**Towards credibility and a clean conclave**

**There can be no justice without truth and both are essential for healing**

**Pour un conclave efficace et credible**

**Il n’y a pas de justice sans vérité, les deux sont essentiels pour guérir**

Gail Grossman Freyne, Australia

*Gail Grossman Freyne is a family therapist, mediator and author.*

October 6, 2018

Instead of engaging with the pain of profound change, the institutional Catholic church is still mired in a program of damage control. We are witnessing a double deflection.

Plutôt que de s’engager dans un profond changement et la douleur associée, l’Eglise est encore embourbée dans la maîtrise des dommages.

Globally, the topic of choice is Archbishop Vigano, Cardinal McCarrick and Pope Francis, the biggest bomb shell to explode into the Catholic news media since the death of John Paul I.

Locally, we retreat to a commitment around the seal of confession, the one definitive response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission made by the church.

Nous nous réfugions derrière le secret de la confession: c’est la réponse de l’Eglise à la commission royale.

Both events evidence a willingness to talk about political cliques and red-herrings rather than what really matters: the re-establishment of the Catholic Church as an inclusive and trustworthy leader in the modern world.

Admittedly a hard topic to address, because it will require nothing less than a return to the Christian scriptures to undo centuries of bad theology which produced the sinful social structures defined by clericalism.

C’est un retour à l’Ecriture dont nous avons besoin face à des siècles de mauvaise théologie, celle qui est une des sources du cléricalisme.

As one small step towards this great ambition the fascinating question is, how can we find a cardinal to elect as pope who has not been involved in the cover-up of sexual abuse?

Comment trouver un cardinal électeur du pape qui ne soit pas impliqué dans la couverture d’abus sexuels ?

The structure of the Church is crumbling from the top down. Cardinal Bernard Law (RIP) of Boston and Cardinal Sean Brady of Armagh failed to protect children. Cardinal Keith O'Brien (RIP) was forced to resign in Scotland.

Cardinal Phillippe Barbarin is on trial in France for cover-up and Cardinal Pell (who, while Episcopal Vicar for Education, failed to report a Christian Brother, Edward Dowlan, who would later be convicted of abusing at least 20 boys at six schools) is facing charges of abuse.

There are repeated calls for the resignation of Cardinal Wuerl in Washington, and questions about Cardinal Oscar Maradiaga of Honduras covering up the criminal behaviour of his assistant, Bishop Fasquille.

Two Chilean Cardinals, Francisco Errazuriz and Ricardo Ezzati, are the subjects of credible, criminal accusations of cover-up. Africa and Asia are yet to have their accounting.

La structure de l’Eglise s’effondre du sommet à la base en Amérique, en Europe, en Australie, bientôt en Afrique et en Asie.

The numbers show this is not a witch hunt, merely the tip of a conclave.

What we need to recognise is that any man who becomes a seminarian, who becomes a deacon, who becomes a priest, who becomes a bishop, who becomes a cardinal, will almost certainly have bumped into, bounced off or blindfolded himself to the endemic, pandemic problem within the Church of the sexual abuse of children and other vulnerable persons. Archbishop Wilson of Adelaide is not alone.

Are the Chilean bishops 'a weird mob'? Americans are asking their bishops to resign *en masse* and Australians might follow suit.

If you were first a diocesan bishop, the files of offending clerics will surely, at some point, have been laid on your desk. How then do we get a clean conclave?

The apologies we have received since the Royal Commission are incomplete. The Australian bishops have told us, in the naming of their own commission, that they want Truth, Justice and Healing.

If Archbishop Fisher really wants to 'speak the truth in love' then it is not enough to merely say that there were 'many failings on the part of some members and leaders of the Church'.

It is not enough for Archbishop Coleridge to say 'many bishops failed to listen, failed to believe and failed to act'.

To use the passive voice, individually or collectively, to say you are sorry that 'it' happened is not enough. We are all sorry that 'it' happened.

Les excuses ne suffisent pas.

Any psychotherapist will tell you that a true apology entails each cleric who abused or covered up to step forward to tell their victims what they did, how they hurt them and why.

There can be no justice without truth and both are essential for healing. But it seems that our bishops are hoping to rush towards healing, by-passing the elements of truth and justice.

Il n’y a pas de justice sans vérité et les deux sont essentiels à la guérison. Mais il semble que nos évêques espèrent la guérison en oubliant vérité et justice.

Bodies like Catholic Professional Standards Ltd and the Implementation Advisory Group cannot demand transparency because they are not independent.

The Plenary Council aims to change the structures and culture of the church. This presupposes two things: any invitation to participation must come with franchise, and the full inclusion of women.

Changer les structures et la culture de l’Eglise présuppose deux choses : droiture et participation active des femmes aux décisions.

A lay woman should be appointed as co-chair by Women and the Australian Church who have been considering women's participation in the church for nearly half a century.

Lacking these two elements, 'humble listening' will be no more than a sleight of hand to cover clericalism in action.

What the Church really needs *is* a return to the theology of the Christian scriptures that call each of us to live as one of a priestly people, continuing that work of Jesus of Nazareth to mediate God's love in the world.

Ce dont l’Eglise a besoin est un retour à l’Ecriture qui appelle chacun de nous à vivre en membre d’un peuple de prêtres, à la suite de Jésus, le médiateur de l’amour de Dieu pour les hommes.

This is the purpose of baptism. In this understanding every one of us is called to act *in persona Christi*.

Whatever Conclave gathers next it must not be tainted by what Pope Francis has named the sin of clericalism. At its root, clericalism is not simply marked by grades of red or purple or being titled Lord or Eminence.

Fundamentally, clericalism is based on the false theology that the priest is ontologically changed by ordination, acquiring a 'special nature' enabling only him to act *in persona Christi* and 'confect' the Eucharist.

A la base le cléricalisme se fonde sur la nature ontologique du prêtre changée par l’ordination, seule permettant qu’il acte « in persona christi » et consacre l’hostie.

This is the error which has produced a relationship of superiority between the priest and the rest of the community.

It is another way of saying that the ministerial priesthood is, of its essence, ordained to govern the laity in the life of the church.

Dit autrement le ministère presbytéral est par nature ordonné à gouverner les laïcs.

Certainly, we need ministers and leaders, but the essence of the eucharistic president is not changed, merely his relationship to other members of the church — as would be the case with the ordination of a woman.

L’Eglise a besoin de ministres et de leaders mais la nature (l’essence) du président de l’eucharistie est inchangée, seule sa relation à l’assemblée l’est ; ainsi en serait-il de l’ordination des femmes.

The Christian Eucharist can only take place in communion.

The Church is made poorer by the assertion — for it is not more than an assertion — that either sex has a special nature to the exclusion of the other sex.

L’Eglise s’affaiblit quand elle affirme -et ce n’est qu’une affirmation- qu’un sexe a une nature spéciale qui lui permet d’exclure l’autre.

Being equal, one with the other, suffices to enable each one to claim their baptismal responsibility to re-vision the church.

We need to be taught again this original theology of our church to lead us away from a later, self-serving and erroneous tradition of a dominating priesthood and towards the vital structural changes that will eliminate clericalist bias.

It will take this kind of theological transformation before we will ever find a clean conclave and renewed credibility in the world.

Nous avons besoin d’une conversion théologique si nous voulons un prochain conclave “propre” et retrouver la confiance du monde.