Introduction to the Modern Era part 2

The Twentieth Century Church

> *At some undefined point in the mid nineteen- Eighties, the Catholic Church became part of the British Establishment. Being a Catholic was no longer something to be whispered about in hushed tones, no longer a cool, alternative lifestyle which sustained its own culture.*[1]

This statement by John Townsend sums up the history of English Catholicism in the final century of the first Millennium and the start of the second Millennium. It has however, brought its own problems to this period. Spiritual boundaries have become blurred in people's minds and the concerns of material wealth, and the secular agendas found in society make it hard for Catholics to retain a distinctive voice. Lastly, internal debate is shaped by the discussion between those who long for a return to their perception of the ghetto and those who would like the church to wholeheartedly embrace the post-modern world. In between these two extremes of course there lie many other shades of opinion. Questions have arisen that require answers such as why did the documents of the Second Vatican Council fail to ignite the imagination of Catholics in England and Wales? How much did the centralising tendencies of the Holy See and the ultramontanist stance taken by the bishops of the Restored Hierarchy stifle the creativity of Catholicism in the mission of revealing the saving Grace of God to humanity?

In examining the state of the English Catholic Church from the death of Cardinal Manning in 1892 to the eve of the Second Vatican Council in 1963 it can be seen that despite the outward signs of growth and development both clergy and people retained the superficial grasp of the faith that is the inevitable result of the rote learning that was characteristic of both the school system and the seminaries. This left them unable to teach and receive the changes Vatican II brought about in teaching and practice. This will be discussed in the second half of this article, but it is worth mentioning now that there was a new context namely a Catholic community that was much more integrated into the world in general and therefore only too well aware of the huge changes in society and culture. There is evidence that even now there is a widespread depth of ignorance about why the changes in liturgy and practice happened and a sense of bereavement for 'the old ways'. At the same time however, there is also a feeling of liberation from the constraints of the clerical domination of everyday lives. There is ever increasing evidence that since the publication of *Humanae Vitae* in 1968, people make decisions in such areas as sexual ethics by reference to their own conscience than by reference to the teachings of the Church. [2]

At the time of Manning's death, the English hierarchy was approaching its first half-century and in the words of McClelland its achievement was that the Catholic community had

> *Become less inward looking, better educated, more socially aware and more loyally Roman than it was at any earlier period in the century.* [3]

Whilst there is a perception that the achievements of the hierarchy noted above were chiefly the result of imposing Ultramontane attitudes, this was not because of the wish to impose clerical domination over the English Catholic Church. Rather it was because of far reaching pastoral concerns to unite all Catholics in England. Ultramontantism was the spiritual and liturgical catalyst that greatly facilitated the essential bonding processes. What was Ultramontanism?

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[1] Townsend, John, 'The Twilight of the English Catholic Writer 'The *Catholic Herald* 06/08/04 6

[2] See essays in Hornsby Smith, M. (Ed) *Catholics in England 1950-2000 Historical and Sociological Perspectives* (1999 Cassell) part III

[3] McClelland V.A. 'The formative Years 1850-92' in McClelland V. and Hodgetts M. (eds) *From Without the Flaminian Gate* (1999, Darton, Longman and Todd London) 17

Briefly it was the tying of Catholic life more closely with Rome, the centre of the church. Manning and his predecessor Wiseman saw this as the force that would bind the disparate groups together and meet the needs of the English Catholic Church. These were described by Manning in 1863 as spiritual regeneration and the elevation of social and political life in England by the influence of the Church in morality and law.[4] These remained priorities throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In Rome, increasing centralisation of the church's structures and direction was happening under Pope Pius IX and was enshrined in doctrine in 1870 at the ill-fated First Vatican Council.[5] With only time to finalise two Constitutions, a one-sided view of the Church's life and Structure was presented although the long pontificate of Leo XIII (1878-1903) did provide a more balanced approach towards secular authority and contemporary issues in comparison with to that of his predecessor.

However, the ethos of centralisation was part of the Ultramontane spirit adopted by the English Catholic Church and led to the clericalisation of the church in a way not experienced before. However, it also meant the necessity of a more educated clergy, and the education of the masses from whom the next generation of priests would be drawn. The impetus for this came from the publication of *Rerum Novarum*.[6] Its' subject matter was dictated by the rise of secularism and industrialisation in the latter part of the C19th. Pope Leo XIII was concerned that such movements would attract the Catholic working classes, given that Catholic social initiatives frequently met with opposition from conservative Catholics who supported economic freedom that of its nature needed a subservient work force.

> *We are persuaded that it is necessary to come to the aid of people of the lower classes , since for the most part they are in a situation of misfortune and undeserved misery... every principle, And every religious feeling has disappeared from the public institutions and so, little by little, isolated and defenceless workers have found themselves in time at the mercy of inhuman masters and victims of the cupidity of unbridled completion . Rapacious usury has added to the evil...To all this must be added the concentration of industry and commerce in the hands the few, so that it has become the province of a small number of the rich and opulent, who in this way impose an almost servile yoke on the infinite multitude of the proletariat.* [7]

The peculiar situation if English Catholicism in that it did not form the Established church in the country, influenced the response of successive hierarchies to the embryonic social doctrine of the church laid out in *Rerum Novarum* .They fully supported the view of poverty that it portrayed: "As for those who possess not the gifts of fortune ,they are taught by the church that in God's sight poverty is no disgrace." Also" the true worth and nobility of man lies in his moral qualities, that is virtue...virtue alone wherever found will be followed by the rewards of everlasting happiness".[8] This view contrasted starkly with the Protestant work ethic that poverty was a shameful condition and wealth was a sign of God's favour. Therefore, it was beholden on a man to work hard and amass wealth. This underpinned much of the drive behind the masters of the Industrial Revolution, who held the working class in virtual slavery. The hierarchy felt their best

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[4] McClelland *ibid*.7

[5] It was brought to a premature end due to political events in Italy. It was not formally closed however, until 1963 its closure was the first act of the Second Vatican Council.

[6] Leo XIII *Rerum Novarum* (1891)

[7] Leo XIII Ibid.2,3

[8] Ibid.23-24

response would be to follow the imperative to educate[9] and pursue the wider aims of social doctrine that emerged over the course of the first half of the C20th, from within the institutions already present in society, rather than form specific Catholic unions and political parties as on the continent. These included campaigning for such things as a fair working wage, shorter working hours and the dignity of the worker. Such guardedness is understandable. Until the final triumph of secularism in the 1960's, Protestantism, in particular Anglicanism was an integral part of the national identity in the minds of most British people. That was the religion that had been chosen at the Reformation, and the Church of England and State were inextricably linked. Catholicism was still regarded with some suspicion as somewhat foreign and exotic, evidenced by its use of Latin and distinctive practices that seemed to set Catholics apart.
Education became under Manning and his successors the means by which the three diverse groups of Catholics in the English church could be united by a common cause. An educated laity would be better placed to further the mission of the Catholic Church in society, and by uniting the old Catholics and the new converts in educating the Irish and the poor generally, spiritual regeneration would occur. With these aims, Manning and his immediate successors were addressing two formidable opponents: the overwhelming poverty of many of their flock, especially the Irish immigrants, and the secularism triggered by the cult of reason.

The poverty of the Irish was not only physical and social it was also spiritual. These problems had to be addressed while taking into account the delicate political situation between the government and the Irish people. England was seen as an oppressor of Irish rights and culture and the English Catholic clergy were seen as agents of this due to the genesis of the main Irish seminary at Maynooth. It was founded in 1794 with money from the British government, the hope was that the clergy could be used to help control the Irish people. That did not come to fruition, but it left a bitter aftertaste in the minds of the Irish.Mary Hickman, in particular has argued many times that one aim of the Catholic Church was to make the Irish news of its Irish adherents invisible. She sums up her arguments thus:

> *To achieve a situation where Catholicism became the significant identity of the Irish working class in England, the Catholic Church… had as its central objectives the prevention of leakage of Irish migrants and the enhancement of the respectability and legitimacy of the church. The Irish in Britain threatened the desired respectability and as a result the Catholic Church constructed its mission to the Irish as a mission of retention and incorporation. The Catholic Church developed a strategy to win its Irish congregation to a version of Catholicism which entailed denationalisation, attempting to substitute a religious identity for the Irish national identity which constituted the hallmark of Irish working-class communities in England.* [10]

There can be no doubt that this was a desired outcome and as an Irish Sister said in conversation with the writer: "You have to realise that we Irish never forget, and the English do not remember".
The English Catholic Church concentrated upon the work of spiritual regeneration and meeting the social needs of its poor, both English and Irish from within the Catholic communities that formed in the towns. Although not strictly ghettoes, it did help that many Catholics lived in areas that were close by each other, often housing built by the local industrialist to house his workers. Churches and schools were built, in the case of schools with great ongoing cost to the Church.

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[9] Ibid 26

[10] Hickman, M., "Religio-ethnic identities of teenagers of Irish dissent' in Hornsby Smith (Ed) *Catholics in Britain* . 182-198.

Social life was also encouraged to revolve around the local Church, with clubs and societies being formed. Female Religious Orders maintained hospitals and homes for the destitute and a 'fortress church 'developed. This had a double effect; Catholics could be educated in the faith by means of apologetics and be protected from the threats of the outside world. The ethos of the Council of Trent had not been fully established in the English Catholic Church due to the political history of Britain and Ireland. The decrees of the Tridentine Council were defined in 1545 and ratified in 1563 and became the face of the Catholic Church for the following five hundred years. This is what the Ultramontanes introduced into he English Catholic Church with its focus on hierarchical stability and the Pope. Wiseman's hymn '*Full in the panting heart of Rome'* which was sung enthusiastically expressed the nature of the papal devotion that the Ultramontanes emphasised.

> *Full in the panting heart of Rome*
> *Beneath the Apostle's crowning dome*
> *From pilgrim's lips that kiss the ground*
> *Breathes in all tongues one only sound*
> *God bless our Pope!*

Many of the canons were, however, a reaction against the Protestant 'heresies' rather than positive teaching. For example:

> *If anyone says that the ceremonies, vestments and outward signs which the Catholic Church uses in the celebration of Masses, are incentives to impiety rather than stimulants to piety, let him be anathema*[11]

> *The defence of the apostolic tradition is, of course one of the main tasks of the Papacy and this pattern of reacting to errors continued to be a feature of Vatican documents until well into the C20th. It leads, unfortunately to a negative impression of the Tridentine church and, at the time lent weight to the suspicion about Catholicism prevalent in Britain.*
> *What did the Ultramontane English Catholic Church look like at prayer? Seamus Heaney paints a vivid picture of it before the Second Council*

> *I knelt. Hiatus. Habit's afterlife…*
> *I was back among the bead clicks and the murmurs*
> *From inside confessionals, side altars*
> *Where candles died insinuating slight*
> *Intimate smells of wax at body heat…*[12]

> *This picture of spirituality would be the same in the poorest parish in England or in the splendour of Westminster Cathedral. Ultramontane Catholicism was class blind, full of non- verbal symbolism and ritual that encompassed all the senses of its participants. It exuded a sense of mystery, awe and worship that foreshadowed the joys of Heaven. Alongside the Mass was a host*

[11] From the Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass VIII Schroeder *Canons and Decrees* 150
[12]Heaney S. Station Island 111 in *New Selected Po ems 1966-1987 (Faber, 1990) 169*

> *of popular and private devotions, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the Blessed Sacrament in the form of Exposition and Benediction and to Mary among others. Catholic homes were filled with holy pictures and statues, daily life shaped and sustained by practices such as the Friday Fast and the First Friday Novena. Voluntary activities were undertaken in the societies and confraternities such as the Legion of Mary and UCM. Encouraging boys to serve the altar fostered vocations and mixed marriages were frowned upon. All this helped cultivate a sense of family loyalty, a standard of religious and moral behaviour, solidity and charity to each other in each local Catholic community. But the centre of Catholic life was the Mass and from this everything else flowed:*
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> *The Church at the bidding of her founder continues the priestly office of Jesus Christ, especially in the liturgy. This she does first and chiefly at the altar, where the sacrifice of the cross is perpetually represented and…for ever renewed.*[13]

The Catholic Church was, however, facing similar problems to the other churches in combating the rise of secularism in society in society. C19th scientific advances had called a number of revealed truths into question and people were left uncertain. Where did the discovery of evolution leave the teaching on Creation and Original Sin? The development of Biblical criticism in the Protestant Churches called Divine inspiration into question. On an intellectual level the Church dealt with this centrally from Rome. In England, the Church created its fortress. However, it was hurt by the intellectual argument that culminated in the 'Modernist Crisis,' (1890-1910) which saw, among other measures a leading English theologian (George Tyrell) excommunicated and the imposition on all clergy of an anti-modernist oath. The harshness of Rome's reaction is revealed particularly in the Encyclical *Pascenti Dominici Gregis* (1907)

> *With our eyes fixed upon the whole system, no one will be surprised that we should define it to be the synthesis of all heresies…their system means the destruction not of the Catholic religion alone, but all religion.*

The condemnations created an oppressive atmosphere for Catholic clergy and theologians. It was not until the publication of the Encyclical *Divino afflante spiritual in 1943,* that Biblical scholars felt the pressure lessening on their work. Nevertheless, it affected the relationship of Catholic theologians with the major English universities, to which Cardinal Bourne had lifted the ban on attending in 1902.

The problems caused by the meeting of faith issues with the modern world remained nonetheless less. The English Catholic Church was not affected by the two world wars in the same way as the continental churches. In many ways, the wars gave English Catholics the chance to prove their loyalty to the country. Rather than being destabilised by the wars , the Church quietly continued to grow though out the nineteen- fifties, when the mood was one of triumphalism. The other churches were in decline , but the Catholic Church was growing and it seemed to be without any effort. Conversions were mainly of two kinds, the partners in mixed marriages, the numbers of which were increasing due to increased socialisation at the workplace, and converts from Protestantism, leaving behind the problems that were besetting those churches. After the war Catholics, like everyone else, had to o e to terms with the problem of evil. The evidence of the Holocaust in the camps of Aushwitz and Belsen caused deep revulsion and the question was

[13] Pope Pius XII *Mediator Dei (*1947)

asked 'where was God?' Many cited the apparent absence of God as a reason for losing their faith. Yet Catholic thinkers were able to point out that God was present in the person of people like Maximilian Kolbe and Edith Stein and that the question really should be ' where was man in Aushwitz? '. Early attempts at ecumenism by Cardinal Hinsley during World War Two had not been supported either by Rome or many of his fellow bishops although the movement he had founded as a Spiritual Crusade continued to operate under lay leadership. (In 1965 having widened its objectives to create an informed Catholic opinion on international affairs, it changed its name to the Catholic Institute for International Affairs (CIIR) and still works supporting Christian groups throughout the world in seeking justice.) In 1928 Rome forbade ecumenical initiatives in the encyclical *Mortalium Animos*. Despite unofficial approaches by a leading Anglican layman [the Malines Talks between Lord Halifax and Belgian Abbe Portal) the English Hierarchy continued to deny the validity of Anglican Orders which had meant the end of any earlier dreams for physical unity.

This then, was the Church that the English bishops left behind when summoned to Rome for the Second Vatican Council in 1962. As a group they did not want nor feel the need for any change in the Church. In England the Church was at its zenith, numbers were growing and educated Catholics were taking their place in English society. Historically Councils were called to meet a crisis in the Church, yet there seemed little sign of one. At best, they expected some tidying up of the loose ends left by the prorouguement of the 1870 Council. Neither they nor the people were prepared for the reorientation of the Church that took place. For some it brought joy, others disappointment, and it changed the face of the English Catholic Church in its own eyes and in the eyes of the country.

Pope John XXIII, in calling the Council, had indicated that it was to have two broad aims, a return to Christian unity and '*aggiornamento'* literally meaning an updating of the church and its people to a world that was constantly changing. The two aims were not unrelated. The Church was being told, in effect, that its mission for the next millennium was less about fighting enemies and more about finding a means of communicating with the world in which it existed, and being increasingly ignored. For the bishops, it should not have been quite such a shock , theological and pastoral research had been happening throughout the post war years under the impetus of the encyclicals *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943)*, Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943) and *Mediator Dei* (1947). The latter, in particular had marked a change the direction of the Church's liturgy:

> *The sacred liturgy itself requires these two elements (external and internal worship) to be closely combined…Otherwise, religion becomes nothing but an empty ceremony and pure formalism…it is a total misunderstanding …to regard it as the merely external and visible element in divine worship, or as the outward splendour of ceremonial; it is equally wrong to see in it a mere catalogue of rules and regulations…for the conduct of the sacred rites.* [14]

Most of the laity in the English Catholic Church however, had been brought up in a way that taught and safeguarded the traditional faith , that is, they were schooled in the tenets of the faith, but not encouraged to explore it for themselves. Thus for them much of what the Vatican II documents taught seemed close to the Protestant 'heresies'. For priests, the syllabuses and texts used in seminary also failed to encourage a thinking faith. Both priests and people were faced with a new agenda in which Catholicism seemed under attack from within its very heart in liturgy, in theology, in ecumenical relations and its institutions. Concurrently however, the English Church was facing unexpected decline due in part to the greater social integration of Catholics with the general population. This was due to the disappearance of the old 'ghettos' , the result of slum clearance programmes, demographic changes from the north towards the

[14] *Mediator Dei* 24,25

southeast, the rising standards of education and income amongst ordinary Catholics and the increasing abundance of 'mixed marriages'.

Despite the presence of individual bishops such as Christopher Butler OSB (Abbot of Downside and auxiliary bishop in Westminster, the most significant English contributor to the Vatican Council) the leadership seemed unable to adapt to the new church. Although Cardinal Heenan conscientiously introduced the English church to the changes of practice that Vatican II advocated, it was done so in an Ultramontane fashion with little pastoral guidance and explanation provided by the bishops. Consequently, there was misunderstanding and grief for things for things that had been lost apparently by a whim of the Council eg the demotion of many saints.

In essence, the Council tried to achieve a church in which the institutional, the mystical and the intellectual elements were held together in a balance. For this to happen, the sacramental view of the Church had to be rediscovered rather than the purely institutional view that had pertained since the Council of Trent. In order to do this, the Council approved three dogmatic constitutions and one pastoral constitutional, which were followed by various decrees and declarations. *Dei Verbum* discussed the teaching office of the Church that Christ established and transmits it through her living tradition. *Lumen Gentium* placed the nature and mission of the Church in the only context possible, that of the mystery of salvation. The document as a whole presents the Church as the people of God called to holiness in which everyone has a place. Bishops were no longer regarded as 'papal curates who derived their teaching authority from a canonical mission given by the Pope.' [15] The laity, for the first time had their role in the Church's mission defined, but also the door was opened for a more positive recognition of other Christian communities. *Sacrosantum Consilum* provided for the first time in the Church a blueprint for liturgical renewal underpinned by a firm doctrinal basis. Building on the work of Pope Pius XII it foreshadowed the spirit of the Council and its aftermath, in that some of the norms were discovered to be too narrow and needed to be broadened. These included things such as use of the vernacular tongue and giving of communion in both kinds. *Gaudium et Spes* involved the Council in a dialogue with the modern world. Its message is that the Church has to take account of the changes in the world and learn from the conflicts and mistakes that have been made because of them. Both political and social problems were examined as well as Atheism and its causes.

Vatican II was conceived as a Council of hope, but it also brought disillusionment. How much of this was the fault of the Council, or a sign of the times is debatable. In the English Church, as in many other Western countries, the aftermath of Vatican II saw a clear decline in religious observance and a decline in Christian influence on behaviour. Attendance at Mass declined, and fewer men were offering themselves for Ordination. Halsey charts a decline in the number of baptisms and marriages in church whilst the divorce rate between Catholics rose as did the practice of cohabitation.[16] Most worrying for the leaders of the Church was the fall in numbers of young people attending church. However, the same decline was happening in all the major denominations and had been going on for longer and at an even faster rate. [17] It cannot be denied that society was changing rapidly and Hastings describes the 'secular hopefulness' of the nineteen- sixties thus:

> *From been something rather conservative, it was transmogrified into an evermore shamelessly radical one – anti-elitist, easy going, even ecstatic, self-satisfied, libertarian, - permissive was the word in regard to sex, art, the whole round I'd of social and intellectual life… The world of youth, of pop, of irreverence, of unprepared happenings, was all…communitas: a brief but intense experience*

[15] Murphy-O'Connor, Cormac,' *Abbot Butler and the Council'* Address given to the Heathrow Symposium 2002

[16] Halsey, A.H., (Ed) *British Social Trends since 1900 (2nd edition)* (MacMillan 1988)

[17] Hastings A., *A History of English Christianity 1020-2000* (SCM Press) xv- xxiii

> *of ecstasy, of unstructured almost coherent fellowship, a world in which norms are temporarily derided and seem unnecessary.*[18]

By the end of the decade, however, a change had occurred, like a generation suffering from a communal bi-polar disorder, bleakness was descending , spiralling people down into a black depression. With rising unemployment and inflation the previous sense of anticipation was nothing but ashes. The Council had encouraged free speech and together with a crisis in society lurching from euphoria to depression, it was inevitable there would be consequences for the Church. In the English Church an unenthusiastic hierarchy compounded these.
With little or no explanation for the changes, many Catholics could not understand why their church suddenly seemed to be the same as the Anglican Church, with the use of the vernacular, communion in both kinds and the revival of the Liturgy of the Word. On one level these changes were welcomed 'One Sunday it was in Latin, the next it was in English, and I suddenly understood what was been said'. [19] Others felt a sense of loss that mirrored the depression mentioned above. What had seemed certain and timeless realities were no more and, in any situation, that is a disorientating experience. Duffy describes the downgrading of fasting as being like:

> *one of the defining aspects of Pre- conciliar Catholicism lost as part of the minimising of symbolic distinctiveness in the service of convenience and a slow form of ritual suicide for any religious tradition* [20]

Reflection on the history of any major Church Council reveals that it takes at least fifty years before its fruits can be truly seen. Vatican II is no different. Within that time span two generations die out, those who remember the old Church and cannot countenance change, and those who lived through the upheaval and saw it as a revolution in which everything must be replaced. It is a difficult time for leaders who have to resist calls to start again. This is especially true at the end of the twentieth century and start of the new millennium when post modernism culture views everything in the present and wants immediate gratification. Any sense of the past or the future seems irrelevant. The church in 2000 was still in that period but there were signs of hope and a look at the English Church reveals this. Laity were becoming more fully involved in their parishes and the Church was at the forefront of the international fight for justice and peace through CAFOD and CIIR. The Church was far more at the centre of national life and relations with other denominations were also closer due to the work of *Churches Together in England* which, unlike its predecessor the British Council of Churches, had aims fully conversant with Catholic teaching and allowed all the major Christian communities to work together in the task of bringing the Gospel anew to the people.
Equally there were signs that not all was well. Many lay people showed an appalling ignorance about the basics of their faith and the English Church was engaging on the task of Adult Formation redressing the deficits of the previous generations' religious education policies of learning faith by rote. Vocations were still dropping, and it was becoming obvious that a crisis was looming in terms of providing priests for every parish. Bishops were starting to find it necessary to close churches and amalgamate parishes.
Outside the Church there were also signs that secularism was not the force it was claimed to be. People were constantly searching for a form of spirituality in their lives, as Otto termed it the 'numinous'. [21] It was not, however the traditional paths that were followed because it had to be on people's own terms, in their own time and immediate. The Church needed to stay constant

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[18] Ibid. 515-516.
[19] Writer in conversation with a 'cradle' Catholic friend
[20] Duffy E., op cit 179-187
[21] Otto, R., *The idea of the Holy* (1923 Oxford)

and true to its faith, not in a state of flux endlessly adapting itself to meet post- modernist demands. The leadership for this came from Pope John II (1978- 2005) who was acknowledged as a spiritual giant, a catalyst for the downfall of Communism and a world leader of stature. Many Catholics also viewed him as a recidivist attempting renege on the Council as he sought to prune its excesses that free expression had bought into the Church and restore some of what had been lost in the first flush of enthusiasm, in order to restore balance. He also steadfastly refused to entertain concepts that he deemed only reflections of Western liberal modernity.

In answer to the question as to whether the centralising tendency of Rome and the Ultramontane stance of the hierarchy stifled the creativity of English Catholicism the response must be yes it did. Protected by a fortress Church from the rest of society, people were left unable to think for themselves and therefore unable to adapt to new ways of looking at the Church after Vatican II. They were in a world where the flickering screen of the television in the corner of the room had replaced the flickering luminescence of the state of Our Lady on the mantelpiece and it brought uncertainty and fear about the survival of the Church. What about the effect of Vatican II. It is obvious that its impact did lead to an unprecedented crisis of faith for many people but its fruits would not be fully seen until the new Millennium was well established. One thing is clear however, numbers would be much smaller, but able to provide a more effective witness to the enduring saving Grace of God to a people searching for it.

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