975 in 1955.<sup>87</sup>

Clyde Cameron relates how Beovich supported Brian Nash, an ardent Movement man, when he was expelled from the ALP in May 1954 for campaigning against Rex Matthews, an endorsed ALP candidate whom Nash alleged was a communist. Beovich asked to see Cameron privately, and after receiving him “most graciously”, told Cameron that “he felt obliged to exclude all members of the South Australian executive who had been party to Nash’s expulsion from future Catholic functions”.<sup>88</sup> Cameron recalls that it was on this occasion that he told Beovich “that the Catholic Church in Australia was taking a grave risk of arousing the sectarian passions of the Protestant majority . . . if it came to the point, many non-Catholics would rather vote Communist than allow Catholics to take

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<sup>84</sup> Minutes, 28-29 April 1954.

<sup>85</sup> Minutes, 23 September 1954.

<sup>86</sup> For example, Brian McKinlay repeatedly refers to Santamaria’s Movement as “the Catholic Action Movement” in his *A Centenary of Struggle: The ALP. A Centenary History* (Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1988).

<sup>87</sup> O’Collins to Beovich, 17 September 1954; “Financial Statement Presented by Bishop of Ballarat, 1954-1955”.

<sup>88</sup> Cameron, *Confessions*, pp. 103-104. “For a long time after that interview, none of us was ever invited to official Church functions in our respective electorates. The ban was not lifted until 1956, when Archie Cameron died. I had to attend his Requiem Mass on behalf of Dr Evatt. Archbishop Beovich came up, shook hands and said, “Well, it’s a long time since we’ve seen you at our functions, Mr Cameron.” I replied, in a friendly way, that he knew why that was. He agreed and asked whether I would come to the next one. I said I would, and so the ban was lifted.”

over”.<sup>89</sup> Santamaria was no doubt thinking of this statement when he alleged in 1997 that Beovich had succumbed to the fear-mongering of leftwing politicians.<sup>90</sup> However, Cameron’s warning had no observable effect on Beovich at the time. In August 1954 Beovich intervened publicly when seven Catholic members of the ALP in South Australia were expelled or suffered penalties after refusing to support Matthews. Without accusing Matthews of being a communist, Beovich affirmed the right of his opponents to act according to their conscience even when this meant refusing to abide by party discipline: “An important principle is at stake and it is for that reason that I have felt it my duty to give to those who have suffered for conscience sake my public and wholehearted support”.<sup>91</sup> The issue of conscience versus party solidarity would soon become even more acute.

### “The Split” and the Bishops’ Response

The internecine struggle in the ALP which was triggered by Evatt’s outburst against the Movement on 5 October 1954 is too complex to be examined here.<sup>92</sup> Beovich did not think highly of Evatt.<sup>93</sup> He flew to Melbourne for a meeting with O’Collins and Santamaria on 23 December 1954 and agreed that “the orthodox thing is to close our ranks and continue the fight against atheistic communism”.<sup>94</sup> It was evident by then that the Sydney bishops no longer supported the national executive. After James Carroll was appointed auxiliary bishop in February 1954, Gilroy delegated Movement matters to him, and Carroll moved promptly to extricate the Movement in New South Wales from

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>90</sup> It is not present in *Against the Tide*, the first version of his autobiography (see p. 196), but it was included in *Santamaria: A Memoir* (p. 167) which was published after Cameron’s *Confessions*.

<sup>91</sup> *Advertiser*, 12 August 1954, p. 1. See also *Advertiser*, 9 August 1954, p. 3 and *Southern Cross*, 13 August 1954, p. 7.

<sup>92</sup> For recent summaries, see Peter Love, “The Great Labor Split of 1955: an overview”, in *The Great Labor Schism: A Retrospective*, pp. 1-20, and Fitzgerald, *The Pope’s Battalions*, pp. 108-148. Contrary to a widespread belief that Evatt was mentally ill, Phillip Dreery argues that he “acted rationally in response to a generally perceived threat”, “Santamaria, The Movement and the Split: A Re-examination”, pp. 47-58.

<sup>93</sup> “He is splitting the Labor Party . . . and thus serving the ends of the Communist Party . . . As a leader he now seems a liability rather than an asset to the cause of Labor.” Diary, 8 October 1956. On 25 November 1954 Beovich’s guest for a meal at Ennis was Archie Cameron, Speaker of the House of Representatives. After praying the Rosary together (Cameron was a convert to Catholicism), Cameron told Beovich that there was “good evidence” that Evatt had once been a member of the Communist Party, so possibly the Communists were blackmailing him. Beovich noted in his diary, “If true this would explain a lot”.

<sup>94</sup> Diary, 23 December 1954.

Santamaria’s influence.<sup>95</sup> Beovich attributed this partly to “state feeling” and partly to “interference on a lower level (Monsignor Wallace and Calwell, etc).”<sup>96</sup> This is significant because his friendship with Calwell is sometimes cited as a reason for his later opposition to Santamaria, Calwell being one of Santamaria’s most bitter Catholic opponents among senior ALP figures in Victoria.<sup>97</sup> In fact, there is no evidence that Calwell or Wallace (another former student of North Melbourne Christian Brothers’ College) influenced Beovich at all. Beovich was an outspoken critic of the decision of the ALP federal conference in Hobart in March 1955 to withdraw support from the Industrial Groups, even though they were no longer in existence in South Australia, having been disbanded in 1951. At the opening of a new Catholic school in Goodwood on 24 March 1955, a few days after the conference ended, Beovich warned of a communist “fifth column” in Australia “determined to smash our liberty and make us part of the Communist empire”. He praised the “stalwart men and women” who had, through the Industrial Groups, fought to free unions from communist control, and he concluded: “I give the warning—as one who holds in great esteem the historic Labor Party—that if the industrial groups are destroyed throughout Australia, the Communists will be the only gainers”.<sup>98</sup>

After their annual meeting in Sydney in April 1955, the Catholic bishops of Australia issued a Joint Pastoral Letter titled *The Menace of Communism*. It praised the “courageous campaign” which had “saved our civil and religious freedoms when they were in grave peril” and paid “warm tribute to all those who have engaged in the struggle”. It also condemned the disbanding of the Industrial Groups, and took a swipe at “highly placed men, including some Catholics, [who] seem to have closed their eyes to the great issues involved . . . [and] do not appear to realise that they are forwarding the interests of Communism”. While this was a remarkably strong declaration of support for the Movement, “the campaign” was specifically identified as taking place within trade unions. The Joint Pastoral denied that the Church had any intention to intervene in party politics. It reiterated that Catholics were free to vote according to conscience for any party but a communist party, and it concluded that “more is effected by prayer than human effort”. It was clearly a compromise document, reflecting the enthusiastic support the Movement

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<sup>95</sup> See Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, pp. 206 ff.

<sup>96</sup> Diary, 23 December 1954.

<sup>97</sup> For example, John Hepworth, “The Movement Revisited: A South Australian Perspective” (BA Hons thesis, University of Adelaide, 1982), p. 102.

<sup>98</sup> *Southern Cross*, 20 March 1955, p. 7.

received from bishops such as James O’Collins and Patrick Lyons, the more cautious approval of Matthew Beovich, and a little of the concern of critics like Justin Simonds. When asked many years later to explain the Joint Pastoral, Beovich commented that the final version was more moderate than the original draft. Given their previous support for the Movement, he thought the bishops could hardly disown it: “the Movement has been in existence, you’ve been helping it, you’re not going to drop it like a hot potato”.<sup>99</sup>

Duncan describes the Joint Pastoral Letter as “a missed opportunity for the bishops to clarify the Church’s role in the Movement”.<sup>100</sup> They could not do that because they found it difficult to understand themselves. Beovich was a member of a working group appointed to “study the situation more closely”. As a result of its deliberations, two motions were unanimously passed at a plenary session. One praised “the self-sacrificing work” of the men and women of the Movement, but added: “At the next Conference of the Bishops the Committee for Social Studies will present suggestions for the future of the Social Studies Movement”. A new committee was formed, including Gilroy and Carroll as well as Mannix. The other motion affirmed that “at all times the rights of the Bishop in his own diocese will be respected by all members of the Social Studies’ Movement before any decision is implemented”.<sup>101</sup> The meeting of the new Committee for Social Studies on 5 May 1955 in Melbourne reached a stalemate as Mannix, the chairman, would not allow each state the right to adopt its own policies or veto decisions of the national executive, and he frustrated the attempt to reconsider the Movement’s mandate by refusing to call another meeting that year.<sup>102</sup>

### **The Formation of a New Political Party**

Beovich left Adelaide on 10 May 1955 with his episcopal friends James O’Collins and Patrick Lyons for an *ad limina* visit to Rome. The trio also attended the International Eucharistic Congress in Rio de Janeiro and enjoyed a vacation in Europe. As a result, Beovich did not return to Adelaide until 6 November 1955. During his absence, the Cain

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<sup>99</sup> Beovich, interview by John Warhurst, 26 June 1974, cited in Warhurst, “The Communist Bogey”, p. 318.

<sup>100</sup> Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, p. 258.

<sup>101</sup> Minutes, 20-21 April, 1955.

<sup>102</sup> “The Social Studies Movement”, pp. 17-18.

Labor government fell in Victoria after a bitter election campaign, helped by Movement sympathizers who had been expelled or seceded from the ALP and formed a new party, the Australian Labor Party (Anti-Communist). The day after Beovich’s return from Europe, Ted Farrell and James Gleeson visited the archbishop and informed him that the Movement wished to sponsor a new party in South Australia along similar lines to the ALP (A-C) in Victoria. Farrell was still the Movement’s senior official in South Australia, and Gleeson was its diocesan chaplain.

Two other full-time employees of the Movement based at the state office in Adelaide were Cyril Naughton and Brian Nash. They had attended a meeting in Melbourne the previous August and had apparently committed their region to supporting the ALP (A-C). Farrell subsequently recounted in a letter to Santamaria: “In the absence of No. 1 [Beovich] abroad, you indicated that you were prepared to accept responsibility for this decision”.<sup>103</sup> Farrell himself was unenthusiastic, thinking the proposal was “not practical”, and he insisted on waiting until Beovich returned before going any further with it. He wrote to Santamaria:

On the first morning on which No. 1 gave interviews, following his return . . . I presented these recommendations as from N.H.Q. [national headquarters], No. 1 of Melbourne [Mannix] and the State Executive here. I deliberately avoided any intrusion of my own views . . . No. 1 decided against the formation of such a party.<sup>104</sup>

In spite of Beovich’s disapproval, the new party was formally established the following day, 8 November 1955, and announced in the *Advertiser* on 12 November. Like its counterpart in Victoria, it was first known as the Australian Labor Party (Anti-Communist). In June 1957 it joined the New South Wales Democratic Labor Party (DLP) and took the DLP name. Two Catholic lawyers were the driving force: Frank Moran and David O’Sullivan. Nash and Naughton became members of the party.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Farrell to Santamaria, 17 April 1956, ACAA.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> See Geraldine Little, “The Democratic Labor Party in South Australia” (BA Honours thesis, University of Adelaide, 1968), p. 17 ff. Little interviewed Beovich in 1968.

Beovich explained the reasons why he decided not to support the party on a number of occasions.<sup>106</sup> He attended a meeting of the state executive of the Movement on 14 November and addressed a clergy conference on 25 November 1955. On 17 December he had a long private interview with David O’Sullivan and Stan Keon, one of the founders of the ALP (A-C) in Victoria. Presumably his explanation to O’Sullivan and Keon was similar to the one he gave the Catholic men’s society, the Knights of the Southern Cross, on 21 December. He related that it was his personal opinion that the ALP (A-C) had some legitimacy in Victoria as it had been endorsed by the old ALP executive (dissolved in controversial circumstances by the federal executive in December 1954). However, he thought a Catholic political party was “unwise” in South Australia. He stressed that anyone who wanted to stand for parliament could do so, but they could not claim the support of the Church.<sup>107</sup>

Beovich’s opposition to the formation of a new party was in part pragmatic. As he recounted in his diary, he realised that there was little chance of a predominantly Catholic political party “getting any distance” in a state in which Catholics were in a minority (15.8 per cent of the population according to the 1954 census). He thought “decent Catholics should remain in the labour movement and not leave that field to Communists and extremists”.<sup>108</sup> There was, nonetheless, also a matter of principle which concerned him. He accepted that Catholic electors should be free to vote according to their conscience for any party but the Communist Party. While also acknowledging this, Mannix made his own voting intentions abundantly clear in a speech published in the *Southern Cross* on 18 November 1955: “my vote will be cast against Communists and against those who are company-keeping with Communists”.<sup>109</sup>

“Company keeping” or “fellow travelling” had become one of the standard slurs used against men and women who remained in the ALP, especially in Victoria. Janet McCalman

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<sup>106</sup> He outlined what he told Farrell and Gleeson “a few days ago” in his diary on 12 November 1955. He subsequently elaborated on his reasons in a speech to the bishops’ conference in January 1956 (notes of the speech are in the ACAA) and in his report to the apostolic delegate on the Movement crisis dated 9 October 1956.

<sup>107</sup> His address to the Knights of the Southern Cross on 21 December 1955 is in the ACAA.

<sup>108</sup> Diary, 12 November 1955.

<sup>109</sup> *Southern Cross*, 18 November 1955, p. 7.

captures some of the virulence of the controversy in her history of the working-class Richmond district:

The crusade against Communist materialism was re-opening old sectarian and class wounds. As the [Movement] crusaders became locked into a mad little world of their own, they drew on decades of class and religious grievance, tapping a vast reservoir of lower-class Catholic resentment against secular sophisticates and the Protestant establishment.<sup>110</sup>

However, arguably more serious than sectarianism was the gulf which emerged within the Catholic community between supporters of the old ALP and the new break-away party in Victoria. Calwell encountered so much antagonism in his local parish that he had to leave it. He claimed:

There is not a parish in Victoria where this division in families and neighbours does not exist. Between neighbours, the hostility sometimes borders on outright hatred. Life-long friendships have been severed, calumny is widespread and detraction is now regarded as a virtue.<sup>111</sup>

The fall of the Gair Labor government in Queensland also took place amidst “unparalleled bitterness”. Boland comments of the 1957 election campaign: “Catholic accused Catholic of treason and apostasy. Priests spoke in that vein in the pulpit and some of them named parishioners”.<sup>112</sup>

Many years later, in a letter to Calwell’s widow, Beovich commented that “the then circumstances and heat of party politics may partly explain this lapse of charity but not excuse it”.<sup>113</sup> At the archdiocesan clergy conference in Adelaide on 25 November 1955, he informed his priests that they were not to give out any “voting instructions” from the pulpit.<sup>114</sup> Most seem to have complied. Cameron believes there were “only a few isolated cases in which a parish priest was so overtly opposed to what the Labor Party was doing as

<sup>110</sup> Janet McCalman, *Struggletown: Public and Private Life in Richmond, 1900-1965* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1984), p. 237.

<sup>111</sup> Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1978), p. 171. See also Niall Brennan, *The Politics of Catholics* (Melbourne: Hill Publishing, 1972), pp. 28ff.

<sup>112</sup> Boland, *Duhig*, p. 359. Maguire describes tension in the Townsville diocese, where Bishop Hugh Ryan and some of his priests were firm supporters of Santamaria. Parishioners who were alienated by the political content of sermons stopped attending Mass, and a number of parents were so disturbed by the political indoctrination of their children that they no longer wanted to send them to a Catholic school. See *Prologue: A History of the Catholic Church as Seen From Townsville*, pp. 161, 218-219.

<sup>113</sup> Beovich to Elizabeth Calwell, 12 November 1973.

<sup>114</sup> Diary, 25 November 1955. He made the same comment at the meeting of the Knights of the Southern Cross on 21 December 1955.



to cause his parishioners to go to another parish for Mass”.<sup>115</sup> Certainly Patrick Kelly, editor of the *Southern Cross*, obediently curbed the exuberant anti-communist campaign he had been waging in the paper, and after 1955 the *Southern Cross* no longer accepted political advertisements.<sup>116</sup>

In its first federal election campaign in December 1955, the new anti-communist party attracted more than 35,000 votes in South Australia (8.7 per cent). Although it did not win a seat itself, by directing its preferences to the Liberal and Country Parties, it prevented the ALP gaining a third Senate seat. In the 1968 state election DLP preferences in two seats contributed to the defeat of the ALP government. Nevertheless, in terms of percentages, the 1955 result was never surpassed. In subsequent Senate elections in the 1950s and 1960s, the South Australian result was the lowest or second-lowest for the party in Australia. It slumped to 2.4 per cent in 1964. The branch never won a parliamentary seat at either state or federal level. Low membership (a peak of about eight hundred was reached in the mid 1960s) and inadequate finances inhibited the party’s growth. Very few former members of the ALP joined it and no trade union chose to affiliate.<sup>117</sup>

Saunders and Lloyd highlight the relatively small percentage of Catholics in South Australia and Beovich’s refusal to support the DLP as factors which “do much to explain why the state branch of the Labor Party did not split in two in the mid-1950s”.<sup>118</sup> They also acknowledge the relatively healthy state of the local branch, largely due to the control exerted by Cameron and Toohey, and believe that memories of the bitter schism in the 1930s and a realistic hope of winning government in the not-too-distant future helped the ALP retain the allegiance of right-wing members.<sup>119</sup> Perhaps the strongest indication that Beovich played a significant role is the fact that the anti-communist party’s best Senate

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<sup>115</sup> Cameron, *Confessions*, p. 91.

<sup>116</sup> Political parties who had wished to advertise in the *Southern Cross* had been forced to sign a stridently anti-communist declaration. The Australian Labor Party (Anti-Communist) was happy to do this and the Liberal—Country Party ran an advertisement in 1955: “Keep the Communists Out by Keeping Menzies In!” There were no ALP advertisements. In subsequent election campaigns the *Southern Cross* abided by Beovich’s policy of neutrality by not accepting any political advertisements. See John Warhurst, “The Australian Labor Party (Anti-Communist) in South Australia, November-December, 1955: ‘Molotov’ Labor Versus ‘Coffee Shop Labor’”, *Labor History* 32 (May 1977): pp. 73-4.

<sup>117</sup> Saunders and Lloyd, “Remembering the Past”, p. 89; P.L. Reynolds, *The Democratic Labor Party* (Brisbane: Jacaranda, 1974), p. 54; Dean Jaensch, “Democratic Labor Party” in the *Wakefield Companion to South Australian History*, pp. 146-7; Little, “The Democratic Labor Party”, passim.

<sup>118</sup> Saunders and Lloyd, “Remembering the Past”, p. 88.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

result was in the 1955 election. That can be attributed to the momentum which had built up after Evatt’s attack on the Movement in October 1954, helped by Beovich’s denunciation of the ALP conference’s decision to disband the Industrial groups and the enthusiastic support given to Santamaria by Patrick Kelly in the *Southern Cross*.<sup>120</sup> As they went to the polling booths in 1955, many Catholics may not have been aware that their archbishop, recently returned from overseas, had declined to endorse the new party. Further evidence that Beovich’s refusal to support the DLP was a severe handicap can be found in the resentment felt by some party members. As Warhurst notes, while the DLP disclaimed that it was a Catholic party, “in those diocese such as Sydney and Adelaide, where the DLP did not receive official church support, the party acted as if they were being deprived of something which was rightfully theirs”.<sup>121</sup>

### The Break with Santamaria

Less than a fortnight after arriving home from Europe in November 1955, Beovich travelled to Queensland for James Duhig’s episcopal golden jubilee celebrations. With so many bishops gathered in Brisbane, Gilroy took the opportunity to call a meeting of the Australian hierarchy. It was agreed that henceforth the Australian bishops would meet each year at St Patrick’s College at Manly on the Tuesday preceding the last Friday in January.<sup>122</sup> Mannix was typically absent and, not intending to go to Sydney in January, wrote to all the bishops in December 1955. He stressed the importance of the Movement remaining national, and he exhorted the bishops to abide by the decisions of the national executive.<sup>123</sup> Beovich was dismayed by his intransigence and refusal to accept that the original mandate given to the Movement in 1945 was based on the assurance that in each diocese it would be “in all things subject to the will of the bishop”. Beovich carefully

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<sup>120</sup> On 21 September 1955 Santamaria gave a lecture to over a thousand people in the Norwood Town Hall. His “outstanding address” was given extensive coverage in the *Southern Cross*, 30 September 1955, pp. 1, 3; 7 October 1955, pp. 3, 7.

<sup>121</sup> Warhurst, “The Communist Bogey”, p. 312. Warhurst cites a 1960 document “Analysis” in the files of the South Australian office of the DLP. A sense that they felt betrayed by the archbishop was communicated to the author of this thesis in a number of informal conversations with former DLP supporters.

<sup>122</sup> Minutes, 17 November 1955.

<sup>123</sup> Daniel Mannix, “Statement for the Bishops Regarding the Social Studies Movement, 21 December 1955”, ACAA.

prepared what he would say at the January meeting.<sup>124</sup> He accepted that, as the bishops had endorsed the Movement, they were responsible for it, and that its mandate needed to be reviewed. His greatest concern was the development of a predominantly Catholic political party. He stated his opposition but concluded: “I hope I am not stubborn, and if the majority of Bishops favour the existence of a Catholic party then I shall agree with them, for I have great confidence in the collective wisdom of the hierarchy”. After the meeting he reflected in his diary that while all the bishops “are most anxious for a strong and effective fight against the communist menace, the majority do not favour a new political party linked with the Movement”.<sup>125</sup> The motion that “the Movement as an organisation is not a political party nor should it attempt to dominate any political party” was in fact carried by nineteen votes to six.<sup>126</sup>

In January 1956 the episcopal conference recommitted the direction of the Movement to the Episcopal Committee on Social Studies. Gilroy chaired a meeting of the committee in Melbourne on 20 March 1956. Four days later Beovich was pleased to receive the committee’s decision that the Movement should confine its activities to the industrial field and education, not politics.<sup>127</sup> He thought the national executive’s response—that the Movement was essentially a lay organisation and thereby free to enter the political sphere—flatly contradicted the long history of episcopal support for the Movement. He jotted in the margin of the letter he received from the executive: “No. The Bishops are closely bound up with the Movement. They finance it in great part and gave it a specific mandate. They can hardly escape some responsibility.”<sup>128</sup>

By now Beovich’s respect for Santamaria had diminished, and he had much more sympathy for Gilroy’s and Carroll’s opposition to the national executive. At the archdiocesan clergy conference in June 1956 he informed his priests of the Episcopal Committee’s decision,<sup>129</sup> and in a private conversation with Romolo Carboni in July he commended Sydney’s “down to earth” policy: that communism could best be fought

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<sup>124</sup> Handwritten notes for the comments he intended to make are in the ACAA.

<sup>125</sup> Diary, 27 January 1956.

<sup>126</sup> Minutes, 24-27 January 1956; Beovich to Carboni, 9 October 1956.

<sup>127</sup> Diary 24 March 1956.

<sup>128</sup> Reply of Members of the National Executive to Members of the Episcopal Committee on the Catholic Social Studies Movement, 24 March 1956.

<sup>129</sup> Diary, 28 June 1956.

within the ALP and the trade union movement, not by forming another party.<sup>130</sup> His words had no apparent effect as the apostolic delegate had become a fervent admirer of Santamaria and publicly supported him at NCRM conventions and other functions.<sup>131</sup>

Although the national executive initially accepted the decision of the Episcopal Committee, on 18 July 1956 all the national officials of the Movement in Melbourne resigned, allegedly on the grounds that giving each bishop a right of veto over Movement activity in his diocese would result in “the collapse of an effective organised resistance to Communism in Australia”.<sup>132</sup> In reality, the resignations meant little as Santamaria immediately inaugurated the “Catholic Social Movement” (CSM) which was virtually the same as the former Movement except that it was made clear that it was a lay organisation and that decisions of the national executive would bind all members. Beovich was displeased and refused to give the supposedly new organisation any support.<sup>133</sup> On 4 September 1956 he received a typewritten circular letter from Santamaria listing the names of fourteen Australian dioceses which had agreed to affiliate with the CSM. Santamaria added a hand-written note to Beovich which assured him that the reconstituted national movement did not intend to establish branches in dioceses which refused to affiliate: “Further, I would like Your Grace to know that there is not—nor has there ever been—any suggestion that another Catholic organisation would be set up in Adelaide”.<sup>134</sup>

Nevertheless, within a few weeks Beovich heard that the CSM was indeed operating in Adelaide. As Santamaria eventually acknowledged in his memoirs, “two of the three lay

<sup>130</sup> Diary, 5 July 1956.

<sup>131</sup> For Carboni’s support for Santamaria, see Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, pp. 220, 250, 267-8, 288, 298, 301, 303, 359.

<sup>132</sup> National Officers and Full-Time Officials of the Social Studies Movement to Beovich, 18 July 1956. All bishops received the letter.

<sup>133</sup> Diary, 20 July 1956. On 22 August 1956 Ted Farrell wrote to “Melbourne”:

He [Beovich] marvels at the resignations of the National Officers and the reported desire to set up a new organisation in view of the formula agreed upon by the Chiefs’ Committee [the Episcopal Committee on Social Studies] which formula was accepted by the National Executive.

Pending further discussion of the whole matter by the general body of chiefs, he will not recognise any new organisation in his region, but will continue to give encouragement and support to the existing Show here and its State Secretary.

He wishes his opposition to any proposed branch in SA of the so-called new National Organisation to be made known to those concerned.

A copy of Farrell’s letter is in the ACAA. A draft—in Beovich’s handwriting—can be found on the back of a letter which Gilroy wrote to Beovich on 2 August 1956.

<sup>134</sup> Santamaria to Beovich, 5 September 1956. Yet in a letter to James McAuley, c. 1 September 1955, Santamaria assured McAuley that Catholics could still join the reconstructed national movement, even if a diocese retained its own movement. See Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, p. 301.

officials [of the Movement in South Australia] stayed with the national body”.<sup>135</sup> He was referring to Nash and Naughton. Farrell remained closely allied to Beovich. When Beovich wrote to Santamaria on 12 October 1956 to complain about the CSM’s activities in Adelaide, Santamaria glibly replied that while no “specifically Catholic” organisation would be set up in the Adelaide archdiocese, the CSM could not allow a vacuum to occur in the fight against communism. Hence it was supporting a “broad” anti-communist organisation whose policies were “in harmony” with its own.<sup>136</sup> The episode further undermined Santamaria’s credibility in Beovich’s eyes.

Beovich was now, like the Sydney bishops, in the awkward position of trying to suppress a supposedly lay organisation at the same time as the apostolic delegate was publicly championing Santamaria’s contention that such an organisation should be free from episcopal interference.<sup>137</sup> In September 1957 the two men “who stayed with the national body”, Nash and Naughton, wrote to Carboni complaining that the new auxiliary bishop in Adelaide, James Gleeson, had told a clergy conference that they were not authorized by Beovich and should not receive financial support from parishes.<sup>138</sup> When Carboni passed the complaint to Beovich,<sup>139</sup> the archbishop sent him a report on the activities of Nash and Naughton. It concluded:

It might be possible for Messrs. Nash and Naughton to claim now that they are working simply as citizens. It is undeniable that they have previously acted and spoken as officials of a Catholic organisation with very special claims upon Catholics both financially and personally. It is no further exaggeration to state that they have, probably with no malice and with good intentions, fostered a spirit of disregard for the teaching authority of the Ordinary [the bishop] and also a spirit of division between priests and lay people.

It is the considered opinion of a large number of experienced lay men . . . that the plan of fighting Communism envisaged and promoted by Messrs. Naughton and

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<sup>135</sup> Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, p. 167.

<sup>136</sup> The correspondence is in the ACAA, along with a response from Farrell to Beovich, dated 24 October 1956, denying that there was “a vacuum”. Henderson (*Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, p. 119) comments that the CSM “never established a formal organizational structure in either Sydney or Adelaide” but “did attempt to operate indirectly in these two cities . . . In Adelaide . . . it achieved very little”.

<sup>137</sup> Gilroy, in a circular letter to the bishops, wrote on 2 August 1956: “laymen whose frequently repeated claim of episcopal support previously gave rise to some anxiety, now would disclaim episcopal authorization altogether . . . [yet] the men in question cannot be considered independent of the Church, in the light of their activities on behalf of the Church up to date, their well-known association with it, and their frequently-repeated claim of support from the hierarchy. Moreover, they propose to carry the Catholic name. Surely their decisions and activities would commit the Church and its hierarchy, even though, in point of fact, they would have no right to speak on behalf of the Church . . . ”

<sup>138</sup> Naughton and Nash to Carboni, 4 September 1957.

<sup>139</sup> Carboni to Beovich, 7 September 1957.

Nash is not only ineffective in the present situation but positively harmful because it is not uniting Catholics and non-Catholics but rather isolating the Catholics and rendering them open to sectarian attack.

They represent not a group of lay people who are prevented from doing effective work by the Ordinary and Clergy but rather lay people in another Diocese and State who are interfering in the really effective and harmonious work being performed by a large number of generous and apostolic men and women in this Ecclesiastical Province . . . <sup>140</sup>

Clearly the Adelaide archdiocese did not entirely escape the trauma of the bitter internal divisions which became so apparent in Victoria, but Nash and Naughton do not seem to have attracted much support. <sup>141</sup>

### **The Split in the Hierarchy and the Appeal to Rome**

On 6 September 1956 Gilroy called an emergency meeting of the Australian hierarchy to discuss the Movement. As tension mounted, Beovich spent several weeks in Calvary Hospital in Adelaide being treated for an abscessed appendix. In October the diagnosis changed from appendicitis to diverticulitis, a chronic illness which could not be resolved by surgery. <sup>142</sup> That it flared up at this time may be some indication of the stress he was experiencing. Yet despite his illness he travelled to Sydney for the meeting on 2 October. Only fifteen of the thirty-three bishops who had been invited were present. <sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> “Summary” prepared 11 September 1957 to be sent with a letter from Beovich to Carboni, 30 September 1957, ACAA.

<sup>141</sup> Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, p. 119. In 1988 Josephine Sheehan interviewed ten South Australians about the Movement and the Split. Nine of the ten recalled it as a traumatic event, making comments like: “I met with a wall of hate”, “there was terrible friction”, “feelings ran very high”, “terrible damage was done”. However, Sheehan concedes that as the interviewees were all “committed people”, their views do not necessarily reflect those of the average Catholic. See “Australian Catholics and the 1955 Split: A Micro-Study of Personal Experiences and Reminiscences” (BA Honours thesis, Flinders University, 1988), p. 74. Margret Mills claims in *Woman, Why Are You Weeping?* that “there was what amounted to a culling of those Catholic lay leaders who were not reconciled to Beovich’s assumption of control of lay Catholic Action groups, and, in particular, of the Newman Institute. The outcome was a polarising, political upheaval that bred resentment and hostility, much of which was suppressed under a façade of unity” (p. 35). As evidence, Mills cites only one example: a member of the National Civic Council was denied membership of the Newman Institute on the grounds that he could try to recruit other members. Mills clearly sympathizes with the position taken by Nash and Naughton (her father-in-law), and her book was published by the publishing house closely associated with Santamaria, News Weekly Books, in 1997.

<sup>142</sup> Diary, 29 September 1956, 17 October 1956.

<sup>143</sup> Gilroy, Beovich, Duhig (Brisbane), O’Brien (Canberra-Goulburn), Simonds (coadjutor, Melbourne), O’Donnell (coadjutor, Brisbane), Norton (Bathurst), Farrelly (Lismore), Fox (Wilcannia-Forbes), McCabe

The rest, “those favouring the new set up” [the CSM], boycotted the meeting.<sup>144</sup> Movement sympathizers had tried a similar tactic at both the Victorian state conference and then the federal conference of the ALP in 1955. As a result, decisions were taken to which the absentees later, unsuccessfully, objected. It would be the same in October 1956. With the division in the hierarchy so starkly manifest, those present decided to send a delegation to Rome: Gilroy, Carroll and Duhig or, as happened, his coadjutor, Patrick O’Donnell. Mannix complained bitterly to Carboni about the “unconstitutional and invalid” meeting, and at the “urgent request” of the apostolic delegate, a further meeting was held on 30 October to give those who had been absent on 2 October a chance to express their views. However, only one of them (Guilford Young of Hobart) chose to attend.<sup>145</sup> The bishops discussed a submission to be sent to Rome with the delegation, highlighting their concerns about the Movement, especially its attempt to control the ALP and its recent evolution into a supposedly independent lay organisation which continued to be closely linked to the Church.<sup>146</sup>

The apostolic delegate also asked for a “personal, confidential and secret” report on the situation from each bishop, this to be forwarded to Rome.<sup>147</sup> Beovich stressed his concern at the development of a Catholic political party, partly because it could stir up sectarian bigotry, but above all because he did not think it could achieve any positive result: “It was tried some twenty or thirty years ago in New South Wales to get justice in education. It effected nothing before it disappeared.”<sup>148</sup> Beovich suggested that a possible solution to the problem of the divisions in the hierarchy over the Movement would be for the Movement to become autonomous in each province, with the bishops advising one another on developments at their annual meetings. Carboni was unimpressed. When he addressed the next national meeting of the Australian hierarchy in January 1957, he chided bishops who “pursued a restricted outlook, limited to the territory of their own diocese”.

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(Wollongong), Cahill (Cairns), Toohey (Maitland), O’Loughlin (Darwin), Lyons and Carroll (Sydney auxiliary bishops).

<sup>144</sup> Diary, 2 October 1956; Minutes, 2 October 1956. Duncan does not include Beovich in his list of the names of the bishops who were present (*Crusade or Conspiracy?*, p. 312), but he was definitely there. See Maguire, *Prologue*, p. 162, for an account of Bishop Ryan of Townsville’s refusal to take part.

<sup>145</sup> “The Social Studies Movement”, p. 24.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> Carboni to Beovich, 4 October 1956; Beovich’s response, 9 October, 1956, ACAA. Beovich was directed to send six copies, one each for the pope, the Holy Office and the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, two for the Vatican Secretariat of State and one for the archives of the delegation.

<sup>148</sup> For the Democratic Party, formed in 1919, see O’Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, pp.346-348.

He further insisted that they should not publicly reveal their differences of opinion, and warned that “lay people should not be unduly or harmfully bothered by their spiritual fathers” in matters such as politics that were purely temporal. His only concession to Santamaria’s critics was to recommend that the national headquarters of the Movement be shifted to Canberra.<sup>149</sup>

An Adelaide diocesan priest recalls a tart comment made by Beovich during the Movement controversy: “the apostolic delegate is the eyes and ears of the Holy Father, but not the mouth”.<sup>150</sup> Bypassing Carboni, the Australian delegation to Rome obtained in May 1957 instructions from Cardinal Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi. He was the prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and, incidentally, one of Gilroy and Beovich’s former lecturers at Propaganda College. Clarifications requested by Gilroy were issued in July 1957.<sup>151</sup> The May document affirmed the laity’s “freedom of initiative” when operating under “their own personal responsibility”, and denied bishops a right of veto. However, it also maintained that it was “not advisable that a confessional political party be created or that the Movement take political character upon itself”. The July clarifications more clearly spelt out that the Movement was to be under the authority of the local bishop with regard to “everything which directly or indirectly concerns the Church’s mission”, that it was to be essentially an organization to promote Catholic social and moral teaching, and that it should “exclude from its program all direct or indirect action on unions or political parties”.

Henderson concludes that none of the protagonists would have been pleased by this response as it meant the Sydney hierarchy had to stop actively supporting the ALP.<sup>152</sup> Beovich, however, wrote with relief to Gilroy after he received copies of the documents on 3 September 1957:

I have read them carefully, and the more I think about the matter the more I appreciate the wisdom of the Holy See both for the present and the future in Australia. Whatever about my thoughts, however, Rome has spoken and I subscribe

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<sup>149</sup> A copy of Carboni’s address, delivered on 22 January 1957 at St Patrick’s College, Manly, is in the ACAA.

<sup>150</sup> Robert Wilkinson, interview by author, 11 June 2002.

<sup>151</sup> Fumasoni-Biondi to Gilroy, 27 May 1957 and 25 July 1957, ACAA. The latter was sent in error to Mannix, so there was some delay before Gilroy and Beovich saw it. For a detailed summary of the Vatican inquiry into the problems of the Australian church and the response, see Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, chapter 23.

<sup>152</sup> Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, p. 129.



to the instructions and clarification without doubt or argument, as, I am happy to know, do all four of us Bishops in this ecclesiastical province of Adelaide [Beovich, Gleeson, Gallagher of Port Pirie and O’Loughlin of Darwin].<sup>153</sup>

After speaking with Gilroy in Sydney on 6 September, Beovich jotted in his diary: “We are in one mind about them”.<sup>154</sup> Carroll, energetically promoting the Vatican directives amongst the hierarchy, appreciated Beovich’s visit. He wrote to Gleeson, three days later: “our Chief [Gilroy] has taken quite a battering over a period and the support of your man has been a big consolation and encouragement”.<sup>155</sup>

Beovich’s one concern with regard to the Vatican directives was that they were issued “in forma riservata” (for the bishops only) and he wanted to share them with his priests. At some point after he received the instructions, Beovich jotted on the back of an envelope a list of “mistakes of the Movement”, perhaps in preparation for the 1958 meeting of the hierarchy. In retrospect, he could see that the Movement had followed too closely the communist tactic of secret infiltration of trade unions and the ALP, and that the move from the industrial field to politics had been an inevitable development. He thought the instructions from the Vatican would prevent these mistakes—if the documents could be made known to the people.<sup>156</sup>

### **In the Aftermath of Vatican Intervention**

At the meeting of the Australian hierarchy in Sydney in January 1958 Beovich moved a motion which expressed gratitude to Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi and pledged that the “authoritative directives” would be implemented.<sup>157</sup> This was unanimously passed. Beovich then moved a more detailed motion as to what exactly would be done. This too

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<sup>153</sup> Beovich to Gilroy, 3 September 1957. Also diary entry for that day: “Rome has spoken and I accepted the instructions and clarifications without doubt or argument.” On 15 July 1957 Carroll wrote to James Gleeson regarding the first instructions. Beovich jotted his reaction at the bottom of the letter: “I think that the Sacred Congregation, in a gentle but definite way, is telling us to get the Movement away from its strong-arm tactics and direct union and political action and to concentrate essentially on the ‘formation’ of Catholic workers for social and political life. Such a laity, prepared spiritually and mentally, under the authority of the bishops, could be very effective in unions and political parties.” Gleeson subsequently copied the paragraph in his reply to Carroll, 29 July 1957.

<sup>154</sup> Diary, 6 September 1957.

<sup>155</sup> Carroll to Gleeson, 9 September 1957.

<sup>156</sup> The envelope is now with Beovich’s papers in the ACAA.

<sup>157</sup> Minutes of meeting, 28-30 January, 1958; Diary, 30 January 1958.

passed with only one vote against, but the issue of publicizing the Vatican instructions was not addressed.<sup>158</sup> At the next archdiocesan clergy conference on 12 March 1958 Beovich reported, without mentioning the confidential Vatican documents, that the Movement would be reconstructed in South Australia along the lines established by the bishops’ conference, “as a Catholic lay association specifically intended for the social and moral formation of its members”.<sup>159</sup> In practice this simply involved an expansion of the Newman Institute which had, for almost a decade, been engaged in such work.

Later in the month Beovich went to a meeting attended by members of the Movement and he informed them of the change.<sup>160</sup> David Shinnick was present. He recalls:

He [Beovich] invited the [Movement] groups which then existed to continue to meet as a lay apostolate organization under the name of the Newman Institute of Christian Studies. The Institute already existed as a formal adult education body and the Archbishop’s desire was that it would broaden its approaches to include ‘the lay apostolate’. All but a few accepted the Archbishop’s invitation. The adult education arm became known as the Public Lecture Branch of the Newman Institute. The Institute’s leaders set about the task of trying to understand ‘the lay apostolate’ and what it meant in concrete terms of formation, programmes, structures, activities, etc.

Parish and vocational groups formed the basic structure of the Newman Institute. In 1958 I joined the St Mary’s parish branch. We were a small group but tackled a wide range of social issues with emphasis on what action we could take in our lives and parish.

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.* The motion was:

We resolve to implement the authoritative directives contained in the two letters from the Congregation of Propaganda Fide on the following lines:

1. The reconstructed Movement will be under the authority of the local Bishop, or better still, of the Bishops of the Province.
2. The reconstructed Movement will be a Catholic lay association specifically intended for the social and moral formation of its members as defenders of the Church’s rights against the threat of Communism.
3. The Movement must exclude from its programme all direct and indirect action on unions or political parties.
4. It is inadvisable to create a confessional political party, and the Movement may not assume political character.
5. The structure of the ACLI Movement [in Italy] will be studied as a possible guide.
6. The possibility and opportuneness of having the centre of the Movement in Canberra will be studied.
7. The Bishops will take steps to ensure that the support of the Church will not be given to any organized body operating in the field of Trade Unions or political parties.
8. His Eminence, the Cardinal, shall convene a meeting in the latter part of 1958 of representatives of each State . . . to arrange for cooperation between the Provinces.

<sup>159</sup> Diary, 12 March 1958. A circular to priests summarizing matters discussed at the conference on 12 March, dated 26 March 1958 is in the ACAA.

<sup>160</sup> Diary, 25 March 1958.

The inspiration for three major projects came from this group: a Lenten appeal for overseas aid, discussion programmes in homes on different aspects of Catholic faith, and a parish credit union.<sup>161</sup>

In Sydney, Gilroy and Carroll inaugurated a body similar to the Newman Institute known as the Paulian Association. They were helped by Ted Farrell and one of his colleagues at the Newman Institute, Bill Byrne.<sup>162</sup> In Melbourne, however, Mannix still maintained the rhetoric of crisis, that a “deadly struggle” was being waged by laymen against communism in Australia. When he first received the Vatican instructions, Mannix seized on the rejection of an episcopal veto and claimed that it justified his position. He then appealed to Rome against the subsequent “clarifications”.<sup>163</sup> To Beovich’s relief, his appeal was dismissed.<sup>164</sup>

Beovich’s relief was short-lived. In December 1957 Santamaria found a way around the Vatican directives. He dissolved the Catholic Social Movement and created in its place the National Civic Council (NCC). It was, Santamaria claimed, “designed as a purely civic body with no connection whatsoever with the Church, completely independent of the bishops”. Yet, as he later conceded, except in New South Wales and South Australia where it encountered strong episcopal opposition, “it retained the bulk of the membership [of the former Movement] . . . , almost all of the old officials, and the same structures of organization”.<sup>165</sup> It also continued to enjoy a very high degree of support from sympathetic bishops, including generous financial assistance. The only exception in Victoria was Justin Simonds, Mannix’s long-suffering coadjutor who had right of succession but, while Mannix lived, less authority in the diocese than a parish priest. A dismayed Beovich noted in his diary on 2 April 1958 that he had received a letter from

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<sup>161</sup> David Shinnick, *Journey Into Justice* (David Shinnick: Adelaide, 1982), p. 21. Even before Beovich’s intervention, Shinnick had become disillusioned with the “commitment through urgency” approach of the Movement’s leaders as the predictions of communist takeover repeatedly failed to eventuate and it became evident that communist involvement in the trade union movement had diminished. He became, therefore, an enthusiastic supporter of the broader approach taken by Newman Institute. See Shinnick, “Youthful Yearnings and Beyond”, pp. 144-145.

<sup>162</sup> Carroll to Gleeson, 5 October 1957.

<sup>163</sup> A copy of a letter from Mannix to Gilroy, 19 August 1957, is in the ACAA, along with the response Mannix received from Rome, 3 November 1957.

<sup>164</sup> Carroll to Gleeson, 2 December 1957, and Gleeson’s reply, 9 December 1957: “His Grace was pleased to receive this information and it would have done you good to see the smile of satisfaction on his face”.

<sup>165</sup> Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, p. 184.

Simonds recounting that “in each parish the priests have been asked to form civic committees to aid a political party, the DLP, which is the closest approach to a confessional party one could imagine. All this Dr Simonds laments and with good reason.”<sup>166</sup>

The 1958 federal election campaign, the second since the Split began, brought the divisions in the hierarchy into the open. The ALP seized on a statement by Gilroy that Catholics could vote for any party but the Communist Party and, without his approval, used it in its advertising. On the eve of the election, Mannix entered the fray, issuing a press release which asserted that “every Communist and every Communist sympathizer in Australia wants a victory for the Evatt Party”. He claimed that Gilroy’s “official attitude” could be found in the 1955 Joint Pastoral against Communism, and he insisted that the “heroic” members of the DLP were standing by the Joint Pastoral.<sup>167</sup> Gilroy did not respond, but Beovich firmly reiterated that Catholics could vote for any party but the Communist Party.<sup>168</sup> After the election he inserted into his diary a clipping from the *Sydney Morning Herald* which attributed the poor polling of the DLP in South Australia in part to the archbishop of Adelaide, “previously thought to have been a supporter of Archbishop Mannix”.<sup>169</sup> The following year, after the state election in March 1959, Beovich wrote with satisfaction that “the DLP had not even the slightest impact on the results”.<sup>170</sup>

The NCC never attracted much support in South Australia but, small though it was, it remained an annoying challenge to Beovich’s authority. Beovich did all he could to starve it of Catholic support,<sup>171</sup> but he was hampered by the fact that the Vatican directives were still supposed to be secret. To complicate matters, Mannix had shared them with Santamaria who, by tendentious analysis and selective quotation, managed to use them to

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<sup>166</sup>The letter from Simonds to Beovich, dated 29 March 1958, is in the ACAA. For Simonds’ perspective, see the chapter “Turbulent Times”, in Max Vodola, *Simonds: A Rewarding Life*, pp. 69-83.

<sup>167</sup>Cited by Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, p. 138.

<sup>168</sup>For the election, see Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, pp. 353-358.

<sup>169</sup>*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December 1958.

<sup>170</sup>Diary, 15 March 1959.

<sup>171</sup>There are undated drafts of two letters in the ACAA: one to Catholic school principals warning them that laymen should not be given permission to address pupils on industrial matters without Beovich’s approval; and another to the superior of the Passionist monastery at Glen Osmond asking him to refuse a request from Naughton to use the monastery for a recollection day for the NCC. Beovich could not stop Santamaria travelling to Adelaide, but he insisted that Santamaria should not speak on church property. Diary, 24 April 1962.

bolster the NCC.<sup>172</sup> Ironically, the impression was given that it was Gilroy and Beovich who were out of step with Rome, not the Victorian bishops.<sup>173</sup> At the archdiocesan clergy conference in March 1959 Beovich finally overcame his reluctance to breach the confidentiality of the documents: “I took the priests into my confidence regarding the Roman directives. I made it clear I would not swerve from obedience to the Holy See.” He then praised their loyalty to Rome and himself.<sup>174</sup> Gilroy eventually did likewise, but not until the *Sydney Morning Herald* ran two articles in June 1959 depicting him as disloyal to the Vatican.<sup>175</sup> He was, therefore, impelled to defend his position.

In August 1959 the pro-prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Cardinal Pietro Agagianian, arrived in Australia. He was well aware of the turmoil in the Australian Church, as he had been well briefed by his two former Propaganda students, Gilroy and Beovich. Carroll once again played a significant role in coordinating the opposition to Santamaria. Concerned that Gilroy might “be disposed to overindulge in charity” he asked Beovich to encourage Gilroy “to state the simple truth with clarity and forthrightness”.<sup>176</sup> Agagianian was diplomatic and discreet and, contrary to rumours which circulated beforehand, did not rebuke Gilroy or force Mannix to resign. He did, however, hint to Beovich that “some good solution to our problem is in the offing”.<sup>177</sup> Beovich later interpreted this as a reference to the appointment of a new apostolic delegate, Maximilian de Fürstenberg, a senior and experienced Vatican diplomat whom Beovich found “very affable and sympathetic” and—unlike Carboni—a good listener.<sup>178</sup> Archbishop Carboni,

<sup>172</sup> See Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, p. 131. On 8 September 1958 Thomas McCabe, bishop of Wollongong, sent Beovich a report on two meetings which Santamaria held in Brisbane, one with Catholic laymen, the other with clergy. According to McCabe, Santamaria “confused” the priests by quoting out of context the Roman directives.

<sup>173</sup> A point made in an unsigned report on a NCC meeting in Melbourne in April 1958 which is in Farrell’s papers in the ACAA. It seems to have been prepared by Farrell for Beovich. Another report, titled “Effects in South Australia of Work of Supporters of Mr B.A. Santamaria (1955-1957)”, relates that Santamaria’s followers claimed the support of the apostolic delegate and “freely indicated that the Archbishop was out of step with the majority of the bishops in Australia.” “Survey. Division Among Catholics—Work Hampered”, another undated document in the ACAA, contains a similar comment: “the NCC members have not hesitated to make known widely in South Australia the divergence of views among the Hierarchy . . . They have claimed that their actions were upheld by the Apostolic Delegate and nineteen bishops, later fourteen bishops. They have quoted one bishop as blessing their work and a number of South Australian priests as supporting them . . .”

<sup>174</sup> Diary, 15 March 1959.

<sup>175</sup> ‘Lacordaire’, “In the Tinsel World: Cardinal Gilroy’s Temporal Dilemmas”, *Nation*, 24 October 1959, p. 13. See also Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, pp. 363-4;

<sup>176</sup> Carroll to Beovich, 31 July 1959.

<sup>177</sup> Diary, 31 August 1959.

<sup>178</sup> Diary, 15 September 1959; 25 August 1961.

still vigorously championing Santamaria, went off as papal nuncio to Peru.<sup>179</sup> That left Mannix as Santamaria’s most prominent supporter. At ninety-five, he could not be expected to live much longer, and there was no doubt that when Justin Simonds finally succeeded him, the official policy of the Melbourne archdiocese would change.

After Agagianian’s visit, tension subsided, although there was a “flare up” during a by-election for the federal seat of Bendigo in mid-1960. Beovich was in Rome at the time, but received from John Toohey, bishop of Maitland, a letter and some newspaper clippings relating to the affair. Arthur Fox, auxiliary bishop of Melbourne, had declared that no Catholic could vote for the ALP. Leslie Rumble, official spokesman for the Sydney diocese, contradicted him, whereupon Mannix attacked Rumble.<sup>180</sup> On learning of this unedifying public spat, Beovich exclaimed in frustration: “It is a pity Bishop Fox does not give out Catholic teaching each Sunday instead of commenting on party political matters”.<sup>181</sup>

Not long after Beovich returned to Adelaide in 1960, Santamaria argued in *Twentieth Century* that it was necessary for Catholics to form organized groups to effectively influence political parties, and that the NCC was such a body.<sup>182</sup> Beovich counterattacked in a lecture at the Newman Institute on 4 September 1960, denouncing the NCC as contrary to the Roman directives.<sup>183</sup> The following year he delivered a similar address to the Knights of the Southern Cross, and then sent copies to all his priests. He also showed it to the premier, Tom Playford, and to Maximilian de Furstenberg, and noted in his diary that the apostolic delegate had commended his remarks.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> At a farewell dinner organized by the NCC in Melbourne in October 1959, Carboni made the comment: “It is consoling to know that Our Divine Lord Himself appeared to have failed.” See Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, pp. 373-4.

<sup>180</sup> Toohey to Beovich, 27 June 1960. Beovich also received a letter from Carroll, dated 30 June 1960: “There is no need to explain to you that it is all a matter of the Bendigo by-election . . . It would appear that the Santamaria people are just as determined to prevent Arthur Calwell [the new opposition leader] becoming Prime Minister as they were to exclude the Doctor [Evatt]. I doubt whether they can see beyond the issues of the immediate and personal struggle.”

<sup>181</sup> Diary, 29 June 1960.

<sup>182</sup> B.A. Santamaria, “Religion and Politics: An Approach”, *Twentieth Century*, 24, no. 4 (1960): 352-369.

<sup>183</sup> Diary, 4 September 1960. A copy of his talk is in the ACAA.

<sup>184</sup> Diary, 29 July 1961; 5 August 1961; 19 August 1961, 25 August 1961. A copy of the address is also in the ACAA.

## Conclusion

The ALP Split of 1954-55 was one of the most divisive events in Australian history. Analyzing what motivated key figures like Evatt and Santamaria is beyond the scope of this chapter, but Evatt was clearly not mistaken in his belief that Santamaria wished to exert influence on the ALP, however unwise his denunciation of the Movement may have been in October 1954. As one of Santamaria's strongest supporters in the hierarchy in the 1940s and early 1950s, Matthew Beovich bore at least some of the responsibility for the rise of the Movement. To his credit, he did not shirk this by accepting Santamaria's post-1955 contention that the Movement was essentially a lay organization. Beovich realized the extent to which the Catholic bishops were involved, and he unsuccessfully tried before and after Evatt's attack to rein in the Movement's political activities. At no stage did he ever support the creation of a predominantly Catholic political party.

Human motivation is a complex thing, and Beovich's response to the Split cannot be reduced to any single explanation. Santamaria's contention that he was frightened by left-wing parliamentarians into withdrawing support from the Movement is manifestly inadequate.<sup>185</sup> What has emerged from this study is not a sudden about-face in November 1955 (when he declined to endorse the new anti-communist party) or 1956 (when he refused to support the CSM) but a more consistent response based on principle, pragmatism and papal teaching. Beovich's adherence to the principle that Catholics should be free to vote according to conscience for any party but the Communist Party can be traced back to the late 1940s when the issue of Catholic participation in the ALP arose in relation to the bank nationalisation controversy. He was also pragmatic enough to realize that a Catholic political party stood little chance of success in Australia, and as he was deeply attuned to papal teaching, he was well aware that Pius XI and Pius XII did not want the Church involved in party politics.

Beovich did make errors of judgment. In particular, his intemperate defence of the Industrial Groups in March 1955 may have encouraged some members of the Movement to assume that he would also support a new political party with a more explicit anti-

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<sup>185</sup> Santamaria was similarly dismissive of Justin Simonds' opposition, attributing it to Simonds' "natural frustrations" at "Dr Mannix's obstinate refusal to die" and jealousy at Santamaria's close relationship with elderly archbishop. See *Santamaria: A Memoir*, pp. 135, 137.

communist agenda than the ALP. Overall, however, his refusal to back the DLP and the NCC ensured that the archdiocese of Adelaide was spared much of the vitriol which infected the Catholic Church in the eastern states. In the end Beovich was faithful to the ancient Catholic tradition that a bishop, in his diocese, should be a symbol of unity. He did not follow the more divisive style of Irish tribal leadership exemplified by Daniel Mannix.

The split in the hierarchy over the Movement highlights the fact that the Catholic Church in Australia has no national centre of unity. Neither the apostolic delegate nor the archbishop of Sydney was able to become a focus of unity, in spite of the former’s link to the pope, and the latter’s status as a cardinal and the bishop of the oldest Australian diocese, “the Mother Church of Australia”, as Matthew Beovich liked to call it.<sup>186</sup> Yet the bishops—most of the bishops—did meet regularly. Beovich conscientiously attended meetings of the Australian hierarchy and respected and implemented the decisions which were taken at those gatherings. He also managed to remain close friends with men on both sides of the dispute.<sup>187</sup> In the first centuries of Christianity, in spite of the difficulties involved in reaching consensus, it was the councils of bishops which provided a crucial manifestation of the unity of the church and a significant way, however imperfect, of resolving differences of opinion with regard to doctrine and church discipline. One of the lowest points in the Movement saga was the meeting of the hierarchy in Sydney on 2 October 1956 which was boycotted by Santamaria’s episcopal supporters. Mannix’s absence from that meeting, and nearly all the others which were held in the 1940s and 1950s, is understandable given his great age, but as this undermined the effectiveness of national gatherings of the hierarchy, it shows the wisdom of the introduction of a retirement age for bishops in 1966.

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<sup>186</sup> An expression Beovich used in a letter to the apostolic delegate, John Panico, 1 June 1948.

<sup>187</sup> He continued throughout the 1950s to take his annual holiday with Jim O’Collins, Pat Lyons and Justin Simonds at Koroit. Gleeson related in an interview (8 October 1997) that he queried how the four bishops could holiday together, holding as they did such different opinions about the Movement. He remembers Beovich responding, “Oh, we just don’t talk about it. We’re not going to spoil the friendship of years over a thing like this.” McCarthy, in his biography of James O’Collins, comments (p. 83): “From time to time O’Collins had his differences at meetings with his fellow bishops, but he never let differences over policies intrude on friendships. His arguments were with other people’s arguments, not with the people themselves.” Beovich wrote in his diary on 31 August 1956 that he had gone for a long walk around Lake Wendouree in Ballarat with Jim O’Collins. They had discussed their different views on the Movement but it had been a “pleasant day”.



At a personal level, the Movement controversy was a great concern to Beovich, and it is surely not a coincidence that his health deteriorated in 1956. However, he had many other calls on his time and attention in the 1950s. The following chapter will consider other aspects of his life in what was a very busy decade in the archdiocese of Adelaide.



Figure 8.1 Beovich addressing the state conference of the National Catholic Rural Movement, 1943

Figure 8.2 Beovich and Santamaria in 1943.





Figures 8.3 & 8.4 (below)  
Cardinal Gilroy in Adelaide,  
1946

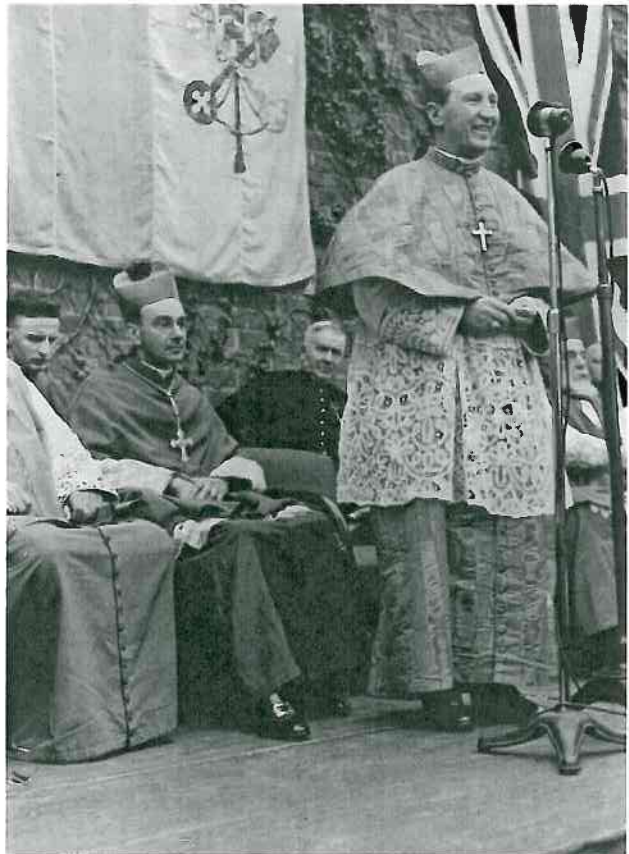




Figure 8.5 Beovich with Cardinal Agagianian, James Gleeson and Romolo Carboni in Adelaide in 1959

## 9. “A Flourishing Diocese”: Adelaide in the 1950s

The Fifties, as a term, has become a cliché. In contemporary political discourse and in the popular imagination, it is seen as emblematic of an Australia that was either static, complacent and monocultural, or, for conservatives, an Australia that was prosperous, unified and satisfyingly middle class . . .

John Murphy and Judith Smart, *The Forgotten Fifties*

More responsibilities and more problems . . .

Matthew Beovich, 3 March 1956

When Matthew Beovich went to Rome for his *ad limina* visit in 1960, he was congratulated on his “flourishing diocese”.<sup>1</sup> It is easy to see why Cardinal Agagianian was so impressed. The number of Catholics had almost doubled in a decade (from about 66,500 to 120,000), as had the number of children in Catholic schools (from 10,394 to 20,931).<sup>2</sup> Seventeen new parishes had been created and 146 building projects had been completed, including twenty-three new churches, twenty-two schools and fifteen “church-schools”, the same building being used as a school during the week and a church at the weekend. The number of diocesan priests had increased from seventy-five to ninety-five, and the arrival of five new male religious orders had helped boost the number of religious priests in the diocese from forty-six to seventy-seven. Forty-three young Australian men from St Francis Xavier Seminary had been ordained and there was no longer a need to recruit priests from Ireland.

The 1950s religious revival crossed denominational, state and national boundaries,<sup>3</sup> but it was particularly pronounced in the Catholic archdiocese of Adelaide. While the

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<sup>1</sup> Diary, 31 May 1960.

<sup>2</sup> These statistics and those which follow are taken from “*Relatio* by the Archbishop for the Archdiocese of Adelaide in South Australia: 1960” (Beovich’s report on the state of his diocese to the Holy See, which he submitted in accordance with canon law before his *ad limina* visit).

<sup>3</sup> See especially David Hilliard, “Popular Religion in Australia in the 1950s: A Study of Adelaide and Brisbane”, *JRH* 15 (December 1988): 219-235; “God in the Suburbs: the Religious Culture of Australian Cities in the 1950s”, *AHS* 24 (October 1991): 399-419; “Church, Family and Sexuality in 1950s Australia”, *The Forgotten Fifties: Aspects of Australian Society and Culture in the 1950s*, *AHS* 28, no. 109 (October 1997): 133-146. For the United States, see, for example, Kathleen Riley, *Fulton Sheen: An American Catholic Response to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Alba House, 2004), pp. 187-232; and David O’Brien, “When It All Came Together: Bishop John J. Wright and the Diocese of Worcester, 1950-1959”, *Catholic Historical Review* 85 (April 1999): 175-194.

percentage of adherents of the Church of England and most Protestant denominations in South Australia remained stable or declined, there was a steady rise in the number of Catholics in the general population: from 12 per cent in the 1933 census to 16 per cent in 1954, 19 per cent in 1961, and then 20 per cent in 1966. In part this can be attributed to the "baby boom" after the Second World War, but it was mainly due to the influx of migrants from overseas. Thousands of "displaced persons" from Central and Eastern Europe came as a result of the federal government's post-war refugee program, while inter-government agreements facilitated the arrival of many Western Europeans in search of better conditions and employment.<sup>4</sup> The expansionist policies of the Playford government, a surging economy and rapid growth in the state's manufacturing industries ensured that South Australia received a disproportionately high share of the migrants.<sup>5</sup> The largest group of non-English speakers came from Italy. Between 1947 and 1961 the Italian-born community in South Australia increased from 2,428 to 26,230. The great majority of these (24,341 or 93 per cent) identified themselves as Catholic or Roman Catholic in the 1961 census. A considerable number of Catholics were also among the 16,007 migrants from Germany (30 per cent), 12,539 from the Netherlands (42 per cent), 6,939 from Poland (81 per cent), 4,996 from Yugoslavia (62 per cent), 2,288 from the Ukraine (47 per cent), 2,881 from Latvia (11 per cent), 2,713 from Hungary (70 per cent) 1,431 from Lithuania (75 per cent), and 1,076 from Czechoslovakia (62 per cent).<sup>6</sup>

Beovich reported to Rome in 1960 that approximately one third of the Catholics in his diocese (40,000 out of 120,000) were migrants who had arrived in the previous twelve years, an estimate which accords with the following year's census data.<sup>7</sup> The dramatic increase in the Catholic population placed great strain on Church resources. In particular, compared with the growth in the number of Catholic schools and students, there was only a

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<sup>4</sup> See James Jupp, *Immigration*, Australian Retrospectives (Sydney University Press, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> See Graeme Hugo, "Playford's People: Population Change in South Australia", in *Playford's South Australia*, pp. 29-46. In 1947 South Australia received over 12 per cent of Australia's net migration gain from overseas although it had only 8.5 per cent of the national population. The 1933 census revealed that 56,043 South Australians had been born overseas; in the 1966 census the figure was almost 250,000. See also Eric Richards, "The Peopling of South Australia" in Eric Richards, ed. *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1986), pp. 134-139.

<sup>6</sup> *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 30 June 1961*, vol. IV: *South Australia* (Canberra: Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics, 1963), pp. 26, 42-9.

<sup>7</sup> *Relatio*, 1960, p. 1.

slight rise in the number of religious teaching sisters,<sup>8</sup> and the number of Catholic students in the state school system jumped from 2,740 in 1950 to 11,749 in 1959.<sup>9</sup> More subtle challenges also arose as many migrants brought with them understandings of what it meant to be Catholic which were different from the dominant Irish style. There is widespread agreement that this was a challenge which the Australian Catholic hierarchy did not handle well.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, beneath the apparent expansion of institutional Christianity in the 1950s, "many warning signs" have been detected as the trend to a more secular society gathered pace.<sup>11</sup> This chapter will explore how Matthew Beovich governed his diocese during this period, which for convenience sake will be the "remembered 1950s" or "long 1950s", extending into the early 1960s, rather than the strictly chronological decade.

### The Influx of Migrants

From the late 1940s a number of initiatives were taken in the archdiocese of Adelaide to welcome migrants. At a practical level, the Catholic Welfare Bureau helped them find sponsors, accommodation and employment. In 1949 Beovich asked Luke Roberts (the priest in charge of the bureau) and H.J. Savage (a lay man who was deeply involved in many Catholic organizations) to convene a meeting to discuss what more could be done. From this gathering emerged the "New Australian Catholic Organisation". "Old" and "new" Australians were on the organizing committee which arranged discussion groups and social activities. A room in the diocesan education building alongside the

<sup>8</sup> Beovich reported to Rome in 1960 that there were 681 religious sisters in the diocese, up from 603 in 1950. The majority were involved in teaching, but not all. There were 25 nuns in the contemplative Carmelite order, and 36 sisters in the Little Company of Mary which ran Calvary Hospital.

<sup>9</sup> *Relatio*, 1960, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Naomi Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, vol. 2, pp. 187 ff.; Patrick O'Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, pp. 404-405; Frank Lewins, *The Myth of the Universal Church: Catholic Migrants in Australia* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1978); *Idem*, "Wholes and Parts: Some Aspects of the Relationship Between the Australian Catholic Church and Migrants" in Alan Black and Peter Glasner, eds. *Practice and Belief*, Studies in Society 15 (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983), pp. 74-85; Adrian Pittarello, "Soup Without Salt": *The Australian Catholic Church and the Italian Migrant* (Sydney: Centre for Migration Studies, 1980); *Idem*, "Migrants and the Catholic Church in Australia", *ACR* 65 (April 1988), 141-158; *Idem*, "Australian Immigration and the Church", *ACR* 70 (July 1993): 305-313; Pino Bosi, *On God's Command: Italian Missionaries in Australia* (Sydney: CIRC, 1989); Anthony Pagononi, *Valiant Struggles and Benign Neglect: Italians, Church and Religious Societies in Diaspora: The Australian Experience from 1950 to 2000* (New York: Centre for Migration Studies, 2003). For an account which is more sympathetic to the Church's response, see Frank Mecham, *The Church and the Migrants: 1946-1987* (Sydney: St Joan of Arc Press, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> David Hilliard, "Playford's South Australia", p. 472; Ian Breward, *History of the Australian Churches*, p. 148; Roger Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, pp. 114-15.

cathedral was set aside for the organization's use: it became known as the Catholic Migration Centre.<sup>12</sup> In 1950 Beovich joined the other Australian bishops in issuing a pastoral letter which exhorted Catholics to welcome their "brothers in Christ",<sup>13</sup> and he used his addresses at various functions to encourage goodwill toward the newcomers. For example, at an annual general meeting of the Catholic Women's League he spoke "at length" about the need to welcome new arrivals;<sup>14</sup> while in his Christmas homily in 1950 he reminded his congregation that Jesus, Mary and Joseph had been refugees in Egypt.<sup>15</sup>

Beovich's main concern, however, was to ensure that migrants had access to the sacraments. He sent one of his most energetic young priests, James Gleeson, to the Woodside Immigration Centre, a former army camp in the Adelaide Hills. For three years Gleeson worked in the Catholic Education Office during the week and went to Woodside at weekends. Assisted by the Legion of Mary and Dominican Sisters from Cabra, he organized religious instruction for the many children who passed through Woodside.<sup>16</sup> Beovich himself periodically visited to administer confirmation. One December day, "there was a regular Pentecostal scene with all the various nationalities" as forty-nine children and a few adults lined up in sweltering heat to receive the sacrament.<sup>17</sup>

At the first Pentecost, as recounted in the New Testament, the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and able to speak foreign languages. No such miracle took place in the 1950s, but Beovich was able to speak Italian and he assiduously recruited priests who could speak other languages. As a result, twenty priests who had not been born in either Australia or Ireland were working in the diocese by 1960. Four came from Italy, three from the United States, two each were from Malta, Poland and Holland, and one each from England, Germany, Lithuania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the Ukraine.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Southern Cross*, 20 March 1953, p. 5. See also Mecham, *The Church and the Migrants*, pp. 148-9.

<sup>13</sup> *Southern Cross*, 10 February 1950, p. 1. The pastoral was printed under the heading: "A Challenge to Our Patriotism, Our Charity, Our Catholicity". See also "'We Shall Be Happy to Call Australia Home': Letters from Migrants Highlight Catholic Migration Committee's Great Work", *Southern Cross*, 5 May 1950, p. 1; "How do You Like Migrants?", *Ibid.*, 23 June 1950, p. 5; "Jesus, Mary and Joseph were Migrants, Too!", *Ibid.*, 15 December 1950, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> *Southern Cross*, 6 July 1951, p. 1. He made a similar appeal at the annual communion breakfast of the Catholic Young Men's Society in 1952. See *Southern Cross*, 21 November 1952, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Southern Cross*, 5 January, 1951, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> James Gleeson, "The Church in Adelaide During My Years as a Priest and Bishop", *ACR* 65 (October 1988), p. 295.

<sup>17</sup> *Southern Cross*, 15 December 1950, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> *Relatio*, 1960, p. 4.



One of the first to arrive was Paul Jatulis, a Lithuanian priest who had studied in Rome during the war years and had been unable to return to his diocese. In 1948 he contacted Beovich who arranged for him to receive a visa to come to Australia.<sup>19</sup> As Jatulis spoke German and Russian as well as Lithuanian, Beovich appointed him chaplain to migrants from the Baltic region. Franciscan friars from Malta accepted Beovich’s invitation to establish a house in Adelaide in 1949. They were followed a few months later by a small community of Italian Capuchins, and then by another branch of the Franciscan family, the Conventuals in 1957. Italian Scalabrinians, whose order was founded in 1887 to care for Italian migrants, especially those in America, began work in Adelaide in 1961. Marian Fathers from Lithuania arrived the following year. Beovich also recruited Polish nuns, the Sisters of the Resurrection. They took charge of a Polish orphanage at Royal Park in 1956. In 1962 a small community of Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus came to Adelaide from Malta. They moved into a small convent which was built in the back garden of Ennis, Beovich’s house at Medindie, and in addition to assisting the Maltese chaplain, took charge of the domestic arrangements at Ennis. Thus Beovich had daily contact with migrant women.

Frank Mecham reports that Beovich acquired such a reputation for being supportive of migrant priests that “chaplains who had difficulties in other dioceses often gravitated to Adelaide”.<sup>20</sup> Doubtless the fact that Beovich was the son of a Croatian migrant and knew from personal experience what it was like to be called a “dago” helps explain his sympathy.<sup>21</sup> He occasionally referred to his father, especially when addressing Croatian migrants,<sup>22</sup> but his father remained a shadowy figure in his life. The influence of his Irish-

<sup>19</sup> Correspondence in the ACAA includes Jatulis to Beovich, 16 March 1948; Beovich to Cyril Chambers (Minister for the Army), 1 December 1948; Arthur Calwell (Minister for Immigration) to Chambers, 9 December 1949; Chambers to Beovich, 10 December 1949.

<sup>20</sup> Mecham, *The Church and the Migrant*, p. 149. Gleeson recalled: “I have often heard migrant priests in Adelaide speaking of the special understanding and support given them by Archbishop Beovich”. See “Church in Adelaide”, p. 295. In a brief history of Ukrainian Catholics in Adelaide, Bohdan Lapka refers to Beovich as “very sympathetic and understanding”. Lapka’s article, “Overview of Ukrainian Catholic Churches in Adelaide” can be found in the *Concise History of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in South Australia* (Adelaide: Nasha Meta and ESTO Printer Publishers, 2001): 167-175. See also Paul Babie, “Australia’s Ukrainian Catholics, Canon Law, and the Eparchial Statutes, ACR 81 (January 2004): 32-48.

<sup>21</sup> As recounted in Chapter 2, when Adelaide priest Robert Wilkinson was in Melbourne having his hair cut, the barber told him that, one day, when he was cutting Matthew Beovich’s hair, a man came in and sat in the next chair. He turned, looked at Beovich, and exclaimed: “Dago Beovich!” They had been at school together. Robert Wilkinson, interview, 11 June 2002.

<sup>22</sup> Beovich recalled his father’s journey to Australia at a celebration in the Catholic Migration Centre in 1953 to welcome twenty-five Croatian youths who had arrived from a refugee camp in Italy after being sponsored by the diocese (*Southern Cross*, 15 October 1954, p. 3). He also mentioned a special bond of union with the

Australian mother may be detected in his concern that migrant children retain the ability to speak their mother's language so they could pray traditional prayers with her.<sup>23</sup>

The ease with which Beovich related to migrant priests can be attributed not only to his family background but also to his student years in Rome. He lived and studied with students from around the world, including the Eastern Catholic Churches in communion with Rome. A large group of Eastern rite Catholics came to South Australia in the post-war years from the Ukraine. With Beovich's help, they were joined in 1949 by a priest, Dmytro Kaczmar.<sup>24</sup> Beovich provided Kaczmar with accommodation at Archbishop's House on the corner of West Terrace and Grote Street, and made St Patrick's Church in Grote Street available for him to use for Mass according to the Ukrainian rite. Kaczmar was also able to celebrate Ukrainian liturgies in various parish churches.<sup>25</sup> In 1952 Beovich attended the Ukrainian's Christmas and Easter celebrations and promised "to do all possible" to assist them spiritually and ensure they could preserve their own liturgy.<sup>26</sup> In 1951 and again in 1958 he sent a circular to his priests which spelt out that "Ukrainian Catholics are Catholics in the full sense of the word. Not only may we not try to have them change their rite, but they cannot attempt to change without the permission of the Holy See."<sup>27</sup> In 1958 Pope Pius XII created an apostolic exarchy for Ukrainians in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania, which meant that they could develop parishes under the authority of their own Melbourne-based bishop, but cooperation between the two rites continued in Adelaide. St Patrick's remained the Ukrainian's central worship centre until

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Croatian community at a Mass in the Cathedral to mark the Croatian national day on 13 April 1958 (*Southern Cross*, 18 April 1958, p. 1). Robert Egar remembers Beovich telling his school speech night, circa 1949-50, that if a young man from Dalmatia had not met an Irish-Australian woman in Melbourne, he would not be there that night. Robert Egar, interview by author, 15 December 2004.

<sup>23</sup> *Southern Cross*, 26 September 1958, p. 1; diary, 28 August 1960. Vincent Tiggeman commented in a note to the author after reading this chapter: "I heard Archbishop Beovich say on more than one occasion, 'If there's a good Catholic mother then the family is also good', obviously a happy reflection on his own mother."

<sup>24</sup> Kaczmar wrote to Beovich from Victoria on 15 August 1949 to ask if he could come to Adelaide. Beovich replied on 30 August that he would seek permission from the apostolic delegate. On 10 September 1949 he wrote to say that this had been secured. Beovich is also credited with intervening with the government to ensure that Kaczmar did not have to fulfill a two-year labor contract. Email from Theodosius Andr to Paul Babie, passed on to the author, 8 October 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Lapka, "Overview of Ukrainian Catholic Churches", p. 167.

<sup>26</sup> Diary, 20 April 1952; *Southern Cross*, 24 April 1952, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Detailed instructions followed dealing with various possible pastoral situations. Ukrainian children were to be welcomed into Catholic schools; they could receive communion according to the Latin rite, but could not be forced to do so; in the case of "mixed marriages", children were to be baptized in the rite of their father; Father Kaczmar was to be informed if there were any Ukrainian families living in a parish; and so on. Circulars to Priests, 25 September 1951; 14 May 1958.

the Church of Our Lady of Protection was opened at Wayville in 1975. Theodosius Andr recalls that the Ukrainian refugees who settled in South Australia in the early 1950s spoke of Beovich “with some reverence” as a sympathetic benefactor.<sup>28</sup>

While Beovich accepted the Australian hierarchy’s decision not to give migrants from the Latin rite permission to establish their own national parishes, even though this was recommended in the Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familiae* in 1952,<sup>29</sup> he encouraged migrants to develop their own community centres. He was happy for these to include chapels, and he appointed chaplains to serve them.<sup>30</sup> That ensured that a close connection could be maintained between religious practice and cultural identity, and that migrants could at least go to confession to a priest who could understand their language. Beovich also gave the new religious orders which arrived in Adelaide responsibility for territorial parishes in areas where there was a high concentration of migrants. Thus the Maltese Franciscans assumed responsibility for Lockleys in 1952, the Franciscan Conventuals for Ottoway in 1957, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate for Hillcrest in 1957, the Capuchins for Campbelltown/Newton in 1961, and the Scalabrinians for Gleneagles/Seaton in 1961. These were all new parishes which Beovich created by subdividing larger ones.

It was desirable to have smaller parishes, given the rapid growth taking place in the Catholic population. However, Beovich was also keen to alleviate tension between migrant chaplains and parish priests. The relationship between them was generally good,<sup>31</sup> but there were occasional outbursts of conflict when the activities of the chaplains cut across traditional parish boundaries. The Capuchins, for example, originally settled at Beovich’s invitation in the Hectorville parish. They acquired land on Newton Road at Campbelltown, and in 1953 a multi-purpose church/hall was built as an Italian Mass centre

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<sup>28</sup> Email from Theodosius Andr, 8 October 2004.

<sup>29</sup> Minutes of the annual meeting of the hierarchy, 9-10 April 1953.

<sup>30</sup> One example concerns the Lithuanian community. On 9 January 1960 Beovich received a delegation bearing a petition asking for the creation of a national parish. He wrote in his diary: “After telling them of my esteem for them and my anxiety to do everything possible for their spiritual needs, I advised them to seek rather a centre where Mass could be said in a quasi-public oratory”. On 20 November 1960 he went to bless the new Lithuanian Catholic Centre at St Peters. In his speech he recalled the petition and said that a Lithuanian national parish would create a precedent which was against the wishes of the Australian hierarchy, but the chapel at the Lithuanian Catholic Centre could be used as a base for the Lithuanian chaplain and a place where people could go to confession in their own language. The petition, the speech and other related documents are in the ACAA.

<sup>31</sup> Mecham, *The Church and the Migrants*, p. 149.

with an adjoining residence for the friars.<sup>32</sup> They initially enjoyed a good relationship with the parish priest of Hectorville, who allowed them to perform "marriages, baptisms etc." at their Mass centre "without any interference". A new parish priest, who had a reputation for being a rather difficult man, was not so accommodating, and so "the archbishop, in order to avoid any friction or argument, offered to cut off part of the territory and erect a parish for us".<sup>33</sup>

Beovich was also forced into the role of mediator when tension arose within migrant communities. As patron of the Catholic Italian Welfare Association (CIWA), he became embroiled in the election of the president in 1955. One of the Capuchins wanted the position. Although he was not eligible according to the constitution, he insisted on being a candidate, but did not receive sufficient votes. With the Italian community divided, Beovich stood by the constitution, and appointed a new chaplain. Instead of another Capuchin, he chose Vincent Tiggeman, a young diocesan priest who had recently returned from studying in Rome.<sup>34</sup> In 1957 Beovich received a petition from four members of the Polish community, requesting that he ignore a petition from other Poles asking for the removal of the Polish chaplain. He replied that he had received no such petition, and asked the four men to visit him to discuss the matter.<sup>35</sup> Beovich usually preferred to handle such matters in person rather than by correspondence. He had several meetings with both sides of a bitter dispute which afflicted the Dutch community in 1960.<sup>36</sup> A new chaplain, Father Van Hugt OFM, offended leading members of the Netherlands Society for the Lay

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<sup>32</sup> For a short history of the Capuchins in Adelaide, see *Fifty Years: History of the Capuchins in Adelaide, 1953-2003* (Adelaide: St Francis of Assisi Parish, 2003).

<sup>33</sup> Fr Claude OFM Cap. to Minister General in Rome, 14 June 1965, translated into English and cited in a letter from John Cooper OFM Cap. to V. Thomas, Adelaide Catholic Finance, 22 August 2001. According to the oral history of the diocese, Beovich himself found this priest difficult. One day Keith Koen, Beovich's chauffeur, drove him as usual from Ennis to his office on West Terrace. Koen pointed out that the parish priest of Hectorville's car was parked in front of the office. "I am sorry, Keith, but I forgot to tell you that I am working at home today", said Beovich, whereupon Koen turned the car around and drove back to Medindie.

<sup>34</sup> Notes in Beovich's handwriting, dated 8 November 1955 and 10 November 1955. There were still problems the following year. He jotted in his diary on 3 August 1956: "Went to the Italian Centre in Carrington Street, Adelaide, to make peace between the committee and the Capuchin Fathers and get them to work together in unity. The meeting was promising." The association subsequently experienced financial difficulties and found it difficult to compete with the regional Italian clubs which were emerging. Beovich agreed that it could approach other clubs to negotiate a merger and alter its constitution to remove all references to the Catholic Church. After amalgamating with Juventus United and Lega Italiana in 1964, the CIWA formally became the Italian Australian Centre Incorporated. In addition to documents in the ACCA, a brief history of the association by Monica Tolcvay can be found on the website of the Italian Centre: [www.italiancentre.com.au](http://www.italiancentre.com.au)

<sup>35</sup> Petition dated 23 June 1957 and Beovich's reply, 28 June 1957

<sup>36</sup> Much correspondence relating to the affair is in the ACAA.

Apostolate, better known as the Society of St Willibrord. Gleeson, in a report on the affair for Beovich in May 1960, concluded that Van Hugt was a “very zealous and intense man who is not prepared to wait for people to come around to his way of thinking”. Beovich agreed that Van Hugt’s tactlessness was a major factor in the dispute, and was not sorry when he was transferred to Melbourne in 1961.<sup>37</sup> Whether Beovich actually requested the transfer is not clear, but it is likely that he was involved at least at an informal level. He tried to remain even handed and while the dispute was raging he temporarily suspended the operations of the St Willibrord’s Society. It is not surprising that when he noted in his diary in 1956 that census figures revealed that Adelaide had received the largest increase in the percentage of Catholic migrants, he wearily commented: “More responsibilities and more problems”.<sup>38</sup>

The “responsibilities” included accepting invitations to attend functions organized by the migrant communities. In the month of December the number of Christmas socials at the various migrant community centres threatened to overtake school speech nights. One little child at the Woodside Immigration Centre mistook the archbishop for Santa Claus, which was not altogether inappropriate, the *Southern Cross* explained, as St Nicholas had been a bishop.<sup>39</sup> During his student days in Rome, Beovich had come to respect the more exuberant aspects of Italian piety, and he willingly participated in traditional Italian religious celebrations. Most became annual events, such as the blessing of the Christmas crib at Lockleys and the blessing of the fishing fleet at Port Adelaide. The latter was started by a number of fishermen from Molfetta in south-eastern Italy. They imported a statue of their patron, Madonna dei Martiri, for St Mary’s Church in Port Adelaide. It arrived in 1958 and from that year on, at the opening of the fishing season in September, a special Mass was held, and then the statue was carried from the church to the wharf and placed on an altar on a fishing boat for a journey up the Port River, accompanied by important dignitaries such as the archbishop, with an enthusiastic crowd of several thousand people following. It was not just an occasion to pray for a safe and prosperous

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<sup>37</sup> Diary, 23 August 1960; Gleeson to George Crennan, National Director of Federal Catholic Immigration Committee, 3 April 1961, ACAA.

<sup>38</sup> Diary, 3 March 1956.

<sup>39</sup> *Southern Cross*, 15 December 1950, p. 9.

fishing season. It became a joyous celebration of Italian culture, the festivities usually including a dinner dance or concert.<sup>40</sup>

Among the many feast days celebrated in the Capuchin parish, those in honour of Madonna di Montevergine and San Rocco were especially popular. From the mid-50s thousands of Italians joined in long processions through the streets of Hectorville and Campbelltown. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of such events in Italian Catholicism—and the embarrassment they caused Catholics from Anglo-Irish backgrounds. Adrian Pittarello comments: "Taking these devotions outside the church was an aspect of the Italian religiousness which Australian priests, and Catholics in general, found weird and even offensive to the Catholic religion, particularly because these devotions were displayed in front of many Protestants who could well consider them superstitious practices".<sup>41</sup> Beovich's participation in the *feste* was a significant endorsement of their validity. The value of his support was recognized in 1962 when the government of Italy awarded him an Order of Merit of the Italian Republic.<sup>42</sup>

Most Italian feast days had a strong local character. They maintained links between migrants from particular villages or towns in Italy. A national and political dimension was more evident in the gatherings of the migrants whose original homelands lay behind the Iron Curtain. It even overrode denominational differences. Presiding at a special Mass in St Francis Xavier Cathedral to mark the day in 1941 when thousands of Baltic people were deported, Beovich told Catholic and Lutheran Latvians that their presence in Adelaide "was a reminder of the diabolical nature of communism".<sup>43</sup> At another Mass in the cathedral on 16 November 1952, Poland's national day, Beovich praised the Poles' bravery in the face of persecution and warned about communist "fifth columnists" in Australia.<sup>44</sup> In 1954 there was a ceremony to mark the laying of the foundation stone for the Polish orphanage at Royal Park:

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<sup>40</sup> Antonio Paganoni and Desmond O'Connor, *Se La Processione Va Bene . . . Religiosità Popolare Italiana Nel Sud Australia* (Roma: Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1999), pp. 118-119; Heather Hartshorne and Josie Wilkinson, "The Carmelite Priests and Brothers in South Australia: 1881-1999", pp. 14-15.

<sup>41</sup> Pittarello, "Soup Without Salt", p. 86. See also Stefano Girola, "Saints in the Suitcase: Italian Popular Catholicism in Australia", *ACR* 80 (April 2003): 164-174.

<sup>42</sup> Diary, 5 March 1962; *Southern Cross*, 9 March 1962.

<sup>43</sup> *Southern Cross*, 27 June 1952, p. 7. His address was translated into Latvian for the benefit of those who could not speak English.

<sup>44</sup> Diary, 16 November 1952; *Southern Cross*, 21 November 1952, p. 7.

The Archbishop said that he was pleased to be with the Polish people that day, because they were the sons and daughters of a valiant nation which had never acknowledged defeat, and they were outstanding for their robust Catholic faith, having suffered persecution for their religion to a degree equalled by few other people. He was confident that the Polish people coming to Australia would be an asset to this country. They would help us fight and defeat Communism and would bring the treasures of their own culture to enrich the Australian way of life.<sup>45</sup>

Two years later almost two thousand Poles heard Beovich lash out at a memorial service in the cathedral for the workers killed during the Poznan riots: "A paradise on earth! The oppressed industrial workers of Poznan can answer that one."<sup>46</sup> In a sign of solidarity, he walked with the procession bearing the Polish flag from the cathedral to the war memorial on North Terrace, where a wreath was laid. He then went on to the Australia Hall in Angas Street where a meeting unanimously resolved to send resolutions condemning communist tyranny to the International Labor Organisation, the Australian government and the United Nations.

Even more joyful events provided the archbishop with opportunities to preach against communism. Attending a concert organized by the Hungarian community, Beovich paid tribute to the heroic resistance of Cardinal Mindszenty as "the embodiment of the struggle for God against Satan".<sup>47</sup> At Croatian gatherings Archbishop Stepinac was likely to get a similar mention.<sup>48</sup> Beovich recalled the heroism and faith of the Ukrainian people during a Ukrainian Christmas liturgy and, presiding at a Ukrainian Easter Mass, he linked the Ukrainians' sufferings to Christ's passion.<sup>49</sup> Nationalism and religion were inextricably linked, but set in the broader context of a world-wide battle for the Catholic faith against the forces of evil. Nevertheless, unlike some of the "five-minutes to midnight" anti-communist preachers, Beovich expressed no doubt as to which side would ultimately win. He maintained that communism would eventually be overcome by prayer, penance and, above all, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Southern Cross*, 14 January 1955, p. 7; Diary, 26 December 1954.

<sup>46</sup> *Southern Cross*, 20 July 1956. The committee who organized the service wrote to Beovich to thank him for his "thorough knowledge and sympathetic understanding" of Polish problems. He slipped the letter into his diary.

<sup>47</sup> *Southern Cross*, 27 March 1953, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Diary, 10 April 1955, 16 April 1955; *Southern Cross*, 14 April 1955.

<sup>49</sup> *Southern Cross*, 14 January 1955, p. 14; Diary, 17 April 1955; *Southern Cross*, 22 April 1955, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> *Southern Cross*, 20 July 1956, p. 3.

### Marian Devotion

Like many Catholics of his generation, Matthew Beovich’s devotion to the mother of Jesus was warm and personal and tended toward the maximalist end of the spectrum. In her study of spirituality in Adelaide and Perth in the mid-twentieth century, Katharine Massam summarizes René Laurentin’s concept of a continuum to describe different views of Mary’s place in the Church.<sup>51</sup> At one end of the continuum, salvation is identified as so much the work of God that it is thought inappropriate to honour Mary, a created human being—that is “Marian minimalism”. At the opposite extreme, Mary’s role as mediator between human kind and God the Father and Jesus Christ is strongly emphasized—“Marian maximalism”.

The belief that Mary could intervene in human history and help those in need was encouraged by the apparitions which were reported in Lourdes in France in 1858 and Fatima in Portugal in 1917.<sup>52</sup> Beovich’s pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1923 was a deeply moving experience. He returned there in 1950 and again in 1955, noting in his diary on 3 July 1950 that while the town had grown and shops had multiplied since his first visit, the atmosphere of faith and piety remained the same. In 1950 he also enjoyed a visit to Portugal where he celebrated Mass at the site where three young children claimed to have seen Mary in 1917.<sup>53</sup>

The apparitions at Fatima stressed that God was offended by sin and called for prayer, especially the praying of the rosary, willingness to suffer for the conversion of sinners, and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in reparation for sin. In 1858 Our Lady of Lourdes had also encouraged prayer, penance and the rosary, but the message of Our Lady of Fatima was sterner and more austere. Unlike the lady at Lourdes, she rarely smiled. The context of the apparitions was, of course, different. Our Lady of Lourdes brought comfort and hope to people suffering the harsh effects of the industrial revolution.

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<sup>51</sup> Massam, *Sacred Threads*, p. 79. See also René Laurentin, *Mary’s Place in the Church* (London, 1965).

<sup>52</sup> For a sceptical account of the modern Marian apparition movement, see George Tavard, *The Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary* (Collegeville, Min: Michael Glazier, 1996). For a more sympathetic account, Donal Anthony Foley, *Marian Apparitions, the Bible and the Modern World* (Leominster, Hertfordshire: Gracewing, 2002).

<sup>53</sup> Diary, 19 June 1950. He did not record his reactions at Fatima but he was generally impressed in Spain and Portugal by the obvious faith and devotion of the people. Diary, 3 July 1950.



In 1917, when Portugal was ruled by an anti-clerical government and had recently entered the First World War, Our Lady of Fatima was more militant. Yet it was not until 1930 that the local bishop approved the cult as worthy of belief, and not until the 1940s that it received significant international attention. That was after Lucia Santos, the sole surviving visionary, wrote further accounts of the revelations she had received, most famously, as noted in the previous chapter, that: “If [Mary’s] requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace, if not . . . [Russia] will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church . . . various nations will be annihilated . . .” As the Cold War intensified, politics and religious fervour became closely intertwined.<sup>54</sup> Devotion to Our Lady of Fatima received encouragement from the highest level of the Church in 1942 when Pope Pius XII consecrated the world to Mary’s Immaculate Heart on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the apparition.

Given Beovich’s intense loyalty to the pope as well as to Mary, it is not surprising that he followed Pius’s example and consecrated his diocese to Mary’s Immaculate Heart in 1943. In 1949 he initiated the first procession in honour of Mary at the seminary. About six thousand people took part.<sup>55</sup> It became an annual event, an opportunity for the archbishop to remind Catholics of the messages of Lourdes and Fatima and how they could, he believed, turn to Mary “as a mother of mercy in whose intercession with the Divine Son we can have every confidence”.<sup>56</sup> At the first Marian procession he also reminded his audience that “we do not worship Mary in the sense in which we adore Christ her Son, for adoration belongs to God alone”. Mary is not a divine being but “stands pre-eminent among the saints of heaven, as the fairest, the most beautiful, and the most worthy of our love and devotion”. There was only the finest of lines between devotion and adoration, and some Catholics strayed beyond it, like the Dominican priest who declared at the Marian procession in 1957: “She is the air that gives life to every cell in the Mystical Body of Christ. In her we live and breathe and have our being.”<sup>57</sup> Beovich was never

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<sup>54</sup> See Thomas Kselman & Steven Avella, “Marian Piety and the Cold War in the United States”, pp. 403-424; Katharine Massam, “The Blue Army and the Cold War”, pp. 420-428; *Idem*, *Sacred Threads*, pp. 91-94.  
<sup>55</sup> *Southern Cross*, 26 August 1949.

<sup>56</sup> Address on 21 August 1949, the first Marian procession. A copy is in the ACAA.

<sup>57</sup> *Southern Cross*, 23 August 1957, p. 3. See also Hilliard, “Popular Religion in Australia in the 1950s”, p. 223.

guilty of that kind of theological aberration, but he did encourage “a most childlike devotion to Mary, and a most ardent love for her”.<sup>58</sup>

On 1 November 1950 Pope Pius XII issued a definition of the dogma of the Assumption, declaring that not only Mary’s soul but her human body had been “assumed” by God into heaven. Beovich welcomed the dogma and held celebrations in Adelaide to mark its proclamation. According to the *Southern Cross*, on the evening of 1 November 1950, fifteen thousand people followed the archbishop and a life-sized statue of Mary in a torchlight procession around the Passionist monastery at Glen Osmond, the grounds “transformed into a fairyland by multicoloured lights”.<sup>59</sup> Despite the rejoicing, Beovich realised that the dogma was a major setback to the ecumenical movement and he tried to soften the blow. He pointed out that the belief that Mary had been taken body and soul to heaven was nothing new. Catholics recalled it every time they prayed the “glorious mysteries” of the rosary, and celebrated it every year on 15 August. Travelling through England earlier in 1950, he had noticed the Assumption depicted on a medieval choir screen in York Minister and a stained glass window in King’s College, Cambridge, and he skilfully used those examples to illustrate his point. The significance of the proclamation of the dogma in 1950, he declared, was that amidst the confusion and materialism of modern life, “it emphasised the truth that with us there was no uncertainty about the fact of heaven”.<sup>60</sup> He did not address a key Protestant complaint—that there was no reference to Mary’s death in the Bible—but neither did he offend Protestant sensibilities by asserting an extreme Mariolatry.

A year after the proclamation of the Assumption, the archdiocese of Adelaide hosted Australia’s first (and to date only) Marian Congress. Rallies were a relatively common feature of Australian religious culture in the 1950s. However, as David Hilliard comments, “nothing could rival the massive gatherings that were held during the post-war years to demonstrate the faith and unity of the Roman Catholic community”.<sup>61</sup> From 24 to 28 October 1951, the Marian Congress included a series of such events. The cathedral being

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<sup>58</sup> Address at the inaugural Marian procession.

<sup>59</sup> *Southern Cross*, 10 November 1950, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> *Southern Cross*, 10 November 1950, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Hilliard, “God in the Suburbs”, pp. 415-16. Anglicans marched every year on Good Friday in Brisbane, Sydney and Perth. For the Methodist “Mission to the Nation” in 1953-6, and Protestant evangelist Billy Graham “crusade” rallies in 1959, see Ian Breward, *History of the Australian Churches*, pp. 144-5, 148.

too small, an altar was set up in what was then the largest auditorium in Adelaide, Centennial Hall in the Wayville Showground, so that thousands could gather for “Women’s Night”, “Men’s Night” and special Masses for children and for religious sisters and brothers. The congress culminated on Sunday 28 October with a giant procession from St Francis Xavier Cathedral to Elder Park via King William Street. Twenty thousand Catholics participated, including “new Australians” who walked in their national groups, wearing colourful costumes, bearing banners and flags, and singing their own Marian hymns. Thirty thousand more lined the route and joined in reciting the rosary as the procession passed. The statue at the centre of the celebrations was one which Beovich had commissioned on his visit to Fatima in 1950. After the congress it toured the parishes of the diocese.<sup>62</sup>

While the Marian Congress helped consolidate Catholic unity and identity, integrating “new” and “old” Australians in magnificent displays of shared devotion,<sup>63</sup> it once again highlighted how different the Catholic understanding of Mary generally was from that common in Protestant traditions. To Beovich’s relief, there was no surge in sectarianism. During the congress the lord mayor hosted a reception in the Adelaide Town Hall to welcome visiting members of the Catholic hierarchy. It was attended by representatives of the Anglican and major Protestant churches and the premier, Tom Playford, who tactfully described the congress as “a gracious gesture to the State of South Australia. The Jubilee Year [it was fifty years since Federation] had been honoured by many celebrations, but all would be inadequate if there were not a serious consideration of religious and moral issues.”<sup>64</sup> After the congress Beovich expressed his appreciation of the “respectful and sympathetic attitude of our brethren outside the Church, an attitude which has clearly shown the essential kindness and fair-mindedness of the South Australian public”.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> A booklet with photographs, speeches and the texts of homilies was printed to commemorate the occasion: *Mother of God and Mother of Men: Record of the Marian Congress held in Adelaide, SA, October 24-28<sup>th</sup>, 1951*.

<sup>63</sup> For a more cynical assessment, see Katharine Massam, *Sacred Threads*, pp. 20-22. She argues that while the “new Australians” provided a certain novelty value, “genuine Catholic culture was still assumed to be essentially uniform and Irish in origin”.

<sup>64</sup> *Mother of God and Mother of Men*, pp. 21-2.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84. Further evidence of this is the positive press coverage the congress received. See the *Advertiser*, 25 October, 1951, p. 3; 26 October 1951, p. 3; 27 October 1951, p. 3; 29 October 1951, p. 3.

For Beovich, the “tremendous success” of the congress was one of the highlights of his years as a bishop.<sup>66</sup> He was not greatly involved in the organisation (James Gleeson and Luke Roberts shouldered much of the burden), and he was not one of the key speakers as visiting bishops were given that honour. Nevertheless, he was intensely proud of the huge crowds, the smooth running of the congress, and the lack of sectarian rancour. It was a demonstration of the vitality of his small diocese and an affirmation of his efforts since becoming bishop to encourage both Marian devotion and more cordial relations with the wider, non-Catholic community. At a personal level, he was deeply moved by “the goodness, enthusiasm and faith of the people”.<sup>67</sup> The congress was clearly not imposed on a reluctant laity but provided an outlet for an outpouring of the most popular form of Catholic piety in the 1950s.

Catholics converged again on Elder Park in 1953—sixty thousand of them, exulted the *Southern Cross*—for the Family Rosary Crusade Rally, part of American priest Patrick Peyton’s world-wide campaign to encourage Catholics to commit to praying the rosary every day as a family group. His famous slogans were: “The Family that Prays Together Stays Together” and “A World at Prayer is a World at Peace”. Beovich also addressed the rally, giving his strong support to Peyton, “who is but echoing a request of the Mother at God at Fatima”.<sup>68</sup> Demonstrating once again ecumenical sensitivity, he reminded his listeners that during the recitation of the rosary, “the bible itself is brought to life” as episodes in the life of Christ are recalled. In a pastoral letter he acknowledged that the family rosary pledge would not bind Catholics under pain of sin, a realistic acceptance of that fact that once the initial enthusiasm for the practice passed, many people would find it difficult to honour their commitment.<sup>69</sup> With regard to Marian devotion, Beovich could perhaps be described as a moderate maximalist.

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<sup>66</sup> Diary, 24 October 1951.

<sup>67</sup> *Relatio of the Archbishop of Adelaide, 1955*, p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> *Southern Cross*, 4 December 1953, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, October 1953, p. 6.

### Catholic Schools

Along with the Marian Congress, Beovich took great pride in the Catholic school system in the early 1950s. In 1949 he described it as "the glory of the Catholic Church in Australia".<sup>70</sup> Six years later he proudly reported to Rome that he did not need to prod Catholics to send their children to Catholic schools, they were willing to make the financial sacrifices involved.<sup>71</sup> Unfortunately, as the decade progressed, it became increasingly difficult to accommodate the growing number of students. Beovich jotted in his diary in 1952 that the number of Catholic students in the Kilburn/Enfield area had risen from 50 to 540 in just three years, and most other parish schools were also "bulging at the seams".<sup>72</sup>

For twelve months at Albert Park there literally were seams. On 18 January 1949, a fortnight before the first school term was due to start, the school building was destroyed by fire. It was quickly replaced by a large marquee, a calico curtain dividing the tent into two classrooms.<sup>73</sup> Beovich visited several times. On one occasion, a storm was raging, and he had to crawl under the lashed down canvas.<sup>74</sup> Other creative solutions were found to the shortage of classrooms in the post-war years. At Stirling in the Adelaide Hills the Dominican Sisters began teaching in what had once been the glasshouse of the old mansion which had become their convent. As the number of students increased, they expanded into the stables.<sup>75</sup> A renovated shed served as the first Catholic school in Riverton before the Mercy nuns and their students moved into a large house.<sup>76</sup> A private dwelling was also transformed into a school in the new satellite city of Elizabeth,<sup>77</sup> while at Tailem Bend the parish established a school in an old railway hostel.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Beovich, "Catholic Education and Catechetics in Australia". Report compiled at the request of the Australian Bishops for the Conference on Education and Catechetics held in Rome in 1950.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8. "I sometimes think that God may spare our people from open persecution because of their loyalty and generosity in the matter of Catholic schools".

<sup>72</sup> Diary, 1 April 1952.

<sup>73</sup> Clarie Bell, *The Parish of Woodville/Findon* (Adelaide: Mater Dei Presbytery, 1987), p. 19.

<sup>74</sup> Anne McLay, *Women on the Move: Mercy's Triple Spiral* (Adelaide: Sisters of Mercy, 1996), p. 183. See also *Southern Cross*, 20 January 1951, p. 10.

<sup>75</sup> Elizabeth Anderson, *On Fertile Soil: A History of the Catholic Church in the Stirling District* (Stirling: Catholic Parish of Stirling, 1987), pp. 69-71.

<sup>76</sup> McLay, *Women on the Move*, p. 184.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>78</sup> Father William Kelly received formal approval for the project from Beovich on 27 August 1954. Documentation related to the project is in the ACAA.

As Beovich admitted to Rome in 1955, his main problem was not opening new Catholic schools, difficult though it was to finance such expansion. The greatest challenge was finding sufficient teachers.<sup>79</sup> Beovich lured some new religious orders to Adelaide,<sup>80</sup> and he persuaded existing congregations to expand their involvement in the diocese,<sup>81</sup> but in spite of this the increase in the number of religious brothers and sisters teaching in Catholic schools was slight in comparison with the increase in students, and few schools could afford to pay lay teachers a reasonable salary.

In response to the shortage of teachers, Beovich regularly asked for prayer for more vocations to religious life. However, at the annual Catholic teachers' conference in 1954 he passed on some wise advice: do not talk too much about vocations, students will resent it; do not boast about the number of girls you have sent to the convent, it will put them on the defensive; do not say “we *need* sisters”—that is the lowest of all motives, give the girls a supernatural motive or none at all. More positively, Beovich stressed that the criteria for a good teacher included understanding, enthusiasm and a sense of humour. He pointed out that priesthood and religious life would be more attractive to young people if priests and religious were happy rather than austere and unfriendly.<sup>82</sup> He spoke on a similar theme at another conference in 1957, encouraging teachers “to cultivate a spirit of joy in working for Christ, and to transmit this joy to pupils”. Exhausted teachers might well have asked how they could do that when they were being pushed close to breaking point. Beovich urged them not to underestimate the power of prayer.<sup>83</sup> The conviction that difficulties should be accepted patiently and “offered up” to the Lord was an important part of his personal piety, but he was not without sympathy for the plight of teachers with very large classes. He heard first-hand accounts of what it was like from his own sister. In 1954 she

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<sup>79</sup> *Relatio*, 1955, p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> In 1954, for example, he arranged for the Good Samaritan Sisters to establish a convent in Adelaide, negotiating in person with congregational leaders in Sydney. The sisters duly took over the running of the parish primary school at Seacombe Gardens and opened Marymount, a secondary college, in 1956. See Mary Dominica McEwen, *Threads in the Fabric* (Sydney: Sisters of the Good Samaritan, 1977), p. 185. Other religious orders who became involved in educational work in the archdiocese of Adelaide in this period were the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (1947); the De la Salle Brothers (1954); the Daughters of Our Lady Help of Christians (1954); the Sisters of the Resurrection (1956); and the Brigidine Sisters (1962).

<sup>81</sup> On 29 March 1958 Beovich met with James Gleeson to discuss the proposed agreement between the Christian Brothers and five parishes in the northern suburbs for the Christian Brothers to provide primary and secondary education at a new college at Northfield. “The terms will favour the Brothers”, Beovich noted in his diary, “but the position is desperate for the boys of the parishes concerned; we must have the school and continue to enlarge the field of Catholic education whatever the cost”.

<sup>82</sup> Notes of his address are in the ACAA.

<sup>83</sup> *Southern Cross*, 6 September 1957, p. 7.

had one hundred students in three grades in her class.<sup>84</sup> James Gleeson, director of Catholic Education from 1952 to 1957, attributed his archbishop’s reluctance to allow the Catholic Education Office to run teacher-training sessions in school holidays to Vera Beovich’s influence. Beovich was not opposed to teachers’ improving their skills, Gleeson recalled, but he realised that they needed a complete break.<sup>85</sup>

Ideally Beovich would have liked every Catholic child to attend a Catholic school, but he was realistic enough to know that this was now a pipe dream. It was no use fulminating against parents, telling them that they were committing a mortal sin by not giving their child a Catholic education, when Catholic children were being turned away from overcrowded Catholic schools.<sup>86</sup> Other strategies had to be devised to propagate the faith. In 1952 Beovich asked the provincial and national leaders of the Sisters of St Joseph if Josephite sisters could travel around country districts where there were no Catholic schools and provide religious instruction in government schools.<sup>87</sup> The “Motor Mission” was subsequently also endorsed by the Australian bishops at their annual meeting in 1953.<sup>88</sup> By 1957 two sisters based at Aldgate in Adelaide Hills were engaged in the work, driving between government schools in a Holden car purchased by the Catholic Education Office with the help of the archbishop.<sup>89</sup> The sisters worked with groups of lay catechists. In 1958, in what the editor of the *Southern Cross* identified as an “epoch-making call”, Beovich invited lay people to volunteer their services for the love of God.<sup>90</sup> In February 1959 over two hundred heeded the request and attended a three-day intensive course on catechetical methods.<sup>91</sup> At the teachers’ conference that year, Beovich paid tribute to the “help and devotion” of the volunteers.<sup>92</sup> They soon had an annual conference of their

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<sup>84</sup> Diary, 26 April 1954.

<sup>85</sup> James Gleeson, interview by the author, 8 October 1997.

<sup>86</sup> “This year, at the beginning of 1958, 2,500 children were ready to start school in this archdiocese. We were able to take 1,500 of this number. We could not take the other 1000 and because of the remarkable increase which is taking place through migration and the natural increase this number will be added to as the years go by, we will have to refuse more and more Catholic children admittance to Catholic schools.” Beovich, quoted in *Southern Cross*, 31 October 1958. The Australian bishops had ruled at the Fourth Plenary Council in 1937 (canon 628) that “parents who, without grave cause . . . allow their children to frequent non-Catholic schools, sin mortally, and a confessor must, in case of stubborn refusal, deny absolution to one who thus shows himself to be indisposed.”

<sup>87</sup> Diary, 17 July 1952; 23 April 1953; Beovich to Mother Mary Leone, RSJ, 25 September 1953, ACAA.

<sup>88</sup> Minutes of the meeting, 9-10 April 1953.

<sup>89</sup> *Southern Cross*, Friday 29 March 1957, p. 7.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 October 1958, p. 3.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 February 1959, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 September 1959, p. 7.

own. In 1963 it focussed on the introduction of the new Australian catechism.<sup>93</sup> About 460 people, mainly women, were given guidance on how to use it.<sup>94</sup> Reflecting on the success of this initiative, Beovich recalled with pride his involvement in 1940 in the South Australian parliament's decision to allow ministers of religion and their representatives right of entry to state schools to give religious instruction.<sup>95</sup>

Beovich was also pleased to note a great improvement in the relations between the state and Catholic education systems in Adelaide since he became archbishop.<sup>96</sup> He gave the credit for this to his three successive directors of education, William Russell, James Gleeson and, from 1958 to 1972, Edward Mulvilhill. They followed his policy of quiet negotiation rather than public protests over education grievances. Beovich consistently tried to take the sectarian sting out of the debate over the lack of government funding for Catholic schools. At the opening of a new church-school in 1958 he advocated "one very good solution: Do not regard a child as going to a state school, or an Anglican school, or a parochial school, or what you call a college. Just regard the child as an Australian—an Australian who must be educated." As the state government was already providing a certain amount of funding for each person in private as well as public hospitals, he thought similar per capita grants could be made to schools.<sup>97</sup> Playford seemed sympathetic to the idea, and Beovich kept up the gentle pressure through private discussions with the premier,<sup>98</sup> and exhortations to parents to campaign for educational justice for *all* Australian children without discrimination.<sup>99</sup> He was disturbed by the widely publicised "Goulburn strike" in July 1962, when the Catholic schools in Goulburn were closed for a week and

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<sup>93</sup> The Australian bishops decided in 1954 to reissue the catechism and Beovich was asked to supervise the revision (Diary, 21 September 1954). John Kelly, the director of Catholic education in Melbourne, ended up doing much of the work, assisted by James Gleeson as secretary of the bishops' committee for education. *Catholic Catechism I* was published in 1962 and *Catholic Catechism II* in 1963, followed by the *My Way to God* series of books in 1964. See Gleeson, "The Church in Adelaide", p. 298.

<sup>94</sup> *Southern Cross*, 18 January, 1963, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> "I have reason for thinking that I did a very good thing when in 1940 I initiated the Bill in the South Australian parliament which opened the state schools to priests and ministers of religion to instruct the children in religion. This may be remembered against my deficiencies." Diary, 1 November 1960.

<sup>96</sup> Diary, 30 April 1961.

<sup>97</sup> *Southern Cross*, 9 May 1957, p. 3 ("Archbishop Suggests Practical Way of Lightening Tremendous Education Burden").

<sup>98</sup> Diary, 2 August 1961 (report of a conversation with Playford at a reception at the Town Hall); Diary, 9 August 1961 (long talk with Playford re possible government help for Catholic education).

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, his speech at the opening of St Raphael's School at Parkside (*Southern Cross*, 23 March 1962, p. 2) and the blessing of extensions to the Salesian Sisters' convent (*Southern Cross*, 27 April 1962, p. 1).



two thousand students suddenly enrolled in the state system.<sup>100</sup> In retrospect, the “Goulburn Strike” has been seen as a significant “milestone on the road to state aid”,<sup>101</sup> but Beovich continued to urge patience rather than agitation.<sup>102</sup>

### **In the Office**

Beovich tried to spend as little time in his office at Archbishop’s House as possible. His chauffeur, Keith Koen, would drive him from his home at Medindie to West Terrace each weekday morning at about 9.30 for several hours of paperwork and appointments, and then he would return to Ennis for lunch. Often these were “working lunches”: priests with special responsibilities, like the director of Catholic education and the editor of the *Southern Cross*, were regular guests. It was one of the ways in which Beovich kept in touch with developments in the diocese. Ennis was also the venue for many informal interviews and meetings, usually in the evening. Most afternoons were devoted to what Beovich called “pastoral work”, to be considered in the next section.

One priest sarcastically described bishops of this era as “like vending machines—just dispensers of permission”.<sup>103</sup> They were trapped by canon law into being the recipients of innumerable requests for dispensations, especially with regard to Catholic marriage laws. In line with progressive thinking in the United Kingdom and United States, Beovich softened his stance on “mixed marriages” in 1950, indicating in a circular to priests that he was prepared to grant dispensations for marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics to be celebrated in Catholic churches, but permission still had to be sought for this.<sup>104</sup> Eight years later he expressed his willingness to approve the “passive attendance” of Catholic at a non-Catholic wedding, if the application was endorsed by the wedding guest’s parish priest. He resolutely refused to allow Catholics to be bridesmaids or page boys at non-

<sup>100</sup> Diary, 11 July 1962. For the incident at Goulburn, see Joshua Puls, “The Goulburn Lockout”, *ACR* 81 (April 2004): 169-183.

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, Campion, *Australian Catholics*, p. 173; Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, vol. 2, pp. 98-100; O’Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, p. 407.

<sup>102</sup> *Southern Cross*, 2 August 1963. p. 16.

<sup>103</sup> Thomas Ormonde, quoted by Paul Ormonde in *Santamaria: The Politics of Fear*, p. 180.

<sup>104</sup> Circular to priests, 22 December 1950.

Catholic weddings, even when the request involved one of the most prominent Catholic families in the diocese.<sup>105</sup>

The sacrament of marriage embroiled priests not only in the complexities of canon law but also civil law, and so there was much official paperwork. Circulars were sent from Church Office reminding priests of their obligations.<sup>106</sup> Tedious but important issues involving taxation and insurance also crossed Beovich’s desk.<sup>107</sup> As the church and school building boom gained momentum in the late 1950s, much of Beovich’s time was spent scrutinizing building plans. While Beovich was pleased at the rate of expansion of his diocese, commending priests and parishioners on their “zealous efforts” to build new schools and Mass centres at innumerable opening ceremonies, he was concerned about finance, and reluctant to give approval for building projects until he was assured that they were financially viable. Unlike James Duhig in Brisbane, he did not have a passion for investing in land, and thereby running up huge debts. He also did not share Duhig’s fondness for red-brick neo-Baroque church buildings.<sup>108</sup> The priests who earned his highest praise were those who demonstrated practical common sense, like William Russell, parish priest of Woodville and Albert Park. At the opening of his new church in Albert Park—a Nissen hut—Beovich commented that Russell was “following wise lines in increasing the number of Mass centres and schools—future generations can put up the grand buildings”.<sup>109</sup>

In 1957 Beovich set up a Council for Architecture and Sites to examine all building proposals.<sup>110</sup> The following year a circular declared that the archbishop had to be consulted

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<sup>105</sup> Circular to priests, 26 March 1958. In his diary on 7 January 1954 Beovich noted that he had refused to give permission for Albert Hannon’s daughter, Mignon, to be a bridesmaid: “It is not easy to say no, but very necessary”.

<sup>106</sup> In a circular dated 26 December 1949, Beovich reminded priests that forms had to be returned to Church Office with details of all baptisms, marriages, confirmations and deaths in their parishes. On 23 February 1950 he reported that he had received a letter from the deputy register of marriages saying that some priests had not submitted their marriage forms. On 23 March 1958 another circular complained that returns from eleven parishes were still outstanding. A year later, 25 March 1959, there was still “a certain amount of neglect”.

<sup>107</sup> On 9 May 1952, for example, Beovich sent around a circular regarding a complaint from the Taxation Department that some priests were not submitting their returns in accordance with the department’s requirements. On 16 February 1959 priests were informed that a single public risk liability insurance policy for the diocese had been negotiated to cover all normal parochial and diocesan activities.

<sup>108</sup> For Duhig’s zeal for building new churches, see Boland, *Duhig*, pp. 192-3.

<sup>109</sup> Diary, 27 July 1952; *Southern Cross*, 8 August 1952, p. 11.

<sup>110</sup> Circular from James Gleeson, 23 August 1957.

first, before a priest entered into any negotiations over the purchase of land, commissioned an architect, or submitted plans to the aforesaid council.<sup>111</sup> The fact that this instruction had to be reiterated in 1959 indicates that, as usual, there was some degree of non-compliance.<sup>112</sup> This tested Beovich's patience, but he was not unreasonable, provided sufficient funds were available to pay for a project. One example concerns Denis O'Connell, the redoubtable parish priest of Burnside-Dulwich. The parish history reports that he had difficulty securing approval to build two new churches.<sup>113</sup> Upon receiving his application on 23 October 1959, Beovich jotted on the letter that he wanted an estimate of costs, and he wanted to know whether O'Connell's predecessor, who had been granted permission to build a new church the previous year, had commissioned an architect. Until those points were cleared up, the application would not be approved. Having been assured that nothing had come of the previous proposal, he approved O'Connell's application on 18 November 1959, subject to finance becoming available. The following year he ruled that the presbytery should not be demolished to make way for the new church at Dulwich. O'Connell ignored this instruction and went ahead with the demolition. Beovich's reaction is not recorded, but according to the parish history, auxiliary bishop James Gleeson arrived on the scene "too late to do more than voice his disapproval".<sup>114</sup> Beovich appointed O'Connell to the Council of Architecture and Sites, a fitting punishment perhaps!

With regard to finance, Beovich was initially wary of the "Wells Way", a method of fundraising developed by the Wells Organization in the United States to encourage parishioners to pledge weekly sums to support their church.<sup>115</sup> He came to see the benefits of planned giving programs as they enabled parishes to borrow money with greater certainty that loans could be repaid.<sup>116</sup> Beovich's careful management of diocesan finances can also be seen in the hard bargains he drove with religious orders, which

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<sup>111</sup> Circular from Vincent Tiggeman (Beovich's secretary), 19 November 1958.

<sup>112</sup> Circular to priests, 25 March 1959.

<sup>113</sup> "The Rays of the Crucifix": *Links in the Chain: A Brief History of the Catholic Church in the Dulwich-Burnside Parish, 1869-1994* (Dulwich-Burnside Parish, 1994), pp. 51-56.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>115</sup> For the Wells Way, see Breward, *History of the Australian Churches*, p. 136; and Hilliard, "Popular Religion in Australia in the 1950s", p. 230.

<sup>116</sup> Gleeson, "The Church in Adelaide". p. 300.

ensured that the diocese did not bear the brunt of the cost of establishing a number of new parishes.<sup>117</sup>

Files of circulars to priests in the archdiocesan archives testify that the archbishop was concerned with more than bricks and mortar. He placed his stamp on popular piety, exhorting priests to attend and to promote to their parishioners annual diocesan events such as the processions in honour of the Blessed Sacrament and Mary. A roster was drawn up so that the Forty Hours' Prayer could be celebrated at regular intervals throughout the parishes of the archdiocese, and priests were directed that each parish should pray a Novena before the feast of the Sacred Heart and hold Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on the day.<sup>118</sup> Their attendance at clergy conferences and the annual retreat for diocesan clergy was also required.

Of particular concern to Beovich in the mid-1950s were the liturgical reforms proclaimed by Pope Pius XII, including the relaxation of the Church's laws on fasting before receiving communion, the introduction of evening Masses and the restoration of the Easter vigil. In obedience to the pope, Beovich promptly implemented the changes in Adelaide and was pleased with the response from the laity, noting that many more people were coming forward for communion.<sup>119</sup> In August 1959 he sent priests and members of religious orders a detailed summary of instructions issued by the Sacred Congregation of Rites which encouraged greater participation by the laity in the liturgy, especially through the so-called “dialogue Mass”, in which the congregation had certain Latin responses to

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<sup>117</sup> In 2001 questions over the ownership of property at Newton provoked the provincial of the Capuchin Friars, John Cooper OFM Cap, to explore the Capuchin archives and translate documents which were in Italian. It emerged that the archdiocese purchased four acres of land at Newton in the 1950s, two acres were kept for the school, and two were “given” to the Capuchins with the loan of money to build a church. The Capuchins agreed to repay the debt of £14,000 (Fr. Anastase OFM Cap. to Beovich, 10 April 1947). The church (to which inadequate accommodation for the friars was attached) then became their property. In 1965, when they wished to build a friary next to the church, the archbishop said that the parish would purchase the land and the church for £11,000 but, as the archdiocese had no spare money because of the building program at the seminary, the friars had to take out a loan on behalf of the parish (Gleeson to Fr. Claude OFM Cap., 30 April 1965). The Minister General of the Capuchins in Italy thought this meant that the friars would actually be paying for the church twice, and believed that the parish should provide a new presbytery (Rev. Fr. Clement of Vlissingen OFM Cap. to Claude, 24 June 1965). The provincial in Australia pleaded that Australian parishes were usually so heavily in debt as a result of building churches and schools that it was difficult to get new presbyteries, and that it would be better if the Capuchins owned their own property as not all the Capuchin friars worked in the parish (Claude to Minister General, 2 July 1956). A friary was eventually built at the Capuchin's expense in 1968. A letter recounting the saga, from John Cooper to V. Thomas, Adelaide Catholic Finance, 22 August 2001, is in the ACAA.

<sup>118</sup> For more on the Forty Hours' Prayer, see Gavin Brown, “Mass Performances”, pp. 84-89.

<sup>119</sup> Diary, 1 April 1956.

make. Yet in spite of the archbishop’s approval, many older priests were unenthusiastic about the changes, and Beovich did not force the adoption of dialogue Masses against their will.<sup>120</sup>

Beovich continued to utilize modern technology in the 1950s as an evangelism tool. He seized on the advent of television and not only negotiated for primetime Catholic programs on Channels Nine and Seven, but purchased shares in the former television station: “It will be useful for the Church to have an interest in this important field”.<sup>121</sup> Beovich did not imitate the United States’ most famous bishop, Fulton Sheen, by attempting to become a television star himself. A diocesan committee coordinated both the television work and the “Catholic Hour” on radio, with a number of priests presenting programs, including James Gleeson, Thomas Horgan and Robert Aitken. On Beovich rested “the agonizing responsibility” of deciding how much money the Church could commit to this very expensive venture. In February 1960 he authorized a special collection in parishes to raise funds.<sup>122</sup> The appeal was launched in a fresh, new version of the diocesan weekly paper. Under the editorship from 1960 of one of the youngest of the diocesan priests, Robert Wilkinson, the *Southern Cross* had more local content, a greater focus on the lay apostolate (Wilkinson was deeply involved in the YCW) and many more pictures. Wilkinson did not experience the kind of interference in editorial matters which his counterpart in Sydney, Kevin Hilferty, endured as editor of the *Catholic Weekly*.<sup>123</sup> He maintains that Beovich allowed him virtually free rein, only keeping a close eye on finance and expressing concern about the mounting cost of the paper.<sup>124</sup>

“At the office this morning ran into a problem each quarter of an hour”, Beovich lamented in his diary on 12 November 1957, “What a day!” He did not specify what the problems were. However, if any Catholic parishioner was offended by remarks made in

<sup>120</sup> Brown (“Mass Performance”, p. 198) concluded that “Dialogue masses never became a common feature of Australian parish religiosity”. Brown interviewed Robert Rice, who told him that he received permission from Beovich to celebrate dialogue Masses but he was only a curate at the time and his parish priest at Brighton and then at St Peters “squashed the whole thing”. On the other hand, the Jesuits at Aquinas College were willing to embrace the innovation (Head, *Fire on the Hill*, p. 178), as did Beovich himself.

<sup>121</sup> Diary, 10 October 1959. The first Catholic program, “Catholic Vision” screened on NWS 9 on Sunday 11 October 1959. In 1960 it ran regularly from 5.30 to 6pm. “Catholic Life” was on Sunday nights on ADS 7 from 10.40 to 11.10 pm.

<sup>122</sup> *Southern Cross*, 12 February 1960, p. 5.

<sup>123</sup> See Kevin Hilferty, “The Making of a Diocesan Editor, or the Education of Young Kevin”, *ACR* 65 (July and October, 1988): 303-314; 448-454.

<sup>124</sup> Robert Wilkinson, interview by author, 11 June 2002.

the pulpit, or upset because their parish priest would not allow their preferred priest to perform a baptism, wedding or funeral, he or she could complain to the archbishop. While Beovich invariably upheld the rights of parish priests to celebrate the sacraments in their parishes, he tried to soothe tensions. He preferred to see both parties to a dispute personally rather than put his response in writing, even though this was more time-consuming: "A day of interviews! Well, aren't they all?"<sup>125</sup> He exacerbated the situation by dismissing no issue as too trivial. In 1954, for example, he received a letter from a Catholic woman who had joined the fencing club run by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). She enjoyed fencing and could not play the sport anywhere else, but her conscience began to trouble her when she realized that the YWCA was a Protestant organization. In a note on the letter, Beovich instructed his secretary to write back suggesting that she make an appointment to see him to discuss the matter.<sup>126</sup> A young man afflicted with schizophrenia, who sometimes believed he was Jesus, became a regular visitor to the archbishop, whom he regarded as a descendent of the apostles. No record survives of what must have been some interesting conversations, just a tribute to Beovich's pastoral care from a grateful family member.<sup>127</sup>

John Brewer, state president of the Catholic Young Men's Society (CYMS), visited Beovich on a number of occasions to discuss problems he was facing as membership diminished. Founded in Ireland in the nineteenth century, the CYMS had reached its peak in Australia by the time it was inaugurated in Adelaide in 1927, and it faced stiff competition from the Catholic Action movements in the 1950s. By 1959 it had only 300 members spread throughout eight parish branches, in contrast to the YCW which could boast sixty branches and five hundred leaders in 1965.<sup>128</sup> Brewer recalls Beovich wisely remarking that organizations in the Church did not necessarily exist in perpetuity, there

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<sup>125</sup> Diary, 20 September 1957.

<sup>126</sup> Margaret Lam to Beovich, 17 October 1954; Beovich to Lam, 20 October 1954.

<sup>127</sup> The man's sister, who did not want her brother to be identified, wrote to the author on 18 September 2000: "He had episodes of confusion when he was agitated and believed he was Jesus. Mark [not his real name] was a fairly new convert and understood that Archbishop Beovich was a descendent of the Apostles and so he began to visit the archbishop, sometimes when he was quite well, and sometimes when he was very disturbed. Mark regarded Archbishop Beovich as a very kind and generous friend whom he could always turn to for help and even a little money. After a while, Mark's visits were put on a regular monthly basis, unless he was obviously upset, in which case he was always helped. My family were always grateful to Archbishop Beovich for his patient, pastoral care of Mark. Mark died a few years ago but he always remembered his friend on West Terrace."

<sup>128</sup> *Southern Cross*, 15 May 1959, p. 3; 2 April 1965, p. 39. The actual number of YCW members was not given in 1965, but it must have been in the thousands.

was a time for them to grow and flourish, and a time for them to fade as circumstances changed.<sup>129</sup> Brewer shifted focus to the Knights of the Southern Cross, which enjoyed greater vibrancy in the 1950s and 1960s. Another long-established organization which struggled to maintain its membership in the 1950s was the Catholic Women's League. It had 560 members in 1955, mostly older women in a dwindling number of branches. Young Catholic women were more likely to be involved in school-based mothers' clubs. In 1962 Beovich approved the establishment of a central branch of the CWL in the diocese, a decision which helped rejuvenate it for a while.<sup>130</sup>

The most difficult problems which Beovich faced involved diocesan clergy. A circular sent out to priests on 9 March 1959 recommended that they attend a public meeting organised by Alcoholics Anonymous as "an understanding of the nature of alcoholism and a working knowledge of Alcoholics Anonymous is of considerable value in the pastoral care of souls". The tactful wording concealed the underlying reality that alcoholism was a serious personal problem for a number of priests (as indeed it was for several bishops in other dioceses), especially those who had come from Ireland. In 1957 Edward Griffiths, much loved parish priest of Blackwood was "summarily withdrawn" from the parish.<sup>131</sup> It might have seemed an abrupt move to Griffith's parishioners, but Beovich had been concerned about Griffith's problems for some time and he eventually insisted that he join Alcoholics Anonymous before he was placed in charge of another parish.<sup>132</sup> Griffiths later served at three other parishes before his death in 1968. To Beovich's dismay, he did not learn that Peter McCabe and Martin Comey were alcoholics until it was too late. They both died of alcohol-related illnesses in Calvary Hospital in January 1959. McCabe was only forty years old, Comey forty-seven.<sup>133</sup> Their hospitalization coincided with the annual retreat for priests at the seminary, at which several priests overindulged in liquid refreshment. In an angry outburst Beovich

<sup>129</sup> John Brewer, interview by author, tape recording, 15 July 2003. Beovich also mentioned in his diary visits from John Brewer to discuss CYMS problems on 1 October 1958 and 25 October 1958.

<sup>130</sup> *Southern Cross*, 30 March 1962, p. 3. See also Ruth Schumann, "'Charity, Work, Loyalty': A History of the Catholic Women's League in South Australia, 1914-1979" (BA Hons thesis, Flinders University, 1979), pp. 75-77.

<sup>131</sup> Peter Donovan, *Towards the New Jerusalem: A History of the Catholic Community of Blackwood* (Adelaide: Blackwood Parish Council, 1986), p. 41.

<sup>132</sup> Diary, 15 June 1957.

<sup>133</sup> Diary, 31 December 1958; 5 January 1959; 16 January 1959; 19 January 1959. See also *Southern Cross*, 16 January 1959, p. 3; 23 January 1959, pp. 1, 7.

threatened any priest who drank outside meals with immediate suspension.<sup>134</sup> It was a rare loss of control which indicates how distressed he was by McCabe's and Comey's plight. One of the chief offenders on the retreat later added attending race meetings and gambling to his excessive drinking. After discussing the case with his diocesan consultants, Beovich transferred the delinquent cleric from the metropolitan area to a quieter country parish.<sup>135</sup>

A problem which taxed Beovich's peacemaking skills was the situation at Semaphore. The parish had been ruled since 1907 by James Hanrahan. A dynamic young priest in his early years, Hanrahan became exceedingly cantankerous as he aged and made life difficult for the priests who lived with him. In a mighty clash of wills Beovich insisted that he become pastor emeritus with no further involvement in parish affairs. When trouble continued, Beovich purchased a new presbytery for the administrator of the parish and his assistant. Beovich wrote in his diary that Hanrahan was "at first inclined to argue" but eventually accepted the new situation.<sup>136</sup> Buying another residence was an expensive way to ease tension, but it allowed Hanrahan to keep his dignity and a modicum of independence, and ensured that the younger priests were not locked out of their home at night.

By now Beovich was conscious of his own increasing age and diminishing energy.<sup>137</sup> From the mid-1950s he battled diverticulitis, a chronic illness which caused periodic outbreaks of intense pain similar to appendicitis. The worst outbreak was in September 1956. As the crisis over the Movement worsened, Beovich spent several weeks in Calvary Hospital. As he was unable to fulfill his commitments to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation, James O'Collins traveled across to Adelaide from Ballarat to help out.<sup>138</sup> After a hectic few weeks in October and November 1956, which included several airplane flights, Beovich returned to Calvary with a blood clot behind the right eye. On 18 December 1956 an operation successfully reattached the retina to the eyeball, but the night before, his doctor recommended that he receive extreme unction. The situation seemed

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<sup>134</sup> Diary, 16 January 1959.

<sup>135</sup> Diary, 21 March 1962.

<sup>136</sup> Diary, 15 March 1962. See also *Southern Cross*, 13 October, 1961.

<sup>137</sup> "It seems that the pressure of work is increasing each year but this impression may be due to my own advancing years," Diary, 31 December 1954.

<sup>138</sup> Diary, 29 September 1956, 17 October 1956.



“pretty grim”.<sup>139</sup> Overall, Beovich was forced to spend most of December and January in bed, doing what office work he could from his hospital room.

While in hospital in November 1956, Beovich received a visit from the apostolic delegate, Romolo Carboni, and he broached the subject of an auxiliary bishop.<sup>140</sup> The following March his wish was granted when the appointment of James Gleeson was announced.<sup>141</sup> Beovich did not, like Mannix in 1942, have to suffer the indignity of a coadjutor being appointed without consultation. Gleeson was his preferred choice,<sup>142</sup> no doubt because he had demonstrated outstanding organizational ability, energy, zeal and loyalty as director of Catholic education and chaplain of the Young Christian Students’ Movement. He had also been deeply involved in organizing special events such as the Marian Congress. Beovich delegated to Gleeson the supervision of the Newman Institute and the Catholic Action movements, Catholic radio and television programmes and the Catholic Immigration Centre. Gleeson also came to preside over the Council of Sites and Architecture, the Seminary Procession Committee, and the Diocesan Charities Appeal. Beovich, however, remained firmly in control of the most important aspects of diocesan administration, including “all matters of diocesan policy and finance”, St Francis Xavier Seminary, Aquinas College, the Catholic Education Office, the Catholic Welfare Bureau, the *Southern Cross*, matters to do with liturgy and worship, permits required for acquiring sites and erecting buildings, and spiritual vocations.<sup>143</sup> The two men clearly worked well together and were fond of one another (“like father and son, the way they would chat”, commented Keith Koen),<sup>144</sup> but Gleeson’s authority was strictly limited. On at least one occasion, when he made a decision regarding the *Southern Cross* without consulting Beovich, the older man reacted sharply and Gleeson quickly apologised.<sup>145</sup> It was not an equal partnership.

<sup>139</sup> Diary, 20 January 1957; *Advertiser*, 7 January 1957.

<sup>140</sup> Diary, 6 December 1956.

<sup>141</sup> *Southern Cross*, 29 March 1957, p. 1.

<sup>142</sup> Thomas McCabe, bishop of Wollongong, wrote to Beovich, on 4 April 1957: “I want to congratulate you on your decision to have an auxiliary to help you and above all upon the wisdom of your choice. Whatever about the final appointment, I know from our former discussions that you justly looked on him as the most suitable for episcopal responsibility.”

<sup>143</sup> A list of responsibilities for the two bishops was drawn up in 1961 and is now in the ACAA

<sup>144</sup> Keith Koen, interview by author, 9 April 1998.

<sup>145</sup> Beovich slipped into his diary a letter from Gleeson dated 2 December 1965: “Please believe me Your Grace when I say that with the *Southern Cross* and other works in which you have asked me to take special care and in any other works in the Archdiocese, there is not the slightest desire to supplant you . . .”

### Out And About

Beovich kept his afternoons as free as possible of appointments so that he could engage in more overtly pastoral work, principally in the form of visits to the seminary, Calvary Hospital, convents, schools and presbyteries.<sup>146</sup> The seminary was his destination every Tuesday afternoon. He would spend some time in the chapel on his own and then join the faculty for afternoon tea. His sudden appearances and disappearances from the staff room, amidst a cloud of cigarette smoke, became part of seminary folklore.<sup>147</sup> He was also a frequent visitor at Calvary Hospital, only a few minutes’ drive from his home. Nursing staff became accustomed to seeing him dart through the wards chatting to patients, trying not to get in the way of their work.<sup>148</sup>

There was more pomp and ceremony at the laying of foundation stones, opening of new buildings and blessing of extensions which were so characteristic of this period. It has been said of the elderly Archbishop Duhig that if he had nothing to open on a Sunday, “he would enquire querulously what the clergy were doing”.<sup>149</sup> Beovich regarded the few Sundays on which he had no engagements as a rare treat.<sup>150</sup> In addition to the openings, which escalated in the late 1950s after building restrictions were lifted, it was not unusual for Beovich to go to several churches on a Sunday afternoon, with over a hundred children waiting for him at each place for the sacrament of confirmation.<sup>151</sup> December was a particularly busy month, filled with Christmas socials and school speech nights. Beovich was relieved when he came to the end of the month in 1954, noting in his diary that he had given “some 34 talks of various types: God help the listeners and myself”.

Not much divine aid would have been required, although children in 1960 may not have appreciated the archbishop’s advice to their parents at speech nights that they limit

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<sup>146</sup> Diary, 15 March 1956, also the testimony of two of his secretaries, Vincent Tiggeman (interview, 16 May 2002) and Peter Travers (interview, 28 November 2002).

<sup>147</sup> Alan Commins, interview by author, tape recording, 20 January 1998; and Brian Jackson, interview by author, tape recording, 15 January 2004.

<sup>148</sup> Calvary nurse Patricia Hearnshaw to Philip Kennedy in a condolence card after Beovich’s death in 1981. Many entries in Beovich’s diary mention visits to Calvary Hospital.

<sup>149</sup> Boland, *Duhig*, p. 342-3.

<sup>150</sup> Diary, 1 July 1956 and 7 September 1958.

<sup>151</sup> On Sunday, 3 April 1960 he noted in his diary that he had confirmed 270 children at Edwardstown in two batches. The following week there were two ceremonies (2.30 at Goodwood, 4pm at Cabra) and a total of 320 children.

the time their offspring spent in front of the television set so that they could cultivate habits of self-discipline and finish their homework.<sup>152</sup> Beovich had mastered the art of giving short, simple exhortations which conveyed a pious message with a down-to-earth touch. At a nurses’ graduation ceremony, for example, he said that nurses needed an understanding of the spiritual significance of pain:

Unless there is a Good Friday in our lives, there will never be an Easter Sunday . . . unless we die in this world we will not live in the next; unless we are crucified with Christ, we shall not rise with Christ. And you will note the sinless Mother of God was not spared suffering in this world . . .

However, he added that nurses required another very important attribute: a sense of humour so that they could see Christ in all their patients, no matter how stubborn and exacting they were.<sup>153</sup>

The feast day of St Joseph the Worker, celebrated for the first time on 1 May 1956, gave Beovich another opportunity to reflect on how ordinary people in their daily lives could serve God:

Since Joseph, then, and God’s choice of him, a halo has been set upon obscurity. Except in daydreams, most of us face up to the sad fact that we are not among the world shakers, the brilliant, the talented, the famous. And, facing that, we tend to get smothered in our own ordinariness. What is it that I, being what I am, can do to set the labouring world aright? Nothing, it seems . . . But it is precisely this tendency of plainness to underrate itself which God condemned when He chose Joseph. You are just a plain, foot-slogging private soldier, are you? Never mind, says God . . . When the world is won for God—and it will be so won—it will not be the generals who have done it, but the privates, the Josephs: the tram conductor with his patient, cheerful word, the policeman courteous in spite of his sore feet, the store salesgirl taking time out from commerce for common human friendliness, the housewife struggling along Rundle Street at high noon with a pram in one hand and bundles and a four-year-old in the other. These are the plain people, the privates, the Josephs, and of them—in God’s plan—is earth’s salvation to be moulded.<sup>154</sup>

In a similar vein, Beovich assured members of the St Vincent de Paul Society that “God does not put a premium on success”. In fact, success could lead to pride rather than humility, and for Beovich, the latter was one of the most basic virtues of spiritual life. Hence, “in His service, failure is often the greatest triumph. Our acts of love and service

<sup>152</sup> Diary, 9 November 1960; *Southern Cross*, 18 November 1960, p. 1.

<sup>153</sup> Notes for his address to the graduation ceremony in the Bonython Hall on 12 December 1951 are in the ACAA.

<sup>154</sup> Homily, undated, for a feast of St Joseph the Worker, ACAA.

for Him, whatever their outcome, are taken at their proper value.”<sup>155</sup> At the opening of the new church of St John Vianney at Burnside in 1962, he stressed the importance of “faith, hope, charity, humility and submission to the will of God. Nothing less is sufficient in a Christian; nothing more is required in a saint.”<sup>156</sup> As Katharine Massam says of Thérèse of Lisieux, Beovich “redefined heroism and put the opportunity for heroic effort firmly in the context of a God-watched daily life”.<sup>157</sup>

Beovich practised what he preached, never succumbing to triumphalism as his diocese expanded. What mattered most to him at the opening of a new church was not the architectural merit of the building but the faith of the people. With its west wall of blue-tinted glass and simple marble altar, the steel and cream brick Holy Name Church at St Peters was described as the loveliest church in Adelaide by a leading expert on church art and architecture.<sup>158</sup> At the formal opening ceremony on 26 April 1959, Beovich agreed that Holy Name Church was a beautiful building and he admired its elegant simplicity. He commented, however, that in an ideal world with perfect weather, it would be better to worship God out in the open air. Wind, rain and intense heat made a building necessary, but the best churches were those which did not distract from the worship of God.<sup>159</sup> Fortunately, Holy Name Church passed that test.

As Holy Name was a war memorial church, it was appropriate that it was opened the day after Anzac Day. Beovich acknowledged, as he always did, the presence of civic dignitaries. He was pleased that the mayor, aldermen and councillors of St Peters had come in their official robes, because it underlined the important role of the Church in the local community and demonstrated how well integrated Catholics had become in a predominantly Protestant state. He had cultivated this since his arrival in Adelaide. There

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<sup>155</sup> Addresses to the St Vincent de Paul Society, 19 July 1961 and 19 July 1962, ACAA.

<sup>156</sup> Homily at Blessing and First Mass of St John Vianney Church, Burnside, 17 June 1962, ACAA.

<sup>157</sup> Massam, *Sacred Threads*, p. 149.

<sup>158</sup> *Southern Cross*, 1 May 1959, p. 1; Joan Brewer, *A History of the Catholic Parish of St Peters, 1934-1984* (Adelaide: St Peters Parish, 1984), p. 12. The expert was Michael Scott, a Jesuit priest and rector of Aquinas College. He was awarded a Carnegie travel grant in 1957 to study developments in religious art and architecture in North America and Europe. He returned to Adelaide as the leading expert on such matters, consulted by Catholic, Anglican and Protestant church building committees. See Michael Head, *Fire on the Hill*, p. 68;.

<sup>159</sup> *Southern Cross*, 1 May 1959, p. 1.

was, however, a price to be paid: Beovich referred to it as “donning the hair shirt”.<sup>160</sup> He was himself invited to numerous civic functions and had to mix with Adelaide’s social elite. A regular guest at Government House, he went with reluctance but usually enjoyed himself once he had overcome his initial shyness. “A very pleasant and happy party”, he wrote one night after dinner with the governor, the governor general, the premier and their wives, “I groan in spirit when facing these functions, but the principals are so kind and friendly that my penance is worth little”.<sup>161</sup>

There was much to be gained from mixing with civic leaders. Apart from the gratification of seeing them at significant Catholic functions, such as the requiem Mass in St Francis Xavier Cathedral for Pope Pius XII in 1958,<sup>162</sup> and civic receptions to honour visiting Catholic dignities,<sup>163</sup> there were opportunities to exert quiet influence. Reg Wilson, former general secretary of the Liberal and Country League (LCL), told Thomas Playford’s biographer that the premier came into his office one day in 1951 or 1952 and said:

“Reg, I’ve had an approach from Archbishop Beovich. He says it’s time the Government recognized the influence and support the party gets from Catholics. He wants to see their numerical strength better reflected in the Parliament, in the Cabinet and in the Courts. I think he’s right, Reg. I think he’s right, and I think you’d better have a look at how we can pre-select some good man. You could start with that lawyer chap, Leo Travers.”<sup>164</sup>

Travers duly became the first Catholic LCL member of Parliament in 1953, and a judge of the Supreme Court in 1962. Overcoming the longstanding anti-Catholic prejudice of Chief Justice Sir Mellis Napier, the first Catholic Supreme Court judge, J.T. Brazel, was appointed in 1959.<sup>165</sup>

Progress continued on the ecumenical front. Beovich noted in his diary in 1957 the “very cordial atmosphere” at a function in the Adelaide Town Hall to farewell the Rev. J.

<sup>160</sup> On 24 March 1966 he had dinner with the Queen Mother at Government House. He found her “charming and affable” but commented in his diary, “I call this type of function—donning the hair shirt”.

<sup>161</sup> Diary, 19 March 1962; also 20 June 1966: “I approach these functions with distaste, offering it up, but as usually happens the hosts are so charming and kindly and the other guests so friendly that there is little to offer up and much to appreciate.”

<sup>162</sup> *Southern Cross*, 17 October 1958, p. 7. The governor, premier and lord mayor were all present.

<sup>163</sup> When Cardinal Agagianian visited Adelaide in September 1959 the Lord Mayor hosted a civic reception in the Adelaide Town Hall and Playford welcomed the cardinal. *Southern Cross*, 25 September 1959, p. 1.

<sup>164</sup> Stewart Cockburn, *Playford: Benevolent Despot*, p. 223.

<sup>165</sup> Hilliard, “Religion in Playford’s South Australia”, p. 255.

Blanchard: "Blanchard is an old friend from my first days in Adelaide, when he was moderator and then moderator general of the Presbyterian Assembly".<sup>166</sup> He also appreciated the tributes to Pius XII in October 1958 from "our non-Catholic friends", including a resolution unanimously passed by the standing committee of the Church of England synod.<sup>167</sup> However, in the same month he was annoyed by the insistence of the newly elected Anglican bishop of Adelaide, T.T. Reed, that his name go first on a joint letter issued by the Christian churches to promote the "Put Christ back into Christmas" campaign. In retaliation, Beovich withdrew his name, and replaced it with James Gleeson's, a gesture which showed his displeasure without significantly impairing Catholic involvement in the campaign.<sup>168</sup> He also maintained contact with his rather autocratic Anglican counterpart, going to Reed's residence, "Bishopscourt", in the mid-1960s for a number of meetings to plan an ecumenical religious centre for the new university campus under construction at Bedford Park. Originally a campus of the University of Adelaide, it became the Flinders University of South Australia in 1966.<sup>169</sup>

A decade earlier joint representation by church leaders had failed to persuade the University of Adelaide to introduce degrees in scholastic theology (for Catholics) and biblical studies ("for our non-Catholic friends").<sup>170</sup> However, through coordinated action the major denominations succeeded in gaining considerable funding for their residential colleges from the federal and state governments and a university-managed joint appeal.<sup>171</sup> It had always been Beovich's desire that Aquinas College not only provide residential facilities for students, but also be an important link between the Catholic Church and the university. Apart from some financial worries as the college expanded, he was very pleased with its progress in the 1950s. The rector, Michael Scott, moved easily in academic circles and the college was the venue for various debates, conferences, discussion groups and recollection days which were open to non-residents.<sup>172</sup> After presiding at the opening Mass for the academic year in 1958, Beovich expressed in his

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<sup>166</sup> Diary, 19 November 1957.

<sup>167</sup> Diary, 18 October 1958; *Southern Cross*, 24 October 1958, p. 1.

<sup>168</sup> Diary, 24 October 1958.

<sup>169</sup> Diary, 24 March 1964, 8 May 1964, 23 June 1964.

<sup>170</sup> Diary, 12 August 1954.

<sup>171</sup> Head, *Fire on the Hill*, p. 50. Between 1958 and 1960, Aquinas College received £20,000 from the federal government, £10,000 from the state government, and £10,000 from the joint fund administered by the university.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 177-182.

diary his “deep satisfaction” that Aquinas had “indeed become the spiritual centre of Catholic life in the University”.<sup>173</sup>

Yet for all Beovich’s genuine interest in ecumenism and concern for the development of an educated Catholic laity, St Francis Xavier Seminary remained his chief pride and joy. Under the care of the Vincentian Fathers from 1952, it was upgraded to a major seminary in 1958, so that students could complete their formation for the priesthood in South Australia and, except in special circumstances, not have to travel interstate or overseas. When the new theology block opened in 1959, there was accommodation for eighty-six students. Sixty-one were in residence the following year.<sup>174</sup> Against the backdrop of the Morialta Conservation Park, close to the city yet seemingly remote, the seminary’s elegant red brick buildings lent themselves to the headline in the *Southern Cross*: “Young Students Man A Fortress for God”.<sup>175</sup> At the opening of the new theology block and chapel—and the launching of an appeal to cover the remaining debt of £48,000—Beovich proclaimed that “No work is greater to the cause of Christ and the welfare of immortal souls than the education and preparation of young men for the priesthood”.<sup>176</sup> Eight bishops from interstate were present to witness the opening, and any Catholic dignitaries who passed through Adelaide were given a tour of the seminary by the enthusiastic archbishop. In 1959 the Marian procession was timed to take place during Cardinal Agagianian’s visit. Twenty thousand Catholics walked from Rostrevor College to the seminary, which Beovich jubilantly hailed as “the power house of this ecclesiastical province of Adelaide”.<sup>177</sup> In his diary Beovich reflected that “the days of ordination to the Priesthood are always my happiest days” and he had many opportunities in the 1950s to enjoy the experience.<sup>178</sup>

In 1957 Beovich stood back and let his new auxiliary bishop have the privilege of ordaining his first priests. James Gleeson took on many other engagements, including official openings, confirmations, speech nights and debutante balls, but to Beovich’s dismay, the number of functions he was expected to attend kept increasing, so his

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<sup>173</sup> Diary, 18 March 1958.

<sup>174</sup> *Relatio*, 1960, p. 7.

<sup>175</sup> *Southern Cross*, 15 May 1959, special supplement, p. 5.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 May 1959, p. 3.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 September 1959, p. 3.

<sup>178</sup> Diary, 28 July 1954.

workload did not noticeably diminish.<sup>179</sup> There was one obligation which he passed over to Gleeson entirely: parish visitation. The travel involved had become difficult for Beovich when he was battling diverticulitis, and it gave Gleeson a chance to get to know the diocese better, but in retrospect it was not one of Beovich’s wiser decisions. Although Gleeson maintained that Beovich still “kept closely in touch with parishes, schools and religious houses in his own inimitable way, through functions, brief visits and confirmations”,<sup>180</sup> the famous speed with which he arrived and disappeared did not abate as he aged, and prevented anyone getting too close to him. Men ordained from 1957 onwards were much more likely than their predecessors to encounter the archbishop infrequently and thus regard him as a rather remote figure. Many still joke about his inability to remember their names.<sup>181</sup>

### Further Afield

In the 1950s Beovich continued to spend every February at Koroit in Victoria with fellow bishops Jim O’Collins, Justin Simonds, Pat Lyons and Alf Gummer. In addition to this annual holiday, he was assiduous in his attendance at the annual bishops’ meetings and special Catholic functions interstate. Fulfilling his obligation according to canon law to make *ad limina* visits to Rome, he went overseas in 1950, 1955 and 1960. As air travel was then uncommon, he normally went by sea, returning by air for the first time in 1960. In 1950 he was away for almost nine months. During that time the diocese was technically in the care of the elderly vicar general, Michael Hourigan. In reality, Beovich’s secretary, William Reardon, kept in close contact with Beovich and was very selective in what business matters he passed on to Hourigan.<sup>182</sup>

Beovich’s travelling companions in 1950 were Simonds, O’Collins and Gummer.<sup>183</sup> Their journey through Canada and the United States was like a study tour. Beovich

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<sup>179</sup> Diary, 28 October 1957.

<sup>180</sup> Gleeson, “The Church in Adelaide”, p. 296.

<sup>181</sup> “Who’s that over there?”, Beovich is reported to have asked at a clergy dinner. “Oh, that’s Father . . . , Your Grace, you ordained him last Saturday.”

<sup>182</sup> This is clear from the Beovich-Reardon correspondence in the ACAA. In 1955 the vicar general was John Gatzemeyer, in 1960 James Gleeson.

<sup>183</sup> William McCarthy includes a short chapter on the trip in *James Patrick O’Collins*, pp. 85-88.



carefully jotted in his diary his observations on the structures and systems in the various dioceses he passed through. In Rome there was the thrill of a private audience with Pius XII and, for Beovich, O’Collins and Gummer, time to visit places and people associated with their student days in the city. John Molony, then a student at the Urban College of Propaganda Fide, sensed that the Louvain-educated Simonds “felt out of place” with his friends in Rome,<sup>184</sup> but his ability to speak French came to the fore when they were in France. O’Collins hired a car, and drove his companions through Italy, Spain, Portugal and France, the journey planned around pilgrimages to Fatima, Lourdes and Lisieux. After a brief visit to Germany to see the passion play at Oberammergau, they went to Ireland where Beovich dutifully visited family and friends of his Irish-born priests and religious sisters as well as visiting the Marian shrine at Knock. A tour of cathedrals and historic sites in England was an opportunity to reflect on the turmoil of the Reformation. Beovich arrived home at the end of October to an enthusiastic greeting from a “huge crowd” at a liturgical reception in St Francis Xavier Cathedral. Perhaps there is some truth in the old adage that “absence makes the heart grow fonder”. While the addresses of welcome verged on the obsequious, they seem to have been offered with genuine warmth.<sup>185</sup>

Five years later Beovich was off again, this time with Jim O’Collins and Pat Lyons.<sup>186</sup> They went first to Rome for their *ad limina* visit, and then represented the Australian hierarchy at the International Eucharistic Congress in Rio de Janeiro. They arrived in Buenos Aires just after the suppression of a revolt against the government, during which a number of churches were desecrated and burnt. It was, for Beovich, a grim reminder of the reality of religious persecution. Returning to Europe, the trio travelled through France, England, Scotland, Ireland and Germany, the journey culminating in a memorable pilgrimage through the Holy Land with Cardinal Agagianian. After another exuberant welcome in the cathedral on Sunday 6 November, the editorial of the *Southern Cross* stressed that the archbishop had not been on holiday for six months, he had been representing his people, few of whom could hope to travel overseas themselves:

Every Catholic would hold it a privilege to walk physically on the ground where Our Lord walked, to see the scenes that He saw, to visit the places sanctified by His presence. Unable to do that, it is deeply satisfying to know that our father-in-God has done it on our behalf. At Nazareth and Bethlehem, at Tabor and Jerusalem, the

<sup>184</sup> Molony, *Luther’s Pine: An Autobiography*, p. 284; Diary, 6 June 1950.

<sup>185</sup> *Southern Cross*, 3 November 1950, pp. 1, 7.

<sup>186</sup> See McCarthy, *James Patrick O’Collins*, pp. 89-91.

Successor of the Apostles who is our spiritual chief walked where the Lord had walked with the Apostles . . . <sup>187</sup>

In 1960 Beovich was only away for eleven weeks, from late April to early July. Most of his time was spent in Rome engaged in matters of diocesan business, such as the suppression of the Institute of St John the Baptist. The highlight was a private audience with the new pope. Whereas the austere and otherworldly Pius XII had looked on Beovich with "piercing eyes" in 1950 and asked "Are your priests spiritual men of interior life?", <sup>188</sup> the affable and relaxed John XXIII seemed particularly interested in hearing about the harmonious relationship between church and state in Adelaide. <sup>189</sup>

### The Divorce Bill

While the cordial relationship between the Catholic Church and the civic authorities in Adelaide owed much to Beovich's diplomacy, it was part of a wider trend in the 1950s. It was generally accepted that a healthy society was undergirded by "Christian beliefs" or "Christian moral standards". <sup>190</sup> The churches were the chief guardians of morality and church leaders were usually listened to with respect when they spoke out on moral issues. They were rarely criticized in the press. However, subtle but unmistakable shifts in social attitudes were taking place, as Beovich discovered to his cost in the late 1950s.

Throughout the western world, divorce rates rose steadily in the twentieth century, and as divorce became more common and financially accessible, there was pressure for reform of the law. This was manifest in Australia in 1957 when a private member's bill in the commonwealth parliament attempted to introduce national legislation to replace the differing and inconsistent state laws. <sup>191</sup> Beovich responded in his annual lecture at the

<sup>187</sup> *Southern Cross*, 11 November 1955, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>188</sup> *Diary*, 11 May 1950, *Southern Cross*, 17 October 1958, p. 7.

<sup>189</sup> *Diary*, 25 June 1960; *Southern Cross*, 22 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>190</sup> "A fundamental theme of the religious culture of urban Australia was the association between personal faith, divinely sanctioned moral values and a stable social order", Hilliard, "God in the Suburbs", p. 410.

<sup>191</sup> See Malcolm Broun, "Historical Introduction" in Paul Toose, Ray Watson and David Benjafield, *Australian Divorce Law and Practice* (Sydney, Melbourne & Brisbane: The Law Book Company, 1968), pp. xciii-cvi. For South Australia, see Ken Elford, "Marriage and Divorce" in Eric Richards, ed. *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*, pp. 312-332. For trends throughout the Western world, see

Beovich was less pleased after the annual meeting of the Australian hierarchy the following January, when he was asked to prepare a special pastoral letter to be issued by all the bishops.<sup>194</sup> He reluctantly agreed, and used his Newman lecture as the basis for the draft which he sent to his episcopal colleagues in April. The majority responded warmly, but the shrewd James Carroll warned against too negative a statement. He wanted greater emphasis on successful marriage and less extensive prohibitions on lawyers acting in divorce cases, as many considerations had to be taken into account in matters of conscience. He also thought it appropriate to express more sympathy for judges.<sup>195</sup> The final version did acknowledge that if Catholic judges were to decline all divorce cases, they could jeopardise their careers and compromise the public good. They could, therefore, be forgiven for “material cooperation in something morally wrong” (granting exemption from the legal recognition of marriage even though they were aware that it could lead to a remarriage) provided there was no “formal cooperation” (intention to “sunder an indissoluble bond”). This subtle distinction did not apply to lawyers who were told they could only “act safely” in divorce cases with approval from the Church.

After the pastoral letter was finalised and sent to the press, Beovich received, via Justin Simonds, to whom it had been wrongly directed, the elderly James Duhig’s response. Duhig, who had just become the first Australian Catholic bishop to receive a knighthood, disapproved:

I have given the matter some thought, and, to be candid, I think it would be a mistake to go into details about the position and duties of Catholic judges sitting in divorce cases. Personally I would prefer to say that the Catholic judge dealing with divorce cases is administering the law of the country and not the teaching of the Church and that his decision does not in any way compromise either the Church or himself . . . I do not think it is necessary for us to give the whys and the wherefore of the Church’s teaching . . . Only the most ignorant Catholics can be unaware of the indissolubility of marriage.<sup>196</sup>

As Simonds wrote to Beovich when forwarding the letter, it was a pity that Sir James had not conveyed his comments when he received the draft copy.<sup>197</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, several bishops overenthusiastically stressed the sinful nature of support for the divorce bill. Beovich deprecated such a “bull in a china shop” approach, reflecting in his

<sup>194</sup> Diary, 28 January 1959.

<sup>195</sup> Carroll to Beovich, 25 April 1959.

<sup>196</sup> Duhig to Simonds, 30 June 1959.

<sup>197</sup> Simonds to Beovich, 3 July 1959.

diary that Church leaders should confine themselves to explaining Christian principles, and then leave the laity to follow their well-informed consciences.<sup>198</sup>

Nevertheless, regardless of what the bishops said, there was very little public debate on divorce in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in marked contrast to previous years.<sup>199</sup> A few Anglican bishops joined the Catholic hierarchy in deploring the bill, as did the prominent Methodist minister Alan Walker, but Barwick’s bill had a relatively smooth passage through parliament in November 1959.<sup>200</sup> To Beovich’s consternation, the majority of Catholic parliamentarians supported “the anti-Christian legislation” and an opinion poll indicated that fifty-one percent of Catholics were also in favour of it.<sup>201</sup> As divorce rates escalated in the 1960s, the diocesan office in Adelaide was not inundated with requests for advice from Catholic lawyers. Attitudes to divorce were changing and there was nothing that Beovich could do about it.

### A Flourishing Diocese?

With the passing of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1959, the 1950s ended on a sour note for Matthew Beovich. There are other signs that the decade was less than a golden age. In the church and school building boom, quantity came at the expense of quality. Few of the new buildings had architectural merit. Many were hurriedly constructed using volunteer labour and cheap building materials such as asbestos, its carcinogenic properties

<sup>198</sup> The chief offender was Arthur Fox, auxiliary bishop of Melbourne, who also annoyed Beovich with his outspoken political remarks (see previous chapter). In April 1960 a newspaper reported that Guilford Young of Hobart had attempted to ban Catholic lawyers from handling divorce cases. This prompted Beovich to issue a statement summarizing the more nuanced position of the pastoral (Diary, 3 April 1960; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 1960, p. 1; *Advertiser*, 4 April 1960, p. 7; *Southern Cross*, 8 April 1960, p. 1).

<sup>199</sup> The pastoral letter received respectful if muted press coverage. See *Advertiser*, 9 July 1959, pp. 3, 6; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 July 1959, p. 6. In contrast, in December 1951 scarcely a day went by when there was not at least one letter in the correspondence section of the *Advertiser* about divorce, triggered by Church of England opposition. No letter to the editor either supporting or opposing the pastoral was published in the *Advertiser* in July 1959. An editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* took a swipe at the Catholic hierarchy for attempting to influence judges (10 July 1959, p. 2). The only response this evoked was a letter (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 July 1959, p. 2) from Leslie Rumble, the well-known Catholic apologist and spokesman for the Sydney archdiocese. See also James Walter, “Designing Families and Solid Citizens: The Dialectic of Modernity and the Matrimonial Causes Bill, 1959”, *Australian Historical Studies* 116 (2001): 40-56.

<sup>200</sup> Elford, “Marriage and Divorce”, p. 326; *Advertiser*, 20 November, 1959, pp. 1,12; 28 November 1959, pp. 1, 13.

<sup>201</sup> Diary, 16 July 1959, 29 November 1959.

not then known. Despite much heroic effort to maintain the separate Catholic education system, there was also a sinister side to the overcrowded classrooms, constant funding crises, and limited teacher training. The psychological toll on students and teachers cannot be explored here but there are hints of it in the sources.<sup>202</sup> For Beovich, the decade was also marred by his long-running battle to suppress the Institute of St John the Baptist, the Movement debacle, and growing health problems.

Yet despite these caveats, the overwhelming impression one gets of the archdiocese of Adelaide in the 1950s is that it *was* “a flourishing diocese” ruled by a wise and conscientious archbishop. The diocesan structures functioned well, and allowed parish priests a fair degree of latitude while ensuring they remained accountable to the archbishop. The initiatives Beovich had taken in the 1940s bore fruit: the Catholic Welfare Bureau and the Catholic Education Office, St Francis Xavier Seminary, Aquinas College and, as noted in the previous chapter, the Newman Institute. Talented young South Australian-born priests like James Gleeson, Edward Mulvilhill and Robert Wilkinson were given leadership opportunities, as were laymen like Edward Farrell and William Byrne of the Newman Institute and the leaders of the vibrant lay apostolate movements. No diocese in Australia did more to welcome migrants, foster ecumenism or establish a harmonious relationship with civic authorities. By the end of the decade the processions in honour of the Blessed Sacrament and Mary were attracting crowds of up to twenty thousand people,<sup>203</sup> a ringing endorsement of the style of piety encouraged by the archbishop.

If ever there was a time “when it all came together” (or seemed to do so) it was during the celebrations to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Beovich’s consecration as archbishop of Adelaide. A special fifty-two page issue of the *Southern Cross* was published to mark the occasion, complete with a souvenir print of the archbishop.<sup>204</sup> Frank Walsh, the new Labor premier—the first Catholic to hold that position—praised Beovich’s “outstanding work” as a spiritual leader; Tom Playford, as Leader of the Opposition, acknowledged Beovich’s courtesy and cooperation during his

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<sup>202</sup> In her history of the South Australian Sisters of Mercy, Anne McLay reflects briefly on the increasingly dysfunctional nature of religious life in this period, the tendency toward a spirituality which overemphasized discipline and self-denial and helped produced workaholics, and a formality in communal life which led to impersonality and in some cases loneliness. See *Women on the Move: Mercy’s Triple Spiral*, pp. 218-221.

<sup>203</sup> *Southern Cross*, 25 September, p. 3; 30 October 1959, p. 1.

<sup>204</sup> *Southern Cross*, 2 April 1965.

Newman Institute by reiterating Catholic teaching. Marriage, he declared, was an indissoluble sacrament, one which only the Church could regulate. The state itself would lose by usurping the Church’s authority “because the harmony and stability of family relations upon which the well-being of the state is ultimately based will be unsettled and impaired by the facilities which are offered for divorce”. Beovich acknowledged the difficult position of Catholic judges, but he strongly recommended that they avoid divorce cases. He exhorted Catholic lawyers not to participate at all unless they were assured by their bishop that a marriage was invalid according to Church law.<sup>192</sup> On a more positive note, he encouraged engaged and married couples to attend “Pre-Cana” and “Cana Conferences”. The Cana Conference Movement originated in the United States as a Catholic marriage guidance movement. In one-day conferences, couples were given advice, usually from a doctor and an experienced lay person as well as a priest. The first Cana Conference was held in Adelaide in 1949. By the early 1960s, eight trained marriage guidance counsellors based at the Catholic Welfare Bureau were involved in the work.<sup>193</sup>

The attempt to reform divorce law in 1957 failed, but in 1958 the Menzies government took up the challenge and the quest for uniform legislation was led by the attorney-general, Sir Garfield Barwick. A controversial feature of his bill was the introduction of a new ground for divorce: if a marriage had completely broken down (the parties having been separated for five years, with no reasonable likelihood of resuming cohabitation), they could be divorced without one party having to prove that the other had committed a matrimonial offence such as adultery. A concerned Beovich suggested to Leo Travers, President of the South Australian Law Society, that he call a meeting of Catholic lawyers at Aquinas College. On 8 October 1958 Beovich duly addressed a large gathering. He repeated much of his Newman Institute lecture and reiterated that lawyers could approach Church Office for help in difficult cases. “I came away feeling very tired, but glad that the meeting had been held and hopeful that much good would come of it”, he wrote in his diary that night.

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Roderick Phillips, *Putting Asunder: A History of Divorce in Western Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). An abridged version is also available: *Untying the Knot: A Short History of Divorce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>192</sup> *Southern Cross*, 9 August 1957, pp. 6-7. The lecture was also reported in *The Advertiser*, 6 August 1957, p. 3.

<sup>193</sup> *Southern Cross*, 2 April 1965, pp. 12, 32, 43. See also Hilliard, “Church, Family and Sexuality in Australia in the 1950s”, pp. 139-140.

many years as premier. Archbishop Beovich, said Playford, was “a man of complete sincerity, high culture and learning; he has been an inspiration to all who have been privileged to come into contact with him”. Similar tributes were paid by the heads of other Christian churches.<sup>205</sup> From Pope Paul VI, Beovich received the honour of being named as an assistant at the pontifical throne, a title dating from the eleventh century.<sup>206</sup>

While much was made of Beovich’s personal contribution to the flourishing of Catholicism in South Australia, the jubilee was, in accordance with his wishes, really a celebration of the achievements of the diocese as a whole: a quarter of a century of expansion and progress. Paul McGuire captured this in the toast he delivered at the layman’s dinner to honour the archbishop. After gently chiding Beovich for excessive personal humility, he observed, “You must surely feel at times a glow of satisfaction through your being. This is an occasion when we and all your laity can glow a little with you.”<sup>207</sup> Ironically, however, in the souvenir portrait the archbishop was not glowing. Standing in front of a crucifix, he looked tired and old. At the age of sixty-nine he was not resting on the achievements of the past but governing a diocese in the throes of dramatic change. How he coped will be the subject of the next two chapters.

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<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 July 1965, p. 2. The silver jubilee dinner was to have been held on 27 April. The date had to be changed when Beovich fell ill with “the old abdominal complaint” and spent several weeks in Calvary Hospital. It eventually took place on 13 July 1965. Paul McGuire was one of the most eminent South Australian lay Catholics, a best-selling author, friend and adviser to Thomas Playford, Australian delegate to the United Nations (1953-4), minister to Italy (1954-7) and ambassador (1957-9).



Figure 9.1 Matthew Beovich in 1950





Figure 9.2 Awarded an Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, 1962.



Figures 9.3 The inaugural Marian Procession through the grounds of St Francis Xavier Seminary, 21 August 1949



Figure 9.4 In front of the seminary at the end of the procession, 1949



Figure 9.5 The Marian Procession reaches  
St Francis Xavier Seminary, 1957



Figure 9.6 Blessing and laying the foundation stone of St Thérèse Church,  
Colonel Light Gardens, 26 August 1962



Figure 9.7 James  
Gleeson on the day of his  
consecration as auxiliary  
bishop of Adelaide,  
21 May 1957

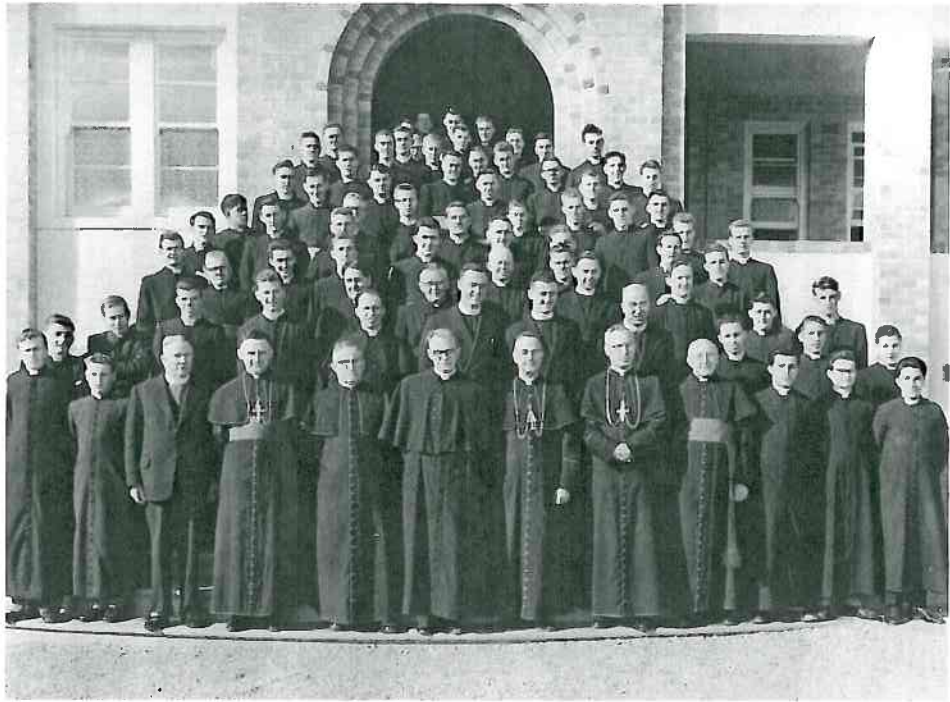


Figure 9.8 Beovich, Gleeson and visiting bishops with staff and students after the blessing and opening of extensions to the seminary in May 1959.



Figure 9.9 Ordination Day, 1961. Beovich with John Chambers, Colin Jarrett, Kevin Bartlett, Brian Taylor and Brian Schmidt.



**Figure 9.10** In Rome in 1950 with James O'Collins, Justin Simonds and Alfred Gummer



**Figure 9.11** Beovich going to his audience with Pope Pius XII on 11 May 1950. He is accompanied by Leonard Faulkner (left) and Vincent Tiggeman (right), Adelaide students at the Urban College of Propaganda Fide



Figure 9.12 Beovich in 1965. The photograph was taken for inclusion as a colour print in the special edition of the *Southern Cross* on 2 April 1965 to mark Beovich's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of episcopal ordination.

## 10. “A School for Bishops”: The Second Vatican Council

As to the hierarchy and senior clergy, they were—with very few exceptions—of the older generation, conservative, very firm adherents to traditional concepts of authority and episcopal power, willing to institute such changes as the Vatican council had decreed, but frequently uncomprehending and even resistant to the spirit of change.

Patrick O’Farrell

Archbishop Beovich often said that Pope John XIII had unwittingly set up an adult education course for bishops when he initiated the Council . . .

James Gleeson

From 1962 to 1965 Matthew Beovich spent three to four months of every year in Rome attending the Second Vatican Council.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to exaggerate the significance of Vatican II, the first ecumenical or world-wide council in the Catholic Church since 1870. The First Vatican Council was interrupted in that year by the incorporation of Rome into the new kingdom of Italy and never resumed, leaving its successor in the 1960s to introduce the most far reaching changes to Catholicism since the sixteenth-century Council of Trent. The impact in Australia was as dramatic as anywhere else, yet for almost three decades Australian historians paid little attention to the Council.<sup>2</sup> What was written was hardly flattering to the Australian bishops. When one of the most eminent Catholic historians, Patrick O’Farrell, depicts the hierarchy as “frequently uncomprehending and even resistant to the spirit of change”,<sup>3</sup> it is not surprising that Ian Breward concludes in his survey of Australian church history:

Most Australian bishops were bemused observers of a process which shattered their convictions about the uniformity of the Roman Catholic Church . . . Australian contributions to Council debates were few. The pragmatism and traditionalism of the Australian Church stood nakedly exposed.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An early version of this chapter was delivered at a public lecture at Catholic Theological College on 10 October 2002 to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the commencement of the Council. It was published as “The Archbishop of Adelaide at Vatican II” in *ACR* 80 (July 2003): 319-333.

<sup>2</sup> The Council is not mentioned at all in Geoffrey Bolton, *The Oxford History of Australia*, vol. 5: *The Middle Way, 1942-1995*, and it is treated only briefly in the general Catholic histories. “Vatican II and After” is the shortest chapter in O’Farrell’s *Catholic Church and Community*. Campion’s chapter “The Vatican II Years” in *Australian Catholics* is longer, but focuses on the changes in Australian Catholicism in the 1960s rather than the Council itself. In *Catholics in Australia*, Turner makes only a few scattered references to the Council.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick O’Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, p. 410.

<sup>4</sup> Ian Breward, *History of the Australian Churches*, p. 163.

On only a slightly more positive note, Roger Thompson states: "The Australian Catholic episcopacy did not resist completely the changes".<sup>5</sup>

In a doctoral thesis devoted to the Australian bishops' involvement in the Second Vatican Council, Jeffrey Murphy challenges the prevailing consensus by arguing that, while they did not play a spectacular role, the bishops generally participated conscientiously and with considerable openness to reform.<sup>6</sup> Yet their reactions naturally varied, and throughout his thesis Murphy discerns three main tendencies: support for significant reforms, resistance to change, and ambivalence. Beovich is one of the bishops whom Murphy finds too enigmatic to classify, but he suspects that while the archbishop of Adelaide eventually accepted the decisions of the Council, his heart was not really in it.<sup>7</sup>

A more positive assessment of Beovich's response to the Council can be found in an article in the *Australasian Catholic Record* by Adelaide diocesan priest, Robert Rice.<sup>8</sup> Rice helpfully translates into English references to Beovich and his auxiliary bishop James Gleeson in the Latin record of the Council proceedings,<sup>9</sup> and he quotes from some notebooks which Beovich used during the Council, but he did not have access to Beovich's main diary. He acknowledges Beovich's early resistance to liturgical reform and detects a change to a more positive view in a notebook entry on 20 November 1962. As Murphy realises, however, Beovich was actually expressing support for the much more conservative document on revelation.<sup>10</sup> This chapter will explore Beovich's reactions to the Council which can be discerned from his diary entries as well as the notebooks which he took into the Council hall. It will begin in 1959 when 2594 Catholic bishops around the world were invited to suggest possible subjects for discussion at the Council.

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<sup>5</sup> Roger Thompson, *Religion in Australia: A History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 129.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey Murphy, "The Australian Hierarchy and Vatican II: 1959-1965" (Ph.D. thesis, Griffith University, 2001). Chapters have been published as a series of articles in *ACR* 78, 79 & 80 (2001, 2002, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> Murphy, "The Australian Hierarchy and Vatican II", pp. 236-237.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Rice, "Some Reflections on the Contributions of Matthew Beovich and James Gleeson to the Second Vatican Council", *ACR* 78 (January 2001): 46-61.

<sup>9</sup> *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II* (Citta del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970-80).

<sup>10</sup> Murphy, "The Australian Hierarchy and Vatican II", p. 151.



### Suggestions for the Agenda

Almost 2000 responses were sent to Rome.<sup>11</sup> In a recent international study, Etienne Fouilloux finds that the majority tended to be cautious, conformist, and concerned with discipline rather than doctrine.<sup>12</sup> William Ryder reached a similar verdict with regard to the Australian bishops. He ends his 1988 article in the *Australasian Catholic Record* with the rather depressing comment: "Pope John's call for renewal found here a small response on which to build."<sup>13</sup>

Undeterred, Murphy went over the Australian responses again. In his thesis, he argues that eleven out of twenty-nine respondents were clearly in favour of some reforms, such as Lancelot Goody of Bunbury who thought that the "overriding theme" of the Council could be the goal of promoting Christian unity. Another eleven did not contribute any suggestions, including James Gleeson, who offered instead his prayers for the Council, and James O'Collins of Ballarat, who observed that the Church was in such a healthy state in his diocese that "nothing came to mind". Seven other bishops sent responses which Murphy puts in the too hard basket, among them Matthew Beovich.<sup>14</sup>

Beovich's brief response contained four suggestions.<sup>15</sup> The first was that the Council could consider "various means of promoting more and more the interior spiritual life both of priests from the diocesan clergy and of men and women from secular institutes". He was the only bishop in Australia who explicitly asked for spirituality to be put on the agenda. This reflected his own priorities, and perhaps also the influence of Pope Pius XII, who had stressed the need for priests to cultivate their interior life in Beovich's first audience with him in 1950.

Beovich was one of only two Australian bishops to call for discussion on ecclesiology (the theology of the Church). He asked for the collection of papal statements on the concept of the Church as "the mystical body of Christ", one of Pius XII's favourite

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<sup>11</sup> See Etienne Fouilloux, "The Antepreparatory Phase" in Giuseppe Alberigo, gen. ed., *History of Vatican II*, vol. 1 (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), pp. 97. ff. Hereafter the series will be cited as *HVII*.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107-8.

<sup>13</sup> William Ryder, "The Australian Bishops' Proposals for Vatican II", *ACR* 65 (January 1988): p. 76.

<sup>14</sup> Murphy, "The Australian Hierarchy and Vatican II", p. 102. See also Appendix 1, pp. 327-401, for English translations of the responses and the final synthesis.

<sup>15</sup> Beovich to Cardinal Tardini, 20 April 1960, ACAA.

expressions. The Council’s reflections on the nature of the Church eventually resulted in its most important document *Lumen gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Beovich also requested clarification of the doctrine, so troublesome in an increasingly ecumenical and secular age, that “outside the Church there is no salvation”. Murphy is not sure whether the implications of this are positive or not.<sup>16</sup> Given Beovich’s efforts to improve relations between Catholics and the wider community in South Australia, endorsed by Pope John XXIII when they met in 1960, it most definitely was a sign of his interest in ecumenism. The Council would strongly affirm this, and present a much more optimistic view of salvation, most notably in *Lumen gentium*, *Unitatis redintegratio*, the Decree on Ecumenism, and *Nostra aetate*, the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.<sup>17</sup>

Beovich was also interested in the relationship between the Church and the world, which became the focus of *Gaudium et spes*, the Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Beovich called for a “more polished version” of the social teaching of the Church, with particular emphasis on the relationship between the Church and the civil state. He was doubtless thinking of the Movement debacle, but he also called for discussion on “the dangers of unbridled nationalism”, perhaps a legacy of the time he spent as a student in Mussolini’s Italy. Only one other bishop in Australia raised the issue of church-state relations, although it was a concern of almost a quarter of the bishops who sent in suggestions from the United States.<sup>18</sup>

Lastly, Beovich, along with six other Australian bishops, recommended that the Council could consider how to reduce and simplify the penalties in canon law. This was done in the revised code of canon law which was promulgated in 1983.

While far from radically innovative, Beovich’s suggestions surely indicate that he was not out of touch with the issues which would arise at the Council.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, he

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<sup>16</sup> Murphy, “The Australian Hierarchy and Vatican II”, p. 97.

<sup>17</sup> For Karl Rahner, “this optimism concerning salvation . . . [was] one of the most noteworthy results of the Second Vatican Council”, *Theological Investigations*, XIV (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976), p. 284.

<sup>18</sup> J. A. Komonchak, “U.S. Bishops’ Suggestions for Vatican II”, *Cristianesimo nella storia*, Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 15 (1994): p. 344.

<sup>19</sup> All the points which Beovich made were included in the final synthesis of the responses from around the world although this was compiled before he sent them on 20 April, 1960. There is no indication why his

did not realise how long it would take to clarify the Council’s teaching—in that respect he was certainly unprepared for what happened. In June 1960 he heard that Pope John had appointed preparatory commissions to develop schemata or draft documents for the Council. He commented in his diary: “I will hazard a guess that the different commissions will get to work rapidly, and from time to time will send statements to the bishops throughout the world for comments, views, etc., so that when the time comes for the meeting of the Council itself there will not be occasion for any prolonged discussion”. He later wrote in the margin: “Wrong!”<sup>20</sup>

Seven schemata were dispatched to the bishops in July 1962. Beovich mentioned in his diary on 5 September that he was reading them, but the diary also reveals a kaleidoscope of activities in the final four weeks before he left Australia: two interstate trips, a stream of engagements and a constant battle to clear his desk of paper work. A lecture on the latest developments in biblical criticism by a visiting scholar at the seminary was an interruption which Beovich “offered up as a voluntary penance for the coming Council”.<sup>21</sup> The transition from pastoral administration to participation at the Council was not an easy one.

### **The First Session (1962)**

On 24 September Beovich flew to Rome. In 1962 that meant an exhausting journey of over twenty-seven hours with six stops on the way. Waiting for him at the airport in Rome was Paul Jatulis, chaplain to the Lithuanian community in Adelaide from 1949 to 1957. Jatulis drove him to the Lithuanian College, not far from the Basilica of St John Lateran. The accommodation was very simple but adequate, and Beovich ended up staying there for all four sessions of the Council.<sup>22</sup> He was joined by Justin Simonds, coadjutor archbishop of Melbourne, Patrick Lyons of Sale and James O’Collins of Ballarat,

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reply was so late. The bishops were originally asked to respond by 1 September, 1959. A reminder note was sent on 21 March 1960 to those like Beovich who had not replied.

<sup>20</sup> Diary, 5 June 1960.

<sup>21</sup> Diary, 22 August 1962.

<sup>22</sup> According to Murphy, Beovich stayed at the Villa Mater Dei (“The Australian Hierarchy and Vatican II”, p. 124). Murphy seems to have confused Beovich with Eris O’Brien. For O’Brien, see Alfred Stirling, *A Distant View of the Vatican* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1975), p. 65.

the bishops with whom he spent his annual holiday each February at the presbytery at Koroit.

A violent storm swept through Rome on the eve of the opening of the Council on 11 October 1962. By morning the thunder and lightning had gone, but the bishops awoke to grey skies and drizzling rain. Fortunately, the sun burst through the clouds as they processed into St Peter’s Basilica, almost 2500 men in all, row upon row of white mitres and copes. Thanks to some cunning strategising, reminiscent of Beovich’s and O’Collins’ student days in Rome, the Koroit contingent ended up close to the main altar and the pope at the opening ceremony.<sup>23</sup> In his address, Pope John XXIII famously challenged the “prophets of doom” who saw only problems in the modern world, and called on the Council fathers to express the ancient deposit of faith in a more positive and appropriate way. Commentators had no trouble identifying one of the chief targets of the pope’s message: Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, the seventy-two-year-old secretary of the Holy Office and head of the preparatory theological commission. Loris Capovilla, the pope’s secretary, later revealed that John told him that he could not resist glancing at Ottaviani every now and then to see how he was coping.<sup>24</sup> Yet, while the pope’s address was very significant, it is worth remembering that it was in Latin, at the end of what Peter Hebblethwaite calls a five-and-a-half-hour “Baroque endurance test”.<sup>25</sup> This could have lessened its impact at the time. Some advocates of liturgical reform went away disheartened by the “triumphalistic pomp” of the opening ceremony,<sup>26</sup> but Beovich wrote in his diary that it was “a wonderful and inspiring experience”.

The first working session of the Council, or general congregation, took place on Saturday, 13 October, in the hall which had been created in the central nave of St Peter’s Basilica. It lasted less than fifty minutes. It came to a premature end when four cardinals appealed for more time for the Council fathers to consider their options before they voted on members for the commissions which would revise the Council documents. This has been interpreted as the first indication that the Council would not simply rubber stamp the

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<sup>23</sup> McCarthy gives O’Collins credit for planning this. Locating good seats in St Peter’s was one of the skills which Roman students tended to acquire. For an account of the opening ceremony based on O’Collins’s diary, see William McCarthy, *James Patrick O’Collins*, p. 123.

<sup>24</sup> *HVII*, vol. 2, p. 18.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1984), pp. 430-432.

<sup>26</sup> *HVII*, vol. 2, p. 12.

decisions of the curia, the Vatican bureaucracy.<sup>27</sup> As Beovich never liked being rushed into a decision, he was pleased with the outcome. In the excited lobbying which followed, he was nominated by the Australian hierarchy for a place on the liturgy commission, but when the vote was finally taken on 16 October he was not elected.<sup>28</sup>

The liturgy text was one of the most progressive and pastoral of the prepared drafts. It opened the door to greater use of the vernacular at the discretion of national episcopal conferences. It was the first to be debated, and the battle lines were soon drawn. The most notable opponents of change (sometimes labeled “curial zealots” or “intransigent traditionalists”) were Cardinals Ottaviani, Ruffini and Dante. As young priests, all three had been on the faculty of the Urban College of Propaganda Fide, Beovich’s beloved *alma mater*, during his time as a student. They were strongly supported by Cardinals Godfrey of Westminster and McIntyre of Los Angeles.

In his diary on 23 October Beovich wrote: “I agree wholeheartedly with the opinions expressed by Cardinals Ottaviani, Ruffini, McIntyre and Godfrey of the Latin school”. On 30 October he reflected: “So far it has appeared that the Germans, Dutch and French (to some extent) want drastic changes in the liturgy; likewise a number of younger bishops. The Irish, English, Scots and most of the USA and ourselves, along with the Roman Curia, are conservative in these matters.” The next day he grumbled: “Listening to the experiences and opinions voiced by some youthful bishops, one wonders if they think the Holy Spirit was absent from some previous periods of the Church’s history, but is helping them now . . .” A meeting of the Australian hierarchy on 3 November revealed that some of the younger Australians were infected by reformist zeal. Beovich, however, was also beginning to rethink his position. According to Cardinal Heenan, many bishops who were opposed to the vernacular liturgy changed their minds when they heard bishops from Communist countries explain how impossible it was to teach the faith except during the liturgy.<sup>29</sup> In his diary Beovich did not identify any particular speech as a turning point, but on 5 November he confided: “I would think, at this stage . . . there is what one could call a left wing and a right wing; in which case there would be wisdom in following a *via*

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 26 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Murphy, “The Australian Hierarchy and Vatican II”, pp. 129-131. Rice (“Some Reflections”, p. 49) believes that Beovich was elected to the commission, but in fact he was only nominated.

<sup>29</sup> John Heenan, *A Crown of Thorns: An Autobiography* (London: Hodder & Staughton, 1974), pp. 368-9.

*media.*" When the schema was finally put to a vote on 14 November, he voted in favour of it, as did the overwhelming number (97 per cent) of bishops.<sup>30</sup>

The excitement of attending the Council soon diminished as it proved to be quite a gruelling experience. There were 328 speeches during the debate on the liturgy; 88 fathers spoke on the first chapter alone.<sup>31</sup> Those who criticize the Australian bishops for not speaking more fail to take into account the sheer number of speeches and the amount of tedious repetition. Beovich thought his Australian colleagues exercised commendable restraint!<sup>32</sup> Another problem was that Latin, under fire as the language of the liturgy, proved to be less than satisfactory as the language of the Council. Cardinal Cushing of Boston is said to have frankly admitted, "I can't understand a word these guys say", and to have packed up and gone home. Other bishops were observed reading newspapers or writing letters during the debates.<sup>33</sup> Beovich was more conscientious, but he struggled to follow Latin spoken with different accents, and sympathised with those who could not understand what was being said: "This morning Cardinal Cushing left for Boston. I would think that anyone who cannot follow the Latin speeches must find the position very frustrating."<sup>34</sup> Beovich also noted the irony of Cardinal McIntyre delivering a speech in very poor Latin in favour of Latin as the language of the Mass.<sup>35</sup>

General congregations were only held during the mornings. Afternoons and evenings were usually free and some bishops, like Guilford Young of Hobart, dashed around attending lectures given by the "periti", theological advisers like Karl Rahner and Yves Congar. There is no evidence that Beovich ever did so. Even if he had been interested in new currents in theology (and he clearly was not at this time), he had to rise at 5am so that he could spend half an hour in prayer (from 5.30 to 6.00) and then celebrate Mass before having breakfast and travelling to St Peter's by 9am.<sup>36</sup> He was "always tired after a morning's session" and ready to return to his lodging to rest, go for a walk, or do something pleasant to unwind like visit the zoo.<sup>37</sup> Dinners at the Australian Embassy and

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<sup>30</sup> *HVII*, vol. 2, 148-149.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 110-111.

<sup>32</sup> Diary, 26 October 1962; 6 November 1962.

<sup>33</sup> John Moorman, *Vatican Observed* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1967), pp. 20-21.

<sup>34</sup> Diary, 30 October 1962.

<sup>35</sup> Notebook, 5 November 1962.

<sup>36</sup> Diary, 21 October 1962, an account of his daily routine.

<sup>37</sup> Diary, 7 November 1962.

other social functions also took up time and energy.<sup>38</sup> Even the appropriately named Young acknowledged that he found his stay in Rome exhausting, and he was twenty years younger than Beovich.<sup>39</sup> Beovich was among the 40 per cent of bishops who had been born in the previous century.<sup>40</sup> He was sixty-six in 1962, but he had been a bishop for twenty-two years which meant, when almost two thousand bishops were seated according to seniority in office, that he was allocated seat number twenty-six. In fact, regardless of age, a number of bishops became ill during their time in Rome.<sup>41</sup> Within the first fortnight of the Council, four actually died, one as he was entering the Council hall. Beovich had his ongoing battle with diverticulitis, and developed a bad cold in November, perhaps helped by the dismal cold, wet weather. In December another cold turned into pneumonia. To add to this catalogue of woes, it is worth remembering that the first session of the Council took place against the backdrop of the Cuban missile crisis when it seemed that the world was on the brink of war between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union.

On 14 November 1962 Cardinal Ottaviani rose to his feet to launch the schema on revelation. He knew that it was in for a rough ride. It had already been savagely criticized and alternative schemas were circulating.<sup>42</sup> On 17 November Beovich summarised objections to the draft: it was too scholastic and rigid, it lacked pastoral spirit and mature theological development, it disregarded the problem of salvation prior to revelation, it did not encourage theological reflection or biblical exegesis, and it was incomprehensible to non-Catholics. The best that defenders of the schema could say was that it had been prepared by some of the “great minds of the Church”—in other words, an appeal to loyalty. Beovich responded accordingly: “For my part I am Roman and in Rome I found a fount of inspiration, learning and piety. Consequently, I shall support the schema . . .” Amidst intense lobbying, the Council fathers voted on 19 November whether to retain the schema or toss it into the conciliar dustbin. On that morning Beovich had the honour of

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<sup>38</sup> The Australian ambassador, Alfred Stirling, was very hospitable to the Australian bishops and must have kept a record of their conversations—which helped when he came to write his book, *A Distant View of the Vatican*.

<sup>39</sup> W.T. Southerwood, *The Wisdom of Guilford Young* (Hobart: Stella Maris Books, 1989), pp. 195, 204.

<sup>40</sup> *HVII*, vol. 2, 172.

<sup>41</sup> Bishop Ellis of Nottingham believed that some bishops became physically ill as a result of the tensions at the council. See Alberic Stacpoole, *Vatican II By Those Who Were There* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1986), p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> For a detailed account, see *HVII*, vol. 2, pp. 233 ff.

celebrating Mass at the beginning of the general congregation, in front of 2197 other bishops. It was the Mass of the Holy Spirit, and Beovich initially attributed the result of the voting to divine intervention: opponents of the schema failed to get the two-thirds majority which they required. Yet 61 per cent of the bishops indicated their dissatisfaction with the document.<sup>43</sup> The pope intervened and sent it to be redrafted by a mixed commission made up of members from the doctrinal commission and the Secretariat for Christian Unity. Beovich welcomed this decision which, he realised, rescued the Council from a difficult position.<sup>44</sup>

Although he did not attend the general congregations, Pope John followed the debates on television and engaged in some subtle and not-so-subtle morale building.<sup>45</sup> In an audience on 11 November he enthusiastically explained to the Australian bishops how he had been inspired to call the Council. Two days later Beovich went to the coffee bar which had been established in the sacristy at St Peter's, and bumped into the retired English archbishop of Bombay, Thomas Roberts SJ.<sup>46</sup> Adrian Hastings wryly comments that "in even the best administered autocracies mistakes occur occasionally and Archbishop Roberts was one of them. No one so honest, so independent . . . so ingenuously frank should ever have been selected by pre-conciliar Rome as an archbishop—even of Bombay."<sup>47</sup> Roberts told Beovich that he was surprised that the pope had spoken to the Australian bishops in Italian. Beovich replied that as most of them had been students in Rome, the language was not a problem. Roberts blurted out that "he feared Roman students as an arm or upholder of the Curia". A bemused Beovich wrote in his diary: "What a strange Jesuit!" He was clearly shocked by the hostility toward the Vatican bureaucracy which surfaced at the first session. It was totally foreign to him.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> In the end, 1368 voted "placet" (to discontinue discussion on the draft) while 822 voted "non placet" (to indicate they wanted to continue to use it as a basis for discussion). However, the question which was put to the bishops was complicated and may have confused some.

<sup>44</sup> Diary, 21 November 1962.

<sup>45</sup> Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII*, p. 450.

<sup>46</sup> Diary, 13 November 1962. On 24 November he commented in his diary, "As I do some mornings I adjourned about 11.30 to the Coffee Room. Here one may have a cup of coffee, stretch one's legs and meet acquaintances from many lands. One also may occasionally pick up an item of interest, but often one hears news that is gossip and that at second or third hand, so hardly reliable."

<sup>47</sup> Adrian Hastings, *History of English Christianity, 1920-1990* (London: SCM, 1991), p. 565.

<sup>48</sup> And to Heenan: "Most of us arrived in Rome in October 1962 without any idea of the anti-Italian mood among many Europeans. This eventually crystallized into a specific hostility towards the curia, the Vatican bureaucracy." *Crown of Thorns*, p. 343.



On 25 November Beovich attended a reunion at his old college. The pope celebrated Mass in the Propaganda chapel and Beovich afterwards wrote down his comments about the Council: “We had been feeling our way because none of us had conciliar experience, now we were advancing more surely. The world must be impressed by the liberty of speech and differences of viewpoints among the bishops on those matters outside the deposit of faith.” *Impressed?* In his address at the close of the first session on 8 December, John XIII continued this theme. The “sharply divergent views” which had arisen illustrated “the holy liberty that the children of God enjoy in the Church” (Archbishop Roberts took this a bit further and said that the children of God could slide down the banisters in the house of the Lord).<sup>49</sup> However, the pope’s positive assessment of the Council was overshadowed by the obvious fact that he was gravely ill. Before the closing ceremony, Beovich bumped into Cardinal Giobbe, Prefect of the Congregation of Rites, and his much respected former rector at Propaganda. He later recorded in his diary Giobbe’s fear that the Modernist heresy had returned to haunt the Church.<sup>50</sup>

On 13 December 1962 Beovich arrived back in Adelaide, still suffering from pneumonia and “very tired, miserable and grubby” after the long flight.<sup>51</sup> The next day he went to the seminary where the diocesan clergy were on retreat. It is remembered that he assured the gathering that “we still have the Mass in Latin”, whereupon all the priests applauded.<sup>52</sup> Two days later he tried to adopt Pope John’s positive tone in an address in the cathedral:

What had been accomplished in the eight weeks of the Vatican Council? A very large body moves slowly in the beginning. The Council is a huge body. Of necessity it had to begin slowly; then it proceeded to make sure and steady progress. Bishops of all colours and from all parts of the world gradually got to know one another, to hear one another’s views, to learn of the problems in settled countries, in missionary fields, and behind the Iron Curtain.<sup>53</sup>

Gleeson was not fooled by this reassurance; he knew that Beovich was “a bit concerned”. However, Gleeson insisted that Beovich’s return from the next session was very different.

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<sup>49</sup> Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII*, pp. 464-5.

<sup>50</sup> Diary, 8 December 1962.

<sup>51</sup> Diary, 13 December 1962.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Egar, interview by author, tape recording, 15 December 2004. Also Robert Aitken, interview by author, tape recording, 1 November 2004.

<sup>53</sup> A typescript of his address is in the ACAA. It was also printed in the *Southern Cross*, 21 December 1962, p. 1.

He came back “on top of the world”, really “enthralled” with the Council.<sup>54</sup> So what had changed?

### The Second Session (1963)

One significant difference between the first and second sessions was that in 1963 Beovich travelled by ship. That meant that there was a badly needed three-week interlude between Adelaide and Rome: time to rest and study the conciliar documents in the company of some of his episcopal friends. In 1963 his travelling companions were Justin Simonds, Norman Gilroy and Patrick O’Donnell of Brisbane. On the return journey there were three weeks to recover from the Council before reaching Adelaide.

In 1963 there was also a new pope whom Beovich deeply respected and trusted. Whereas John XXIII had talked with charismatic vagueness of a “new Pentecost”, Paul VI clearly set out a plan for the Council. In his opening address on 19 September 1963 he spelt out that he wanted the Council fathers to come to a deeper understanding of the nature of the Church, promote its inner renewal, encourage Christian unity, and engage in dialogue with the modern world. Three weeks later Beovich reflected in his diary:

One can now take stock of the second session. A year ago we assembled for the Council uncertain of its atmosphere and direction. Those of us who had been Roman students, certainly myself, would look for a lead from the Pope and the Holy See. Most of us would incline to the conservative side and would not welcome what we called innovations. What impressed us at the first session was to hear the problems of bishops in many countries and the exchange of ideas; what many of us did not relish, myself included, was the enthusiastic activity of a number of *periti* [theological experts] who looked for groups of bishops to expound their ideas, sometimes very novel.

Now at this second session, the atmosphere has cleared, for me at any rate. It is certain that a vigorous and comparatively youthful pope is following closely the mind of Pope John . . .

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<sup>54</sup> James Gleeson, interview by author, 8 October 1997. Beovich asked Gleeson to remain in Adelaide during the second session but never explained why. Gleeson wondered whether this was because Beovich wanted to protect him from heretical currents at the Council or test his ability to run the diocese (the following year he was appointed coadjutor). A stronger possibility is that Beovich was loyally responding to a request from the Vatican. Word went out that if a diocese had more than one bishop, one should remain home (*HVII*, vol. 2, p. 174). When Beovich arrived in Rome for the second session he was surprised to find that most bishops had returned (Diary, 29 September 1963). If it was a strategy by curial officials to keep the younger, often more progressive auxiliary bishops away, it failed. Gleeson attended the remaining two sessions, in 1964 and 1965.

Consequently, one can discern among the bishops a greater air of assuredness, and a desire to be in the van of progress, myself included.

One notices that the *periti* are now not much in evidence for propaganda work, though their legitimate task of helping the commissions is praiseworthy. In the many fine speeches delivered by the bishops on the schema before us on the church, there is no evidence of national blocks or of that or this side of the Alps. We feel that the debate is stimulating and not boring. We are helped by the initiative of the USA bishops who are producing, day by day, a digest in English of the various speeches . . .

In addition, the commissions have done and are doing excellent work. There is still maximum freedom of debate. One feels that after a certain amount of uncertainty at the first session we are now safely launched.<sup>55</sup>

On 28 October 1963, to commemorate the anniversary of Pope John's election, Pope Paul celebrated Mass in the Council hall. Cardinal Suenens preached a tribute to John and to Paul who, he stressed, was continuing John's work. He exhorted the Council fathers to have courage. As John XXIII had said: "Fear comes only through lack of faith". When Suenens left the pulpit, he was warmly embraced by Paul VI. Not much is made of this in the recent volume on the second session in the *History of Vatican II* series, but it had a profound impact on Beovich.<sup>56</sup> It confirmed that he had correctly discerned the wishes of Popes John and Paul. He resolved: "I shall follow them and uphold them as best I can. As between the extreme schools, one is a little left of centre."<sup>57</sup>

In *The Roman Mould of the Australian Catholic Church*, John Molony defines *Romanità* as "unswerving loyalty to the office, and affection for the person of the Pope, acceptance of Rome and what it stands for as the centre and heart of Christendom, subservience to the Roman curia . . . [and] a willing readiness to form and foster a local institutional Church according to Roman ideas".<sup>58</sup> Murphy argues that the Australian bishops learnt a different kind of *Romanità* at Vatican II: loyalty to the pope did not necessarily entail subservience to the curia.<sup>59</sup> Beovich is an example of a bishop who made this adjustment.

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<sup>55</sup> Diary, 13 October 1963.

<sup>56</sup> *HVII*, vol. 3, p. 9. See also Xavier Rynne, *Vatican Council II* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999), p. 213.

<sup>57</sup> Diary, 28 October 1963.

<sup>58</sup> John Molony, *Roman Mould of the Australian Catholic Church*, p. 168.

One of the most important debates of the second session concerned the schema on the Church, and the emergence of what some would see as “the guiding idea” of the Council: the concept of *communio*.<sup>60</sup> This is sometimes translated “communion” or “fellowship”, although in fact it is itself a Latin translation of the Greek *koinonia* which originally meant “participation”. It is a fluid theological term which can be used to describe the nature of the Church as a sacrament (meaning a sign and instrument) of fellowship with God. It can also refer to participation in the Holy Spirit, in the local Christian community, and above all in the Eucharist. It is closely allied to what came to be regarded, in hindsight, as another leitmotif of the Council: the notion of the Church as “the People of God”. What was particularly significant in 1963 was that the chapter on the hierarchy, with its emphasis on the Church as an institution, was demoted from first to third place, behind those on “The Mystery of the Church” and “The People of God.”

What Beovich made of these theological developments is not clear, but he enjoyed the discussion and did not record any opposition. A highlight of the second session for him was the debate on episcopal collegiality.<sup>61</sup> A number of issues were interwoven. One concerned the very nature of episcopacy. The special role of bishops to represent Christ as teacher, priest and shepherd was strongly affirmed. Supporters of collegiality saw this threefold office of preaching, sanctifying and leadership as the fullness of priesthood, conferred by consecration. In other words, bishops receive their authority directly from Christ. It is not merely delegated by the pope. Moreover, in communion with the pope and with each other, they form an episcopal college and thus share responsibility for the universal church.

This view was bitterly opposed by a minority at the Council, including Cardinal Ottaviani, who thought that it undermined the First Vatican Council’s emphasis on papal primacy. Few bishops could have been more devoted to the papacy than Matthew

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<sup>59</sup> Murphy, “The Australian Hierarchy and Vatican II”, pp. 174 ff.

<sup>60</sup> See Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church* (London: SCM, 1989), p. 149. For an alternative view, see Joseph Komonchak, “The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology” in Peter Phan, ed., *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook on Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield, OSB* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000), pp. 76-77. Komonchak argues that there was no one key conciliar idea such as “communion” or “People of God” as the Council documents employ a variety of images and models of the church.

<sup>61</sup> For a summary of the Council’s teaching on bishops, see Hermann Pottmeyer, “Episcopacy” in *The Gift of the Church*, pp. 337-353.

Beovich, but “after careful thought and prayer” he voted in favour of collegiality on 30 October. The doctrine reflected the lived experience of the Council where the bishops *were* acting collegially. Beovich rejoiced in this. One day he arrived early and sat watching the participants gather. He jotted in his notebook: “In the happy and relaxed atmosphere of the Council, I savored this morning the universality of the Church . . . ”<sup>62</sup>

A sense of collegiality was also evident in the meetings of the national episcopal conferences which took place regularly during the Council, and after the Council assumed considerable responsibility for implementing its decrees. There was some heated discussion over what legislative power the conferences should enjoy. In a written submission, James Carroll of Sydney maintained that while unity should be strongly encouraged, individual bishops should retain the freedom to withdraw from national decisions. Beovich added his name to Carroll’s appeal. Rice interprets this as an indication that he did not really embrace collegiality but was still captive to a Vatican I mentality.<sup>63</sup> However, what clearly lay behind the submission was not the First Vatican Council but the Movement controversy of the 1950s. Beovich and Gilroy, supported by their auxiliaries Gleeson and Carroll, divorced their dioceses from Santamaria’s Movement, but given the strong support which Santamaria received from other bishops, they probably would not have been able to get two-thirds of their episcopal colleagues to agree to the decision at a national meeting. In the end, the Council decided that national conferences could develop their own regulations, subject to the approval of the Holy See.

Beovich was disappointed at the second session when the Council fathers narrowly voted to place a chapter on Mary at the end of the Constitution on the Church rather than devote a separate document to her. Before the Council there had been talk of new dogmas, speculation that Mary might be proclaimed mediatrix of all graces or even co-redemptrix. That did not happen. Instead there was a balanced statement which highlighted Mary’s pre-eminence among human creatures while stressing her subordination to her son. This helped stop the escalation in Marian piety which had been occurring since the mid-nineteenth century. While Beovich had a deep devotion to Mary, he had never promoted an extreme Mariolatry, and he was reassured by Cardinal Agagianian saying to him that the

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<sup>62</sup> Notebook, 16 October 1963.

<sup>63</sup> Rice, “Some Reflections”, p. 51.

statement "could not be construed as any lessening of the dignity of Our Lady or any down-grading of her pre-eminent role in the Church".<sup>64</sup>

Beovich was particularly interested in the schema on ecumenism, which was also discussed at the second session. While some Council fathers maintained that Christian unity could only be achieved when Orthodox and Protestant "schismatics" returned to the Catholic fold, others were keen to foster common Christian witness, cooperation in works of charity, and dialogue. Cardinal Bea, the dynamic eighty-two-year-old president of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, frankly acknowledged the difficulties raised by the ecumenical movement, but argued that ecumenical action, carefully guided and promoted by the bishops, would help the renewal of Christian life for all.<sup>65</sup> Beovich was very impressed by Bea and found his appeal "both convincing and moving".<sup>66</sup> He made up his mind during the debate that he would lift restrictions on Catholics attending non-Catholic weddings, including the ban on them serving as bridesmaids and groomsmen.<sup>67</sup>

When Beovich returned to Adelaide in February 1964 after the second session, another opportunity presented itself to put theory into practice. He arrived home while Geoffrey Fisher, retired archbishop of Canterbury, was visiting relatives in South Australia. Hearing that there would be a liturgical reception to welcome Beovich, Fisher asked if he could attend the service and hear Beovich's report on the Council. Gleeson, who was organising the event, agreed, but somewhat reluctantly as he was concerned about protocol. Lord Fisher had met Pope John in 1960, but the meeting had been strictly private, no photographs or press releases had been allowed. It would be very different in Adelaide on 9 February 1964. As the liturgy drew to a close, Beovich unexpectedly darted over to Fisher, seated in the congregation, grabbed him and arm in arm they walked out of St Francis Xavier Cathedral. It was ecumenism in action, Beovich-style.<sup>68</sup> A few days later at Ennis Beovich hosted a "pleasant tea party" for Lord and Lady Fisher and the Anglican Archbishop of Adelaide, Dr Reed, and his wife.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Diary, 29 October 1963.

<sup>65</sup> *HVII*, vol. 3, p. 273.

<sup>66</sup> Notebook, 70<sup>th</sup> General Congregation.

<sup>67</sup> Notebook, 22 November, 1963; Diary, 26 November 1963 (account of letter to Gleeson in Adelaide).

<sup>68</sup> Gleeson recounted the incident to Stirling, who reported it in *A Distant View of the Vatican*, p. 178. See also, *Advertiser*, 10 February 1964.

In his address in the cathedral on 9 February 1964 Beovich mentioned the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. The final vote had taken place in a public session presided over by the pope on 4 December 1963. While it encouraged much greater active participation by the Christian community in the liturgy, the constitution did not require the wholesale introduction of the vernacular. It did not ban it either. It merely approved the vernacular “especially” for the readings and prayers of the faithful. Beovich advised his audience that Latin remained the language of the liturgy, but the vernacular could be introduced according to the judgment of the bishops. He promised to give effect to the new constitution as soon as possible.<sup>70</sup> In keeping with the Council’s spirit of episcopal collegiality, he did not act unilaterally. He spoke strongly in favour of liturgical reform at “a highly successful” meeting of the Australian bishops in March 1964.<sup>71</sup> After Rome approved the resolutions adopted at the meeting, the bishops met again in June to plan their gradual implementation throughout Australia from July 1964.<sup>72</sup> The result, which included a change to the vernacular for most parts of the Mass, will be considered in the following chapter.

### **The Third Session (1964)**

The third session began on 14 September 1964 with one of the Council’s liturgical reforms which symbolically displayed the doctrine of episcopal collegiality even though it had not yet been formally proclaimed. Twenty-four bishops from nineteen countries stood around the enlarged main altar in St Peter’s Basilica and concelebrated the opening Mass with Pope Paul VI. As he wrote in his diary, it was “the day of days” for Matthew Beovich because he was one of the chosen ones. He did not know why “the lowly had been lifted from the dunghill”, but he rejoiced in the honour.

With fourteen texts on the agenda, the third session was even more strenuous than the first two. In his notebook Beovich again commended the Australian bishops for contributing written submissions rather than adding to the tedious number of speeches.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Diary, 11 February 1964.

<sup>70</sup> *Southern Cross*, 14 February 1964, p. 8. A copy of the address is in his diary.

<sup>71</sup> Diary, 5 March 1964.

<sup>72</sup> Diary, 10 June 1964.

<sup>73</sup> Notebook, 1 October 1964; 21 October 1964.

The document which provoked the most heated debate was the one which affirmed that freedom in religious matters is an inherent human right. A particularly contentious paragraph acknowledged that other religious groups had a right to promote their beliefs and practices. This raised the ire of Beovich’s friend, Patrick Lyons of Sale, a firm adherent of the “error has no rights” school. In a written submission he objected to the paragraph and called for a much stronger affirmation that the Catholic Church was the one, true church. At the other end of the spectrum, Guilford Young of Hobart argued that the Catholic Church could not claim religious freedom for itself without conceding it to other groups, and this view eventually won out.<sup>74</sup> However, Norman Gilroy thought that the paragraph in question should be quietly dropped. Beovich added his name to Gilroy’s submission.<sup>75</sup> It was, typically, the *via media*.

Another bishop was also striving to steer a middle course—the bishop of Rome.<sup>76</sup> That was not Beovich’s only resemblance to Pope Paul VI. They were very close in age and temperament; both being rather shy, sensitive men with a warmth and sense of humour which sometimes broke through their innate reserve. The tragedy of Paul VI is that while his *via media* may have saved the Church from schism, it did not make him popular. Die-hard traditionalists were offended by his support for collegiality and ecumenism, while those with more progressive inclinations were dismayed to see curial cardinals like Ottaviani bounce back from the humiliations of the first session as stridently conservative as ever. On 2 October 1964 *Time* magazine quoted an unnamed Australian bishop who said of the pope: “Let’s face it, he’s weak”. Cardinal Gilroy called an emergency meeting of the Australian hierarchy. Everyone denied uttering such heresy, and a missive was speedily dispatched to assure Pope Paul that he had their loyalty and obedience.<sup>77</sup> Undercurrents, however, remained.

Paul exacerbated tensions by making a surprise appearance at a working session of the Council on 6 November. He praised the schema on the missions, which had been prepared largely by Roman clerics associated with the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and he expressed his hope that the bishops would approve it. Unfortunately, in the

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<sup>74</sup> Murphy, “The Australian Hierarchy and Vatican II”, pp. 217-223; *HVII*, vol. 4, p. 126.

<sup>75</sup> Rice, “Some Reflections”, pp. 53-4.

<sup>76</sup> For Paul VI, see Peter Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope* (London: HarperCollins, 1993).

<sup>77</sup> Diary, 30 September 1964.



words of a bishop who actually had experience as a missionary, the schema consisted of “thirteen lifeless platitudes culled from some worm-cankered textbook on Missiology”.<sup>78</sup> Beovich obediently voted in favour of retaining the document as a basis for discussion, but he knew that Paul had backed the wrong horse and was not surprised when it was sent back to be re-written.<sup>79</sup> He had, probably before Paul’s intervention, added his name to the submission of Xaverius Geeraerts of the Missionaries of Africa, which called for the Council to develop a more adequate theology of mission, grounded in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and therefore part of the very nature of the Church.<sup>80</sup>

Why did Paul seem to favour the traditionalists at the third session? Bernard Pawley, one of the Anglican observers at the Council, wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury that he thought that Paul had put a bit of weight on the conservative side to keep the balance and stop the boat rocking too much. Shortly afterwards, he had an audience with the pope. Paul asked what he had reported, and agreed with his response: “As captain of the ship I have to keep her on a steady course . . . It is better for me to go ahead slowly and carry everyone with me than to hurry along and cause dissension.”<sup>81</sup> Beovich would have heartily endorsed those sentiments which reflected his own preferred style of leadership. The image of the Church as a ship was one which also appealed to him. In his address to the four hundred laymen who gathered in July 1965 at the dinner to celebrate his twenty-fifth anniversary of episcopal consecration, Beovich remarked:

Many times in the course of each century—and the present is no exception—the Church . . . finds herself in rough waters. In perilous seas the passengers and the crew are careful not to rock the boat; they look to the captain of the ship—the man in charge.

Beovich had his eyes set firmly on the pope.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Donal Lamont, “*Ad Gentes: A Missionary Bishop Remembers*”, in Stacpoole, p. 276.

<sup>79</sup> The vote for redrafting was passed 1601 to 311. Diary, 9 November 1964.

<sup>80</sup> Rice, “Some Reflections”, p. 55; *HVII*, vol. 4, p. 340.

<sup>81</sup> Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI*, pp. 404-6.

<sup>82</sup> *Southern Cross*, 19 July 1965, p. 19. In the same speech, Beovich praised Paul for combining “the keen intelligence, discernment and sound judgment of Pius XII and the heartfelt goodness, affability and pastoral zeal of John XXIII”. For a similar diary comment, see 18 November 1965.

### The Fourth Session (1965)

After a short stay in Calvary Hospital caused by another bout of diverticulitis, Beovich left with his friend Justin Simonds for the fourth and final session of the Council on 6 August 1965. When it opened on 14 September 1965 he was promoted to seat number 11. Simonds was in the seat in front. In November 1963 he had finally succeeded Mannix as archbishop of Melbourne but was by now almost blind. Beovich guided him to and from his seat and filled in his ballot papers. As Simonds was a member of the commission for studies and seminaries, Beovich also read the necessary paperwork to him in their free time.<sup>83</sup>

There was still tension over the declaration on religious liberty, but Paul VI intervened and ordered that it be put to the vote before he addressed the United Nations on 4 October. Almost two thousand fathers voted in favour, only 224 against. Beovich was "very pleased" with the result.<sup>84</sup>

Beovich was also very interested in the speeches on the document on the Church in the modern world which he thought would be "one of the outstanding works of the Council".<sup>85</sup> As Pope John had wanted, the overall tone of *Gaudium et spes* was positive rather than defensive. It affirmed that the Holy Spirit was not absent from modern developments, but it did offer some serious critiques which were not welcomed by all bishops. At almost the last minute an attempt to derail the schema was made by Archbishop Hannan of New Orleans.<sup>86</sup> He interpreted its condemnation of nuclear warfare as a slap in the face to the United States because it did not acknowledge the deterrent value of nuclear weapons. He called on the Council fathers to vote against the whole schema if the "errors" in the chapter were not corrected. Nine other bishops signed his submission, including Australia's Guilford Young.<sup>87</sup> In an efficiently organised campaign, Hannan's appeal was translated into different languages and nuns rushed around Rome hand-delivering a copy to each bishop. Beovich was not impressed.<sup>88</sup> Neither was Cardinal Ottaviani, who proved that

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<sup>83</sup> Diary, 27 September 1965.

<sup>84</sup> Diary, 16 and 21 September 1965.

<sup>85</sup> Diary, 17 November 1965.

<sup>86</sup> Ralph Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber* (Chawleigh, Devon: Augustine Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 278-81.

<sup>87</sup> Murphy, "The Australian Hierarchy and Vatican II", p. 312.

<sup>88</sup> Diary, 4 December 1965.

the issue transcended “progressive” and “conservative” divisions by giving one of the most passionate speeches against war ever uttered.<sup>89</sup> In the end the schema was passed, 2111 to 251.

During the first session a joke went around the Council after Ottaviani had been absent for a few days. It was said that he had hailed a taxi to take him to the Council, and when the driver asked where he wanted to go, he had inadvertently said “Trent”.<sup>90</sup> Beovich did go to the beautiful northern Italian city in November 1965. The archbishop of Trent invited a number of bishops from around the world to a ceremony in his cathedral to underline the nexus between the great sixteenth-century Council and Vatican II. As the representative of the Australian hierarchy, Beovich enjoyed his visit to Trent, but his mind was on the future rather than the past. He liked the way the congregation recited the *Gloria* and the *Credo* in Italian at the concelebrated Mass, and joined in singing hymns at the offertory and communion. He resolved to copy the new liturgical style when he returned to Adelaide.<sup>91</sup>

### The Close of the Council

On 8 December 1965 the Second Vatican Council drew to a triumphant close with a ceremony watched by a vast crowd in St Peter’s Square. Beovich concluded in his diary: “The great Council has now entered history; in the aftermath we of our time will also enter history if we speedily and effectively put the decrees of the Council into operation. May God grant it.”<sup>92</sup> This hardly seems the response of someone ambivalent about the Council or “resistant to the spirit of change”. On the contrary, it confirms Murphy’s conclusion that even those bishops who went to Rome in 1962 in an “indifferent” or “enigmatic” frame of mind were much more accepting of the Council’s direction by the end of 1965.<sup>93</sup> While Murphy concedes that in some cases the acceptance may have been somewhat grudging, Beovich’s diary entries demonstrate a more profound shift.

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<sup>89</sup> Moorman, *Vatican Observed*, p. 169; Rynne, *Vatican Council II*, pp. 504-5.

<sup>90</sup> Moorman, *Vatican Observed*, p. 45.

<sup>91</sup> Diary, 24 November 1965.

<sup>92</sup> Diary, 8 December 1965.

<sup>93</sup> Murphy, “The Australian Hierarchy and Vatican II”, p. 320.

What caused this change of heart? Clearly Beovich’s unswerving loyalty to Popes John and Paul was the crucial factor. Also significant, however, was his appreciation of episcopal collegiality. He demonstrated throughout the 1940s and 1950s a strong commitment to the meetings of the Australian hierarchy and a desire for the Catholic bishops to speak with a united voice on issues of mutual concern. At the Council he was able to gain a broader understanding of the problems, challenges and opportunities facing the Church in twentieth century through his contact with bishops from around the world. That is what seems to have made the most impact on him, not the new currents in theology or the hours spent pouring over conciliar documents.

Beovich’s own contribution to the Council could be deemed insignificant if participation is judged only in terms of speeches in the Council hall. That would be unfair; however. Consideration should also be given to his dogged attendance at all the general congregations in spite of the difficulties involved, his conscientious efforts to follow the debates, and his involvement in the Council liturgies. He was not merely a silent witness and he was certainly not a bemused one, at least after the first session. Through his active participation in meetings of the Australian hierarchy, his interaction with other bishops during the breaks from formal proceedings, and his support for a number of written submissions, he engaged constructively in the discussion process.

Finally, Beovich’s innate wisdom and moderation should be acknowledged. Even during the first session he was wary of extreme viewpoints. Genuine collegiality often requires compromises to be made, and Beovich was very much aware of that. In his careful and prayerful pursuit of the *via media*, and his eventual willingness to move “a little left of centre”, he was very much a Vatican II bishop.



Figure 10.1 Processing into St Peter's Basilica, 11 October 1962, Beovich looking toward the camera.



Figure 10.2 Inside the basilica



Figure 10.3 In 1962 Beovich was seated between an archbishop from Chile (right) and one from Bagdad (left), a former Propaganda classmate. The trio spoke to one another in Italian.



Figure 10.4 The Australian hierarchy's audience with Pope John XXIII, 11 November 1962. Beovich is the fourth bishop from John on the right.



Figure 10.5 Sailing to Rome on the Galileo in 1963 with Justin Simonds and Brian Gallagher of Port Pirie



Figure 10.6 A meal at the Villa Lithuania where Beovich stayed for all four sessions of the Council. This picture was taken in 1965. With Beovich, from left to right, are Hugo Modotti SJ, Justin Simonds, Patrick Lyons and James O'Collins.



Figure 10.7 Listening to Cardinal Suenens speak in 1963, Beovich in the second row from the bottom, next to the lectern.



Figure 10.8 The Australian hierarchy's audience with Pope Paul VI, 15 November 1964. "The pope looked relaxed and in good health", Beovich wrote in his diary.



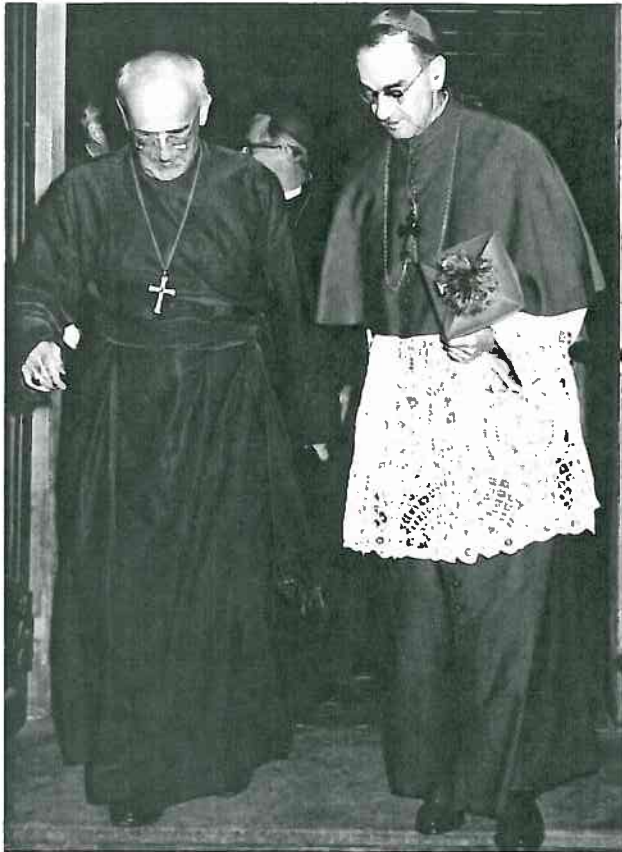
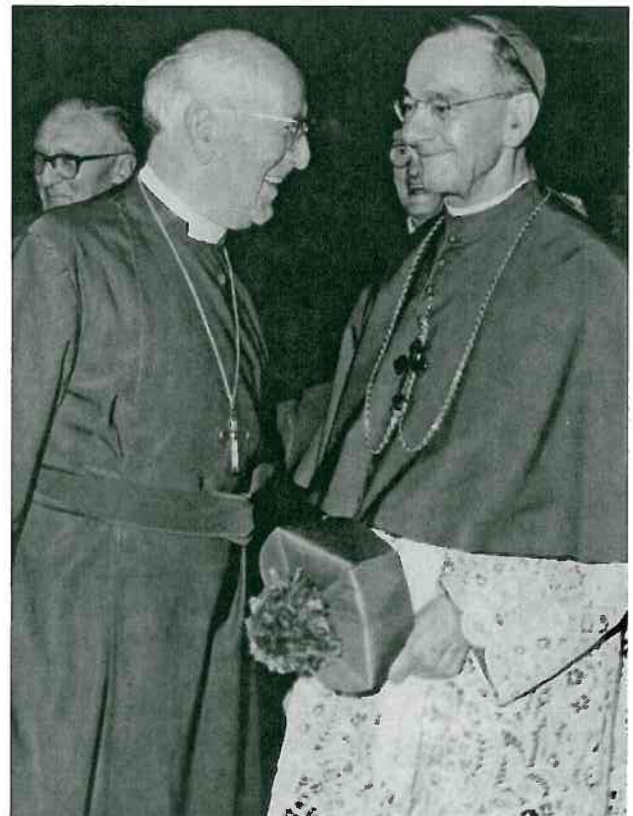
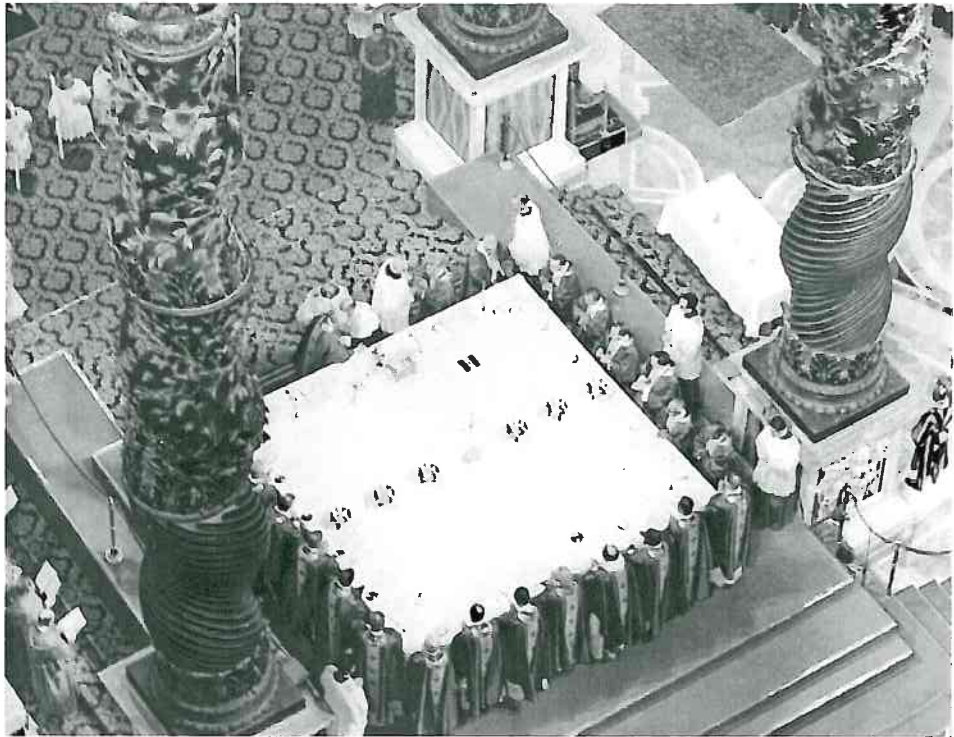


Figure 10.9 Ecumenism in action. Beovich leaving St Francis Xavier Cathedral with Geoffrey Fisher, retired archbishop of Canterbury, 9 February 1964.

Figure 10.10 Another photograph of Beovich and Fisher taken on the same day.





Figures 10.11-12 The “day of days” for Matthew Beovich: concelebrating the opening Mass of the third session of the Council on 14 September 1964. Beovich is third from the left, behind the pope.

## 11. “The Times They Are A-Changin’”: The Turbulent 1960s

But how to express the excitement of those times! The 1960s were heady enough, but as the Church responded in a most positive way to the universal stirrings of the times, we, in Adelaide, were infected, too. Our state and diocesan culture pre-disposed us to receive this excitement with enthusiasm. Many though did not capture this spirit but continued to yearn for the traditional. They were cautious of changes lest the ‘one, true Church’ take a backward step, possibly even destroy itself . . .

David Shinnick

It is dangerous to move too slowly after the Vatican Council, and even more dangerous to move too fast . . .

Matthew Beovich

For Matthew Beovich there was no gentle coasting into old age in his third and last decade as archbishop of Adelaide. After the stress and excitement of attending the Second Vatican Council, he had to reform his diocese in accordance with its decrees. It is common in Catholic circles to speak of “the implementation of Vatican II” as if there was a series of changes which could have been introduced in an orderly way to reinvigorate the Church. That was certainly Beovich’s hope in February 1966 when he returned to Australia after the final session of the Council.<sup>1</sup> It almost happened. In November that year an article in a national weekly, the *Bulletin*, was subtitled “Breathing New Life into Catholicism”. However, author Peter Gough concluded that, with the exception of Guilford Young of Hobart, renewal was occurring *in spite of the bishops*, and he accurately predicted “a stormy season ahead”.<sup>2</sup>

The following year a series of articles by Ian Moffitt and Graham Williams appeared in the national newspaper the *Australian* under the heading, “The Catholic Revolution”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Southern Cross*, 11 February 1966, pp. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin*, 12 November 1966, pp. 31, 33, 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Australian*, 16-23 September 1967. “Catholic Revolution” is also the title of sociologist Andrew Greeley’s recent work, *The Catholic Revolution: New Wine, Old Wineskins, and the Second Vatican Council* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). See also Peter Hebblethwaite, *The Runaway Church* (Glasgow: Collins, 1978); Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph Komonchak, eds., *The Reception of Vatican II* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1987); and Adrian Hastings, ed., *Modern*

This title more accurately conveyed the impact of the changes in a church which had seemed to many in the 1950s to be immutable, a flourishing and respected bastion of certainty in a changing world. Adrian Hastings opens his chapter on Roman Catholicism in England in the 1960s with the comment: “It was good to be an English Catholic bishop in 1960”.<sup>4</sup> The same could be said of Australian bishops. It was manifestly much more difficult from the mid-1960s onwards, but the Australian hierarchy received little sympathy from journalists at the time or from historians later. Like Gough, Moffitt and Williams singled Young out as “one of only a handful of Australian bishops who are responding keenly to Pope John’s call for renewal”.<sup>5</sup> In his ground-breaking *Catholic Church and Community*, Patrick O’Farrell dismisses the Australian hierarchy as “frequently uncomprehending and even resistant to the spirit of change”, and other writers follow suit, without, however, subjecting the post-conciliar Church to close scrutiny.<sup>6</sup> The previous chapter argued that this is not a fair assessment of Beovich’s attitudes during the Council, at least after the first session. It remains to be seen how he coped in the Council’s wake as both the momentum for change increased and resistance to it.

To complicate matters, even if Vatican II had not resulted in seismic shifts in the Catholic Church’s liturgy and self-understanding, there would have been challenges aplenty for an ageing archbishop. In the western world, the generation born after the Second World War grew up with a rising standard of living and greater access to higher education. The air of optimism which this generated soon gave way to intense questioning of established values and institutions. Nothing was too sacred in the decade of the pill, the

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*Catholicism: Vatican II and After* (London & New York: SPCK and Oxford University Press, 1991). For an evocative account of the differences between pre-conciliar and post-conciliar Catholicism, see Eamon Duffy, *Faith of our Fathers: Reflections on Catholic Tradition* (London & New York: Continuum, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Hastings, *History of English Christianity*, p. 561.

<sup>5</sup> *Australian*, 16 September 1967, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> O’Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, p. 410. See also Breward, *History of the Australian Churches*, pp. 162-7; Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, p. 129; and Paul Collins, *Mixed Blessings: John Paul II and the Church of the Eighties: The Crisis in World Catholicism and the Australian Church* (Melbourne: Penguin, 1986), pp. 188-9. As Mannix died in 1963 and Duhig in 1965, their biographers did not need to consider the post-conciliar period. Most diocesan histories also avoid it: D.F. Bourke’s *A History of the Catholic Church in Victoria* concludes with Mannix’s death. The second and last volume of Margaret Press’s history of South Australian Catholicism does not go beyond 1962. A rare and important exception is John P. Maguire’s *Prologue: A History of the Catholic Church As Seen From Townsville, 1863-1983*. Based mainly on Young’s speeches and writings, W.T. Southerwood’s *The Wisdom of Guilford Young* gives insights into the man Gough hailed as the “top performer” among the bishops. Edmund Campion’s books (*Australian Catholics*, *Rockchoppers*, *A Place in the City*) draw on the author’s memories of life as a young priest in the Sydney diocese after the Council. The last two chapters of John Luttrell’s thesis on Cardinal Gilroy cover this period, as does the final chapter in Nicholas Reid’s “Churchman: A Study of James Michael Liston, Bishop of Auckland, 1920-70” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Auckland, 2004).

miniskirt, the civil rights movement, the “demo”, the “sit-in”, hippies and LSD.<sup>7</sup> Belief in God declined, or at least it became more socially acceptable to acknowledge that one did not believe.<sup>8</sup> The majority of Australians were not prepared to go that far, but neither were they willing to go to church regularly.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1960s various attempts were made to make religion seem more relevant. In the decade in which man first walked on the moon, radical currents in theology encouraged some of the more theologically literate to think that Christianity could be shorn of its supernatural element and “demythologized”. This tendency was more pronounced in Protestant circles, but the Catholic Church was not immune to the questioning of traditional teaching. A heated controversy erupted in the Sydney archdiocese in 1966 over Bishop Muldoon’s denunciation of a Sacre Coeur nun who called for more appropriate modern symbolism to express the concept of divinity.<sup>10</sup> Another trend which crossed denominational boundaries was the greater prominence given to social justice issues. At the same time as this outward-looking focus gained momentum, there was increased interest in subjective, immediate religious experience. While this was most obvious in Pentecostal churches, a charismatic movement also spread through the Catholic Church.

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<sup>7</sup> For Australia, the literature on the 1960s includes Donald Horne, *Time of Hope: Australia 1966-72* (Sydney & Melbourne: Angus & Robertson, 1980); Helen Townsend, *The Baby Boomers: Growing Up in Australia in the 1940s, 50, and 60s* (Sydney: Simon & Schuster, 1988); and especially significant for religious history, David Hilliard, “The Religious Crisis of the 1960s: The Experience of the Australian Churches”, *Journal of Religious History* 21 (June 1997): 209-227. For Britain, see especially Hastings, *History of English Christianity*, chapter 37, Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe: 1789-1979*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), chapter 8; and Ian Machin, “British Churches and Moral Change in the 1960s”, in W.M. Jacob & Nigel Yates, eds., *Crown and Mitre: Religion and Society in Northern Europe Since the Reformation* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1993), pp. 223-41. For the United States there is Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1972), chapter 63; Ronald Flowers, *Religion in Strange Times: The 1960s and 1970s* (Mercer University Press, 1984); Wade Clark Roof, *A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1993); Robert Ellwood, *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening: American Religion Moving from Modern to Postmodern* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994); and Patrick Allitt, *Religion in America Since 1945: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> An international Gallop poll in 1970 indicated that 87 per cent of Australians claimed to believe in God, down from 95 per cent in 1949 (see Mol, *The Faith of Australians*, p. 130). Census figures for South Australia show that only 3,234 out of 969,340 respondents (0.33 per cent) claimed to have “no religion” in 1961. In 1971 the number had leapt to 95,874 (8.17 per cent). However, in 1961 there were 102,605 people (10.59 per cent of the population) who did not state their position. In 1971 this had dropped to 69,023 (5.88 per cent). See Hilliard, “Religion” in *South Australian Historical Statistics*, p. 140.

<sup>9</sup> According to Morgan Gallop polls, in 1970 25 per cent of Australian respondents had attended church in the week the survey was conducted, down from 30 per cent in 1960. Within denominations the situation varied. The Catholic Church fared better than the other major denominations but still experienced a decline in the weekly attendance of its adherents from 75 per cent in 1954 to 55 per cent in 1962 and then 51 per cent in 1970 (Mol, *Faith of Australians*, p. 56).

<sup>10</sup> See Campion, *Rockchoppers*, pp. 173-176.

For many people the ideal of self-fulfillment replaced the self-abnegation which meant so much to Beovich. Donald Horne's account of Australia between 1966 and 1972 highlights the development of "the consumer society" and "the permissive society".<sup>11</sup> In his survey of Australian religious history, Roger Thompson sees the decade as the beginning of the transformation of Australia into a post-Christian country.<sup>12</sup> In this brave new world, religion was well on the way to becoming "a marginalized, privatized activity, something to be done between consenting adults".<sup>13</sup>

In short, it is clear that the 1960s was a watershed decade.<sup>14</sup> The inevitability of change, the challenge to authority, and the exuberant, brash, restless spirit of the age were captured by Bob Dylan in his 1964 song, *The Times They Are A Changin'*. As Gough observed in 1966, maintaining "business-as-usual Catholicism" was simply not an option for the bishops. So how did Beovich govern his diocese during this turbulent period?

### **Promoting Conciliar Teaching**

Interviewed in Melbourne in February 1966, after he disembarked from the ship which had brought him back from Italy, Beovich tried to dampen any expectation of radical change. Unlike earlier councils, he pointed out, Vatican II had not been called to deal with schism or heresy. Its spirit "was charity, the love of God and the love of neighbour". There was nothing new about that, just a need to revitalize the way it was expressed in response to the problems of the day.<sup>15</sup> At a liturgical reception in St Francis Xavier Cathedral a few days later, he gave a detailed report on the final session and said that the task ahead was "to implement the teachings of the Council . . . with zeal and prudence". Picking up the language of the Council, that "the Church is not something above us, but *we* are the Church, people, religious, priests, and bishops", he called on all Catholics in the diocese to participate in the work. Yet he maintained that renewal should first take place in the individual person, and he exhorted clergy and laity to strive for

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<sup>11</sup> Horne, *Time of Hope*, especially chapters 1, 4 and 5.

<sup>12</sup> Thompson, *Religion in Australia*, chapter 6.

<sup>13</sup> Neil Omerod, *Introducing Contemporary Theologies: The What and the Who of Theology Today* (Sydney: E.J. Dwyer, 1990), p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> That is, the "remembered sixties" or the "long sixties", lasting until about 1972.

<sup>15</sup> *Southern Cross*, 4 February 1966, p. 1.

greater holiness of life and to practice more effectively Christian virtues, especially charity and compassion.<sup>16</sup>

From January to May 1966 a series of “talks” was held in the cathedral on Sunday evenings: “The Bishop Explains the Council”. It was originally planned that Gleeson would give thirteen of them and Beovich would be responsible for seven.<sup>17</sup> Unexpected illness forced a change of plans. Beovich went to Calvary Hospital in April suffering from a severe bout of influenza. As a result, he presented only three of the evening sessions, which is perhaps why Adelaide Catholics tend to associate Vatican II with Gleeson. They were also more likely to encounter the energetic, workaholic Gleeson at the innumerable confirmation ceremonies, speech nights, and such like, which provided the bishops with further opportunities to promote conciliar teaching.

The talks which Beovich gave included one on the Council’s decree on priestly training and another on the decree on the lay apostolate. In the former Beovich acknowledged the importance of a Christ-centred spirituality and greater preparation for pastoral work.<sup>18</sup> In the latter he spoke of lay men and women promoting Christian faith in the secular world, and playing more active roles within the Church.<sup>19</sup> In both the need to cultivate personal holiness remained an underlying concern, and for Beovich, holiness included the virtues of humility and obedience. He thus presented a carefully constructed blend of conciliar reform and traditional piety. His strongest outburst was in his address on the Council’s declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions. He insisted that the Jewish people should not be blamed for the death of Christ, the injustice and persecution which they had suffered at the hands of Christians was deplorable, and that all discrimination or harassment on the grounds of race, colour or religion was foreign to true Christianity.<sup>20</sup> He clearly had no sympathy for the “error has no rights” position of archconservatives like retired French bishop Marcel Lefebvre, who emerged in the late 1960s as one of the most vehement critics of post-conciliar Catholicism.

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<sup>16</sup> *Southern Cross*, 11 February 1966, pp. 1-3.

<sup>17</sup> Beovich inserted in his diary a list of the topics, the dates, and whether the speaker was to be himself or Gleeson. It was always intended that Gleeson would be responsible for a greater number because Beovich did not arrive home from Rome until February and then took his annual holiday at Koroit.

<sup>18</sup> *Southern Cross*, 11 March 1966, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 April 1966, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Southern Cross*, 25 March 1966, p. 6.

The cathedral talks were published in the *Southern Cross*. In a new spirit of openness, the diocesan paper also gave a detailed report on the Australian bishops' meeting in April 1966.<sup>21</sup> In keeping with the Council decrees, statutes for the Australian Episcopal Conference were drawn up for submission to Rome. Gilroy was elected president and Beovich vice-president. He also became a member of the standing committee or central commission, and chairman of the committee for doctrine and morals. Back in the Adelaide archdiocese, the chief item of business at the clergy conferences in March and July was how to find "practical ways" to promote understanding of the Council.<sup>22</sup> In September almost seventy priests attended a three-day seminar at the seminary to study *Lumen gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.<sup>23</sup> Another special study day was held at the YCW centre at Stirling. Priests met to discuss the lay apostolate and were, appropriately, addressed by a number of lay speakers.<sup>24</sup>

In June 1966 the annual "Diocesan Life Campaign" in Adelaide focused on "Community Spirit in the Parish". These campaigns were initiated in 1962 by Robert Wilkinson, editor of the *Southern Cross*. The first one comprised four parish-based lectures on Pope John XXIII's encyclical, *Mater et Magistra*. The following year a home-group approach was adopted, incorporating the YCW "See, Judge, Act" methodology.<sup>25</sup> Helped by kits published in the *Southern Cross*, in 1966 participants were encouraged to reflect on their experiences of parish life, "judge" them in the light of readings from Scripture and Council documents, and plan ways of improving community spirit. It was estimated that 10,000 parishioners took part. Beovich gave the campaign strong support. He encouraged priests and religious to join home groups with lay people and he commissioned lay group leaders at a ceremony in the cathedral.<sup>26</sup>

In the 1960s the Newman Institute, which Beovich had established in 1948 as the education arm of the Movement, continued its evolution. In 1967 it became known as the Christian Life Movement. Full-time lay employees Bill Byrne (until 1968), Brian Moylan and David Shinnick, along with part-time teachers and members of the Institute's council,

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 April 1966, pp. 1, 2-3, 12.

<sup>22</sup> Diary, 9 March 1966; 6 July 1966.

<sup>23</sup> Diary, 6 September 1966; *Southern Cross*, 9 September 1966, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Southern Cross*, 9 December 1966, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> David Shinnick, *Journey into Justice* (Clovelly Park, SA: David Shinnick, 1982), p. 22.

<sup>26</sup> *Southern Cross*, 20 May 1966, p. 3; 3 June 1966, p. 1.



enthusiastically embraced conciliar ideas, especially the decree on the lay apostolate. They were convinced that it was no longer sufficient for lay Catholic men and women to be involved in pious sodalities and charitable organizations. They needed to be encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility for spreading Christianity in the world, and they had to be “formed” to carry out this mission.<sup>27</sup> Throughout 1966 the men from the Newman Institute helped members of lay organizations in the diocese reflect on the lay apostolate decree. They were also involved in 1966 in the establishment of “the Lay Apostolate Liaison Committee” (LALC) which was designed to coordinate the work of the various organizations. This seems to have been the first such body in Australia. Its president, Bill Brewer, described it in 1970 as “the envy of the eastern states”.<sup>28</sup> The Adelaide group maintained contact with other “adult lay apostolate formative movements” interstate, and in 1967 Bill Byrne became the secretary of the new national Catholic Federation of Christian Family and Social Apostolate Organizations. Byrne was also one of three Adelaide delegates to the Third World Congress of the Lay Apostolate which was held in Rome in October 1967. The other two were Carmel Clancy, diocesan president of the YCW, and Peter Davis, vice-president of the Aquinas Association of Catholic Graduates of the University of Adelaide, which changed its name in 1967 to the Newman Association.<sup>29</sup> At the congress in Rome, Byrne was elected a vice-president of the executive committee.<sup>30</sup> The Adelaide enthusiasts also developed a strong social justice orientation and interest in overseas aid, becoming involved in the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, a new Lenten appeal known as “Project Compassion”, and Australian Catholic Relief. Byrne left Adelaide in 1968 to become the Sydney-based national director of Australian Catholic Relief.<sup>31</sup> All this took place with Gleeson’s active involvement and Beovich’s strong support.<sup>32</sup>

It seemed to those involved in the lay apostolate movement in Adelaide that they were at the forefront of efforts to implement the Council in Australia.<sup>33</sup> It is impossible to

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 February 1966, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Southern Cross*, 3 April 1970, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 January 1967, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 October 1967, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> A detailed account of this period and reflection on the meaning of the lay apostolate can be found in David Shinnick’s *Journey into Justice* and unpublished memoirs.

<sup>32</sup> Bill Byrne, interview by author, 13 December 2004.

<sup>33</sup> David Shinnick, interview by author, 21 November 2002; Denis Edwards, interview by author, 10 December 2004; Bill Byrne, interview by telephone, 13 December 2004.

test the validity of this perception without examining the situation in all the other Australian dioceses, but Adelaide was at least on a par with Hobart, and it was well ahead of Townsville and Sydney. It gained a reputation as a progressive diocese.<sup>34</sup> Given Byrne's prominent role at the congress in Rome, it could even be argued that Adelaide was in the vanguard of international developments. However, in 1967 there was a sobering reality check for the lay reformers. To help Byrne, Clancy and Davis prepare for the congress, readers of the *Southern Cross* were asked to answer a questionnaire on how effectively the decrees of the Council had been publicized, understood and put into practice at parish level.<sup>35</sup> As there were 34 main questions, and typed responses were requested, it is not surprising that only fifty people took the trouble to reply. They seem to have come from the section of the Church most committed to conciliar reform. The report compiled from the submissions concluded that, in spite of the extensive efforts which had been made to promote conciliar teaching, including the "clear, vigorous, dynamic lead from the bishops", most Catholics had a poor grasp of what the bishops were saying and found the Council documents too verbose and complex to read. The majority did not consider themselves lay apostles, were not involved in lay apostolate organizations, and evidently did not want to be. A particular problem, one of the first discussed at a LALC meeting, was the lack of interest shown by teenagers and young adults.<sup>36</sup> Respondents were keen for further changes—specific suggestions included sermons in discussion form, priests in everyday clothes, and the consecration of whole loaves of bread at Mass—but they recognized that many older Catholics would have difficulty accepting them.<sup>37</sup>

The Adelaide responses were similar to those nation-wide.<sup>38</sup> For Rosemary Goldie, an Australian woman who became assistant secretary of the Roman curia's Council for the Laity, they shed light on the laity's "un-preparedness" for Vatican II and, therefore, the

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<sup>34</sup> For Townsville, see Maguire, *Prologue*, chapter 12. Commenting on the difficulties which former Adelaide priest, Leonard Faulkner, experienced when he became Bishop of Townsville in 1968, Maguire notes (p. 235): "In comparison with what had been achieved in Adelaide in implementing the conciliar decrees, most dioceses lagged behind". For Hobart, see Southerwood, *Wisdom of Guilford Young*, especially chapter 7. In *Catholics in Australia*, vol. 2, pp. 294-8, Turner quotes Bill and Anne Byrne's account of moving from Adelaide to Sydney in 1968. They found that in the Sydney archdiocese "only superficial changes had been made . . . Both clergy and laity were at that time suffering from a real lack of education programs . . . Liturgical changes came so slowly and seemed to be at the whim of the parish priest . . ."

<sup>35</sup> *Southern Cross*, 17 March 1967, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 April 1966, p. 1. This was common problem across denominations. See Hilliard, "Religious Crisis", pp. 220-1.

<sup>37</sup> *Southern Cross*, 21 April 1967, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Reported in the *Southern Cross*, 6 October 1967, p. 2; 13 October 1967, p. 2; 20 October 1967, p. 2.

subsequent years of “post-conciliar confusion”.<sup>39</sup> Yet it is difficult to see what more could have been done in the short term to promote the Council’s teachings. Beovich realized that time was needed for changes to slowly percolate through the Catholic community. He was invited to preach in St Mary’s Cathedral in Sydney on 9 July 1967 at a special Mass to inaugurate the “Year of Faith” which Pope Paul VI had proclaimed to commemorate the nineteen-hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of St Peter. Beovich used the occasion to acknowledge that there was danger in moving too slowly to implement changes, but even more danger in moving too quickly. Instead of simply appealing for patience, he urged Catholics to have confidence in the judgment of their bishops and, above all, the pope, the successor of St Peter.<sup>40</sup> That tactic might have worked before the Council. At a time of increasing restlessness it raised the issue of authority which would trouble the Church the following year. Before examining the crisis of 1968, however, the next three sections will consider what was achieved with regard to liturgical reform, ecumenism, and developing consultative church structures.

### **The Transformation of the Liturgy**

Of all the changes which took place in the Catholic Church in the 1960s, the most dramatic and obvious was the change in the language of the Mass from Latin to the vernacular. This began in mid-1964 after the second session of the Council and culminated in the introduction of a new rite in 1969. Amidst a multitude of minor changes, as the old liturgy was simplified, the number of genuflections and signs of the cross were reduced, and so on, there were developments of great symbolic significance. Altars were brought forward so that priests could stand behind them and face the congregation instead of having their backs to the people. Thus priests became leaders of community celebrations instead of lone spiritual warriors mediating between earth and heaven. An intense focus on the Eucharistic Host had dominated pre-conciliar piety. To ensure that this did not overshadow the liturgy of the Eucharist and the renewed understanding of the presence of Christ in the community, tabernacles were shifted in many churches from their place of honour behind the main altar to the side of the sanctuary or to a separate chapel.

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<sup>39</sup> Rosemary Goldie, *From a Roman Window: Five Decades: The World, The Church and the Catholic Laity* (Melbourne: HarperCollins Religious, 1998), p. 93.

<sup>40</sup> *Southern Cross*, 14 July 1967, pp. 1-2.

Devotions which had encouraged Eucharistic adoration, like Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and the Forty Hours Prayer, and provided opportunities for people to pray in English, faded from prominence.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, it became much more common for people to receive communion at every Mass they attended.<sup>42</sup>

The 1967 national survey of Catholic responses to Vatican II concluded that the liturgical changes were being well received in Australia but they were not always preceded by adequate preparation and explanation.<sup>43</sup> This was not true in Adelaide, at least at the diocesan level. Liturgical reform was one of the main agenda items at clergy conferences from 1964 onwards, starting with a “historic” meeting on 30 June 1964.<sup>44</sup> The following month the theme of the Diocesan Life Campaign was “The Parish Around the Altar”. In the cathedral Beovich commissioned 600 lay men and women to lead small discussion groups in parishes reflecting on the meaning of the Mass. An estimated 7,500 Catholics took part.<sup>45</sup> In addition, a five-part series (“Here is the Mass”) was screened on Channel 7 on Sunday evenings in July.<sup>46</sup> The first stage of the introduction of English, due in July 1964, was delayed when booklets of the English text were not ready in time, but after rehearsals on Sunday, August 16, the revised liturgy was celebrated for the first time throughout the diocese on Sunday, 23 August.<sup>47</sup>

In February 1967 the *Southern Cross* invited readers to send their suggestions on different versions of the English translation of the Mass to Archbishop Young, vice-president of the International Committee on English in the Liturgy.<sup>48</sup> “Liturgy: Your

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<sup>41</sup> The last known roster for the Forty Hours Prayer or “Quarant Ore” was distributed in the Adelaide archdiocese in 1967. Forty-one parishes were involved, but in most the devotion only lasted one day.

<sup>42</sup> Senate of Priests, Minutes, 29 June 1967, ACAA. Greeley concludes that in the United States half of those who attended Mass in 1974 received communion compared with less than one-fifth in 1963 (see *Catholic Revolution*, p. 38).

<sup>43</sup> *Southern Cross*, 6 October 1967, p. 2. Maguire wrote of the Townsville diocese: “for the most part changes were introduced by episcopal fiat overnight, with little adequate preparation and explanation” (*Prologue*, p. 211). The author has heard similar comments in conversation, e.g. Fr. Mark Sexton on 15 January 2004. A young altar boy in the Newton parish in the late 1960s, Sexton recalls: “They were never, to my memory, explained. They just happened.” The Newton parish was somewhat unusual in that it had a very high percentage of Italians and was run by Capuchin friars.

<sup>44</sup> Diary 30 June 1964; Circular to priests, 22 June 1964 .

<sup>45</sup> *Southern Cross*, 3 July 1964, p. 1; 21 August 1964, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 July 1964, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 August 1964, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 February 1967. Complaints were made in the survey that year about the “unfortunate” response to the dismissal. When the priest said, “Go the Mass is ended”, the congregation said: “Thanks be to God”. *Southern Cross*, 21 April 1967, p. 13.

Views Sought” proclaimed another headline in November 1967 in an article promoting the “Catholics in Worship Convention” which was held on 10 December.<sup>49</sup> Brian Jackson, the seminary’s youthful liturgy lecturer, and David Shinnick organized this as part of the diocese’s preparation for the National Liturgical Convention which was held in Melbourne in January 1968. Discussion group leaders at the Adelaide event called for “greater freedom in liturgical experimentation”,<sup>50</sup> and they got a dose of it in Melbourne at an unscheduled “guitar Mass” which was described as “one of the highlights of the convention”.<sup>51</sup>

With “the new Mass” on the way, efforts in Adelaide to promote education and discussion escalated in 1969. Over 500 people participated in a three-day “Life and Worship Congress” in April 1969, another Jackson/Shinnick production, and about 1800 flocked to the cathedral for the final Mass of the congress on 29 April.<sup>52</sup> Instead of the normal Diocesan Life Campaign that year, parish groups were organized to reflect on congress themes. Priests were required to attend rehearsals at the seminary,<sup>53</sup> and as a follow-up to the April Congress, a “Life and Worship Day” was held in November, also with about 500 participants. Shinnick remembers this “as a charismatic time. The people were full of enthusiasm and hope for the future.”<sup>54</sup> In an article in the *Southern Cross*, Jackson stressed that the Mass was meant to be a celebration: “I mean celebration. You know, let’s have a party. Let’s get together. Everyone involved. It’s a joyful occasion.”<sup>55</sup>

Not everyone, however, was so excited. Only a few letters critical of liturgical changes were published in the diocesan paper from 1964 to 1968 but, faced with the final demise of Latin, they became more numerous and strident in 1969. The issue of authority arose. One correspondent wrote: “For me the Mass has lost its dignity, meaning and holiness. Why were not the people who make up the Church asked if they wanted the Mass changed? The new Mass was just thrust on us. Let us get back to the correct way of

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 November 1967.

<sup>50</sup> *Southern Cross*, 15 December 1967, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 February 1968, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 April 1969, p. 1; Shinnick, “Youthful Yearnings and Beyond”, p. 291-2.

<sup>53</sup> See *Southern Cross*, 3 October 1969, pp. 8-9, for explanatory notes and photographs of Brian Jackson in the seminary chapel demonstrating to priests how the Mass should be celebrated.

<sup>54</sup> Shinnick, *Journey Into Justice*, p. 28.

<sup>55</sup> *Southern Cross*, 7 November 1969, p. 6.

saying Mass.”<sup>56</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by the man who demanded that the Australian bishops get Paul VI to “give us back the Mass. . . if it was good enough for umpteen popes for umpteen centuries it is good enough for me”.<sup>57</sup> Another maintained: “It is rightful and just that the Masses should be said and sung in Latin. It is our heritage. To be denied this right is shameful. In most cases it is fault of the bishops.”<sup>58</sup> A small group of lay dissidents in Adelaide would eventually support Lefebvre’s archconservative Society of Pius X, but not until after Beovich’s retirement.

What was Beovich’s role in all this? Although Guilford Young was the Australian bishop most associated with liturgical reform, Beovich spoke strongly in favour of a broad use of English at the Australian bishops’ meeting in March 1964, and he was very pleased with the outcome.<sup>59</sup> At Christmas 1964 he led the way in Adelaide in celebrating Mass facing the congregation in the cathedral,<sup>60</sup> and the following April he jotted in his diary after the Easter ceremonies:

We are all edified by the faith and devotion of the people throughout the diocese. From various reports, the Revised Sacred Liturgy from the General Council, including the use of English, has received wholehearted acclaim from priests and people. They are sharing more fully in the Liturgy. *Deo gratias.*<sup>61</sup>

As someone who had a deep devotion to the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, Beovich initially resisted shifting the tabernacle from behind the altar to a less prominent place. A confrontation with Jackson entered diocesan folklore: “Over my dead body” is the mildest version of the words the archbishop is said to have uttered. When Beovich subsequently learnt that Giacomo Lercaro, President of the Council on the Sacred Liturgy in Rome, favoured the change, he accepted it with good grace.<sup>62</sup> “After that, I don’t think I could say anything he disagreed with,” Jackson recalls.<sup>63</sup> However, Lercaro also emphasized the importance in the renewal of the liturgy of the “harmonious and disciplined co-operation” of priests, bishops, national episcopal conferences and the papacy. Beovich strove to ensure that changes did not take place without his approval but

<sup>56</sup> *Southern Cross*, 30 May 1969, p. 13.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 May 1969, p. 13,

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 October 1969, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> Diary, 5 March 1964.

<sup>60</sup> *Southern Cross*, 12 March 1965, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Diary, 18 April 1965.

<sup>62</sup> The letter which Lercaro sent Gilroy, dated 30 June 1965, was copied and distributed to the Australian bishops. Beovich in turn circulated it to his priests on 30 July 1965.

<sup>63</sup> Brian Jackson, interview by author, tape recording, 15 January 2004.

were implemented uniformly throughout the diocese, in accordance with the directives of the Australian Episcopal Conference.<sup>64</sup>

Unlike Gleeson, Beovich did not take part personally in the “Life And Worship Congress” in April 1969. He was away at the bishops’ conference in New South Wales. Nevertheless, he exhorted parish priests to give their “most earnest support” to the organizing committee’s request that small groups be established in each parish,<sup>65</sup> and he left a letter to be read out at the congress. It encouraged participants to grow in their understanding of the liturgy and how they could participate more actively and fruitfully in it.<sup>66</sup> Not all his interventions were so positive. In October it was announced that “the new Mass” would be celebrated in the diocese for the first time at the “Life and Worship Day” to be held on 16 November at Prince Alfred College—a Methodist school.<sup>67</sup> The organizers’ choice of venue, based on practical considerations, was a further provocation to those Catholics who thought their liturgy was becoming too Protestant, and they had also made the mistake of not consulting the archbishop. From his sickbed in Calvary Hospital, Beovich demanded that the “Life and Worship Day” be moved to a Catholic site.<sup>68</sup> It was duly held at St Michael’s College, Henley Beach.<sup>69</sup>

This incident highlights the fact that while Beovich allowed leading Catholics in the diocese a great deal of latitude, he could intervene decisively when he thought it was necessary. He was the one ultimately in charge, and in late 1969 he applied the brakes. Although some Australian dioceses planned to introduce the new rite on the first Sunday in Advent, Beovich decided on a later date, the first Sunday in Lent (15 February 1970) to allow more preparation time. In response to a request from a group of priests, concerned about “many puzzling features of the new rite”, he gave permission for more seminars to be held at the seminary at the conclusion of the priests’ annual retreat in December. He

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<sup>64</sup> A circular to priests dated 19 February 1964 warned that no changes should take place without the approval of the archbishop. Notes for the clergy conference on 10 March 1965 indicate that priests were told that the archbishop would not allow them to celebrate Mass facing the congregation until he had personally approved the new arrangements for the altar. See also *Southern Cross*, 12 March 1965, p. 1. Beovich’s approval was also necessary before the tabernacle was shifted. Liturgical Commission, Minutes, 29 March 1967.

<sup>65</sup> Circulars to priests, 16 August 1968 and 21 January 1969.

<sup>66</sup> *Southern Cross*, 24 April 1969, pp. 1, 12.

<sup>67</sup> *Southern Cross*, 3 October 1967, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Diary, 4 October 1969; Brian Jackson, interview, 15 January 2004. An infected cyst on his back was the cause of Beovich’s hospitalization.

<sup>69</sup> *Southern Cross*, 21 November 1969, p. 2.

also agreed that prior to 15 February the new rite could be celebrated on weekdays, with appropriate explanation and discussion, in churches, halls and even in private homes (at the request of the Christian Life Movement he had given permission for home discussion groups to have an annual Mass the year before).<sup>70</sup> He sensibly suggested, however, that “it may be preferable to have study sessions with ‘dry runs’ of different parts of the Mass rather than actual celebrations to preserve the dignity of the Mass and to give more opportunities for questions and explanations”.<sup>71</sup> At the opening of a new church at Goodwood on 14 December 1969 he tried to reassure those worried about the changes: it would not be a *new* Mass, just a new *order* of the Mass. The sacrifice of the Mass remained the same. Christ would offer himself as on the cross, but it would be easier for people to participate with more intelligence and fervour.<sup>72</sup> Overall, Beovich’s approach seems to have worked. Whatever Catholics felt privately, they made little public fuss. The first letter published in the *Southern Cross* after 15 February 1970 concerned a parish football club.<sup>73</sup>

### **Ecumenism**

After the changes to the liturgy, the other most noticeable outcome of the Vatican Council was the much greater involvement of the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement. As with the liturgical reform, the Australian bishops attempted to implement changes in a coordinated and orderly way. Gleeson helped draw up a statement of principles which was approved at the hierarchy’s meeting in 1965. It was clearly a compromise document. On one hand, Catholic participation in ecumenical work was commended and Catholics were given permission to attend non-Catholic weddings, even as bridesmaids and groomsmen. On the other hand, they were still required to get approval from their bishop before attending ecumenical gatherings, and they were forbidden to take

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<sup>70</sup> See Shinnick, *Journey into Justice*, p. 22.

<sup>71</sup> Circular to Priests, 13 November 1969; *Southern Cross*, 21 November 1969, p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> *Southern Cross*, 19 December 1969, pp. 1, 4; The notes of the sermon are in his diary.

<sup>73</sup> *Southern Cross*, 27 February 1970, p. 11. As the letters to the editor section began each week with the subheading: “Only through the turmoil of free, public and continuing discussion does the whole Church learn to understand”, it does not seem likely that letters were deliberately withheld. A 1974 study in the USA indicated that four out of five Catholics approved of the new vernacular liturgy. See Greeley, *Catholic Revolution*, p. 37.



part in the celebration of the Eucharist in Protestant churches.<sup>74</sup> Beovich supported this *via media* (he had already, in 1963, lifted the ban on Catholics in the Adelaide archdiocese participating in non-Catholic weddings) and he was pleased that Justin Simonds was also sympathetic to it: “Pat Lyons and Jim O’Collins are still thinking of pre-conciliar days”.<sup>75</sup>

Another bishop who struggled to adapt to the Catholic Church’s greater openness to other denominations was Hugh Ryan of Townsville. He reportedly returned from the Council resolving to be “charitable to that damn fool Shevill” (the local Anglican bishop).<sup>76</sup> As Beovich had always tried to be charitable, in the wake of the Council he merely continued his earlier efforts to develop good relations with the leaders of other Christian communities. In March 1964 he accepted an invitation to speak on the Council at a meeting of the Protestant Ministers’ Fraternal at Port Adelaide.<sup>77</sup> A week later he was at Bishopscourt, the residence of the Anglican bishop of Adelaide, for a meeting with representatives of various denominations to discuss hospital and prison chaplaincies.<sup>78</sup> In April he dined at St Mark’s College on the eve of the Anglican university college’s feast day, and in June he gave a talk on the Council to about 160 guests of the South Australian branch of the Australian Council of Churches.<sup>79</sup> Beovich was on his annual holiday at Koroit in February 1965 when he received news that Winston Churchill had died, but he arranged for Gleeson to attend a service held in St Peter’s Cathedral in Adelaide to mark the occasion. He was interested to read that Cardinal Heenan had attended the funeral in England, “so Arch. Gleeson was not alone”.<sup>80</sup> A month later he was able to meet Michael Ramsey, the “quiet and friendly” Archbishop of Canterbury, at a “warm and pleasant” dinner at Government House.<sup>81</sup> “Heads of Churches” meetings, which had previously taken place on an informal basis became more regular (at least twice a year). In October 1966 Beovich went to the Methodist Conference to welcome on behalf of the Heads of Churches the incoming president, and in June 1968 he attended the installation of a new

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<sup>74</sup> *Southern Cross*, 30 April 1965, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> Diary, 24 April 1965.

<sup>76</sup> The remark was addressed to Father Tom Boland who repeated it in an interview with Jeffrey Murphy. See “The Australian Hierarchy at Vatican II”, p. 155.

<sup>77</sup> Diary, 16 March 1964. A copy of his address is in the ACAA.

<sup>78</sup> Diary, 24 March 1964.

<sup>79</sup> Diary, 24 April 1964, 17 June 1964; text of address in the ACAA.

<sup>80</sup> Diary, 3 February 1965 and 15 February.

<sup>81</sup> Diary, 27 March 1965,

president of the Congregational Union, “a friendly function”.<sup>82</sup> After many meetings, in that year the leaders of the different denominations finalized the plans for the religious centre at the new Flinders University.<sup>83</sup>

In 1967 Beovich gave his priests permission to join “ministers’ fraternals” with their counterparts from other denominations,<sup>84</sup> and in some places inter-church councils were also formed, involving lay people as well.<sup>85</sup> For many Catholic families ecumenism became a practical reality as the number of “mixed marriages” surged.<sup>86</sup> In 1960 about 30 per cent of marriages in Catholic churches in the archdiocese of Adelaide involved a non-Catholic bride or groom. By 1969 the figure was 52 per cent.<sup>87</sup> The fact that Shinnick and Jackson chose a Protestant college as the venue for a Catholic liturgy seminar without consulting Beovich is another indication of how far ecumenism had progressed in Adelaide by 1969. “There was a real sense of enthusiasm and hope”, a priest who was involved in the interchurch council at Glenelg recalls.<sup>88</sup> A danger which Beovich correctly discerned was that some enthusiasts would minimize the differences which remained between the churches and think that “unity was just around the corner”. In fact, no less than Lyons and O’Collins did he believe that “real unity meant the return of our separated brethren to the Catholic Church under the pope”, and he was under no illusions about the time this would take to be accomplished.<sup>89</sup> He appreciated the complexity and challenges of the ecumenical movement, telling the ministers’ fraternal at Port Adelaide:

Any unity achieved by bargaining or compromise, or by soft-peddling unresolved differences would be spurious. No genuine unity can arise out of forsaking conscientious convictions sincerely held. So to achieve Christian unity we must begin to know one another, and even before that, know ourselves. We cannot force one another to see the same truth, but we can love one another warmly, sincerely and un-patronisingly . . .<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Diary, 14 October 1966; 6 June 1968.

<sup>83</sup> Diary, 8 November 1968.

<sup>84</sup> “Summary of Matters Discussed at the Clergy Conference, 10 May 1967”.

<sup>85</sup> One of the first was at Glenelg. Formed in 1967, it involved the Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, and Congregational churches and the Church of Christ. See *Southern Cross*, 24 February 1967, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> Peter Murnane, “Inter-Faith Marriage and the Catholic Church in Australia: Aspects of its Rate of Occurrence, its Causes, and the Changing Attitude Towards It” (BA Hons thesis, Flinders University, 1970).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>88</sup> Robert Rice, interview by author, 16 November 2004.

<sup>89</sup> Diary, 16 March 1964.

<sup>90</sup> The text of the address delivered on 16 March 1964 is in the ACAA.

In his archdiocese Beovich led the way in demonstrating how fidelity to Catholic teaching could be combined with friendliness to other Christians. He was perhaps less successful at helping Catholics “get to know themselves” at a time when traditional markers of Catholic identity were dissolving, such as the Latin Mass and abstinence from meat on Fridays, which was made optional by the Australian bishops in 1967.<sup>91</sup> In addition, Catholics were given greater opportunities to voice their opinions in a Church which had prided itself on its hierarchy, and extolled obedience as a virtue. Some looked with dismay at this “Protestantising” of Catholicism, for others it was heady new wine, embraced with enthusiasm. Unfortunately for the latter, it was poured into wine skins which, while enlarged and stretched, remained essentially the same.

### **A More Participative Church?**

Fired with enthusiasm from their own experience of coming together to discuss reform of the Church, the bishops at the Second Vatican Council approved decrees which recommended the creation of consultative bodies in their own dioceses. In 1964, in accordance with the Constitution on the Liturgy, Beovich established a Diocesan Commission for Sacred Liturgy, Music and Art. Although the constitution permitted lay people to be involved, Beovich initially appointed only priests to the commission. It was not until 1970 that membership was widened and meetings became more frequent. In the early years members wrestled with practical issues such as postures in the revised liturgy (when to kneel, sit and stand), what kind of hymns were acceptable, and where the tabernacle should be placed. Beovich chaired the meetings himself, and for those who disliked wasting time, he demonstrated a commendable ability to get to the heart of a matter as soon as possible.<sup>92</sup> The flip side of this was that those who wandered off the point were sometimes curtly brought to order, and left with their feelings bruised.<sup>93</sup> It was not uncommon for priests to have their comments dismissed with the classic Beovich phrase, “That’s very interesting, Father”. As all priests soon got to know, this was an indication that the archbishop was not pleased, and the only sensible course of action was to shut up. Another warning sign was a sudden increase in smoke from his pipe. Beovich

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<sup>91</sup> *Southern Cross*, 14 April 1967, p. 1. Greeley argues that this “may have been the most unnecessary and the most devastating [change]. Fish on Friday had been a symbol that most visibly distinguished American Catholics from other Americans.” See *Catholic Revolution*, p. 54.

always retained the right to make the final decision so further discussion was futile once he had clearly made up his mind.

It was the same when the Senate of Priests met for the first time on 29 June 1967, in accordance with the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops,<sup>94</sup> although the appointment process which Beovich himself devised was a little more democratic. In May 1967 diocesan priests were divided into five groups according to age and seniority: they then voted to elect two representatives from each group. Four representatives were nominated by the male religious orders working in the diocese. The six diocesan consultors were automatically included, as was the rector of the seminary and priests in charge of special works, such as the Catholic Education Office and the Catholic Welfare Bureau. Beovich began the first meeting by reminding members that the Senate was a consultative body, called to advise the archbishop, and he particularly wanted them to reflect on spiritual renewal in the diocese in the light of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>95</sup>

As it happened, over the next three years the Senate's most notable achievement was the development of a salary and superannuation scheme for priests. This was a major practical change. Whereas previously each parish priest had retained the income from his parish, henceforth it would go into a common fund and be distributed according to a fixed scale of salaries and allowances. Thus great discrepancies in parish incomes were overcome and provision was made for priests to retire at the age of 75, or earlier if their health declined. To facilitate this, in 1969 the Senate also approved a proposal from the Little Sisters of the Poor to build a number of flats for retired priests. Previously most priests had stayed in their parishes until they died, were appointed to light chaplaincy duties, or were so ill that they were admitted to Calvary Hospital. The remuneration scheme was eminently sensible but potentially divisive as it meant that priests from wealthier parishes would be deprived of much of the income they had hitherto enjoyed. In

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<sup>92</sup> Thomas Horgan, interview by author, 23 September 1997; Liturgical Commission, Minutes, 19 June 1964.

<sup>93</sup> Alan Commins, interview by author, 20 January 1998.

<sup>94</sup> Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, 27: "Also included among the bishop's cooperators in the administration of the diocese are the priests who form his senate or council. Such are the cathedral chapters, the board of consultors or other committees according to the circumstances or ethos of different areas. These institutions . . . should be reorganized, so far as necessary, to meet modern needs." Norman P. Tanner, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. II: *Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), p. 931.

<sup>95</sup> Senate of Priests, Minutes, 29 June 1967.

Sydney, Gilroy faced bitter and vocal opposition over a similar proposal. One priest, Patrick Ford, likened it to socialization and totalitarianism.<sup>96</sup> After much discussion and feedback from priests in Adelaide, statutes were finally approved at a clergy conference on 18 June 1970 by 67 votes to 20 and, unlike Gilroy, Beovich swiftly implemented the majority decision. He was relieved that the priests had been able “to handle it themselves”.<sup>97</sup> Democracy could be useful at times.

The Senate of Priests also played a significant role in the establishment of a uniform system of administration and financing for parish schools. As government funding began to flow to Catholic schools during the 1960s, the Catholic Education Office became an important conduit. In 1968 Edward Mulvihill, director of Catholic Education, proposed that each school should be required to set up a school board, with representatives from parents, teachers, religious and clergy, and a trained accountant, and that the board should submit regular financial reports to the Catholic Education Office.<sup>98</sup> On 18 September the Senate recommended that the archbishop approve the plan, which he did.<sup>99</sup> It was a measure of its effectiveness that it was subsequently adopted by the more independent schools owned by the religious orders. However, like the clergy remuneration scheme, it eroded the authority of the parish priest. In the large Sydney archdiocese, some rather heavy-handed centralization in the financing and control of Catholic schools generated further “discontent and resistance” from priests such as Ford.<sup>100</sup> The much smaller Adelaide archdiocese does not seem to have experienced that problem.

On the whole, it seems that the Senate of Priests functioned well as an advisory body to the bishop on practical administrative matters, and it provided a structure through which Beovich could, with little trouble, consult a number of priests on matters which affected them. It is not so easy to detect positive outcomes from the first Diocesan Pastoral

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<sup>96</sup> Patrick Ford, “Subsidiarity and Sacradotal Sustentation”, *ACR* 47 (October 1970), 290-305. See also Luttrell, “Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy”, pp. 231-236.

<sup>97</sup> Diary, 18 June 1970.

<sup>98</sup> Edward Mulvilhill, “My Recollections of Archbishop Matthew Beovich”, 19 June 2002; letter to the author, 23 September 2004.

<sup>99</sup> Senate of Priests, Minutes, 18 September, 1968; Circular to Priests, 29 September 1968.

<sup>100</sup> Luttrell, “Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy as Archbishop of Sydney”, pp. 213-14. See also Kelvin Canavan, “The Development of the Sydney Catholic Education Office”, *ACR* 75 (October 1988): 441-7.

Council, which was also recommended by the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops.<sup>101</sup> The Pastoral Council comprised the two archbishops, Beovich and Gleeson, five priests, two nuns, and twenty lay people appointed by Beovich after being nominated by the Lay Apostolate Liaison Committee.<sup>102</sup> They were men and women who had been actively involved in Catholic organizations. While they did not formally represent specific groups, an attempt was made to ensure that the major organizations in the diocese had at least one of their leading members on the Council. Similarly, the priests and religious sisters whom Beovich appointed were carefully chosen so that they could bring to the Council their experience of different aspects of Church life, most notably with regard to education, welfare and the needs of migrant communities. When the Council met for the first time on 31 March 1968, Beovich explained that “the specific work of the Pastoral Council is to improve the religious life of the whole diocese, to investigate matters concerning pastoral works, to discuss them, and to come to practical conclusions about them.” If the new councillors were not quite sure what this implied, neither was the archbishop. He frankly admitted: “As the bishops were at the beginning of the General Council, so are we apprentices in this Pastoral Council, but we will gradually find our feet”.<sup>103</sup>

Three years later, as the term of the first councillors came to an end, Paul McGuire expressed concern that the Council had only addressed *ad hoc* matters and had not “made available to the bishop a comprehensive view of the church in the area”.<sup>104</sup> McGuire may have been politely saying that he had found meetings boring. David Shinnick, another of the original members of the Council, observes:

A common feeling after meetings of the Diocesan Pastoral Council was one of frustration, because we never seemed to be clear about the purpose of the Council, except in general terms. There was no doubt that a lot of personal formation and development of a broader diocesan perspective took place among members. But the council was only advisory and lacked participation in any real decision making. It was not directly responsible either for its own recommendations. These seemed to be two weaknesses which kept it in a confused state.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> “It is much to be desired that in every diocese there should be established its own pastoral council. The diocesan bishop himself should preside over it; and specially selected clergy, religious and laity should play their part in it. The function of this council will be to examine those matters affecting pastoral activities, to assess them and to put forward practical conclusions concerning them.” Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops 28, in Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, p. 932.

<sup>102</sup> For a list of members and their photographs, see *Southern Cross*, 15 December 1967, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup> Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) Minutes, 31 March, 1969.

<sup>104</sup> DPC Minutes, 9 August 1970.

<sup>105</sup> Shinnick, *Journey into Justice*, p. 28.

The issue of school boards illustrates the Council's ineffectiveness. After much discussion, the Council agreed on 30 June 1968 that a trust would be preferable to a board as a way of administering school finances.<sup>106</sup> The next meeting on 15 September was largely devoted to examining a model trust deed which had been prepared by the education sub-committee. It was decided that the trust deed and accompanying guidelines should be adopted on a provisional basis, and that the Council would meet again before the end of the year to give formal approval.<sup>107</sup> On 4 October 1968, however, the front page of the *Southern Cross* reported that Beovich had announced that every parish school would have a school board within a month. At the next meeting of the Council on 1 December 1968, Mulvilhill explained that this course of action had been approved by the Senate of Priests, a clergy conference and the Pastoral Council's education sub-committee.<sup>108</sup>

In August 1970 concern was expressed by one councillor at the "widespread dissatisfaction with the new liturgy among a considerable portion of congregations".<sup>109</sup> As a result of this comment, the state of the liturgy was the major agenda item at the next Council meeting in November. Some councillors spoke positively of the new liturgy evoking a greater sense of community, of more people receiving communion, and of a general improvement in people's awareness of the importance of the Mass. Others complained about the lack of availability of Masses in Latin, and of the need for a deeper spirit of reverence, more appropriate hymns and better trained readers. In the end no recommendations for improvements were made, as Gleeson (for Beovich was in Rome) stated that responsibility for this area belonged to the newly re-formed Liturgical Commission.<sup>110</sup>

There was much discussion in 1970 over how the next Diocesan Pastoral Council should be constituted: in particular, whether representatives could be elected from parish pastoral councils. As there were 74 parishes, it was suggested that it would be better to elect members on a regional basis, but it was not clear how this could be done. A further complication was that not all parishes had established pastoral councils, although

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<sup>106</sup> DPC Minutes, 30 June, 1968.

<sup>107</sup> DPC Minutes, 15 September, 1968.

<sup>108</sup> DPC Minutes, 1 December, 1968.

<sup>109</sup> DPC Minutes, 9 August, 1970.

<sup>110</sup> DPC Minutes, 15 November, 1970.

promoting their establishment was David Shinnick's major task in 1970.<sup>111</sup> In the end it was agreed that the archbishop would appoint members as before. Beovich used the occasion to reiterate that "the Parish Pastoral Council is a pastoral body. Its purpose is to make us better Christians and to work for the salvation of souls." As examples of work which a parish pastoral council could undertake, he cited making converts and ecumenical contacts and helping senior parishioners who were unable to drive to Mass.<sup>112</sup> In practice, the parish councils faced the same problems as the diocesan body. Lay members were unable to take any real decisions without the approval of their parish priest, and their enthusiasm was easily dashed when their ideas were not received sympathetically by their priest or fellow parishioners.<sup>113</sup>

The development of a more participative, less authoritarian Church was clearly a long and complicated process. It could never have been anything else. Shinnick reflects:

These early experiments in consultation and advice seeking were inevitably frustrating coming as they did into a predominantly hierarchic Church. The changes were too slow and superficial for some; for others too fast and radical. Others again tried to find a middle course. But what was probably most lacking in those times was an appreciation of some plurality within the Church.<sup>114</sup>

Beovich, in particular, had little experience dealing with dissent, especially dissent from papal teaching. He would undoubtedly have endorsed Gilroy's comment in April 1968:

It is often said that devotion to the Vicar of Christ is at the heart of Catholicism. It is a saying dear to every true son and daughter of the Church. It speaks of love, of reverence, loyalty, generosity. But the real test of devotion to the Holy Father is a spirit of docility—a willing readiness to accept his teaching and decisions.<sup>115</sup>

That attitude of docile acceptance which Gilroy and Beovich valued so highly was about to be severely tested.

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<sup>111</sup> Shinnick was the coordinator of a steering committee to promote parish pastoral councils. Over five months members of the committee visited parishes, held training sessions and assisted home-based discussion groups. See *Southern Cross*, 13 March 1970, p. 1 and 20 March 1970, p. 3.

<sup>112</sup> DPC Minutes, 9 August, 1970.

<sup>113</sup> In his history of the Blackwood parish, Peter Donovan recounts the encouragement a "new-wave priest", Bernard Morellini, gave to the formation of a pastoral council in 1970 and the enthusiasm of its first members. However, when Morellini left in 1971 his temporary replacement was Fr. B. Clinton, "a very strict and dour" administrator, and frustration and friction arose (see *Towards A New Jerusalem*, pp. 50-55).

<sup>114</sup> Shinnick, *Journey Into Justice*, p. 29.

<sup>115</sup> Extract from *L'Osservatore Romano*, 4 April 1968 (English language edition), in Patrick O'Farrell, *Documents in Australian Catholic History*, p. 366.



### **The *Humanae Vitae* Crisis**

With so much change taking place in the Catholic Church, there was a widespread expectation that the Church's rigorous teaching on birth control would also be relaxed. True, Paul VI had not allowed the bishops at the Council to debate the matter, but he had expanded the commission of experts which John XXIII had appointed to advise him, and had included married couples. Although a minority of commission members submitted a dissenting report, the majority recommended that married couples should be permitted to make their own decisions on contraception, in the light of values promoted by the Church. Their report was leaked to the press in April 1967.<sup>116</sup> On 24 September 1967 a "mini-congress" was held at Cabra Convent to provide ideas and opinions for Bill Byrne, Carmel Clancy and Peter Davis to take to the Third World Congress of the Lay Apostolate in Rome. Dr Francois Mai, vice-president of the Newman Association of Catholic Graduates, tried to put a motion on behalf of the Newman Association "that the Holy See be asked to liberalize the Church's teaching on birth control". Chairman John O'Keefe ruled that no formal vote could be taken but a show of hands revealed that "the congress was overwhelmingly in favour of the proposal". One participant then complained that there had not been sufficient discussion on the issue. Reporter Nicholas Kerr wrote in his page one article for the *Southern Cross*, "the person sitting next to me hissed: 'How can you be a Catholic today and not have discussed it?'"<sup>117</sup> Byrne said afterward that he regarded the vote as an indication that delegates should raise the matter at the world congress. It did become one of the congress's central issues, with a resolution being passed which stated that: "there is a need for a clear stand by the teaching authorities of the Church which would focus on fundamental moral and spiritual values, while leaving the choice of scientific and technical means for achieving responsible parenthood to parents acting in accordance with their Christian faith and on the basis of medical and scientific consultation."<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> The story broke in the *National Catholic Reporter* in the USA on 19 April and the English *Tablet* on 22 April. It was on the front page of the *Southern Cross* on 28 April. See also Leo Pyle, ed., *The Pope and the Pill* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968); Ivan Yates, "The Pope and the Pill", *Bulletin*, 10 August 1968, pp. 33-35; Peter Hebblethwaite, *The Runaway Church*, pp. 209 ff; Joseph Komonchak, "Humanae Vitae and Its Reception: Ecclesiological Reflections", *Theological Studies* 39, no. 2 (1978): 221-257.

<sup>117</sup> *Southern Cross*, 29 September 1967, p. 1.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 October 1967, p. 1. See also *3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress for the Lay Apostolate: Report of the South Australian Delegates* (Adelaide: LALC, 1968), p. 8.

“Pope Gives Firm ‘No’ to the Pill”, proclaimed the front page of the *Advertiser* on 30 July 1968, two days before Beovich’s official copy of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* arrived from Rome.<sup>119</sup> In the following days the responses of the Australian bishops also became front-page news. In Melbourne the new archbishop, James Robert Knox, said that he received the encyclical “with a lively sense of gratitude”, while Patrick O’Donnell declared in Brisbane that “there could now be no ambiguity on the Church’s position on birth control”.<sup>120</sup> Thomas Muldoon stressed in Sydney that the pope intended to “bind gravely the consciences of all”: “This is a declaration of divine law, not merely Church law”.<sup>121</sup> Deeply imbued with *Romanità*, Beovich was impelled to support the pope, but he uttered no expressions of gratitude and, like Paul VI in the actual encyclical, he acknowledged the hardship that it would cause Catholics:

Christ’s Vicar has spoken: the previous teaching of the Church continues as we have always known it. Aided by God’s grace, with faith and humility we will obey the Holy Father.

To be a Catholic is to accept a life of suffering as well as love. No one welcomes the unquestioned suffering that refusing contraception involves. But Catholics have simply a different standpoint from almost everyone on earth. For Catholics loyalty to their Church is not a fringe affair. It involves loyalty to God himself. This loyalty has occasioned even martyrdom in the past. It will be the occasion of equal heroism as a result of the present decision. For Catholics when the Pope speaks as the successor of Saint Peter, as Shepherd of the whole Church, he is the voice of Christ and we accept his teaching.

This statement was released to the press and sent to priests to be read in every parish church on Sunday, 4 August.<sup>122</sup> Unlike Gilroy in Sydney, Beovich wisely avoiding holding a press conference.<sup>123</sup>

With the *Advertiser* headlines on 31 July 1968 highlighting widespread opposition to the encyclical (“World in Protest At Pope’s Ban”; “Pill Ruling ‘Disaster’”),<sup>124</sup> Beovich

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<sup>119</sup> Diary, 30 July, 1 August 1968.

<sup>120</sup> *Advertiser*, 31 July 1968, p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> *Advertiser*, 30 July 1968, p. 1.

<sup>122</sup> Circular to Priests, 1 August 1968; *Australian*, 31 July 1968, p. 1; *Advertiser*, 31 July 1968, p. 3.

<sup>123</sup> Henry Mayer commented in his column in the *Australian* on 2 August 1968 (p. 8): “Cardinal Gilroy, Bishop Muldoon and their advisers put up a pathetic front on television . . . They lacked both dignity and grace and sounded like badly programmed computers on the way to the junk heap.” Edmund Campion remembers Gilroy’s “haunted eyes” as he released the encyclical to the press in the crypt of St Mary’s Cathedral: “There was too much lead in the saddle bags for this horse to win, and the Cardinal knew it” (*Rockchoppers*, p. 20).

<sup>124</sup> *Advertiser*, 31 July 1968, pp. 1, 3.

was relieved to report in his diary that the Senate of Priests “to my happiness . . . carried a motion without dissent, upholding and giving obedience to the Pope’s teaching”.<sup>125</sup> On 1 August he telephoned Gilroy to suggest that the whole Australian hierarchy send a telegram of support to the pope. The following day Gilroy called back to say that a meeting of the central commission of the Australian Bishops’ Conference would be held in Melbourne on Monday, 5 August. Beovich flew to Melbourne and helped draft the statement which was released to the press on 7 August.<sup>126</sup> According to Peter Hebblethwaite, national hierarchies were under pressure from Cardinal Cicognani, the secretary of state at the Vatican, to show support for the pope.<sup>127</sup> The Australian bishops dutifully warned that it would be “a grave act of disobedience” for Catholics to refuse to accept the encyclical. However, their statement also acknowledged that Paul VI had not put the full weight of his teaching authority behind *Humanae Vitae*—it was not technically an infallible definition of faith—and they concluded on what was clearly intended to be a humane and pastoral note: “we pray that husbands and wives may find in bishops and priests Christ-like kindness and understanding in the difficulties of their vocation of marriage”.<sup>128</sup> An unidentified Catholic spokesman in Adelaide interpreted the statement in the most lenient way possible, telling a reporter from the *Advertiser* that the bishops had “removed the matter from essential Catholic doctrine to the field of practical duty. This meant that there was not necessarily any question of excommunication from the Catholic faith involved in a Catholic’s decision as to how he accepted the pope’s decision.”<sup>129</sup>

With reports coming in of the pope’s “suffering and anguish”,<sup>130</sup> Beovich still wanted to contact him. On 9 August he sent a telegram to Cardinal Cicognani on behalf of the bishops of his province (himself, Gleeson, Gallagher of Port Pirie and O’Loughlin of Darwin) and the Senate of Priests. This expressed “unreserved obedience” to the encyclical: “We stand united with Pope Paul and give him our loyalty and prayers”.<sup>131</sup> Guilford Young’s refusal to send a similar cable from the Hobart diocese caused a bitter

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<sup>125</sup> Diary, 31 July 1968. According to Robert Egar, one of the members of the Senate, it was not unanimous as two priests abstained from voting. Interview, 15 December 2004.

<sup>126</sup> Diary, 5 August 1968. Present at the meeting were Cardinal Gilroy, Archbishops Beovich, Knox and Young, and Bishops Cahill and Toohey.

<sup>127</sup> Hebblethwaite, *The Runaway Church*, p. 215.

<sup>128</sup> *Southern Cross*, 9 August 1968, p. 1.

<sup>129</sup> *Advertiser*, 7 August 1968, p. 1.

<sup>130</sup> *Advertiser*, 1 August 1968, p. 1; *Southern Cross*, 16 August 1968, p. 1.

<sup>131</sup> Diary, 9 August 1968; *Southern Cross*, 16 August 1968, p. 1.

dispute among his priests. Some ardent supporters of the encyclical accused him of lack of leadership and loyalty to the pope, and complained to the apostolic delegate, while in the diocesan paper one of Young's supporters publicly attacked the "zealots" for their lack of respect and loyalty to their archbishop.<sup>132</sup> Priests in Adelaide were also divided, with some strongly in favour of the encyclical and others dismayed at its publication. The former would have been pleased with Beovich's "loyalty cable". The latter were probably appeased by his moderate stance at the special seminar which was held at the seminary to study the encyclical on 30 August. It was attended by almost 200 South Australian priests. It is remembered that Beovich exhorted priests to be as pastoral and understanding as possible, especially in the confessional: "the priest in the confessional is above all a pastor, a shepherd, and he must be gentle with the sheep . . ." <sup>133</sup> An article in the *Southern Cross* explained that Catholics would commit a sin if they disregarded their conscience, but if they mistakenly believed that a wrong action (such as using contraceptives) was right, they could still in good conscience receive the sacraments.<sup>134</sup> This became an important loophole for priests who found the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* difficult to accept.<sup>135</sup> No priest in the Adelaide diocese was disciplined or suspended for public dissent, as happened in some dioceses interstate and overseas, and there was no subsequent wave of resignations from the priesthood, as was the case in some dioceses in Victoria and New South Wales.<sup>136</sup>

Another pastoral response in Adelaide was the establishment of the Catholic Family Planning Centre to teach the ovulation or rhythm method of avoiding pregnancy, the only form of birth control which *Humanae Vitae* deemed licit. Peter Travers, Beovich's secretary at the time, recalls that the archbishop began planning the centre the day after the encyclical was published "to make it possible for people to obey".<sup>137</sup> It opened early in 1969, a joint venture involving the Catholic Welfare Bureau, the Guild of St Luke for

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<sup>132</sup> See Southerwood, *Wisdom of Guilford Young*, pp. 419, 422-3.

<sup>133</sup> Robert Aitken, interview by author, 1 November 2004; also Leon Czechowicz, interview by author, 5 February 2004. Gilroy issued similar instructions in Sydney. See Luttrell, "Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy", p. 276.

<sup>134</sup> *Southern Cross*, 6 September 1968, p. 4.

<sup>135</sup> A survey of American priests in 1972 indicated that the number who would deny absolution to Catholics who used contraception had fallen from 26 per cent before *Humanae Vitae* was issued to 13 per cent in 1972. The fall in the number of those who would discourage use but not deny absolution was not as dramatic, from 36 to 33 per cent. However, the number prepared to accept the responsibility of Catholics to form their own moral judgment had risen from 31 to 44 per cent. See Greeley, *Catholic Revolution*, p. 36.

<sup>136</sup> In the *Bulletin*, 17 May 1969, p. 28, former priest Michael Parer estimated that at least 65 priests had left in the previous eighteen months, 60 of them from Victoria and New South Wales.

<sup>137</sup> Peter Travers, interview by author, 28 November 2002.

Catholic Doctors, the Cana Conference of Adelaide (the marriage guidance movement), the Christian Life Movement and the Catholic Women's League.<sup>138</sup> In the immediate wake of the encyclical, the *Southern Cross* published two articles by "A Catholic Doctor" which gave detailed and frank advice on how a woman could detect when it was "safe" for sexual intercourse by using a thermometer and monitoring vaginal discharges.<sup>139</sup>

While Beovich was able to minimize disunity amongst his clergy by carefully negotiating a *via media* through the different reactions to *Humanae Vitae*, he was not so successful at diffusing the anger of a group of educated and vocal lay Catholics. He never seems to have explained or defended the theology and complex ethical reasoning behind the encyclical, why "natural" methods of birth control were acceptable when "artificial" methods were sinful. He simply maintained that the pope had to be obeyed because he was the pope, not because he was right. That shifted the focus of the controversy to the issue of authority. On 2 August Gleeson warned Beovich that Peter Davis and Francois Mai would not accept the pope's ruling, and that they had called a meeting of the Newman Society of Catholic Graduates at the University of Adelaide Staff Club on 13 August. Beovich urged them not to publicize their opposition, and sent Peter Travers to the meeting to be a "channel of communication".<sup>140</sup> About ninety people attended, and "by a clear majority" passed a number of resolutions which expressed dismay at the encyclical, withheld assent from it, and called on Beovich to petition the pope for another council to consider both marriage and family life and the teaching authority of the Church. To Beovich's displeasure, a report of the 13 August meeting featured prominently in the *Advertiser* the next day.<sup>141</sup> When approached by a reporter, he refused to comment on the resolutions. He merely reaffirmed his call to Catholics to give their "loyal obedience" to the pope.<sup>142</sup>

Thirty-nine-year-old Peter Davis emerged as one of the encyclical's most vocal critics. As a lecturer in clinical biology at the University of Adelaide, and father of six children, he could speak from professional and personal experience. As one of the Adelaide representatives at the World Congress of the Lay Apostolate, he was annoyed that the pope had rejected the advice he had received from lay Catholics. In an interview

<sup>138</sup> *Southern Cross*, 14 February 1969, p. 3.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 August 1968, p. 4; 6 September 1968, p. 4.

<sup>140</sup> Diary, 6 August 1968.

<sup>141</sup> Diary, 13 and 14 August; *Advertiser*, 14 August 1968, p. 3.

<sup>142</sup> *Advertiser*, 15 August 1968, p. 3.

with a reporter, published in the *News* on 14 September 1968, Davis recounted that, in spite of Beovich's disapproval, the Newman Association was "pushing ahead with a detailed examination of Pope Paul's encyclical". A committee had been established comprising medical doctors, social workers, marriage guidance counsellors, scientists, biologists and demographers, but—because Beovich refused to appoint any—no theologians. "We feel sure he will reconsider his decision", Davis said.<sup>143</sup> His confidence was misplaced. The next day a meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council took place, chaired as usual by the archbishop. Although it was the first meeting of the Council since the controversial encyclical was published, *Humanae Vitae* was not on the agenda. At the end of the meeting a heated discussion took place between Beovich and Davis. Beovich rebuked Davis for publicizing his views in the press, and insisted that if the Newman Association wanted official recognition as a Catholic organization it would have to accept the pope's teaching. Shinnick remembers that no one else on the Council was willing to challenge the archbishop, who clearly did not want the matter discussed further.<sup>144</sup> Beovich, concluding privately that Davis was "emotionally disturbed", offered to pray for him.<sup>145</sup> Davis subsequently withdrew from active involvement in the Church.

Catholics were able to air their views in the "Letters to the Editor" section in the *Southern Cross*. On 9 August four correspondents passionately supported the pope and/or attacked opposition to the encyclical. On the other hand, a woman who signed herself "One of Them" was not impressed by Beovich's call to married couples to endure heroic suffering in married life:

I did not get married in order to suffer but because I loved my husband and wanted to bear his children. For health and finance reasons my family is now limited, but my conscience is easy . . . Let us not turn away from the Church in which we believe. But let us show that we are grown up in this matter. We are not naughty children being chided by a loving father . . .<sup>146</sup>

"Catholic Mother" wrote:

It is part of our lives to take the pope's authority for granted. But since the Vatican Council it has also become part of our lives to believe we have an obligation to form our own consciences. It is all very well to say that Pope Paul's statement will play a

<sup>143</sup> *News*, 14 September 1968, p. 2.

<sup>144</sup> DPC Minutes, 15 September 1968; David Shinnick, telephone conversation with the author, 3 December 2004.

<sup>145</sup> Diary, 15 September 1968.

<sup>146</sup> *Southern Cross*, 9 August, p. 6.

big part in forming our consciences in this matter. But the truth is that we read, pondered, prayed and sought advice about this matter years ago . . . Now we are in a bewildering position. Our conscience says yes and our pope says no . . .

“Catholic Mother” had absorbed the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that the Church was the “People of God”; now she also wanted to be treated as an adult and not a child.<sup>147</sup> “Just a Woman” was provoked to write to the *Southern Cross* after seeing in the 6 September issue a photograph of the phalanx of male priests at the *Humanae Vitae* seminar on 30 August 1968, and reading the articles on family planning by the Catholic doctor who was also obviously male:

Has no one thought of consulting Mrs Average Catholic? She is the one most vitally concerned with the whole question . . . Mrs Average Catholic rise up! You have nothing to lose but your thermometer.<sup>148</sup>

It is impossible to know how representative these opinions are of the reactions of Adelaide’s Catholics. On 20 August Beovich wrote in his diary: “Reports coming in from parishes. There is no turmoil, but general obedience and loyalty to the Pope. The ‘mass media’ give a wrong impression, inflating pockets of resistance both here and overseas.” He probably underestimated the level of quiet dissent. A survey published in the *Australian* in November 1970 indicated that only 29 per cent of Catholics responded positively when asked, “Do you accept the Pope’s viewpoint that women should not use the pill?” Over half, 58 per cent, said “no”.<sup>149</sup> It seems likely that in Adelaide, as elsewhere, *Humane Vitae* was the turning point which caused some Catholics to leave the Church and many others to remain but on their own terms—as adults no longer prone to childlike obedience to Church authorities. As they stopped participating in the sacrament of penance, the issue gradually became less troubling for priests. The magnitude of the crisis can be gathered from Beovich’s diary note on 21 August 1968. For all his abhorrence of war and communism, he was relieved that the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia had swept *Humanae Vitae* off the front page of the daily newspapers.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 August, p. 6.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 September 1968, p. 6. See also Peter Donovan, *Towards the New Jerusalem: A History of the Catholic Community of Blackwood*, p. 48.

<sup>149</sup> *Australian*, 23 November 1970, p. 11. Greeley notes that in the late 1960s and early 1970s “every age segment in Catholic America changed its convictions about the legitimacy of birth control, and more ominously, about the right of the Church to lay down rules for sexual behavior” (*The Catholic Revolution*, p. 57). Whereas a survey in 1966 showed that 56 per cent of Catholic respondents thought that contraception was always wrong, in 1974 the figure was just 16 per cent (*Ibid.*, p. 39).

### The Difficult Years

In retrospect, it can be seen that the storm over *Humanae Vitae* did not erupt in a clear sky. Months before the encyclical was issued, readers of the *Southern Cross* would have noticed an increasing number of articles dealing with problems in the Church. They were alerted to tensions around the globe, such as the battle between the modernizing Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Los Angeles and the elderly, conservative Cardinal McIntyre (“Nuns in Nylons Defy Cardinal”).<sup>150</sup> From 1968 to 1970 they could follow the rise and fall of the Dutch National Pastoral Council, the most radical experiment in democracy in the Catholic Church (“Dutch Pastoral Council Wants Married Clergy”).<sup>151</sup> Swiss theologian Hans Kung’s wish list featured in a March issue. Kung thought that clergy and lay representatives should participate in the nomination of bishops and that the Catholic Church should drop “out of date and ridiculous” pomp and ceremony, clerical dress, feudal titles, and so on.<sup>152</sup> Closer to home, Peter Davis said much the same thing in an article in January 1968 which was headlined, “The Failures of the Lay Congress”. Reflecting on his experiences in Rome the previous October, Davis maintained that the Church as an institution was out of touch with the world. It was failing to recognise “that today man’s aspirations are to democratic structures and procedures . . . The use of titles and symbols of power reminiscent of medieval princes seem an incongruity in a serving church.”<sup>153</sup> There must have been times when Beovich winced as he read his diocesan paper, but Robert Wilkinson, the editor throughout the 1960s, testifies that he was allowed complete freedom to print such views.<sup>154</sup> Not all bishops were so generous.<sup>155</sup> The fact that Wilkinson’s editorials were usually balanced and moderate doubtless helps explain why Beovich trusted his judgment.

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<sup>150</sup> *Southern Cross*, 12 January, 1968, p. 15.

<sup>151</sup> *Southern Cross*, 19 January 1968, p. 12.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 March 1968, p. 5.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 January 1968, p. 4.

<sup>154</sup> Robert Wilkinson, interview, 11 June 2002, and telephone conversation, 4 December 2004.

<sup>155</sup> For an account of the way Gilroy and the directors of the *Catholic Weekly* in Sydney “intruded into day-to-day editorial decisions”, see Kevin Hilferty, “The Making of a Diocesan Editor, or The Education Of Young Kevin”, *ACR* 75 (July and October 1988), pp. 303-314, 448-454. After experiencing a number of reprimands from his bishop, Michael Costigan eventually resigned from both his position as editor of the *Advocate* and the priesthood in 1969. See Val Noone, *Disturbing the War: Melbourne Catholics and Vietnam* (Melbourne: Spectrum, 1993), p. 202. In 1969 James Liston, bishop of Auckland, dismissed two successive editors of his diocesan paper, the *Zealandia*, and replaced them with a much more conservative man, provoking demonstrations and a “pray in” in the cathedral. See Nicholas Reid, “Churchman”, pp. 382-4.



Paul VI did reduce much of the medieval pomp and ceremony in the Vatican, but his credibility as a reformer slumped after *Humanae Vitae*, at least among “progressive” Catholics. Yet as the turbulence increased, Beovich saw even greater need than before for adhering to the pope. An incident on one of his holidays at Koroit provided him with an illustration for an speech in 1969:

Archbishop Beovich said that he had once been among five bishops who had snatched a holiday and gone fishing. It was on a stretch of coast known for its sudden storms. One had come up while they were out at sea and they had to negotiate a cleft in the rocks.

“A bishop always thinks he knows the answers”, he said. They had all started to give orders. But they quickly had the sense to leave it to the man at the tiller—and got safely ashore.<sup>156</sup>

The message was clear to him. It was Paul VI who was at the tiller of the Church.

At Koroit, Beovich sometimes preached in the parish church, and in 1967 he gave a series of meditations in Lent on the inevitability of suffering in a Christian’s life. In 1968, in the heat of the *Humanae Vitae* controversy, he would return to this theme. The Koroit sermons reveal that it was basic to his spirituality:

Our vocation as a Christian implies suffering. Faith means suffering because it means giving up my own will and not doing what I feel like doing—the selfish thing, the easy thing, the thing that will rebound to my profit and glory—but rather what God wants me to do. The supreme example is Christ, who could have escaped death by compromising but who did God’s Will even though He knew that obedience would lead Him to the cross.

Love, too, invariably causes suffering because it means putting myself out for others and sacrificing myself, my own time, my own pleasure. Here again, Christ is the perfect example . . .

Our Lord never said that the life of a Christian would be easy. Rather he told us that we would be expected to take up our cross daily and follow Him. Our Lord knew loneliness and discouragement and frustration too . . . If we follow Christ in our daily lives we will know fatigue and frustration too . . .

Beovich’s conviction that one should “take up one’s cross” was at odds with the increasing emphasis on self-fulfilment in society as a whole and the questioning of

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<sup>156</sup> *Southern Cross*, 11 July 1969, p. 3.

unsatisfactory life situations. Priests were not immune to the new cultural style. By the time Beovich retired in 1971 there was a large generation gap between himself and most of his priests. Only 20 of the 99 diocesan priests of 1971 had been among the 64 priests Beovich had found in Adelaide in 1940. In 1971 almost half (48) were younger than 40 years of age, 28 had been ordained ten years or less, and 16 had been born after 1940. Overall, the average age of priests was the same as in 1940 (44 years old), but 65 per cent of the priests of 1971 had been born in South Australia and only 21 per cent in Ireland, an almost exact reversal of the percentages for 1940. There were, in addition, ten who had been born in other countries.<sup>157</sup>

In 1969 a subcommittee of the Senate of Priests in Adelaide was formed to examine the difficulties and obstacles which confronted priests. In an interim report to the Senate, members of the committee (who were all under forty), spoke freely about the frustrations they detected arising from:

- Lack of appropriate training to help people experiencing personal problems;
- “A mountain of paperwork” (“Was I ordained to be a clerk?”);
- The inability of assistant priests to offer any real leadership in parishes, especially when parish priests refused to consult them on matters of parish policy;
- The lack of sympathy and understanding between priests of different ages;
- The lack of a positive approach to celibacy;
- Because of celibacy, the lack of someone “to rely on emotionally”;
- Difficulties in finding time to pray because of the pressure of parish work.

When Beovich read through the list, he must have been struck in particular by the comment:

There is a sense of isolation resulting from barriers to genuine dialogue between the priests and their bishop. It is felt that a bishop must not only intend to be a father to his priests, he must appear to be a father. Too often the present conditions of life do not create an atmosphere in which a priest can approach his bishop easily and speak freely to him.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> These statistics have been compiled largely from “Record of Diocesan Clergy”, an exercise book in which Beovich’s secretary recorded details of all priests from 1940 to 1968. These included their place of birth, date of birth, and date of ordination. Beovich sometimes noted in his own handwriting their appointments to parishes or other positions. A list of the clergy in 1940 and 1971 can also be found in the respective volumes of the *Australasian Catholic Yearbook*.

<sup>158</sup> “Interim Report of the Sub-Committee on the Life and Ministry of Priests”, 4 July 1969.

Even in the 1940s some priests were “a little bit timid of approaching the archbishop”.<sup>159</sup> By the late 1960s, not only was Beovich much older than most of his priests, but he had, since 1958, delegated parish visitation to Gleeson, thus losing a valuable opportunity to get to know the diocesan clergy better. Gleeson had also taken over much of the routine administration, as Beovich cut back the amount of time he spent in Church Office. In 1969 he decided to go into the office on Tuesday and Thursday mornings only.<sup>160</sup> While this was designed to leave more time for pastoral work, for Beovich this primarily meant visiting patients in Calvary Hospital. It did not necessarily bring him into contact with younger priests.

A copy of the interim report and a request for feedback was sent to all the other diocesan priests and the 115 religious order priests who were working in the diocese. An article in the *Southern Cross* recounted that twenty-four submitted written replies, and from their responses emerged “the need for more frequent and more personal contact between priests and bishops” and “disappointment in the Senate as a means of communication”.<sup>161</sup> When the report was discussed by the Senate, Beovich said that “he really desired that lines of communication be improved”.<sup>162</sup> He attempted to do that in a circular letter to priests in which he stressed that they were free to apply for any vacant parish. In the past he had sometimes consulted priests before shifting them, but most first heard about their transfer when they received a concisely-worded letter of appointment to their new parish—in some cases, it consisted of no more than one sentence.<sup>163</sup> “It would be mutually helpful to all of us,” Beovich added in the 1969 circular, “if priests realize that they are welcome to raise the question of possible transfers and appointments with me, my coadjutor or any of the Diocesan Consultors”.<sup>164</sup> When one assistant priest admitted that he was finding it very difficult to live with his parish priest, Beovich was sympathetic but

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<sup>159</sup> Darcy Woodards, “Archbishop Beovich” (typescript submitted to ACA in 1973), p. 2.

<sup>160</sup> Diary, 19 March 1969.

<sup>161</sup> *Southern Cross*, 21 November 1967, p. 7.

<sup>162</sup> Senate of Priests, Minutes, 12 November 1969

<sup>163</sup> Thomas Horgan (interview, 23 September 1997) and Robert Aitken (interview, 1 November 2004) recalled Beovich discussing possible transfers with them, but Robert Rice (interview, 16 November 2004) first heard of his new appointment when he received the following letter, dated 7 December 1956: “Dear Father Rice, You are hereby appointed as Assistant Priest to Rev. Father Collins in the parish of Brighton as from the 24<sup>th</sup> December. With every kind wish, I am, Yours sincerely in J.C., + Matthew Beovich.”

<sup>164</sup> Circular to Priests, 23 October 1969.

brisk in the way he handled the matter. He immediately transferred the curate to another parish, giving him just three days to shift.<sup>165</sup>

After the proposal was discussed by the Senate of Priests, Beovich approved the formation of regional groups as a way of promoting friendship and support among priests, and it was decided that in future the elected members of the Senate would be representatives from the regional groups.<sup>166</sup> Some priests also began meeting informally to study together recent theological works,<sup>167</sup> and three went at the expense of the diocese to the meeting of priests in Sydney which led to the formation of the National Council of Priests.<sup>168</sup> Nothing else seems to have been done to address the problems which the subcommittee had identified, and one of its members left the priesthood in 1972. “I must say that through 1967-71, the period of my most intense personal upheaval, it would not have occurred to me to consult Archbishop Beovich”, he reflected three decades later: “He was a remote figure and I was a sacerdotal minnow”.<sup>169</sup>

The *Statistical Yearbook of the Church*, published annually by the Vatican Secretariat of State, reveals that the number of men leaving the priesthood rose steadily from 640 in 1964 to a peak of 3,690 in 1973, and then gradually subsided to just over 1000 a year in the mid-1980s.<sup>170</sup> In an article in the *Bulletin* in 1969, Michael Parer, a former priest, attributed the increasing number of departures to a “crisis of identity”. Whereas once the priest had been better educated than most of his parishioners, and able to provide respected leadership, this was no longer automatically the case. To make matters worse, bishops did not understand “the issues that torment many of their young priests”.<sup>171</sup> A large survey commissioned by the United States Bishops’ Conference in the early 1970s concluded that the major reason why most men left the priesthood was loneliness, followed by frustration over ecclesiastical superiors’ lack of communication and cooperation.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Peter Monopoli, in conversation with the author, 2 December 2004.

<sup>166</sup> Senate of Priests, Minutes, 12 November 1969 and 10 June 1970.

<sup>167</sup> Denis Edwards, interview, 10 December 2004.

<sup>168</sup> Robert Egar, interview, 15 December 2004. The Adelaide representatives were Egar, Wilkinson and Peter McIntyre. For the formation of the National Council of Priests, see *Campion, Rockchoppers*, pp. 195 ff.

<sup>169</sup> Anthony Lowes, email to the author, 19 November 2004.

<sup>170</sup> See Michael Gaine, “The State of the Priesthood” in Adrian Hastings, ed., *Modern Catholicism*, pp. 246-255.

<sup>171</sup> Michael Parer, “Priests Who Leave”, *Bulletin*, 17 May 1969, p. 30 and 24 May 1969, p. 37. See also Parer’s autobiography, *Dreamer by Day: A Priest Returns to Life* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1972).

<sup>172</sup> Gaine, “The State of the Priesthood”, p. 249.

Priests in the Adelaide archdiocese were clearly subject to those problems too. By the end of 1969 four had left. By 1988 the figure had risen to nineteen.<sup>173</sup> Most of them were men whom Beovich had ordained.

“He was grief stricken when any of his priests decided to leave the priestly ministry”, Gleeson recalled.<sup>174</sup> Beovich also thought he knew the main reasons why they left, and his judgment demonstrates the lack of empathy of which Parer complained. In his report to Rome in 1969, he claimed that each of the four “defections” in Adelaide had been due “to lapses in the spiritual life and the influence of women”.<sup>175</sup> He had no sympathy for eminent English theologian Charles Davis, who announced his decision to leave the Church as well as the priesthood in 1966—although he said Mass for him. Davis’s sudden departure received extensive press coverage around the world, with Davis, one of the theological advisers at Vatican II, openly discussing how he had come to doubt Church teaching. “There is a woman in the case”, was Beovich’s cynical diary comment: “As the old parish priest is reputed to have asked when a brother priest said he was having doubts about the doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist, ‘What is her name?’”<sup>176</sup> In conversation with the Sister Provincial at Calvary Hospital in 1969, Beovich remarked “that priestly and religious defections, always in evidence from apostolic days but more apparent now through press publicity, come through lack of prayer and sound interior life. When this protection is missing, then pride, vanity, and/or sensuality take charge. There are few exceptions.”<sup>177</sup> He was horrified to discover in March 1970 that one of his priests was involved in a long-term relationship with a woman: “I told him to break the friendship, to improve and foster his spiritual life, and to see me each month. This he promised to do.”<sup>178</sup> A few days after this interview, tired and dispirited over the affair, Beovich asked Gleeson to take his place at the Easter Vigil.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Gleeson, “The Church in Adelaide During My Years as a Priest and Bishop”, p. 301.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>175</sup> “Report on the Archdiocese of Adelaide in South Australia, 1969”, p. 4.

<sup>176</sup> Diary, 23 December 1966. Davis publicly announced that he would leave the Roman Catholic Church on 21 December 1966. He married in February 1967 and wrote a frank account of his disillusionment with the Church which was published in November that year. See Charles Davis, *A Question of Conscience* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1967).

<sup>177</sup> Diary, 27 July 1969.

<sup>178</sup> Diary, 22 March 1970.

<sup>179</sup> Diary, 27 March 1970.

Beovich's lack of sympathy was exacerbated by his own exalted understanding of the priesthood. "We priests consider God's greatest gift to us was when He called us to be His ministers", he proclaimed in 1970 at the silver jubilee of Gleeson's ordination,<sup>180</sup> and for him that was undoubtedly the case. He told Alan Commins, rector of St Francis Xavier Seminary from 1964 to 1975, that once he had decided to become a priest, he had never had the slightest doubt about his vocation. At the time Commins found this difficult to believe, but looking back he thought it was probably true: "He was that sort of man. He had made up his mind and that was it."<sup>181</sup> Commitment, loyalty and obedience to ecclesiastical superiors were deeply ingrained in his psyche.

On the whole, departures from the priesthood were not a significant problem in the Adelaide archdiocese until after Beovich retired in 1971. While he had to deal with only four "defections" in the 1960s, his episcopal colleagues in New South Wales and Victoria lost many times that number in 1968 and early 1969.<sup>182</sup> Even allowing for the much larger number of priests interstate, Adelaide seems to have escaped lightly. Part of the explanation for this must lie in the way Beovich encouraged the implementation of conciliar reforms. Adelaide priests who were ordained in the late 1960s tend to remember this as an exciting time of conciliar renewal, not a time of crisis and confusion.<sup>183</sup> Beovich was also able to handle the *Humanae Vitae* controversy in a way which did not alienate his younger, more progressive priests. The same, as will be seen shortly, was true of his response to the Vietnam War.

Moreover, despite the concern of the sub-committee in 1969 that young assistant priests could exercise little authority in parishes, nearly all of those ordained in the 1950s were either in charge of parishes by 1971 or engaged in special works. Even if he struggled to relate to them on a personal level, Beovich was good at discerning the abilities of his younger priests and giving them significant positions of responsibility. Wilkinson was only 26 years old when Beovich appointed him editor of the *Southern Cross*.

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<sup>180</sup> *Southern Cross*, 31 July 1970, p. 1.

<sup>181</sup> Alan Commins CM, interview by author, 20 January 1998.

<sup>182</sup> As previously noted, in May 1969 Michael Parer calculated that "at least" 65 men had left, 60 of them from Victoria and New South Wales. See his article, "Priests Who Leave", *Bulletin*, 17 May 1969, pp. 28-30; 24 May 1969, pp. 37-38.

<sup>183</sup> Roy Richardson, interview by author, 9 December 2004; Denis Edwards, interview by author, 10 December 2004. Both men were ordained in 1966.

Mulvilhill became director of Catholic Education at 29, and Terry Holland director of the Catholic Welfare Bureau at 33. Gleeson, Beovich's choice as auxiliary bishop, was only 36 when consecrated in 1957. At the other end of the age scale, Beovich insisted that elderly priests who were no longer capable of active ministry should retire and make way for younger men. Only 4 of the 54 diocesan parish priests were over 70 years old in 1971. There were 27 under 50, and 14 of these were under 40. There was, therefore, no large "proletariat" of discontented and disempowered young and middle-aged priests in Adelaide as there seems to have been in some other dioceses. This was particularly true of the large Sydney archdiocese where it was not uncommon for priests to celebrate their silver jubilees of ordination still as lowly curates.<sup>184</sup>

### **The Seminary**

The unrest which swept secular tertiary institutions in the late 1960s also affected some Catholic seminaries, especially those run by elderly rectors who found it difficult to adapt to the waves of change which emanated from the Second Vatican Council. Tension was evident at St Patrick's College, Manly, where former students complained to a reporter from the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1967 that the college "suffocated creative and imaginative work and personal fulfillment".<sup>185</sup> Not even Beovich's beloved *alma mater*, the Urban College of Propaganda Fide in Rome, escaped. There were forty-three Australian students there in 1969, including two from Adelaide, and they led a revolt against excessive discipline. Beovich heard an account of the turmoil the following year when he was visited by the new rector. The students from Australia and New Zealand had formed an Australasian Society and complained about such matters as lack of communication and the fact that the elderly rector and some of the lecturers were not

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<sup>184</sup> Roy Richardson, 9 December 2004; Robert Egar, 15 December 2004. In his thesis "Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy as Archbishop of Sydney", Luttrell does not give any statistics, but he concludes that discontent amongst younger and middle-aged priests was a significant problem in the Sydney archdiocese (see pp. 259-71). Gilroy did attempt to remedy this situation by asking some of the older priests to resign in 1969, but he did not persevere when they refused to do so. Michael Hogan is critical of his "meek acceptance of their refusals" in "An Assessment and Criticism of the Parish Structure of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney" (Research Essay, University of Sydney, 1969), pp. 6, 9, cited by Luttrell, p. 266. The *Official Year Book of the Catholic Church* (Sydney: EJ Dwyer, 1971) reports that there were 434 diocesan priests in Sydney, 340 religious order priests, and 209 parishes.

<sup>185</sup> Campion, *Australian Catholics*, p. 226; See also K.J. Walsh's *Yesterday's Seminary: A History of St Patrick's, Manly* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1998), chapter 10.

sufficiently “stimulating” or “up to date”. Imitating student “demos” in secular universities, some even wanted to picket and carry slogans in protest, but the majority decided on a slightly less confrontational approach and sent a petition to Cardinal Agaginian. Beovich was dismayed to learn that even on retreats, traditionally a time of intense private prayer, they wanted “no silence but much discussion”. It did not surprise him that most of them, including the Adelaide students, had decided against ordination.<sup>186</sup>

It was a very different situation at St Francis Xavier Seminary in Adelaide after 40-year-old Alan Commins became rector in 1964. Excited about the Council, he was keen to introduce new ways of thinking and teaching and a more humane atmosphere. Instead of insisting that seminarians abide by strict rules and regulations, segregated from the outside world, he encouraged them to take more responsibility for their lives. The timetable became less rigid and they were given one free day a week “to go wherever they wanted to” instead of being forced to take part in compulsory group outings and recreational activities. They were also permitted to smoke cigarettes.<sup>187</sup> After careful thought, Beovich approved the changes. Commins felt that Beovich did not share his enthusiasm for seminary reform, but he realized when he talked to rectors interstate that he was fortunate to get even lukewarm acceptance of the changes.<sup>188</sup>

Under Beovich’s and Commins’s benign leadership, ordination rates at St Francis Xavier Seminary remained relatively high. Eighteen men were ordained for the archdiocese of Adelaide between 1965 and 1969, the same number as between 1955 and 1959. However, only 20 seminarians commenced formation for the priesthood for the archdiocese between 1965 and 1969, well down on the 52 who started between 1955 and 1959. From 1966 junior classes were not offered so seminarians began their studies at a more mature age. Twelve out of the 20 who commenced in the late 1960s persevered to ordination, making a retention rate of 60 per cent.<sup>189</sup> This was double that of the previous period, and better than Manly, Corpus Christi in Melbourne and Banyo in Brisbane.<sup>190</sup> In

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<sup>186</sup> Diary, 10 July 1970.

<sup>187</sup> *Southern Cross*, 2 September 1966, p. 2.

<sup>188</sup> Alan Commins CM, interview, 20 January 1998.

<sup>189</sup> For lists of ordinations and enrolments, see Margaret Press, *St Francis Xavier Seminary*, pp. 131-144.

<sup>190</sup> According to statistician Eric Hodgens, Corpus Christi had a retention rate in the 1960s of about 40 per cent and Manly only 30 per cent, while Banyo declined from about 60 to 40 per cent. Eric Hodgens, “Seminary Facts, Factors and Futures”, *Online Catholics* 28, 1 December 2004.



1964, with 81 seminarians crowded into the seminary (it served the Western Australian dioceses and the Vincentians as well as South Australia), Beovich confidently began planning its expansion so that it could accommodate up to 140 men.<sup>191</sup> A new four-story wing with 72 rooms was blessed and formally opened by the apostolic delegate at the seminary's silver jubilee celebrations in May 1967. Although it cost over \$600,000, thanks to careful financial management and the generosity of donors, Beovich was able to announce at the opening ceremony that a debt of only \$20,000 remained to be paid.<sup>192</sup> As Beovich had always taken particular interest in the seminary, the expansion was hailed as "a great personal triumph" for him.<sup>193</sup> Ironically, 1967 was the year numbers reached a peak (88 seminarians) and from then on began to decline.<sup>194</sup>

### **Schools and Religious Education**

For Beovich there was also a worrying underside to positive developments in the Catholic education system although, as with seminary numbers, this did not become fully apparent until after his retirement. He rejoiced as the long battle for "state aid" was gradually won in the 1960s. "To think that I would live to see the day!" he wrote in his diary when it was announced that 24 million dollars had been allocated to private schools in the Commonwealth budget in 1969.<sup>195</sup> He was also pleased that his director of education, Edward Mulvilhill, played an important role in both coordinating the Catholic system and building good relationships with the government and other independent schools. It was the kind of cooperation which Beovich relished and had pioneered in Melbourne in the 1930s. In 1966 Mulvilhill was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship to study overseas, and in 1967 he was named in the Queen's Birthday Honours list as a member of the Order of the British Empire.<sup>196</sup> He later served on important federal and state government committees charged with distributing aid to independent schools. Gratifying though these developments were to Beovich, they came at a time when over

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<sup>191</sup> Diary, 18 March 1964; 10 April 1964; 25 May 1964; 26 May 1964; 12 June 1964; 16 July 1964; 8 March 1965; 6 June 1965.

<sup>192</sup> Diary, 14 May 1967.

<sup>193</sup> *Southern Cross*, 19 May 1967, p. 2.

<sup>194</sup> Protestant churches also faced a decline in recruitment. See Hilliard, "Religious Crisis", p. 222.

<sup>195</sup> Diary, 13 August 1969.

<sup>196</sup> *Southern Cross*, 16 June 1967, p. 1.

half of the Catholic children in his archdiocese were enrolled in state schools, and questions were being asked about the worth of the separate Catholic system.<sup>197</sup> In Melbourne in 1970, Archbishop Knox dismissed the director of the Catholic Education Office, Father Patrick Crudden, after he suggested that greater effort should be put into religious education in government schools. His comments were interpreted as implying that the Catholic system should be wound down.<sup>198</sup> At a meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council in Adelaide in 1968, Beovich “sensed a current of doubt as to the value of Catholic schools on the part of a few, possibly Davis, Byrne, Shinnick”. Fortunately, he concluded, they were very much in a minority.<sup>199</sup>

On the other hand, unlike some bishops who still regarded it as sinful for Catholic parents to send their children to a non-Catholic school, Beovich accepted the inevitability of this development.<sup>200</sup> He thought that one of his greatest achievements as a bishop was the “right of entry” scheme which he had negotiated in 1940, allowing each denomination to give religious instruction to its children in state schools.<sup>201</sup> As the number of Catholic children in state schools grew, he continued to encourage the “motor missions” and training programs for lay catechists which made Catholic involvement in this field possible. In 1967 he approved the establishment of a new department in the Catholic Education Office for religious education in state schools. It was run by Father Barrymore Hynes, who was also the supervisor of the Confraternity for Christian Doctrine. By the end of 1968 there were 800 members of the confraternity, and Hynes was providing support to eleven motor missions and training to lay catechists.<sup>202</sup> In December 1970 Beovich presented certificates to 150 graduating catechists at a rally in the cathedral and praised their “vital work”.<sup>203</sup> That month it was announced that a new centre for the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine would open in Goodwood, with two additional full-time employees to train the many more catechists who would be needed for state schools in

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<sup>197</sup> In his 1969 report to Rome, Beovich acknowledged that there were 22,628 Catholic children in Catholic schools (a slight rise from 20,931 in 1959) and 28,673 Catholic children in state schools (up from 11,749 in 1959).

<sup>198</sup> For Crudden, see Campion, *Rockchoppers*, pp. 176-178; Idem, *Australian Catholics*, p. 222.

<sup>199</sup> Diary, 30 June 1968.

<sup>200</sup> In Auckland, James Liston still tried to enforce a ban on Catholic parents' sending their children to state schools in the sixties. See Reid, “Churchman”, p. 365.

<sup>201</sup> Diary, 1 November 1960.

<sup>202</sup> *Southern Cross*, 10 January 1969, p. 5.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 December 1970, p. 3.

the 1970s.<sup>204</sup> However, the provision of religious instruction had become too great a burden for other denominations. The Methodist Church formally withdrew in 1968, followed by the Anglican Church in 1972, forcing a reappraisal of the “right of entry” scheme. The Methodist Conference asked that it be replaced by a non-denominational course on religious education, and under the Education Act of 1972 one was introduced, a study of religion in which the historic importance of Christianity in Australian culture was acknowledged, but the subject was treated in as neutral a way as possible.<sup>205</sup> Within a few years even that subject had all but disappeared, and so South Australian state schools became “more secular than ever before”.<sup>206</sup> Other strategies for religious education, predominantly parish-based, were developed in the archdiocese of Adelaide, but as they took place after Beovich’s retirement, they fall outside the scope of this thesis.

In 1970 Beovich was also disturbed about the quality of religious education in Catholic schools. The traditional question-and-answer catechism had gone out of fashion and the new trend was to a “life-centred” approach in which students were encouraged to find God in their own experiences of life. When the Australian Episcopal Conference reviewed the draft of “Come Alive”, a new text for senior grades in August 1970, Beovich spoke out against it:

The life centered approach . . . has some attractive aspects, but hardly any theology. Indeed in the hands of some teachers it could become a kind of humanism—the love of neighbour not based on the love of God—and become further ego centered . . . there could well be on the part of the students a general fog of moral or doctrinal confusion. Instead of bread they are given a stone . . .

What we want first and foremost is a clear plan of what is proposed for each senior year. We haven’t seen that yet . . . Prayer, sacraments, Mass and Scripture should have a place . . .<sup>207</sup>

He was annoyed to discover in November that the draft had gone to print.<sup>208</sup> Another concerned bishop, Bernard Stewart of Sandhurst, reacted by issuing his own catechism in 1970, titled *The Catholic Religion: With Peter and Under Peter*. At their graduation ceremony in the cathedral in December, Beovich promised to send each lay catechist a

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<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 December 1970, p. 3.

<sup>205</sup> Hunt, *This Side of Heaven: A History of Methodism in South Australia*, pp. 390-1.

<sup>206</sup> Hilliard, *Godliness and Good Order: A History of the Anglican Church in South Australia*, p. 153.

<sup>207</sup> Notes inserted in his diary, 20 August 1970; Australian Episcopal Conference, Minutes, 17-21 August 1970.

<sup>208</sup> Diary, 28 November 1970.

copy of *The Catholic Religion*, and a few weeks later he arranged for one thousand to be purchased and distributed.<sup>209</sup> On 17 March 1971, he addressed a large group of Catholic school students at St Francis Xavier Cathedral, and was conscious that it might be his final opportunity to speak to them. He emphasized the “essential truths” which he had taught since his earliest days as a priest in Melbourne:

That God exists; that there is an eternal life; that Christ is God; that he is really present in his Eucharist; that there are mortal sins that separate a man from God, even for eternity if he dies without repentance and forgiveness.

That we cannot love God without loving our neighbour, for that would be a lie; that we shall be judged on what we have done for others who hunger and thirst; that we are destined to help others in spiritual matters; that there can be no love that does not first seek justice; that God wants to save all men of goodwill. We need to constantly repeat and remember these truths, and to teach them to others . . .<sup>210</sup>

He had always tried to do this, and now he could do no more.

### **Moral Issues**

Problems opened up on another front in the late 1960s. The role of guardian of public morality, which most church leaders in the modest religious revival of the 1950s had assumed quite comfortably, became increasingly difficult to sustain in the 1960s as the trend toward a more liberal, secular society gained momentum and as divisions opened up within church communities. Under the charismatic Labor Premier Don Dunstan (1967-68 and 1970-79) and the moderate Liberal and Country League leader Steele Hall (1968-1970), South Australia gained a reputation as one of the most progressive states in Australia.<sup>211</sup> Beovich supported some easing of restrictions, including one of the first initiatives of the Dunstan government—legislation to extend the availability of sport and public entertainment on Sundays. Maintaining “Sunday observance” was still important to some of the Protestant denominations, but Beovich declared in his submission to the government that “civil law should regulate and restrict personal action only when such restriction is necessary in the interests of public welfare”. Provided that Christians were free to worship God on Sundays, he could see no harm in them afterwards taking part in

<sup>209</sup> *Southern Cross*, 18 December 1970, p. 1; Diary, 15 January 1971.

<sup>210</sup> He inserted the notes for the address in his diary.

<sup>211</sup> See Horne, *Time of Hope*, p. 163; Andrew Parkin and Allan Patience, ed. *The Dunstan Decade: Social Democracy at the State Level* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1981).

sport and recreation: “Sunday for the Christian need not be funereal”.<sup>212</sup> He was pleased that Dunstan had thought to consult the Heads of Churches about the matter, and in February 1968 jotted in his diary that Dunstan would be a good premier.<sup>213</sup>

An issue on which Beovich utterly refused to compromise was abortion. In December 1968 the attorney-general in the Hall government, Robin Millhouse, introduced a bill which was largely based on the British Abortion Act of 1967. This decriminalized induced abortion by medical practitioners when it was deemed necessary for the physical or mental health of a woman or any of her existing children, or when there was a substantial risk that a child would be born with serious abnormalities. This was the first time such legislation had been introduced in Australia, so for supporters and opponents there was much at stake. The former included members of the Humanist Society in South Australia who formed an Abortion Law Reform Association to lobby the government for liberalization.<sup>214</sup> Catholics were at the forefront of a campaign to achieve the opposite result. Members of the Newman Society at Adelaide University and the Christian Life Movement were particularly active. Throughout 1969 David Shinnick, as secretary of the Christian Life Movement, devoted much time and effort to organizing protest meetings in Catholic parishes, petitions to send to politicians, and so forth.<sup>215</sup> Des Corcoran, a member of parliament who was also a Catholic, became the leading opponent of the bill in the House of Assembly. The response from the major Protestant denominations in Adelaide was much more muted. While the Anglican bishop of Adelaide was personally opposed to the bill, the Anglican Synod made no public statement. A representative of the Lutheran Church expressed opposition to abortion but qualified this by acknowledging that it could be appropriate when a woman’s life was in danger. The leadership of the Congregational Union, the Presbyterian Church, the Church of Christ and the Methodist Church supported the legislation, only objecting to induced abortion on socio-economic grounds.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> *Southern Cross*, 13 October 1967; *Advertiser*, 6 October 1967, p. 1; 7 October 1967, p. 3.

<sup>213</sup> Diary, 18 February 1968.

<sup>214</sup> Jill Blewett, “The Abortion Law Reform Association of South Australia 1968-73” in Jan Mercer, ed. *The Other Half: Women in Australian Society* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1975), pp. 377-394.

<sup>215</sup> Many articles in the *Southern Cross* were devoted to the issue. See in particular, 16 January 1969, p. 1.

<sup>216</sup> Thérèse Nicholas, “Abortion Law Reform in South Australia” (BA Hons. thesis, Flinders University, 1970), pp. 85-6; Hunt, *This Side of Heaven*, p. 398.

Between December 1968 and February 1969 the bill was referred to a parliamentary select committee of enquiry which considered seven written submissions and heard from thirty-three witnesses. The strongest attack on the legislation came from Beovich in a written submission:

Every human being, even a child in the mother's womb, has a right to life directly from God and not from the parents or from any human society or authority . . . I would say that the proposed Bill, in extending the grounds for abortion, will not be for the common good of South Australians . . . Instead of liberalizing abortion, steps should be taken to provide mothers in distress with the medical, social and psychiatric care they need. There should be a more humane understanding of unwed mothers and their children and we should provide them with real help. In general more adequate social and family policies should be planned and developed with greater generosity by legislators.<sup>217</sup>

Beovich did not address the committee in person but he appointed three people to speak on behalf of the Catholic Church. He wisely chose suitably qualified lay Catholics rather than priests. Karl Texler was an obstetrician and gynaecologist and prominent member of the Newman Society, Margaret Gibson a social worker, and David Haese a barrister and solicitor. The committee's report noted that they did not take such an "extreme position" as the archbishop. Texler acknowledged that "I would be against any provision to ban abortion utterly from our society, even though I personally consider it wrong". Haese said that he was not opposed to putting the common law on abortion into statutory form, and Gibson avoided answering the question: "Do you think the position might ever arise where abortion was the only solution?"<sup>218</sup> In its report which was tabled in parliament on 18 February 1969, the committee recommend to the House of Assembly that the bill be passed.

After much more debate, and some minor amendments, the bill successfully passed through both the Legislative Council and House of Assembly on 4 December 1969. On 14 November 1969, Premier Hall, who had just voted in favour of the legislation in the House of Assembly, attended a speech night at St Michael's College, Henley Beech. He had to sit through a stinging speech in which Beovich attacked deliberate abortion as "an

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<sup>217</sup> "Report of the Select Committee, 18 February 1969", cited in John Fleming and Daniel Overduin, *Wake Up Lucky County! A Reflection on Social Issues During the Last Decade*, rev. ed. (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1982), p. 37.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

unspeakable crime” which should be condemned in all circumstances.<sup>219</sup> At the opening of the new church at Goodwood the following month Beovich lashed out again: “Do not be surprised if, after their initial success, the same so-called ‘humanists’ who couldn’t care less about God, start suggesting as the next step that the killing off of the aged and unfit would be for the common good”.<sup>220</sup> Conceding that the battle had been lost, he called on Catholics to observe 28 December, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, as a special day of prayer for children who died as a result of abortion.<sup>221</sup> This became an annual event, an opportunity to protest at the escalation in the number of abortions in the wake of the new legislation.<sup>222</sup> On the front page of the *Sunday Mail* on 26 December 1970 Beovich was quoted again as condemning “an unspeakable crime . . . a grievous sin”.

While the vigorous anti-abortion campaign waged by Beovich and other members of the Catholic community clearly failed in its main aim, it may have had some impact. There is evidence in opinion polls that Catholic attitudes in Australia hardened between June 1968 and February 1969, and Catholics were certainly much more likely to oppose liberalization than Protestants, especially those Catholics who were regular church-goers.<sup>223</sup> However, the figures would not have given Beovich much comfort. In February 1969 a Gallop poll indicated that just over a third of Catholics (37.5 per cent) thought that abortion should not be legal under any circumstances. This had risen from 23 per cent in June 1968, a gratifying trend. In comparison, only about 27 per cent of Methodists, 13.7 per cent of Baptists, 11.3 per cent of Presbyterians and 8.6 per cent of Anglicans thought likewise. On the other hand, the February poll implies that almost two thirds of Catholics were prepared to condone abortion in some cases, which is consistent with a survey in the United States in 1974 which indicated that 72 per cent of Catholics believed that abortion was acceptable if the unborn child was known to have serious physical or mental abnormalities.<sup>224</sup> As with birth control, this suggests that by the 1970s Catholics were likely to make decisions on such matters according to their own consciences rather than

<sup>219</sup> *Southern Cross*, 21 November 1969, p. 1; *Advertiser*, 15 November 1969.

<sup>220</sup> *Southern Cross*, 19 December 1969, p. 1. Beovich inserted a copy of his speech in his diary.

<sup>221</sup> Circular to priests, 18 December 1970.

<sup>222</sup> For statistics, see Fleming and Overduin, *Wake Up Lucky County!* pp. 54-62.

<sup>223</sup> A 1968 study concluded that only a third of those Catholics who considered themselves strong church-goers favoured some liberalization of abortion law, while 50 per cent of those who considered themselves moderate church-goers were in favour and 79 per cent of those who never went to church wanted change. See P.R. Wilson & D. Chappell, “Australian Attitudes Towards Abortion, Prostitution and Homosexuality”, *Australian Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1968): 10.

<sup>224</sup> Greeley, *Catholic Revolution*, p. 39

official church teaching. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the abortion debate in 1969 is that, while there were passionate responses from both ends of the spectrum, the issue did not seem to arouse widespread community interest.<sup>225</sup>

### **The Vietnam War**

Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, although modest in comparison with the commitment of the United States, was a much more controversial issue than abortion.<sup>226</sup> This was largely due to the introduction of selective military conscription in November 1964. When men turned twenty they had to register for conscription, and if their birth dates were drawn out of a lottery barrel, and they passed medical and psychological examinations, they were required to perform "national service", including duty overseas. The opposition leader in the federal parliament was Beovich's friend from schooldays, Arthur Calwell. A veteran of the bitter anti-conscription campaigns of the First World War, he strongly opposed the National Service Act. In 1964 Calwell could also see little benefit in Australia "blundering" into a civil war in South East Asia which could only result in "unending and futile bloodshed".<sup>227</sup> Despite the lack of bipartisan support, Prime Minister Menzies went ahead and in April 1965 announced the deployment of a battalion to South Vietnam.

In sending troops to Vietnam, Menzies ignored an appeal in March 1965 from twelve Anglican bishops who urged the government to work towards a peaceful settlement.<sup>228</sup> The Australian Catholic bishops took no such coordinated action and did not play a leading role in helping Australians analyze the morality of the conflict. Instead, according to Henry Albinski, they "lapsed into almost total silence on Vietnam".<sup>229</sup> Reasons for this are not hard to find. The Second World War had revealed Australia's vulnerability to

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<sup>225</sup> Nicholas, "Abortion Law Reform", p. 105.

<sup>226</sup> About 50,000 Australian military personnel served in Vietnam compared to 2.5 million from the United States. About 57,000 Americans died, 519 Australians. Figures cited by Carl Bridge in Peter Lowe, ed. *The Vietnam War* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1988), p. 188.

<sup>227</sup> *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, 13 August 1964. Cited in Colm Kiernan, *Calwell: A Personal and Political Biography*, p. 246.

<sup>228</sup> David Hilliard, "Pluralism and New Alignments in Society and Church 1967 to the Present", in Bruce Kaye, gen. ed., *Anglicanism in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), p. 128.

<sup>229</sup> Henry Albinski, *Politics and Foreign Policy in Australia: The Impact of Vietnam and Conscription* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1970), p. 128.



attack from the north, and the Cold War had heightened fear of communism. With Vietnam split between a communist north and a pro-western south, it was clear where sympathies would lie. This was true of the community generally. The war was not initially unpopular. A Morgan Gallup Poll in July 1965 indicated that 59 per cent of Australians supported Australian involvement, while 27 per cent were opposed.<sup>230</sup>

In fact, not all the Catholic bishops were silent. The strong element of anti-communism within the Catholic Church in Australia, and the presence of a significant Catholic minority in Vietnam, encouraged a “hawkish” response. Even Guilford Young, widely regarded as the leading “moderate” in the Australian hierarchy, issued a statement in June 1965 in which he claimed there was “a moral right to resist [the North Vietnamese]—indeed a duty”.<sup>231</sup> Arthur Fox, auxiliary bishop of Melbourne, proclaimed in August 1966: “I have said before and I repeat it now that the Government of Australia is protecting our own country by sending troops to fight in Vietnam; this is a morally correct action.”<sup>232</sup> James O’Collins of Ballarat and Bernard Stewart of Sandhurst made similar comments.<sup>233</sup> When the Melbourne diocesan paper, the *Advocate*, protested against conscription, Fox issued a public statement which chided the editor and supported the government.<sup>234</sup>

Young, Fox, O’Collins and Stewart were all associated with the National Civic Council, which strongly supported the war, but Gilroy, no friend of Santamaria, also backed the war effort. In response to the announcement that conscripts would go to Vietnam, Gilroy declared that “the Government must be presumed to have acted conscientiously in the fulfillment of this obligation [of safeguarding Australia]. The common good demands that the legislative enactments of a representative Government should be respected.”<sup>235</sup> The Catholic peace group which was formed in Sydney, like its counterpart in Melbourne, received little support from the local bishops and encountered some open hostility.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Geoffrey Bolton, *Oxford History of Australia*, vol. 5, p. 167.

<sup>231</sup> Southerwood, *Wisdom of Guilford Young*, p. 303.

<sup>232</sup> *Advocate*, 4 August 1966, p. 7.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 June 1965, p. 3; 23 June 1966, p. 7.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 March 1966, 24 March 1966, p. 1.

<sup>235</sup> Luttrell, “Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy”, pp. 252-259.

<sup>236</sup> For accounts written by former priests who were involved in the peace movement, see Val Noone, *Disturbing the War: Melbourne Catholics and Vietnam* (Melbourne: Spectrum, 1993) and C.F. Bowers, “The

In his diary Beovich used adjectives like “ghastly” and “atrocious” when he mentioned the war in Vietnam.<sup>237</sup> He was more circumspect in public and confined himself to praying for peace. In October 1966 he energetically promoted Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Christi Matri Rosarii*. One of the least well-known of Paul’s encyclicals, it reflects the “tortured subtleties” which characterized his pontificate.<sup>238</sup> On one hand, the pope pleaded for an immediate end to hostilities (“We cry to them in God’s name to stop . . . A settlement should be reached now, even at the expense of some inconvenience or loss; for it may have to be made later in the train of bitter slaughter and involve great loss”). On the other hand, Paul declared that peace “must rest on justice and the liberty of mankind, and take into account the rights of individuals and communities”.<sup>239</sup>

Santamaria objected to an editorial in the *Southern Cross* in which Robert Wilkinson noted the discrepancy between the pope’s call for a cease fire and the Allied policy of “reluctant but all-out fighting in Vietnam”.<sup>240</sup> Santamaria highlighted the pope’s call for peace to rest on justice and liberty, and argued that a ceasefire would hand South Vietnam over to the Viet Cong. Whatever the merit of the respective arguments, diocesan editors were in a vulnerable position if they offended their episcopal employers. Beovich took no action against Wilkinson. He himself maintained Paul’s *via media*, stressing both the need for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a peace based on justice and liberty.<sup>241</sup>

Above all, in response to the pope’s encyclical Beovich intensified prayer for peace in his diocese during the month of October 1966.<sup>242</sup> He encouraged Catholics to pray the Rosary daily for the intention of peace, and he exhorted parishes and religious

Catholic Church in Sydney & the Vietnam Conflict”, *Australian Left Review* 71 (1979), 30-37. For the peace movement in general, see Malcolm Saunders, “Opposition to the Vietnam War in South Australia, 1965-73”, *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia* 10 (1982): 61-71, and “The Vietnam Moratorium Movement in Australia: 1969-73” (PhD thesis, Flinders University, 1977).

<sup>237</sup> Diary, 3 October 1966; 1 April 1968; 7 December 1968.

<sup>238</sup> Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope*, pp. 13, 459.

<sup>239</sup> The encyclical was printed in the *Southern Cross*, 7 October 1966.

<sup>240</sup> The editorial was in the *Southern Cross*, 23 September 1966 (“Harm of Fighting Outweighs Risks of Peace”). It was summarized in the *Advocate*, 29 September 1966, p. 1 (“Pope Paul and Allies Differ?”). Santamaria responded on 6 October 1966, p. 22 (“Do Pope and Allies Differ? Priest-editor’s Interpretation of Encyclical Challenged”). See also *Advocate*, 13 October 1966, p. 22 (“Unilateral Cease-fire Advocated: Fr Wilkinson’s Reply to Mr Santamaria’s Article”); 20 October 1966, p. 22 (letter from B.A. Santamaria re “Fr Wilkinson’s Proposal”); 3 November 1966, p. 17 (letter from Wilkinson re “Cease-fire Proposal”).

<sup>241</sup> *Southern Cross*, 7 October 1966, p. 1 (“Archbishop Beovich Leads Prayer for Peace: ‘End War Before It Is Too Late’”).

<sup>242</sup> A circular letter from Beovich to priests and religious, dated 27 September 1966, outlined a special programme of prayer for October. It was reported in the *Southern Cross*, 30 September 1966, p. 1.

communities to organize prayer vigils. He presided at a special Mass for peace in the cathedral on 4 October 1966, the feast day of St Francis of Assisi; and he made peace the theme of the annual Eucharistic procession at the Passionist Monastery at Glen Osmond on 9 October and the Marian procession at the seminary on 30 October. It was estimated that about 10,000 took part in the latter event, making it “one of Adelaide’s biggest and most orderly peace marches”.<sup>243</sup>

Nevertheless, it was also in October 1966 that President Lyndon Johnson of the United States visited Australia, a public relations triumph for the Holt Coalition government. As the ALP pledged to withdraw troops from Vietnam, the November 1966 election was fought largely on the war issue, and the Coalition’s resounding victory was a vindication of its foreign policy. Although Beovich never publicly disclosed how he voted, his diary reveals that he was disturbed by the election result. He was also dismayed to learn that Cardinal Spellman of New York had visited troops in Vietnam at Christmas and prayed for victory:

In fact Spellman is calling for a holy war. To the soldiers he said, “You are fighting for God”. The Pope on the other hand sees the conflict as an impartial observer, and in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, he feels that a negotiated peace rather than military victory by either side is the way to end the war. The Pope is right (as Pope Benedict was right in 1917), but nationalism blinds people. It seems to have blinded the majority of Australians.<sup>244</sup>

When the Australian Bishops’ Conference met in April 1967 the bishops issued a statement which liberally quoted from the pope’s encyclical of the previous year.<sup>245</sup> For some opponents of the war it did not go far enough. In particular, while it called on all citizens to review the moral issues raised by the war, it gave little guidance on how this could be done.<sup>246</sup> The statement was, nevertheless, sufficiently different from the rhetoric of the hawkish bishops for Max Charlesworth to speculate in an article in the *Age* on the role Beovich may have had in its production, as “it is rumored, [he] has grave reservations both about conscription and the Vietnam War”.<sup>247</sup> Neither the minutes of the meeting nor

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<sup>243</sup> *Southern Cross*, 4 November 1966, p. 3.

<sup>244</sup> Diary, 29 December 1966.

<sup>245</sup> The statement was printed in the *Southern Cross*, 14 April 1967, p. 1.

<sup>246</sup> Noone, *Disturbing the War*, pp. 134-5.

<sup>247</sup> *Age*, 14 April 1967, p. 5.

Beovich's diary shed any light on this, but it is probable that he was involved as he was vice president of the episcopal conference and a member of its executive body.

No one should have been left in any doubt about Beovich's opposition to the war after the Marian procession later that year: "Will men never learn that nothing is solved in war, everything may gradually be solved in peace". This does not, however, mean that he supported the groups which sprang up to protest against the war. At the Marian procession he addressed the question: "In these dire circumstances, what can ordinary people do?" He answered with a typical emphasis on personal piety: "We must escalate our prayers to God and our penance for peace". Taking a swipe at strident elements in the anti-war movement, Beovich added: "It is better than most anti-war rallies and demonstrations which are often anything but the mark of a peace-loving people".<sup>248</sup> Beovich was doubtless influenced by televised images of rallies interstate which were sometimes marred by violence. In Adelaide, the Campaign for Peace in Vietnam (CPV) was formed in July 1967. Dominated by academics from the University of Adelaide and Flinders University, it was "possibly the most moderate and cautious of all the peace and anti-Vietnam war groups which made up the Australian peace movement".<sup>249</sup>

During the late 1960s opposition to the war gradually grew. By 1969 Morgan polls indicated that 40 per cent of Australians wanted the troops withdrawn. The following year it was about 50 per cent.<sup>250</sup> At their annual meeting in April 1969, the Australian Catholic bishops made a modest contribution to the conscription debate by issuing a statement which called on the government to develop an alternative to military service for conscientious objectors.<sup>251</sup> The government did not take up this suggestion. The bishops also formed a National Commission on Justice and Peace, and under the chairmanship of James Gleeson, this began to offer more outspoken critique of government policies. It expressed, for example, "growing concern" over the extension of the war into Cambodia in 1970.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> *Southern Cross*, 3 November 1967.

<sup>249</sup> Saunders, 'Opposition to the Vietnam War', p. 63.

<sup>250</sup> Horne, *Time of Hope*, p. 59. Albinski notes that Catholic opinions on the Vietnam War were almost identical to national responses. See *Politics and Foreign Policy in Australia*, p. 133.

<sup>251</sup> *Southern Cross*, 2 May 1969, pp. 1, 12.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 May 1970, p. 1.

In November 1969 the CPV joined the Vietnam Moratorium Campaign (VMC). The first campaign culminated on 8-9 May 1970 when rallies were held around Australia. About 50,000 people marched in Melbourne and 20,000 in Sydney on Friday, 8 May. In Adelaide about 1000 protesters, mainly university students, were harassed by a group of intoxicated soldiers on the evening of 8 May, but the major rally in Adelaide the following day passed peacefully. It attracted about 5000 demonstrators, including an ecumenical group known as Christians for Peace. Only a small number of anti-moratorium protesters chanted “Here come the Commies”.<sup>253</sup>

The Catholics who marched in Melbourne and Sydney on 8 May 1970 did so in spite of their bishops’ disapproval. In Melbourne Knox issued a statement which attacked the campaign, saying “it could well become a threat to public order”, while a spokesman for Gilroy in Sydney described it as “hardly worthy of Christian participation”. Both press statements also implied that it would be wrong to abandon the South Vietnamese.<sup>254</sup> Gilroy would not even countenance a prayer vigil linked to the moratorium because he believed the campaign to be “of communistic inspiration”.<sup>255</sup>

The annual Marian procession in Adelaide was scheduled to take place on 3 May 1970. Marshals wanted Beovich to make a similar statement to Knox and Gilroy to prevent the procession becoming associated with the moratorium. Beovich refused on the grounds that it would only inflame the situation further.<sup>256</sup> When visited by supporters of the VMC, he insisted that no “partisan or political activity” should take place at the Marian procession, but he offered to hold a special Mass for peace in the cathedral on the day of the rally on 9 May.<sup>257</sup> With the “letters to the editor” section of the *Southern Cross* indicating that Catholics were bitterly divided over Vietnam and the moratorium campaign, often along generational lines, this was an appropriate *via media*. It did not completely resolve the tension—university students handing out moratorium leaflets after the procession on 3 May were abused by some of the participants—but it stopped it escalating. Interstate, the Vietnam War coalesced with the papal encyclical on birth control, *Humanae*

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<sup>253</sup> *Advertiser*, 9 May 1970, p. 3; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 May 1970, p. 1.

<sup>254</sup> Saunders, “Vietnam Moratorium Movement”, pp. 89-92; Noone, *Disturbing the War*, p. 248; *Age*, 20 April 1970, p. 1; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 May 1970, p. 6.

<sup>255</sup> Gilroy to Michael Horsburgh, 28 April 1970, cited by Luttrell, “Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy”, p. 258.

<sup>256</sup> *Diary*, 1 May 1970.

<sup>257</sup> *Diary*, 30 April 1970.

*Vitae*, as the trigger which drove many men from the priesthood.<sup>258</sup> Beovich's benign response ensured that the archdiocese of Adelaide fared much better. No priest left over the issue. One woman wrote to the *Southern Cross*: "I was proud to be associated with the Christians for Peace group in the moratorium march. It was a heartwarming experience to be present at the Mass in the cathedral beforehand with about 200 eager and happy young people."<sup>259</sup>

### **Towards Retirement**

By mid-1970 the most important phase of the revolution inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council was over. Catholics in the archdiocese of Adelaide were becoming accustomed to the new way of celebrating the Eucharist. Some were still grieving for the Latin Mass, but most had accepted the changes and more received holy communion each week. The members of the first Senate of Priests and Diocesan Pastoral Council were nearing the end of their terms. While these experiments in the development of consultative structures had not been entirely successful, they had led to some positive outcomes, such as the salary and superannuation scheme for priests and the growth in "a broader diocesan perspective" among lay people.<sup>260</sup> The controversy over *Humanae Vitae* had died down, and as Australian troops were gradually withdrawn from Vietnam in the early 1970s, tension eased on that front too.

Returning from the final session of the Second Vatican Council in February 1966, Beovich promised to implement its reforms "with zeal and prudence". That is exactly what he did during the remainder of the decade. Unflinching in his commitment to the Council, he gave strong support to his coadjutor archbishop and a talented group of priests and lay people who found new and creative ways to promote conciliar teaching.

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<sup>258</sup> See Ian Moffitt and Graham Williams, "The Angry Young Men of the Church", *Australian*, 19 September 1967, p. 9. In an unpublished manuscript cited by Saunders ("Vietnam Moratorium Movement", p. 96), Williams wrote that "an estimated fifty priests and other clergy resigned or were forced out of the church because of their peace activities". One of the most publicized cases involved Dennis Corrigan of the Hobart diocese. When he refused to obey Archbishop Young's request that he resign as acting chairman of the Tasmanian Vietnam Moratorium Campaign, Young suspended him from priestly ministry. See Noone, *Disturbing the War*, pp. 272-3; Hilliard, "The Religious Crisis of the 1960s", p. 225.

<sup>259</sup> *Southern Cross*, 22 May 1970, p. 13.

<sup>260</sup> Shinnick, *Journey Into Justice*, p. 28.

Occasionally he applied the brakes, not to bring the reform process to a screeching halt but, as he saw it, to prevent it careering out of control. He was aware that not all Catholics could keep up with the pace of change, or approach it with the same degree of enthusiasm. He realized that there was a need for further education.

A story in David Shinnick's memoirs highlights this. It also illustrates Beovich's brisk approach to administration and ability to delegate while retaining ultimate control over diocesan policy. Shinnick remembers that he went to see Beovich in 1970. He had submitted a report to the archbishop which proposed that he take responsibility for a number of tasks in the diocese, such as furthering the development of parish pastoral councils. He was accompanied by James Gleeson:

After the preliminaries were dealt with, Archbishop Beovich went straight to the point. "This is an excellent report, David. You must all have put a lot of time and thought into it. Now, Archbishop Gleeson, I think we'll leave it aside for now. The big need for the future is adult religious education, don't you think?" I was aghast. Where did this come from? "Now, David, give it some thought, keep in touch with Archbishop Gleeson, and see what you can do about it." End of conversation. After we left the room, I said to Archbishop Gleeson, "What do you know about adult education?" "Not much", he said, "how much do you know?" "Even less", I replied. We both appreciated, though, Archbishop Beovich's shrewdness in discerning the needs of the diocese, especially in relation to the future.<sup>261</sup>

The result was the development of the Catholic Adult Education Centre with Shinnick as secretary and training officer. It was announced in the *Southern Cross* on 29 January 1971 that it would offer a range of topics and small group discussions on liturgy, theology, scripture and social justice matters. It was one of Beovich's last initiatives before he retired on 1 May 1971.

In as far as it is possible to make comparisons, the archdiocese of Adelaide seems to have emerged from the turbulent 1960s in a better state than most other Australian dioceses. The fact that it was a relatively small diocese helped. With half a million more Catholics, and over four times as many diocesan priests, Norman Gilroy had a much harder task than Beovich. However, in his more compact administration Beovich demonstrated great shrewdness in the way he utilized the abilities of his younger priests, persuaded older ones to retire, encouraged the formation of regional groups of priests, and allowed the

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<sup>261</sup> Shinnick, "Youthful Yearnings and Beyond", p. 338

rector to relax the regime at the seminary before discontent reached a crisis point. In his response to *Humanae Vitae*, Beovich was more sensitive to the pain the encyclical could cause Catholics than some of his episcopal colleagues interstate, and his reaction to the Vietnam War was much less simplistic and divisive. He took an extreme stand during the debate on abortion, and made inflammatory comments reminiscent of his passionate protests at the bombing of Rome in 1944, but he was usually more circumspect. He continued to cultivate in the 1960s good relations with the leaders of other Christian churches and the state's civic leaders. The Vatican Council did not revolutionize his thinking in this respect but confirmed the course on which he had been set since his arrival in Adelaide in 1940.

In 1970 Beovich could be proud of the fact that the number of Catholics in South Australia had risen steadily in the 1960s. The growth was not as rapid as in the heady days of 1950s, but as migrants continued to arrive from southern Europe, and refugees from south-east Asia, the Catholic Church fared much better than most Protestant denominations which either remained static or experienced a decline in membership.<sup>262</sup> In the 1971 census, 20 per cent of South Australians identified themselves as Catholic or Roman Catholic, a figure which was modest in comparison with the national average of 27 per cent, but well up on the 12 per cent of 1933.

There was a shadow side to Beovich's episcopal ministry in this period. It had been present since 1940 but became more noticeable in his latter years as he aged and became less visible to the Catholic community. An essentially shy man, he could appear aloof and remote. As the generation gap between himself and most of his priests widened, he was not able to be a father to them in any genuine sense of the word, and he could not be a friend. He willingly established the consultative structures recommended by the Vatican Council, but he found it difficult to listen patiently to different viewpoints, and almost impossible to comprehend dissent from Church teaching, especially papal teaching. It was a characteristic of his that once he had made up his mind, he would commit himself fully to a course of action or way of thinking. That trait, admirable as it was at times, had the negative consequence of making him unable to empathize with those who were not so strong-willed, who came to doubt their vocation or question Church teaching, or found the

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<sup>262</sup> See Hilliard, "Religion" in *South Australian Historical Statistics*, pp. 137-145.



hierarchical nature of the Church stifling and self-abnegation unfulfilling. In that respect, Beovich was out of step with the spirit of the times.

Keeping his eyes firmly on the pope as he sailed through turbulent seas, Beovich made it safely to shore on 1 May 1971 when he handed the government of the diocese to his loyal deputy, James Gleeson. It was a good time to retire. He had steered the diocese through the most dramatic period of change in the Catholic Church since the sixteenth century, and morale amongst the clergy and laity was still quite high. Fifty-year-old Gleeson abounded with energy and enthusiasm. Having worked closely with Beovich for twenty-five years, he was well-equipped to continue the initiatives which Beovich had begun as well as face the challenges of the 1970s. Leaving them to Gleeson's biographer, the final chapter will consider the last phase of Beovich's life, when he took up the new role of emeritus archbishop.

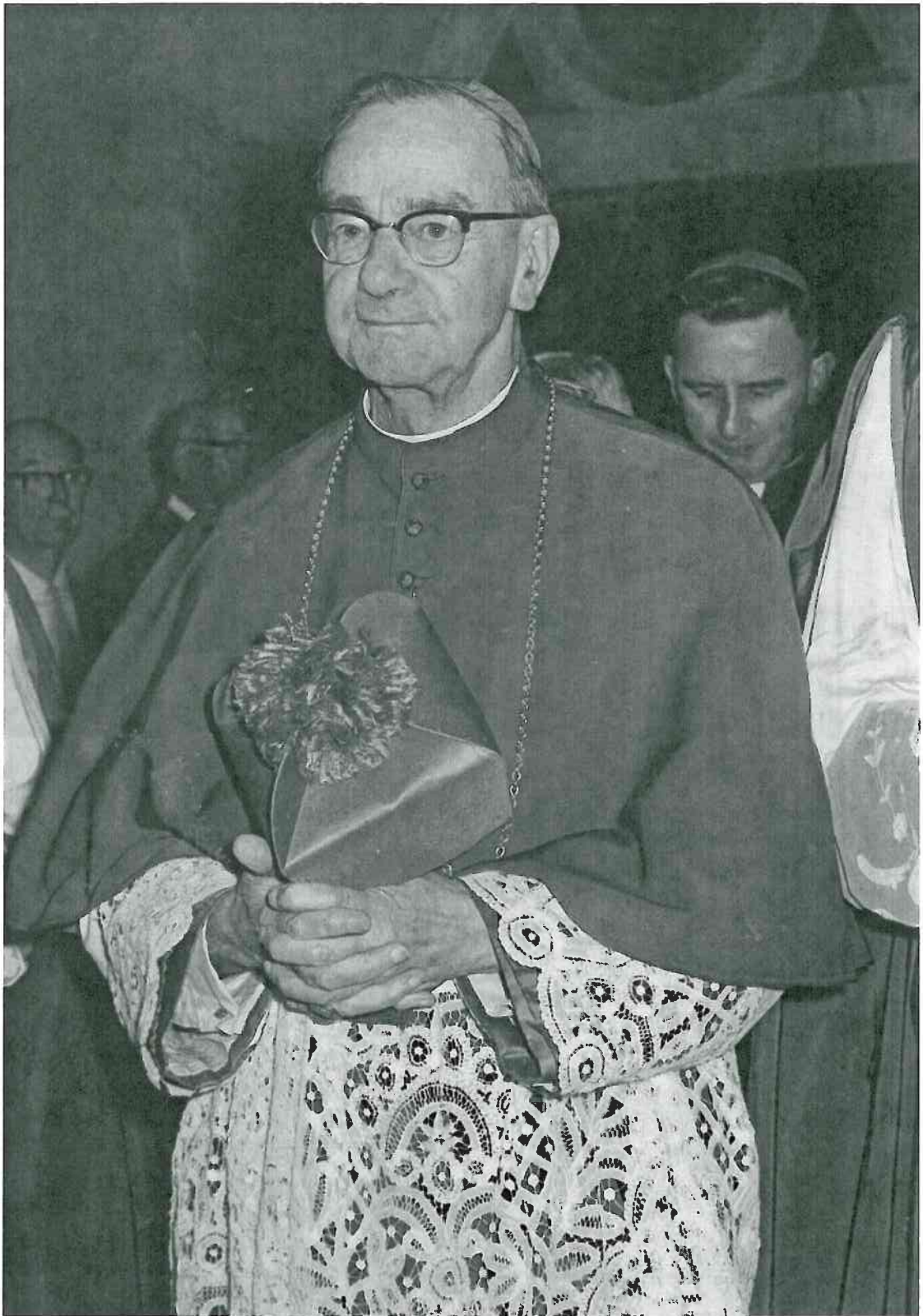


Figure 11.1 Home from the Second Vatican Council. Beovich photographed leaving St Francis Xavier Cathedral after the liturgical reception on 6 February 1966

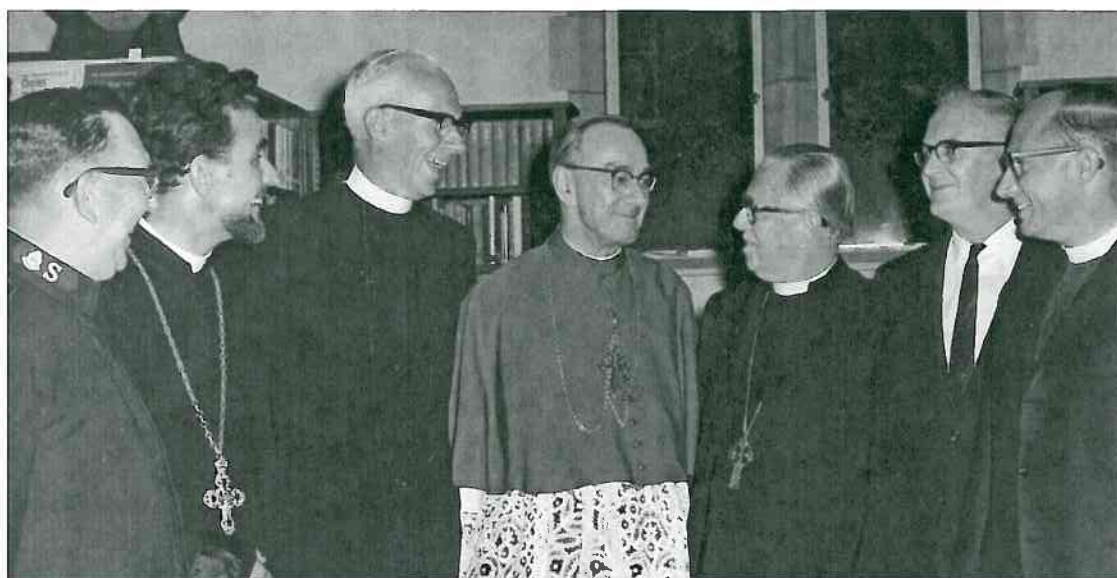


Figure 11.2 After the liturgical reception on 6 February 1966. Beovich with leaders and representatives of other Christian churches. Left to right: Lieutenant-Colonel R. Smith (Salvation Army), Very Rev. K. Psalios (Greek Orthodox), Rev. M. Wilmshurst (Methodist), Beovich, Right Rev. T. Reed (Anglican), Mr I. Shivell (Churches of Christ), Rev. G. Pope (Congregational Union).

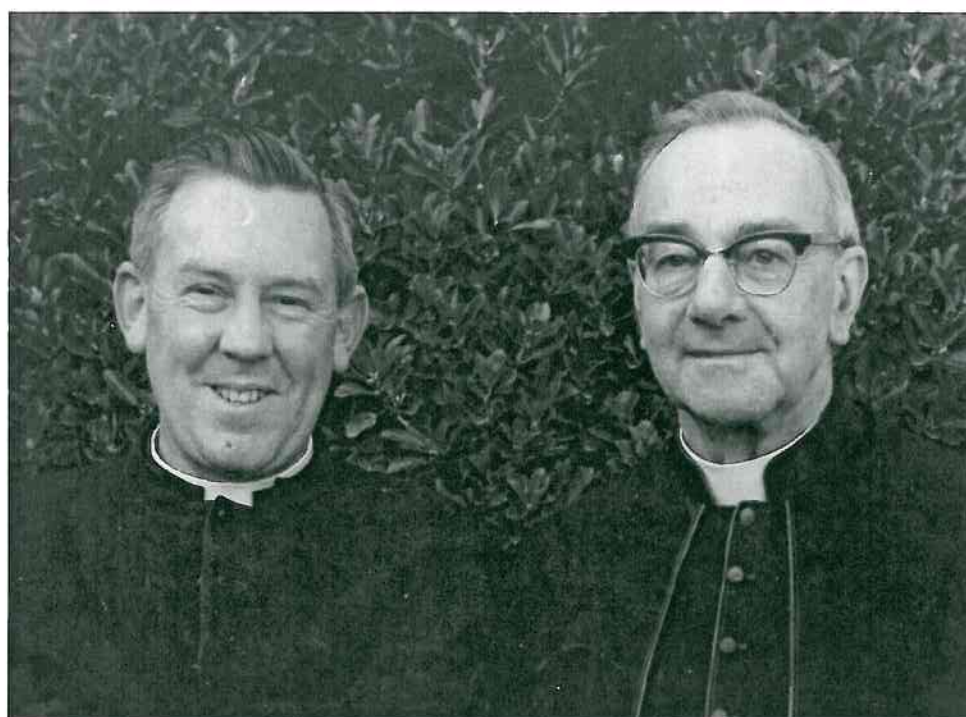


Figure 11.3 With Alan Commins CM, rector of St Francis Xavier Seminary, in 1969



Figure 11.4 With Premier Don Dunstan at the blessing of the Italian fishing fleet at Port Adelaide, 1967.

## 12. “The Golden Years”: Emeritus Archbishop

Blessed be God for arranging that the last quarter of his 40 years with us was spent in a relaxed, happy and fruitful retirement . . . A happiness that was not dimmed by a weaknesses that developed in his legs . . . [he] countered any sounds of sympathy with: “Well, at my age, you either go in the head or in the legs.”

Thomas Horgan, 1981

I am trying to do the will of God. If He calls me tonight, that’s OK.

Matthew Beovich, 1980

An Adelaide diocesan priest recalls that his housekeeper answered the telephone one day, about 1970: “It’s the archbishop”, said the voice at the other end. “Which one?” she asked, not knowing whether she was talking to Matthew Beovich or James Gleeson. “The real one!” was the terse reply from Beovich.<sup>1</sup> As coadjutor archbishop, Gleeson had right of succession, but only as much authority as Beovich was willing to delegate. While the older bishop appreciated having “a faithful and energetic assistant”,<sup>2</sup> he kept a firm hold on the reins of power in the 1960s. He was somewhat taken aback when the issue of a retirement age for bishops was mooted at the Second Vatican Council.<sup>3</sup> It was an ingrained tradition that bishops were the “fathers” of their dioceses, and that it was a job for life. Most died in office, only a very few resigning due to ill health (more precisely, in at least several cases in mid-twentieth century Australia, a lost battle with alcoholism). The issue of mandatory retirement was not resolved at the Council, but in 1966 Pope Paul VI issued instructions that bishops ought to tender their resignations at the age of seventy five. Accordingly, on 29 June 1970, Beovich wrote to the pope and the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith expressing his wish to hand over his diocese to Gleeson. His resignation was accepted, and on 1 May 1971 he presided at the installation of Gleeson as archbishop of Adelaide. This chapter will consider how Beovich then fulfilled, in the last decade of his life, the new role of emeritus archbishop.

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<sup>1</sup> Vincent Tiggeman, interview by author, 16 May 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Beovich to Pope Paul VI, 29 June 1970, ACAA

<sup>3</sup> Diary, 12 November 1963.

### The Transition

Once the pope had made it clear that bishops should resign at the age of seventy-five, there was no doubt that Beovich would loyally comply, but as he entered his seventy-fifth year in 1970 he was genuinely relieved to do so. "More than 30 years as archbishop have taken their toll, and the constantly increasing work in a rapidly growing diocese requires a more active mind and body", he wrote to the pope on 29 June 1970. "Thanks be to God they exist in my coadjutor archbishop James Gleeson."<sup>4</sup> In November he was told that his retirement had been approved, and that he could hand over the government of the diocese to Gleeson the following May. He was very pleased to learn that the pope had decided in 1970 to change the status of retired bishops.<sup>5</sup> Instead of being assigned to a titular diocese, usually an extinct one in the Middle East or North Africa, they could bear the official title of "former bishop" or emeritus bishop of the diocese they had served. Beovich was one of the first Catholic bishops to whom this new rule applied.

Before his resignation took effect, Beovich made one final *ad limina* visit to his beloved Rome. Accompanied by Vincent Tiggeman, who had been his secretary from 1955 to 1965, he left Adelaide on 19 September 1970. After a long sea journey, travelling via the Panama Canal, he reached Rome on 25 October. Apart from finalizing his retirement, there was little business to transact and Beovich had "a very happy time" wandering through the places which had meant so much to him in his student years, including the old Urban College in the Piazza di Spagna, the village of Castel Gandolfo where he had spent summer holidays, and the basilica of St John Lateran where he had been ordained.<sup>6</sup> He visited his fellow student and teacher, Cardinal Agagianian, and his old rector, Cardinal Giobbe: "We had a happy conversation and parted for the last time in this world".<sup>7</sup> His audience with the pope was on 12 November 1970. Although Paul VI spoke with animation, Beovich detected "glimpses of fatigue".<sup>8</sup> The bishop of Rome was only one year younger than he, but would not consider retirement himself.

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<sup>4</sup> A copy of the letter is attached to the report on the archdiocese which he submitted in July 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Diary, 12 November 1970.

<sup>6</sup> Diary, 23 November 1970.

<sup>7</sup> Diary, 18 November 1970

<sup>8</sup> Diary, 12 November 1970.

Beovich originally intended to return to Adelaide by sea in February 1971. These plans had to be changed when it was announced in May 1970 that Paul VI would make the first papal visit to Australia later that year. Beovich booked an airline ticket, and flying straight from Rome, reached Sydney on 26 November, just four days ahead of the pope. On 30 November Paul VI arrived at Mascot Airport in Sydney and was welcomed by Prime Minister John Gorton, the Governor-General, Paul Hasluck, a beaming Cardinal Gilroy, and various other dignitaries.<sup>9</sup> Despite all the turbulence of the previous years, the pope’s three-day visit was a great success. Cheering crowds greeted him wherever he went, and the media coverage was overwhelming positive. A survey in the *Australian* indicated that even if they did not accept his teaching on birth control, the majority of Catholics and a significant minority of adherents of other denominations admired him.<sup>10</sup> A highlight of the visit was Paul VI’s participation in an ecumenical prayer service in the Sydney Town Hall. Although it was marred by the refusal of the Anglican bishop of Sydney to attend, it showed how much relations between the Christian denominations had improved since the Vatican Council. At Gilroy’s request, Beovich greeted official guests on the steps of the Town Hall and introduced them to the pope.<sup>11</sup> In a private session with the Catholic bishops of Australia and the Pacific region on 1 December, Paul stressed the importance of unity in faith and love, the latter manifest in self-sacrifice and self-giving.<sup>12</sup> For Beovich, the visit was a fitting culmination of his years as a bishop and an affirmation of the policies he had pursued. Gilroy described it as the “greatest event that occurred in the whole of my episcopate”.<sup>13</sup> Beovich simply wrote in his diary on 1 December 1970: “A glorious day”.

Although Beovich did not publicly announce his retirement until 31 March 1971, back in Adelaide after the papal tour he began a final round of engagements. His last Chrism Mass in the Cathedral on 6 April 1971 was an opportunity to address all his priests:

I am indeed grateful for your loyal and generous cooperation over the years . . . My final words to you are the words of Pope Pius XI: “We must be outstanding for the holiness of our lives. Holiness is the most important quality of the Catholic priest;

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<sup>9</sup> For an account of the papal tour, see *Visit of Pope Paul VI to the Far East Australia and the Pacific: November 26 to December 5, 1970* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1971). A photographic record can be found in Michael Parer, *Four Papal Days* (Sydney: Alella Books, 1970).

<sup>10</sup> *Australian*, 24 November 1970, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Diary, 2 December 1970.

<sup>12</sup> *Visit of Pope Paul VI*, pp. 178-82.

<sup>13</sup> Gilroy, interview by Hazel De Berg, 19 January 1972.

without it, all his other gifts count for little; with it he can do marvellous work even though he has little else . . .”<sup>14</sup>

At a farewell Mass at the seminary on 23 April, Beovich repeated a statement which Paul VI had issued to seminarians in Rome the previous March. It warned about the danger of being influenced by “strange thoughts that have become a fashion”. On a more positive note, he encouraged the young men to “try to have an inner life. Listen to the Spirit. Have faith. Try to pray to the Lord.” After he had typed this out, Beovich took up a pen and added, “Not mechanically but heart to heart.”<sup>15</sup> In his last pastoral letter to the clergy, religious and laity of the diocese, he exhorted them to attend the Marian Procession on 2 May.<sup>16</sup> Thus the traditional piety which Beovich had absorbed during his childhood and formation for the priesthood in Rome stayed with him throughout his life, the rigid dogmatism softened by the sincerity and warmth of his personal faith.

In a relatively simple ceremony in St Francis Xavier Cathedral on Saturday, 1 May 1971, Beovich led Gleeson to the *cathedra*, the episcopal chair, and declared to the congregation: “Here is your archbishop”. “The whole function went without a hitch”, he reported in his diary. Official guests included most of the bishops from around Australia, the Premier of South Australia, Don Dunstan, the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, a representative of the governor, and the heads of other churches. A “great crowd” flocked to the seminary the following day for the Marian procession. Due to heavy rain, the actual procession was cancelled, but the crowd prayed the Rosary and, to Beovich’s delight, he was presented with the first installment of money for a bursary to educate a priest at the seminary. An appeal conducted in parishes throughout the diocese had raised over \$10,000.<sup>17</sup> It was a fitting retirement gift for someone whose personal needs were few but who had immense regard for the Catholic priesthood. On Monday, 3 May 1971, the priests of the diocese gathered at Alden Manor, Glenelg, for a dinner to mark both Beovich’s retirement and Gleeson’s installation. A fortnight earlier the Lord Mayor had hosted a luncheon in Beovich’s honour at the Town Hall.

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<sup>14</sup> *Southern Cross*, 16 April 1971, p. 1 and diary notes.

<sup>15</sup> The typescript is in the ACAA.

<sup>16</sup> *Southern Cross*, 30 April 1970, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Diary, 2 May; *Southern Cross*, 7 May 1971, p. 4.



Once the formalities in Adelaide were over, Beovich travelled to Ballarat to be with his old friend Jim O'Collins, as O'Collins handed over his diocese to Ronald Mulkearns on 21 May. The following month Norman Gilroy also retired, and Beovich went to Sydney for the installation of his successor, James Freeman, on 20 August.

## **Retirement**

In retirement Beovich continued to live at Ennis at Medindie. He retained the long, narrow, book-lined study on the western side of the old mansion, along with his tiny suite of rooms upstairs in the old servants' quarters: a bedroom, bathroom and sitting room. Three Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus from Malta lived in the convent in the grounds behind the house and, as well as pastoral work in the Maltese Catholic community in Adelaide, were responsible for cooking and cleaning at Ennis. James Gleeson chose to remain at Archbishop's House, West Terrace, but he arranged for a young priest to live at Ennis, usually the diocesan vocations director. The pretext for this was that there were more spare bedrooms at Medindie than West Terrace. In reality, it was to ensure there would be at least one other person in the house at night as Beovich aged and became increasingly frail.<sup>18</sup> He accepted his increasing weakness philosophically. "At my age you either go in the head or in the legs, and I've gone in the legs", was his frequent retort to questions about his health.<sup>19</sup> Sometimes in later years he added, "I'm afraid I can't say the same about Bishop O'Collins".<sup>20</sup> O'Collins continued to play golf until an advanced age, but his mind began to wander toward the end of his life.

Beovich's legs might not have worked as well as they once did, but he was determined to keep his brain active. In 1972 he embarked on a disciplined reading regime: a study of commentaries on the documents of the Second Vatican Council, interspersed with P.G. Wodehouse novels for relaxation.<sup>21</sup> Roy Richardson, the diocesan vocations

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<sup>18</sup> John Chambers, interview by the author, tape recording, 10 December 2004; Roy Richardson, interview by author, tape recording, 9 December 2004. Chambers lived at Ennis from 1971 to 1974; Richardson from 1975 to 1978.

<sup>19</sup> First related to the author in a letter from Daniel Conquest, 21 August 1997, and subsequently recalled by many people in conversation.

<sup>20</sup> Roy Richardson, interview, 9 December 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Diary, 13 March 1972.

director who lived at Ennis from 1975 to 1978, remembers Beovich dividing the day into periods, with set times for reading theology, general history and books about sport.<sup>22</sup> Carlton was his favourite team in the Victorian Football League, and he keenly supported the South Australian side in Sheffield Shield cricket matches, and the Australian team in international test matches. Sometimes he watched cricket or football on television, but as he admitted himself, he was not a good loser and tended to turn the set off if his team was not playing well.<sup>23</sup>

Initially Beovich's health was good. A newspaper reporter who interviewed him on his seventy-fifth birthday in 1971, just before his retirement, was impressed by "this slight, sprightly man who bubbles with good cheer".<sup>24</sup> On 3 March 1973, however, while he was getting dressed in his bathroom, Beovich fell heavily, breaking two ribs and hurting his back.<sup>25</sup> A few months later, on 8 July 1973, he felt a bit "uncomfortable" in the morning. He said Mass in his private chapel at Ennis as usual and tried to relax. On the midday news he heard that his old school friend, Arthur Calwell, had died.<sup>26</sup> The following day, as he was preparing a condolence telegram to send to Calwell's widow, Elizabeth, he experienced a second, more severe, coronary attack, and was taken by ambulance to Calvary Hospital.<sup>27</sup> For a few days he was seriously ill, but after being cared for by the Little Company of Mary, he returned to Ennis five weeks later "in great spirits and thrilled to be home".<sup>28</sup> He was very pleased in October when John Rice, his doctor for many years, condoned three pipes a day.<sup>29</sup> After a slow recovery, there were no more major health crises until his final illness.

Retirement did not mean an end to pastoral work. Beovich was a familiar figure at Calvary Hospital as he regularly visited patients, often on Sunday afternoons. Looking back at the end of 1972, he calculated that he had attended sixty-one functions in that year and given twenty-five prepared talks. Many of the functions were requiem Masses for

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<sup>22</sup> Richardson, interview, 9 December 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Beovich, interview by Garth Rawlins, *Sunday Mail*, 30 March 1980, p. 24. Thomas Horgan, interview by the author, 23 September 1997; John Chambers, interview, 10 December 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Mike Quirk, "Retiring Archbishop is Footy Fan", *News*, 1 April 1971, p. 49.

<sup>25</sup> Diary, 3 March 1973, 8 March 1973.

<sup>26</sup> Diary, 8 July 1973.

<sup>27</sup> Diary, 9 July 1973 (presumably written some time afterward); Beovich to Elizabeth Calwell, 19 October 1973.

<sup>28</sup> Gleeson to Vera Beovich, 16 August 1973

<sup>29</sup> Diary, 15 October 1973.

priests, religious and lay people he had known, and most of the talks were sermons.<sup>30</sup> In his diary in 1967, Beovich confided that with increasing age he felt “a bit of nervous tension before certain important appointments when I’m expected to speak, but this does not apply to liturgical functions or sermons”.<sup>31</sup> The sermon notes and transcripts which survive from his later years indicate that he usually gave short, simple exhortations on the importance of the priesthood and religious life, the reality of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, and the certainty of life beyond death.

Requiem Masses predominate in Beovich’s diary but there were happier functions, most notably the jubilee celebrations which he attended as various priests and religious commemorated significant milestones. In spite of a heavy cold, he travelled to Sydney in April 1972 to be with his sister Vera, as she and a group of seven other Sisters of St Joseph marked the fiftieth anniversary of their religious profession. In the chapel at Mount Street, North Sydney, near Mary MacKillop’s tomb, Beovich spoke of religious life as “a life of romance”:

True we also use the expression when our friends get married. In that case, however, the best that most of us really expect them to enjoy is a life-long comradeship. For romance is nourished on nothing less satisfying than perfection; and the perfections we human beings have aren’t enough to go round . . . The bridegroom who claims your soul is of such infinite perfection that a lifetime of close relationship can never exhaust its fullness . . .

Anniversaries of priestly ordination encouraged Beovich to address another favourite theme. “The gift of the priesthood was the greatest gift one could receive in this world”, he proclaimed at a diamond jubilee in 1975, because the priest had “the awe-inspiring power of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ”.<sup>32</sup> As he had been taught when he was a student at Propaganda, with such awesome power came the need for self-renunciation. At another jubilee in 1977, one to commemorate twenty-five years of priestly ministry, he stressed, “We priests, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, must strive for holiness, especially in humility, obedience and self-denial”.<sup>33</sup> As he no longer

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<sup>30</sup> Diary, 31 December 1972.

<sup>31</sup> Diary, 31 December 1967.

<sup>32</sup> *Southern Cross*, 4 July 1975, p. 2. The occasion was the sixtieth anniversary of Thomas Maloney’s ordination.

<sup>33</sup> Sermon at jubilee Mass for Robin Sutherland, 22 July 1977. Notes for the sermon were found in one of Beovich’s books in 2003 and passed on to the author.

had any authority over the diocesan clergy, he could address them as brother priests. No one could accuse him of not practising what he preached.

Maintaining contact with episcopal friends interstate, Beovich traveled to Bendigo in January 1972 for the twenty-fifth anniversary of Bernard Stewart’s consecration as bishop of Sandhurst,<sup>34</sup> and to Ballarat in December that year for the fiftieth anniversary of James O’Collins’s ordination to the priesthood. Beovich’s own golden jubilee was also approaching—he and O’Collins had been ordained in the same ceremony in Rome on 23 December 1922. He did not mention that in his homily at the thanksgiving Mass in the cathedral in Ballarat on 12 December. He kept the focus on O’Collins and, above all, on the “tremendous gift” of the priesthood: “It is God who calls a person to be priest—to minister to His people and build up the Body of Christ . . . How great is God’s love, by which both Himself and His Passion and Death are ever really present to us in the Mass and in the Tabernacle.”<sup>35</sup>

Beovich returned to Adelaide on 13 December, O’Collins accompanying him on the overnight train. On Friday evening, 15 December 1972, there was a special Mass in St Francis Xavier Cathedral, preceded by a dinner for clergy at Alden Manor, Glenelg. At Beovich’s insistence this was a joint celebration, commemorating not only his own anniversary of ordination, but also the golden jubilee of one of the diocesan priests.<sup>36</sup> The actual anniversary on 23 December passed like many other days. Beovich attended the requiem Mass for the father of a diocesan priest, and celebrated the Eucharist for the Sisters of St Joseph in their chapel at Kensington.<sup>37</sup> Three days later he concelebrated a Mass at Glenelg to mark the fiftieth wedding anniversary of long-time diocesan employee Darcy Woodards and his wife.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Light*, March 1972, p. 16.

<sup>35</sup> The typescript for his sermon is in the ACAA.

<sup>36</sup> The priest was Charles Thompson. Born in Melbourne in 1897, he had been ordained in 1922 after studying at St Patrick’s College, Manly. He was the administrator of the cathedral parish when Beovich arrived in Adelaide in 1940. *Southern Cross*, 24 May 1974, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Diary, 23 December 1972.

<sup>38</sup> Diary, 26 December 1972.

Occasionally, in Gleeson's absence, Beovich celebrated the sacrament of confirmation, handed out prizes at school speech nights, and presided at the annual dedication of infants to Mary in the Cathedral in May. After Philip Kennedy was consecrated as auxiliary bishop of Adelaide on 17 March 1973, there was less need for Beovich to deputize for Gleeson, and he was able to recede further into the background. He continued to attend special services in the cathedral, such as ordinations and the Easter liturgies, but he would sit discreetly at the side of the sanctuary and take no formal part in the ceremonies.

When he retired, Beovich resolved that he would not interfere in diocesan administration. There were times when this required a considerable exercise of will-power. He was pleased to report in his diary on 2 June 1973 that he had managed to remain silent when Gleeson had visited him and enthusiastically described a plan to erect a multi-story building alongside the cathedral.<sup>39</sup> He also detached himself from the national bishops' meetings. "I look from afar at the Bishops' Conference, sorry for the bishops in their problems but very, very glad to be away from them", Gilroy wrote to Beovich in September 1973. In his reply, Beovich agreed that "problems are not becoming fewer at the Bishops' Conference. From time to time as matters arise or don't arise, I have to say to myself, 'Shut up and make no comment'. So far thank God I have succeeded."<sup>40</sup>

Thomas Horgan remembered Beovich saying that one of the things he enjoyed most about retirement was the absence of protocol.<sup>41</sup> According to James Gleeson, the day after Beovich retired, 2 May 1971, the telephone rang in the Brighton presbytery. When William Collins, the parish priest, answered it, he heard: "Oh, Bill, it's Matt here." Collins thought someone was playing a joke on him. It sounded like the former archbishop's voice, but Beovich had never called priests by their first names.<sup>42</sup> In retirement he began to do so, at least in private conversation with senior priests like

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<sup>39</sup> The office tower appeared to be a good investment, but it would have completely overshadowed the cathedral. As it happened, the plan fell through and lawn and trees now grow on the site.

<sup>40</sup> Gilroy to Beovich, 11 September 1973; Beovich to Gilroy, 18 September 1973.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Horgan, interview, 23 September 1997.

<sup>42</sup> James Gleeson, interview, 8 October 1997. John Maguire writes of Hugh Ryan, bishop of Townsville from 1938 to 1967: "Throughout his episcopate, as if fearful that any level of familiarity might inhibit the exercise of his authority, the bishop never permitted himself to address his priests by their Christian names. Only after he retired did priests begin to experience the personal warmth which as a bishop he had rigorously controlled." *Prologue: The Catholic Church as Seen From Townsville*, p. 128.

Collins, who had arrived in Adelaide from Ireland in 1936, and Tom Horgan, the first priest whom Beovich ordained in 1941. He still addressed the younger priests who lived with him at Ennis in the 1970s as “Father”, and they called him, “Your Grace”.<sup>43</sup>

The only member of his staff whom Beovich had always called by his Christian name was Keith Koen, his chauffer from 1940.<sup>44</sup> From 1 May 1971 Koen officially worked for Gleeson, but continued to drive Beovich when needed (unlike Beovich, Gleeson could drive himself). When Koen retired in 1978, Gleeson allowed him to keep his last diocesan car, and once a week he took Beovich for an outing.<sup>45</sup> A favourite route was along the sea front, sometimes with a visit to the presbytery at Brighton or Glenelg. Beovich also occasionally joined the priests living at Archbishop’s House, West Terrace, for their midday meal. Robert Aitken, then administrator of the cathedral parish, testifies that these lunches were inclined to be more leisurely than they had been during Beovich’s days in charge, as he seemed to enjoy the opportunity to talk.<sup>46</sup>

Like many shy and introverted people, Beovich may have been torn between a desire for friendship and a need for solitude. A few priests, like Tom Horgan, called in to see him at Ennis, but Beovich had been so successful at keeping some distance between himself and his priests that most were loath to intrude on his privacy.<sup>47</sup> The house became a venue for meetings in the diocese, and Gleeson hosted dinner parties there, but on those occasions Beovich usually retreated to his private quarters, as he did after each evening meal with the vocations director.<sup>48</sup> Bill Byrne recalls being invited by Gleeson to a meal at Ennis in the 1970s, along with his wife and four children. The youngest child wandered out of the dining room, and another was sent to fetch him back. When, over time, all four children disappeared, the adults went in search and found them clustered around the elderly archbishop. They had innocently strayed into his private domain and been warmly welcomed.<sup>49</sup> A Polish cardinal who travelled to Australia in February 1973 for the International Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne would no doubt also have received

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<sup>43</sup> Roy Richardson, interview, 9 December 2004; John Chambers, interview, 10 December 2004.

<sup>44</sup> Keith Koen, interview, 9 April 1998.

<sup>45</sup> *Advertiser*, 30 October 1981 (“Traveling Partners Part”); Pauline Smitheram (Keith Koen’s daughter) in conversation with the author.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Aitken, interview, 1 November 2004.

<sup>47</sup> Robert Egar, interview, 15 December 2004.

<sup>48</sup> Roy Richardson, interview, 9 December 2004; John Chambers, interview, 10 December 2004.

<sup>49</sup> Bill Byrne, interview, 13 December 2004.

a sincere welcome when he stopped in Adelaide to visit the Polish Catholic community. Beovich, however, was on holiday in Ballarat at the time, and left Gleeson and diocesan priest Leon Czechowicz to entertain Karol Wojtyla. After Wojtyla was elected Pope John Paul II in 1978, Beovich went back to his 1973 diary and noted when the future pope had stayed at Ennis.

Beovich made Ennis available for meetings, functions and hospitality to visiting clerics because, in spite of his love of solitude, he regarded the house as diocesan property rather than his private home. In December 1970, when Jim O’Collins was contemplating his own retirement, he wrote to ask his friend what arrangements he had made. Beovich replied that he would continue to live in his quarters at Ennis, and that he planned to receive an income of about \$1000 a year from an investment of \$20,000.<sup>50</sup> He later noted on a copy of the letter that he had relinquished the income from the diocese at the end of 1972, “and the principal remained where it belonged in the Diocesan Works Fund”. From 1 October 1973 he received the old age pension of \$46 a fortnight, and from 1 July 1976 he paid \$1000 annually from the pension towards his board at Ennis: “Should end up penniless or centless. Deo Gratias”. He had never been materialistic or tempted to live as “a prince bishop”. According to the terms of his will, his estate, amounting to just over \$4000, went to his successor, James Gleeson. In a codicil added to the will in 1964, he left £500 to Keith Koen, but this was cancelled in 1977 when he presented Koen with \$1000 as “a modest token of gratitude and appreciation for your years of loyal and faithful service”.<sup>51</sup> There were no other bequests.

### **Remembering Friends**

By the time Beovich retired, three of his closest episcopal friends had died. Alf Gummer of Geraldton had been in poor health, but news of his death on 5 April 1962 still came as “a great shock”.<sup>52</sup> Beovich went to Geraldton and delivered the sermon at the requiem Mass. He took as his text Psalm 1, “Blessed is the man . . . whose delight is the law of the Lord”. In words which could equally have been applied to himself, he praised

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<sup>50</sup> O’Collins’s letter to Beovich, and a copy of Beovich’s reply, dated 24 December 1970, are in the ACAA.

<sup>51</sup> Beovich to Koen, 24 October 1977.

Gummer as a kind and encouraging leader, a firm and tenacious defender of the faith, and a prudent administrator.<sup>53</sup>

In June 1967, Pat Lyons spent a few days at Ennis. Beovich was concerned as his friend looked unwell, but Lyons refused to discuss his health.<sup>54</sup> He did not disclose that he was suffering from a terminal illness. He died from cancer on 13 August 1967. Preaching at the Month’s Mind for Lyons at Sale on 4 October 1967, Beovich admitted that the deceased bishop’s reticence “could sometimes baffle his friends and irritate others”.<sup>55</sup> He paid tribute to Lyons’s dedication to duty but could not extol him as a beloved leader of the diocese of Sale. Instead, he presented his austere approach to episcopal ministry as thoroughly normal:

The priest or bishop has few who mourn a personal loss. His life is given to the Church in almost an impersonal way. The bishop is the father of his diocese. He labours and toils, and lives and dies, and the grave closes over him. For a few days the hearts of all are filled with solemn grief; they gather around the lifeless body, and their prayers mingle with the tears of relatives and close friends. Then there is left only a name and a memory—and these quickly fade. This is a wholesome thought both for the proud and the humble. But, of course, death is not the end . . .

The chilling phrase, “His life is given to the Church in almost an impersonal way”, captured not only the reserve so characteristic of Patrick Lyons but Beovich’s own commitment to self-denial. Similarly, his point that memories of a bishop would soon fade reflected his own fierce modesty and somewhat cynical view of the transitory nature of human achievements. Robert Aitken remembers an incident at one of the annual Masses to mark the anniversary of the death of Archbishop Killian on 28 June 1939. As Beovich and Gleeson prepared to process into the cold, almost empty cathedral one 28 June, Aitken overheard Beovich say: “Jim, have a good look. We’ll soon be forgotten.”<sup>56</sup> He did not seem to be joking.

On 3 November 1967, a few months after Lyons died, Beovich lost another close friend: Justin Simonds. This time the sad news was not a shock. Suffering from a series of strokes, Simonds had spent the final year of his life at the Mercy Hospital in Melbourne.

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<sup>52</sup> Diary, 5 April 1962.

<sup>53</sup> The typescript of the sermon is in the ACAA.

<sup>54</sup> Diary, 23 June 1967.

<sup>55</sup> Typescript in ACAA.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Aitken, interview, 1 November 2004.



In 1966 and 1967 Beovich travelled to Melbourne as often as he could to spend time at his friend's bedside.<sup>57</sup> Preaching at the requiem Mass in St Patrick's Cathedral on 7 November, Beovich presented Simonds as an outstanding priest: “a man of prayer and interior life, strong in the faith, obedient to authority, and zealous in the care of souls”.<sup>58</sup> He acknowledged the obvious fact that Daniel Mannix's longevity had deprived Simonds of the opportunity to rule the archdiocese of Melbourne until 1963, by which time his own health had begun to decline. It was delicately done, with no direct criticism of Mannix:

He came to assist the venerable Archbishop Mannix who had not asked for a helper, yet gave his new assistant a cordial welcome. He treated him exactly as he himself had been treated when he was a coadjutor. This meant that Archbishop Simonds had the fullness of the priesthood but little of its responsibility; that is, he did not share in the government of the archdiocese. Humanly speaking there was something tragic in this, and I do not think it would bear repetition in these days following the Second General Council of the Vatican.

On a more positive note, Beovich praised the role Simonds had played in the wider Church: “speaking of his learning and knowledge, I would venture the opinion that he held first place among the bishops of Australia, and many of his contributions at their general meetings were of great value for the welfare and progress of the Church”. Episcopal collegiality was something which Beovich always valued, even if Mannix did not seem to rate it highly.

Beovich also retained an intense regard for the pope. When asked to submit a tribute to Norman Gilroy, who died at Lewisham Hospital in Sydney on 21 October 1977, Gilroy's similar loyalty sprang to his mind: “He esteemed the Holy Father. Indeed to St Peter's successor and to the Holy See he was always and utterly obedient.” Gilroy's exalted understanding of the priesthood was, for Beovich, a further indication of his holiness: “He cherished the gift of his priesthood. In the years when he was a cardinal he inscribed these words in the Visitors' Book of his Alma Mater: ‘The priesthood is the greatest honour that one can receive in this world’.” Overall, Beovich concluded:

I consider that his life was holy beyond the ordinary. It had an affinity, perhaps, with the child-like way of St Teresa of Lisieux; a simple but not an easy way in which by

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<sup>57</sup> In typical Beovich-style, he recorded his numerous visits and the worsening state of Simonds' health on the back of a travel itinerary. It is now in the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission. See Max Vodola, *Simonds: A Rewarding Life*, p. 95.

<sup>58</sup> The typescript is in the ACAA.

cooperating with divine grace, he consistently did the Will of God in faith, hope, love and humility.<sup>59</sup>

Beovich could have been writing about himself.

### **Requiem, 1981**

In due course, it was Beovich's turn to receive such accolades. He became steadily weaker in 1981 but he continued to live at Ennis and was able to say Mass daily in the chapel there. A blood clot developed in his leg and on 16 October he was taken to Calvary Hospital. Nurses reported hearing him mutter, again and again, "Lord, take me".<sup>60</sup> He died on 24 October 1981.

Twenty-two bishops from around Australia gathered in Adelaide for the requiem Mass on Thursday, 29 October 1981. The principal celebrant was Cardinal Sir James Freeman, archbishop of Sydney and president of the Australian Episcopal Conference. The most notable absentee was, ironically, the archbishop of Adelaide. Before Beovich died, James Gleeson had flown to Rome for meetings and a holiday in Europe. Both men had realised that it was possible that Beovich would not live to see Gleeson's return. With more concern for the workaholic Gleeson's health than his own, Beovich had insisted that he go, and not cut short his badly-needed holiday in the advent of his death. It was agreed that auxiliary bishop Philip Kennedy would be responsible for the funeral arrangements.<sup>61</sup>

In a press release issued on 24 October 1981, Kennedy declared: "I mourn the death of a simple and gracious man, a wise and humble leader whose only ambition was to spend himself and be spent in the service of Christ". It was appropriate that the requiem Mass was a simple, hope-filled and Christ-centred liturgy.<sup>62</sup> In a cathedral decked with red and white flowers, readings from Scripture proclaimed life beyond death (Wisdom 3:1-9, 1

<sup>59</sup> Beovich to Bishop Dougherty, 24 July 1979, in reply to an invitation in the minutes of the Australian Episcopal Conference for those who knew Gilroy to submit reports concerning his holiness of life.

<sup>60</sup> Philip Kennedy, homily at Beovich's requiem Mass, 29 October 1981. A copy is in the ACAA. It was published in the *Southern Cross*, 5 November 1981, pp. 28-9.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 October 1981; James Gleeson, interview by author, 24 July 1997.

<sup>62</sup> The booklet for the service is in the ACAA. The ceremony was reported in the *News*, 29 October 1981, p. 9; *Advertiser*, 30 October 1981; *Southern Cross*, 5 November 1981, pp. 1-2, 8-9.

John 3:1-2, and John 6:51-59). The eucharistic overtone of the Gospel passage was a reminder of the centrality of the sacrament in Beovich's life. The honour of carrying to the altar the bread and wine for the Eucharist went to Vera Beovich, Keith Koen, the three Franciscan sisters from Ennis and a sister of the Little Company of Mary who had known Beovich for many years and nursed him during his final illness.

Assembled dignitaries included the state governor, premier and leader of the opposition, a testimony to the good relations Beovich had cultivated with civic leaders. His participation in the ecumenical movement was reflected in the number of heads of Christian denominations who attended the service. Anglican and Greek Orthodox bishops were there, along with senior representatives from the Lutheran, Uniting and Presbyterian Churches, the Churches of Christ and the Salvation Army. Those from Protestant traditions would have been familiar with the classic English hymns chosen for the occasion: “The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord”, “Praise to the Lord, the almighty”, “Alleluia, sing to Jesus”, “The Lord's my Shepherd” and “Abide with me”.

An estimated 1500 to 2000 people crowded into the cathedral for the ceremony, many getting no further than the foyer. Six of the leading laymen of the diocese were the pall-bearers. Catholic school children joined over two hundred priests and seminarians in forming a guard of honour as the cortege left the cathedral and made its way to the cemetery at West Terrace. When it reached the cemetery, Beovich's body was buried in a simple grave alongside the remains of his predecessors, Robert Spence and Andrew Killian.

In a moving homily at the requiem Mass, Kennedy highlighted Beovich's commitment to good citizenship, concern for migrants, support for ecumenism and, above all, quest for holiness, “a holiness which expressed itself in love of God and neighbour”. These themes predominate in the other tributes which were paid after his death.<sup>63</sup> The governor of South Australia, Sir Keith Seaman, commented that “Archbishop Beovich was a warm, approachable and caring man who touched the life of the community at many points. The whole state has been enriched by this saintly and sensitive leader, and he will

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<sup>63</sup> See *Sunday Mail*, 25 October 1981, p. 6; *Advertiser*, 26 October 1981, p. 7; *Southern Cross*, 29 October 1981, pp. 3, 5-6.

be greatly missed."<sup>64</sup> The former Anglican bishop of Adelaide, T.T. Reed, remembered "a great Christian leader for whom I had a warm regard . . . His practical wisdom, courteous manner, and clear and concise statements were of great service to the Heads of Churches at their meetings."<sup>65</sup> Representatives of Catholic migrant communities recalled the late archbishop with particular gratitude:

We trust you see this farewell note from your heavenly abode and understand our feelings behind the written words. 'Your Grace' is a nice title and there are many other nice titles in this worldly life, but we believe that 'true friend' is the nicest and greatest of all these . . . And you were our true friend when we arrived here thirty years ago. Your memory lives in our souls and we know we will meet again.<sup>66</sup>

Keith Koen told a reporter from the *Advertiser* that his former boss had been "a kind gentle man" with a great sense of humour.<sup>67</sup> At the Office for the Dead, held in the cathedral the evening before the requiem Mass, Tom Horgan recalled Beovich's "often salty" wit and gave some examples of his kindness: "the parish Mass supplied at short notice; weekly visits to the sick . . . ; the firm, warm hand that said what words could not say to one bereaved; the patient and delicate reaction to a priest given to sharing a yarn or two: 'I feel you've told me this before, Father, but tell me again any way'."<sup>68</sup> In a condolence card to Philip Kennedy, a nurse at Calvary Hospital remembered how Beovich had tried not to disturb the nursing staff when visiting patients in the hospital on Sunday afternoons: "he never wanted to be a bother to anyone".<sup>69</sup>

An aspect of Beovich's life which was not mentioned at the requiem Mass was his involvement in the political controversies of the 1950s. After the service, John Bannon, then leader of the opposition in the South Australian House of Assembly, expressed in a letter to Philip Kennedy:

the special significance that the late Archbishop Beovich has for the Australian Labor Party in this state. He is remembered very warmly indeed by very many people in our Party, particularly for the crucial role he played in the 1950s when sectarian divisions were beginning to emerge. Not only the Labor Party, but, I

<sup>64</sup> *Sunday Mail*, 25 October 1981, p. 60.

<sup>65</sup> *Southern Cross*, 29 October 1981, p. 5.

<sup>66</sup> Note attached to a condolence letter from J. Herendi, on behalf of the Hungarian Catholic community, to Kennedy on 28 October 1981. There is a folder of condolence cards and letters in the ACAA.

<sup>67</sup> *Advertiser*, 30 October 1981.

<sup>68</sup> *Southern Cross*, 5 November 1981, p. 9.

<sup>69</sup> Pat Hearnshaw to Philip Kennedy, undated.

believe, the political and social life of this state, has benefited greatly from the fact that there was no split within our Party, nor any real bitterness of a type that occurred, for instance, in Victoria. It was before my time in politics, but whenever the subject is raised the key role played by the late Archbishop is always referred to.<sup>70</sup>

It is the nature of panegyrics that they usually focus on the positive features of a person’s life, but in 1981 there were clearly many people who remembered Matthew Beovich with affection and mourned his passing. Tributes to his warmth and friendliness may seem difficult to reconcile with the words “remote”, “aloof” and “austere” which, two decades after his death, feature commonly in people’s reminiscences. However, Philip Kennedy acknowledged Beovich’s innate reserve in his homily on 29 October 1981, telling the congregation at the requiem Mass how much Beovich relished the many hours he spent in prayer “with the one intimate friend of his life, the Risen Christ”. Later Kennedy added, “In this self-effacing and shy man we divined depths of piety which remained in the privacy of his heart and mind”.

At the Office for the Dead, Tom Horgan described Beovich as “a man of friendly dignity”. Dignity was, for Beovich, a very important quality for a priest and a bishop, and he was clearly able to maintain it without succumbing to pomposity. Not all bishops were so successful at that. Doug Warren, bishop of the New South Wales rural diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes, encountered Beovich at gatherings of the hierarchy. Writing to apologize to Kennedy for his inability to attend the requiem Mass, he dryly remarked: “I had a rather sneaking regard for Matty’s holy cynicism & open approach to the unstuffing of shirts—he did it so well”.<sup>71</sup> It is an intriguing insight into Beovich’s contribution to the Australian Episcopal Conference which does not feature in any formal minutes.

It was not Beovich’s “holy cynicism” which struck Bill Byrne but his “natural optimism” and faith and trust in people, manifest in the support he gave the lay Catholics of his diocese who worked in the Newman Institute and later the Christian Life Movement.<sup>72</sup> Cynicism and optimism are another seemingly incompatible combination of

<sup>70</sup> John Bannon to Kennedy, 2 November 1981.

<sup>71</sup> Doug Warren to Kennedy, 19 November 1981.

<sup>72</sup> Bill Byrne, “Archbishop Beovich”, *National Outlook*, February 1982, p. 22.

attributes, but in Beovich both stemmed from his conviction that God was in control of human history. Accordingly, human achievements and human concerns appeared less significant to him than they might otherwise have done. Apparent success or failure in any endeavour was ultimately irrelevant so long as one was getting closer to God. That attitude helped him accept change in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, and then adjust to retirement after so many years in charge of the archdiocese of Adelaide.

In his homily on 29 October 1981, Philip Kennedy said that Beovich thought of his retirement as “golden years”. The phrase is a cliché, but it does seem that, apart from the health scare in 1973 and his final illness, the elderly Beovich enjoyed a relaxed lifestyle away from the cares of diocesan administration. With characteristic dignity and restraint, he let his successor take over the government of the diocese while he slipped quietly into the background. Being a priest meant a great deal more to him than being a bishop. Comfortable with solitude, he spent much time praying and reading, yet in an unobtrusive way he continued to undertake pastoral work. He was an exemplary emeritus archbishop, and the requiem Mass on Thursday 29 October 1981 was a fitting conclusion to his four decades in the archdiocese of Adelaide.



Figure 12.1 Matthew Beovich and James Gleeson shortly before Beovich's retirement in 1971



**Figure 12.2** Beovich with his sister Vera in 1976.



**Figure 12.3** Beovich with James O'Collins and Brian Gallagher in Ballarat in February 1976



**Figure 12.4** With the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at Ennis in 1977. In the background is the portrait of Beovich which was painted in Rome in 1950. It now hangs in the dining room at Archbishop's House, West Terrace.



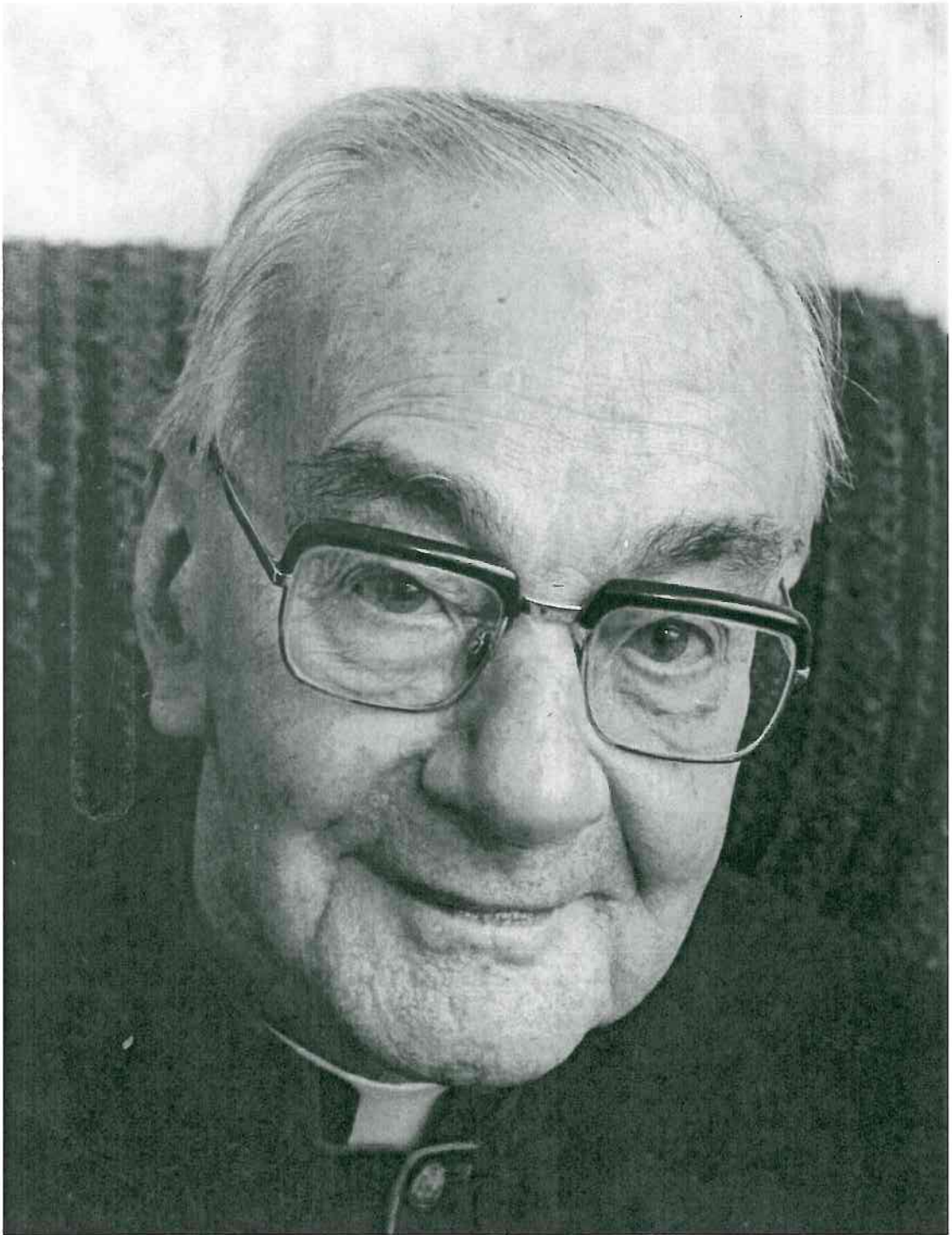


Figure 12.5 Beovich in 1980



Figure 12.6 Requiem Mass in St Francis Xavier Cathedral, 29 October 1981



Figure 12.7 Bishop Philip Kennedy delivering the homily.



Figure 12.8 The funeral cortège leaves St Francis Xavier Cathedral



Figure 12.9 The grave at West Terrace Cemetery