**What one Australian bishop has learned from the sex abuse crisis**

**Church needs to once and for all jettison the clericalist model, says Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen**

**Ce qu’un évêque australien a appris de la crise des abus sexuels**

**L’Eglise doit abandonner un fois pour toutes le modèle clérical, dit Mgr Vincent Long Van Nguyen, évêque de Parramatta**

La Croix International staff

Australia, October 1, 2018

The sexual abuse crisis inundating the whole Church like a tsunami has the potential to cause long-term damage, chaos and even a schism, says a bishop in Australia.

It is the biggest crisis since the Reformation and it exposes the ideological conflict that runs deeply through the length and breadth of the universal Church, Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen of Parramatta said while addressing the Concerned Catholics of Canberra and Goulburn Forum on Sept. 11.

The Concerned Catholics group is pressing for changes that propose a big boost to lay representation, including women, in church decision-making and the establishment of a diocesan pastoral council with significant lay membership.

Its recent forum was convened to address “The Role of the Faithful in a post-Royal Commission Church in Australia.” The Royal Commission had provided the grounds for profound system reform of the Church’s administration and of its clerical, male-dominated culture.

Le récent forum des catholiques de Canberra et de Goulburn a été convoqué pour réfléchir au rôle des fidèles après la Commission royale. Celle-ci a établi les bases pour une profonde réforme de l’administration de l’Eglise et sa culture cléricale et masculine.

Bishop Long, who heads the diocese northwest of Sydney, said the Church needs prophetic voices, even voices from the margins and from outside, to keep its leaders honest, transparent and accountable.

“We cannot afford to let the momentum for cultural and structural change in the Church fizzle out. It is for the sake of a healthier Church that all the baptized participate in its functioning and bring their gifts to bear on its growth,” he said.

The time has come for the hierarchy to not only admit the need for change but to discern with lay people the process and agenda for change, he said.

Le temps est venu pour la hiérarchie non seulement d’admettre le besoin de changement mais de construire avec les laïcs le processus et l’agenda du changement.

“In my opinion, we really need to once and for all jettison the clericalist model of the Church with its by-product of the exclusive clerical club. It has served us well beyond its use-by date,” said Bishop Long, former assistant general of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual.

“For the Church to flourish, it is crucial that we come to terms with the flaws of clericalism and move beyond its patriarchal and monarchical matrix … So long as we continue to exclude women from Church governance structures, decision-making processes and institutional functions, we deprive ourselves of the richness of our full humanity,” he said.

“So long as we continue to make women invisible and inferior in the Church’s language, liturgy, theology and law, we impoverish ourselves as if we heard with only one ear, we saw with only one eye and we thought with only one half of the brain,” said the bishop, who is Australia’s first Asian-born bishop and the first Vietnamese-born bishop to head a diocese outside Vietnam.

« Tant que nous continuons à rendre les femmes invisibles dans les langages de l’Eglise, dans la liturgie, dans la théologie et dans les règles nous nous appauvrissons comme si nous n’entendions que d’une oreille, ne voyions que d’un seul œil et que nous pensions qu’avec la moitié de notre cerveau » dit l’évêque qui est le premier évêque australien né en Asie et le premier évêque vietnamien à être à la tête d’un diocèse hors du Vietnam.

Bishop Long also spoke about anti-Pope Francis forces who have accelerated their frontal attacks against him in a coordinated and virulent manner.

“The gloves are clearly off and they have seized this moment of turmoil as an opportunity to undermine his papacy and derail his reform agenda. Only until recently, criticisms against a sitting pope were deemed an absolute anathema,” he said, criticizing bishops who have chosen to sympathize with these forces with their not so subtle disapproval of the way the pope is leading the Church.

Parlant au sujet des forces opposées à François il a critiqué les évêques qui ont choisi ce camp et leurs grossières attaques sur la manière dont il dirige l’Eglise.

“Clearly, Captain Francis will have to weather both the storm and the mutiny onboard. I just hope and pray that he stays the course because nothing less than a deep and comprehensive reform will restore confidence and trust in the Church,” he said.

However, he added: “Let us be under no illusions about the change we seek, which is not only in attitude of the office holders but the very structure and culture of the Church ... After all, Pope Francis might just be a banana slip away from his reform agenda and we might all end up sliding backwards.”

Il ajoute : “Nous devons être sans illusions au sujet du changement que nous voulons : ce n’est pas seulement une affaire d’attitude mais de structure et de culture de l’Eglise…Prenons garde aux chausses-trappes qui lui sont tendues, elles pourraient bien nous faire revenir en arrière “.

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