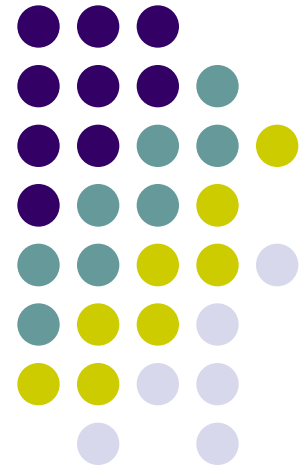


Reflections on Mark 6:7-13

Fr Kevin McGovern,
Caroline Chisholm Centre for Health Ethics:
CHA Stewardship Board 2014 Retreat,
6 February 2014



Outline



Information, Affirmation and Challenge on

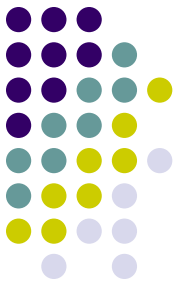
- A. The Kingdom of God
- B. God
- C. Being Poor

A. The Kingdom of God: Information



- Jesus' proclamation: "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near: repent, and believe in the Good News." (Mk 1:14)
- God's initiative and God's action
- definitively established through the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ
- already but not yet
- **This should be for us a source of hope and courage!**

A. The Kingdom of God: Information (cont'd)



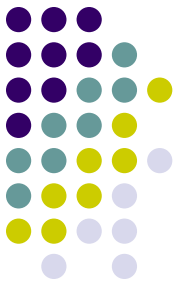
- overcoming anything that limits human beings
 - serious unmet human needs (e.g. hunger, poverty, loneliness)
 - sickness and disease
 - sin
- Each person lives in right relationship with self, other people and all of creation because they live in right relationship with God.
- social dimension (Catholic social teaching)
 - common good
 - preferential option for the poor
 - solidarity

A. The Kingdom of God: Affirmation



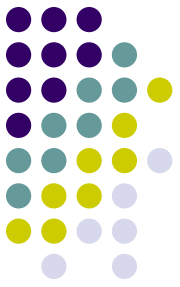
- The Church is meant to be both a **sign** and an **instrument** of the coming of the Kingdom
- Catholic hospitals and aged care facilities are a **sign** of the coming of the Kingdom
 - how we treat our patients/clients/residents
 - how we treat our staff
- Catholic hospitals and aged care facilities are an **instrument** of the coming of the Kingdom
 - our service to all people
 - our particular service of the poor
 - our care for our staff (both in general and in times of crisis)

A. The Kingdom of God: Challenge



- What can we do to ensure that other concerns (especially profit) do not lead us away from our work for the Kingdom?
- What can we do to communicate our vision of working for the Kingdom to all our staff and stakeholders?
- What can we do to collaborate with other sectors of the Catholic Church so we can work together for the Kingdom?
- What can we do to collaborate with other sectors of Australian society so we can work together for the Kingdom?
- What can we do to be better advocates for the Kingdom within Australian society and before Australian governments?

B. God: Information



- Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- a Power greater than ourselves – a Higher Power
- the Mystery
- the Divine
- the Divine Spirit
- the Spirit of the Universe
- the Creator
- the Creator Spirit
- Love – Divine Love
- Mercy

B. God: Affirmation



- Catholic health and aged care services try very hard to provide religious care to all patients/clients/residents. This includes the sacraments and other religious rites.
- Catholic symbols (statues, pictures, crucifixes)
- Qibla (Kiblah)

B. God: Challenge



- “We don’t do God.” – then-UK Prime Minister Tony Blair’s senior advisor Alistair Campbell (4 May 2003)
- Do our Catholic hospitals and aged care services “do” God?

Catholic Faith

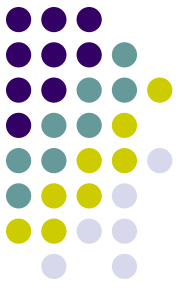


Catholic Social Thought



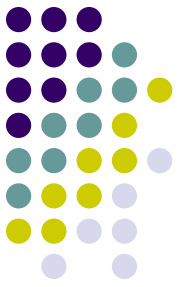
People of Good Will

B. God: Challenge (cont'd)



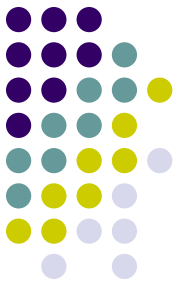
- Ask about, accept and value religious experience:
 - “Have you ever been aware of or influenced by a presence or power, whether you call it God or not, which is different from your everyday self?”
 - In one survey, 72% (124 of 172 people) described religious experience in considerable detail.
 - 50% (87 of 172 people) had this experience at a time when they were distressed or ill at ease.
 - While their circumstances did not change, 61% (105 of 172 people) reported that after this experience their state of mind dramatically changed to positive feelings such as peace, restoration, happiness, elation or awe.

B. God: Challenge (cont'd)



- Ask about, accept and value deathbed visions:
 - Michael Barbato's *Reflections of a Setting Sun: Healing experiences around death* (2009):
 - mostly visual, but also auditory, tactile and olfactory
 - the appearance of pre-deceased relatives or friends or (less commonly) unfamiliar faces, religious identities, images or scenes
 - bringing a state of acceptance, peace or even joy

B. God: Challenge (cont'd)



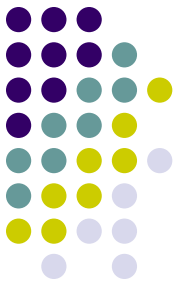
- WWJD wristbands
 - available from Koorong Christian Products
 - www.koorong.com
 - Customer Service: (02) 9857-4477
 - \$6.00 a packet of 6 (plus postage)
 - <http://www.koorong.com/search/product/silicon-wwjd-wristband-pack-of-6-colours/6006937099609.jhtml>

C. Being Poor: Information



- “Take nothing for the journey but a walking stick – no food, no sack, no money in your belt.” (Mk 6:8)
- When we have any form of wealth, we are tempted to rely not on God but on our wealth.
- The poor can rely only on God.
- Fortunately for them, God has a particular concern for the poor.
- God calls the People of God to share God’s concern for the poor:

C. Being Poor: Information (cont'd)



- the Law: “You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him. You shall not afflict any widow or orphan.” (Ex. 22:21-22)
- the Wisdom literature: “Give justice to the weak and the orphan, maintain the right of the afflicted and destitute, rescue the weak and the needy.” (Ps. 82:3-4)
- the Prophets: “Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the stranger, the orphan or the widow.” (Jer. 22:3-4)
- the Australian bishops: “Failure to care for the poorest and most vulnerable shows that a person is not truly attentive to the voice of God.” (*Common Wealth for the Common Good*, p. 5)

C. Being Poor: Information (cont'd)



- Jesus Christ “became poor, and was always close to the poor and the outcast.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, #186)
- If we are rich, it is hard for us to really connect with the poor.
- The poor have much to teach us:
 - “The most beautiful and natural expressions of joy which I have seen in my life were in poor people who had little...” (*EG*, #7)
 - “We need to let ourselves be evangelised by them.” (*EG*, #198)
- “There is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor.” (Pope Benedict, quoted by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, #48)
- “This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor.” (Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, #198)

C. Being Poor: Affirmation



- Catholic hospitals and aged care services are genuine in their concern to serve the poor.
- Catholic hospitals and aged care services are generous in their service of the poor.
- One of our basic principles in the *Code of Ethical Standards* is Collaboration in health and aged care. (p. 7) This desire for collaboration humbly recognises that by ourselves we do not have the resources to do everything we would like to do. We need others to stand with us and work with us so we can do as much as possible to serve the poor.

C. Being Poor: Challenge



- Both as hospitals and aged care services, and as individuals:
 - Develop relationships with disadvantaged people and groups
 - Strive to be close to God in prayer
 - Get outside our comfort zones
 - Try to be a bit more generous each time
 - Try to detach ourselves from our wealth: it is relationships not wealth which truly enriches our lives
 - At the same time, “do not deprive yourself of the day’s enjoyment.” (Sirach 14:14, quoted in *EG*, #4)

A song to conclude...



- Peter Kearney's *The Common Good*
 - from Peter's Album *The Common Good* (1993)
 - available from Peter's website at
<http://www.peterkearneysongs.com.au/>