

Paddy Kearney:

An example of the creation and re-creation of
a Christian Activist over Five Decades

PhD dissertation

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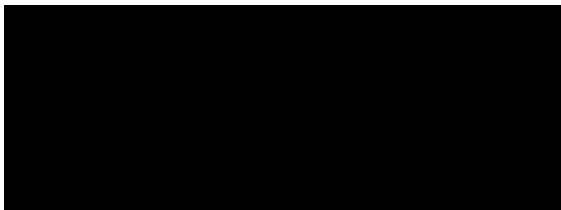
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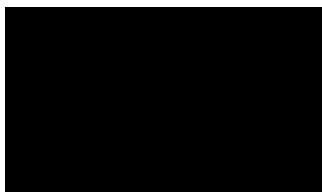
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Signed at Durban, 22 November 2022



Supervisor's approval:



Acknowledgements

The most important person for me to acknowledge is, of course, Paddy Kearney himself. His unexpected death in November 2018, aged only 76, was a great shock and created an immense sense of loss for all those who worked closely with him. I had only had that pleasure for the preceding four years but had been greatly inspired and encouraged by his witness as a Christian activist. Talking, in those days of mourning, to those who had known him better and for longer, soon showed me the importance of capturing Paddy's story and presenting it – not as a regular biography but as a theological biography to inspire future generations.

In this I am following in his own footsteps. Paddy's award-winning biography of +Denis Hurley is not only a major contribution to South African historiography but also an on-going inspiration to people like me who did not know +Hurley and want to know why he mattered. (Many of us also pray that it will be an important first step on the road towards him one day being declared 'St Denis of Durban'). The title of that book uses the name that Alan Paton coined for the Archbishop, playing on Hurley père's profession as a lighthouse keeper: 'The Guardian of the Light'. I used to tease Paddy that that meant he was 'The Guardian of the Guardian of the Light'. I wonder if that now makes me 'The Guardian of the Guardian of the Guardian of the Light'?

I therefore wish to acknowledge the many people who were willing to be interviewed for this work: his family, friends and colleagues from across almost six decades, who shared with me their stories and insights. I am conscious that some of them will not be around much longer to pass on their wisdom – and sadly a few have died since I interviewed them – and this makes it all the more important for them, and for South Africa history, that they have been recorded. Among these, particular thanks goes to Sarah Kearney, one of Paddy's nieces, who was probably closest to him among his family members and had also worked with him in his final months on sorting his archive, a wonderful posthumous gift from him to me as a researcher.

Work on this dissertation took place whilst I was also the director of the Denis Hurley Centre – a busy role at the best of times, but all the more so during the last few years of COVID, riots and floods. However, far from being a distraction, it meant that I had a daily exposure to the on-going mission of Paddy's last great project. I could thus constantly connect what I was reading and learning from his past with our attempts to live out that vision in the present. I therefore wish to thank the Trustees, staff, volunteers, supporters and service users of the DHC whose commitment as *synergoi* ('energy sharers') in our God-given vocation has continued to motivate me.

The deepest thanks are for my illustrious supervisor, Br Philippe Denis OP. It is important to have a supervisor who can commit the time and care to working with a first-time academic like me; it is rare to find someone with the unparalleled breadth of reading and experience that he has; it is an even greater blessing that he also knew and worked with Paddy and shares my belief that this is a story worth capturing. I am very grateful for all the efforts that he spent on nurturing me through this process and I hope that he feels that the result lives up to his very high standards. I also wish to acknowledge the kindness and patience shown me by the librarians and archivists at St Joseph's Theological Institute, Cedara.

Finally, a word of personal thanks. One of the most poignant discoveries in Paddy's archives was of bundles of handwritten letters that he had sent home during three different trips overseas (in 1958, 1972 and 1991). His parents, I assume, had treasured these letters safely; Paddy then inherited the collection when they died. Being able to 'listen in' on the thoughts shared between son and parents across the decades was an unexpected insight into the thoughts of a very private man. This therefore prompts me to acknowledge the support and encouragement of my own mother and father, many thousands of miles away, Phil and Winston Perrier. And also, closer to hand, the words of reassurance and love, matched with cups of tea and glasses of wine, from Caroline Joubert, Illa Thompson and Dr Ockert Fourie.

I should like to dedicate this work – in the hope that it is worthy of them – to three great South African men of faith. I had the great honour to know them towards the end of their days; they showed me through their lives and their work that in every age and in different ways, we are called to carry out the words that are the motto of the OMIs: 'go and bring good news to the poor'. From a better place, I hope that in some small way this work can honour the memory of Paddy Kearney, Paul Nadal and Albert Nolan. May they rest in peace and rise in glory!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations. (Jer 1:5)

Scope of the Project

This dissertation aims to take on the task of writing not just about the creation but also the re-creation of a Christian activist. The reason why there is this re-creation is because the activist in question, Paddy Kearney, was busy across more than five decades and through periods of great change in South Africa, in the Church and in his own life. I hope to show that what holds his life together with coherence is ‘the theology of Paddy Kearney’.

Some might challenge that he was not a theologian. Although Kearney wrote extensively about the Church¹ and ecclesial issues, and reviewed works by theologians, he did not himself write any works of academic theology. And although he had a post at a university, three degrees and two honorary doctorates, none of these were in theology-related fields. Nevertheless, for me, his life is his theological statement: it proves its role as theology in that it was a response to reflections on theological themes, it commented on and challenged theological issues of his day, and it inspired others for the way they should live and write (including the current author).

Although there will be many biographical elements, this is not strictly a detailed biography of Paddy Kearney (nor a history of the organisations with which he was mostly closely associated, Diakonia and the Denis Hurley Centre). I am cautioned by the words of one of Kearney’s heroes, Alan Paton, who described one biography as ‘a dull book about a dull man’.² Whilst that would be unlikely in the case of Kearney, lists of dates and events and talks and publications may not always inspire a future generation. Yet that is what I intend to do with this project.

In the task of inspiring others, there can certainly be value in some biographical accounts. On this I agree with the author of *African Christian Biography* who argues:

Biography is powerful. On a popular level, biography introduces ordinary people to the excitement of history by exploring the loves, hates, struggles, and victories of actual human beings.... Biography illustrates how people construct meaning in the midst of social, cultural and political processes that often seem overwhelming and uncontrollable....In short, through biography people become, to borrow a concept made popular by liberation theology, the ‘subjects of their own history’.³

I will therefore be drawing on those elements of Kearney’s life which I believe are inspiring and which tie in with the theological themes that dominate his life: this is ‘Biography as Theology’.

¹ The use of the word ‘Church’ can be confusing. Most Roman Catholics tend to use the term to mean only ‘the Roman Catholic Church’; but clearly other Christians (and some Roman Catholics) use it to mean the whole community that follows Christ. I will mostly use ‘Church’ to mean ‘Roman Catholic Church’; if I mean ‘the whole Christian community’ that will be specified or be clear from the context. I do this, with apologies to my fellow Christians, but to avoid being too wordy: I am a Catholic writing about a Catholic and often quoting Catholic documents – to keep saying Roman Catholic Church and not just Church will become irksome for the reader. Even if Vatican II, Kearney and I all try to be ecumenical in our outlook, it is only honest to admit that the referent of ‘Church’ mostly remains specific and not general.

² Paton, Alan. *Journey Continued*. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 52

³ Robert, Dana. *African Christian Biography*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2018) viii

As someone who knew and was inspired by Kearney, and on behalf of the 70 people I interviewed who knew him much better than I did and who were almost without exception inspired by him, I want to present his life as an inspiration to future generations. They will not get a chance to meet him in person. But, through these pages, I hope that they will meet him in a way that brings him to life for them but also situates his life in a theological context.

Biography as Theology

For this idea of 'Biography as Theology', I draw on the American writer, James McClendon who argues that reflecting on people who consciously lived in response to faith can provide a form of theology.⁴ I have no reason to believe that Kearney read this book (it would not have been easily accessible to him) and I am indebted to the Johannesburg-based Jesuit theologian, Anthony Egan, who drew my attention to it.⁵ Egan has also been engaged in biographical reflection for example on Rick Turner, an academic colleague of Kearney and a fellow anti-Apartheid activist who was assassinated in 1978 only a few kilometres from Kearney's own home.⁶ Egan encouraged me to start with the premise that Kearney did have a theological viewpoint and look for evidence for this, in part in what he wrote, but more so in how he lived.

McClendon supports this:

The best way to understand theology is to see it not as a study about God (for there are godless theologies as well as godly ones) but as the investigation of a convictional community, discovering its convictions, interpreting them, criticising them in the light of all that we can know and creatively transforming them into better ones if possible.⁷

In or near the community, there appear from time to time, singular or striking lives, the lives of persons who embody the convictions of the community but in a new way; who share the vision of the community but with new scope or power; who exhibit the style of the community but with significant differences. It is patent that the example of these lives may serve to disclose, and perhaps to correct or enlarge, the community's moral vision, at the same time arousing impotent wills within the community to a better fulfilment of the vision already acquired.

Such lives, by their very attractiveness or beauty, may serve as data for the Christian thinker, enabling him more fully to reflect on the tension between what is and what ought to be believed and lived by all. To engage in such reflection is the proper task of Christian theology.⁸

I intend to show that Kearney's life is an excellent example of this with a number of overlapping communities: the Catholic Church in Durban, the wider Christian community in Durban, and the wider faith community across South Africa; and in relation to the convictional communities of those

⁴ McClendon, James. *Biography as Theology: how life stories can remake today's theology* (New York: Abingdon, 1974)

⁵ Egan, Anthony. Personal interview by author, 16 October 2020 via Zoom (Jesuit priest and theologian).

⁶ Egan, Anthony. "Remembering to think critically: Rick Turner 40 years on" *Spotlight Africa* <https://spotlight.africa/2018/01/08/thinking-rick-turner/> (accessed 24 March 2022)

⁷ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 35

⁸ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 37

who fought against Apartheid before 1994, and of those who have attempted to build a new South Africa in the last 2-3 decades.

The reference above to a number of faith communities (like concentric circles) and to a socio-political communities which may or may not include people of faith, raises the question of the importance of propositional beliefs in this theology. Should we be asking: what did Kearney think about the role of Christ? The role of the Catholic Church? The possibility of redemption? And do his beliefs about these matter?

McClendon cautions against us focusing on statements-of-truth to the neglect of actions-in-truth:

By recognising that Christian beliefs are not so many propositions to be catalogued or juggled like truth-functions in a computer, but are living conditions that give shape to actual lives and actual communities, we open ourselves to the possibility that the only relevant critical examination of Christian beliefs may be one which begins by attending to lived lives.⁹

Writing in 1974 (a critical year in Kearney's life), McClendon's book covers four lives. Unfortunately, all of them are men and all living in the United States, but at least one is not white!¹⁰ McClendon explains his choice: "Others can choose other lives and reap an equal or better harvest. I have chosen these because, with all their flaws, I like them very much."¹¹ I would certainly say the same about my choice of Kearney; but I also have closer links to the subject as I shall explain later in this chapter.

Writing about one of his subjects, McClendon says: "My intention cannot be to discover what Dag [Hammarskjöld] believed religiously and argue that we should believe the same. That is not what biography as theology means."¹² In the same way, my focus will not be to try and neatly formulate the set of theological propositions that Kearney held strongly; rather it is to show how aspects of his life were shaped by certain convictions and that he encouraged others to share these convictions: beliefs, then, not as theological propositions but as a moral guide to a good life.

This, of course, is in keeping with the Catholic tradition of recognising and honouring saints. That was something of which Kearney was very aware; moreover, it was also something in which he was personally invested: starting the process towards 'St Denis of Durban' (technically 'opening the cause for his canonisation') was one of the unfinished tasks of Kearney's life.¹³ In fact, only a few months before his death, Kearney encouraged me to appear in a national television programme about saints and talk specifically about this cause.¹⁴

Saints mattered to Kearney, to me and to McClendon: "Saints serve as models for new styles of being Christian, opening paths that others may follow."¹⁵ Kearney clearly believed that about Archbishop Hurley which is why he invested a large part of the 14 years between Hurley's death in 2004 and his own in 2018 to ensuring that the Archbishop's model and style would open paths for others to follow. Whilst I might hesitate to make a similar canonisation claim for Kearney – not least

⁹ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 37

¹⁰ His focuses are Dag Hammarskjöld (Secretary General of the United Nations), Martin Luther King (civil rights activist), Charles Ives (composer) and Clarence Jordan (founder of Habitat for Humanity). Though all are people of strong Christian conviction, only King is a formal Church minister.

¹¹ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 38

¹² McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 40

¹³ Mary Gardner, Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Pietermaritzburg (Widow of Chair of Christian Institute)

¹⁴ 'Saints'. *Issue of Faith*. SABC 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsioMjEBNbU> (accessed 8 September 2022) (The programme aired on SABC2 in June 2018 but can be viewed via YouTube).

¹⁵ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 186

because he would not want it! – I certainly believe, and hope to show, that Kearney’s life also provides a model and style that open paths for others to follow.

A starting point for that, then, is to set out the key shape of that life. Kearney did this for +Hurley with his award-winning biography which will be frequently referenced throughout this work.¹⁶ I will not be attempting in this work a comparably exhaustive biography of Kearney and will instead be focusing on specific aspects of his life and work. But just as Kearney was able to condense his 380-page book into a ‘short biography’ of 2,500 words for the Denis Hurley Centre website, so I shall start with a short overview of Kearney’s life, also in under 2,500 words.¹⁷

The shape of this life already gives some insights into the character of Kearney, both by what he chose to do and the ways in which he enabled himself (and others) to develop. McClendon stresses the importance of character, something which is both a given and also continuously developed:

To have character, then, is to enter at a new level the realm of morality, the level at which one’s person, with its continuities, its interconnections, its integrity, is intimately involved in one’s deeds. By being the persons we are, we are able to do what we do, and conversely, by those very deeds, we form or re-form our own characters... Thus character is paradoxically both the cause and the consequence of what we do.¹⁸

Brief life of Kearney

Kearney was born in Pietermaritzburg South Africa on 28 August 1942 to Jack and Margie Kearney. His father was a civil servant with the provincial government and they lived a ‘respectable lifestyle’ typical of middle-class white South Africans of their era.¹⁹ ²⁰ Although christened Gerald Patrick, he was always known by the nickname ‘Paddy’ – probably (as mentioned at his funeral) because ‘Gerry’ was at the time of World War II a derogatory way of referring to Germans!²¹ He had a brother four years his senior (also Jack) and one two years younger than him (Brian). Whilst proudly South African, the family were also conscious of their Irish roots²²; for example, of Kearney’s great-great grandfather James Kearney who had been the Superintendent of St Stephen’s Green in Dublin (effectively, a very upmarket park curator). Kearney was pleased (in a visit to Ireland in 1992) to see the plaque that commemorated his ancestor’s actions during the Easter Uprising of 1916, entering the park during the ceasefire to feed the ducks.²³ Perhaps he saw this as evidence of a family tradition of non-violent resistance in the midst of conflict.²⁴

The family were ‘staunchly Catholic’ attending St Mary’s Church in Pietermaritzburg (the only Catholic church in the town at the time) and all three boys were sent to the local whites-only

¹⁶ Kearney, G Paddy. *Guardian of the Light* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2009)

¹⁷ Kearney, G Patrick. ‘Short biographies’. *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/short-biography-of-hurley> (accessed 8 September 2022)

¹⁸ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 30

¹⁹ Houston, Gregory. “Interview with Paddy Kearney”. *Unsung Heroes and Heroines of the Liberation Struggle* (Cape Town: Human Science Research Council, 2013) 2; ; Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

²⁰ For more on this, see Appendix A: “Kearney’s racial identity”.

²¹ ‘Kearney obituaries and sermons’. *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/kearney-obituaries-and-sermons> (accessed 8 September 2022)

²² Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

²³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/C/1 “Kearney’s letters to his parents, September 1991 to August 1992” (Letter dated 10 April 1992)

²⁴ For more on non-violence, see Appendix E: “+Hurley, Kearney and Gandhi”.

Catholic boys' school, St Charles (which Archbishop Hurley had also attended in the 1920s). The school was run by the Marists, a Catholic order of brothers (i.e. not priests) founded in France in the early 19th century and which had been running a number of schools (at the time only for boys) across South Africa since 1867.²⁵ The myth that Kearney was an altar boy when +Hurley was made a bishop is not substantiated by investigation of the official photograph (aged 4 in March 1947, Kearney would have been too young).²⁶ But he certainly would have served the (Arch)Bishop at Mass at St Mary's and also in the chapel at St Charles and was confirmed by him in 1957. In 1958, he had his first experience outside of South Africa, travelling for 6 weeks, with his grandfather and some members of the Church community, to Italy, France and the United Kingdom.

On completing his education in 1959, aged still only 17, and having shown himself to be an able scholar, Kearney (not untypical for young Catholics of his generation) immediately joined religious life, in fact the Marist order itself. Like other South African Marist novices, he was sent to spend 18 months on a rural farm in Australia. The noviceship was intended as a period of isolation for the candidate Marists, not just from their friends and family but also from most of the world around them. But, in two significant respects, it provided the opposite experience for Kearney.

Apartheid – formalised when the National Party came to power when Kearney was six – meant that his life as a white South African would have kept him isolated from 'other races'. But at the noviciate he did have the experience of living with people of colour since there were also novices from the Pacific Islands.²⁷ In addition, the news coverage in Australia was not censored as it was back home and so Kearney recalls hearing reports about the Sharpeville massacre in March 1960.²⁸

On his return to South Africa in 1961, he spent 18 months teaching at the Marist school in Port Elizabeth and then, from 1963 to 1965, he was back in Pietermaritzburg (living in a Marist house, not with his parents) and studying for a B.A., first with UNISA and then completed at the University of Natal. In 1966 (aged 23) he moved to Johannesburg where he was sent to teach at the more upmarket of the city's two Marist schools (St David's Inanda) whilst also studying part-time for a U.Ed. at the University of the Witwatersrand. During this period, there is the first evidence of his straying beyond the formal confines of his situation: he was exposed to other forms of Catholic life (regularly visiting the Grail, a community of lay women); he had ecumenical contacts (including Ds. Beyers Naudé); and he was engaged in social justice (illicitly conducting classes for black children in Soweto in the choir loft of Regina Mundi church).²⁹ In 1967 he took his 'Final Vows' as a Marist though, compared to his peers, he had delayed this commitment by a year.³⁰

Nevertheless, after a Christmas break, with no forewarning to his friends, his family or his fellow-Marists, Kearney did not return to St David's as planned in January 1970 but instead announced that he was leaving the order and asked to be released from his vows. He turned 28 in this year and spent some of it back in Pietermaritzburg completing a Diploma in Education at the University of Natal which he later converted into a B.Ed. Armed with this, in 1971 he spent a year teaching at the Inanda Seminary School outside Durban, an all-girls, all-black, Congregational school (in stark

²⁵ 'Marist Schools in South Africa'. *Marist Brothers website*. <https://champagnat.org/mundo-marista/marist-schools-in-south-africa/> (accessed 8 September 2022)

²⁶ Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban (Catholic Monsignor, Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre). Nadal clung to the view that when +Hurley was consecrated bishop, Kearney was a train bearer.

²⁷ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney).

²⁸ Houston, "Interview with Paddy Kearney", 3

²⁹ Ceruti, Ines. Personal interview by author, 8 April 2019 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

³⁰ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney).

contrast to the all-boys, all-white, Catholic school at the Johannesburg Inanda). This gave him a much fuller insight into the lived situation of black families in South Africa at the time and the research element of his B.Ed. focused on this.³¹

Between 1972 and 1974, Kearney worked part-time as a Junior Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Natal while also starting to get involved in Justice & Peace activities with the Archdiocese of Durban.³² He also won a Fulbright scholarship which enabled him to earn an M.Ed. at the University of Toledo, Ohio. During his time away (September 1972 to November 1973) he also visited Mexico (where he met Ivan Illich who was the focus of his M.Ed. dissertation³³), and then the United Kingdom.³⁴

From late 1974, he was engaged by +Hurley to conduct research into the planning of an 'ecumenical centre for social justice' that would serve the greater Durban area and support all the Christian churches in their response to the social challenges of the time.³⁵ By 1976, he became the first employee of the organisation, called Diakonia, initially as 'Secretary' and then later as 'Director'. He oversaw the development and growth of the organisation (up to 30 staff when he left).³⁶

Even though the project was only focused on Durban, it earned a national and international reputation as a locus for resistance to injustice and in particular to the Apartheid policies of the Nationalist Government. This was partly for the programmes that it ran itself and also for its association with a building (initially called the Ecumenical Centre and later the Diakonia Centre) which hosted a number of other organisations fighting for social justice (Black Sash, Legal Resource Centre, End Conscription Campaign, Detainees Support Committee, etc). For the police it was 'the HQ for trouble-makers'.³⁷

Diakonia received praise from fellow-activists (in South Africa and in exile) and also substantial funding from European anti-Apartheid supporters; it also received criticism from some Church members and leaders and was treated with great suspicion by the authorities who would regularly harass, threaten and investigate Kearney and his associates.³⁸ Throughout this period, +Hurley remained closely associated with the work of Diakonia as its Chair and principal spokesperson.³⁹

Highlights of this time in the history of Diakonia were Kearney's involvement in the Durban part of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983 and campaigning against the Tri-Cameral Parliament. In April 1985, he initiated an annual 'Good Friday Walk of Witness' which, in defiance of State of Emergency legislation at the time, enabled a group of people to publicly protest about Apartheid and show solidarity with its various victims, though under the guise of a religious service. Also in 1985, Kearney was one of a number of Diakonia employees who were detained by the security police as a threat to the state. A high-profile and precedent-setting court case led by Archbishop

³¹ Kearney, G Paddy. "A Study of School Leavers from a High School for African Girls", B.Ed. dissertation (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1972)

³² Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (personal friend and involved in Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace).

³³ Kearney, G Paddy. "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", M.Ed. dissertation (University of Toledo, 1973)

³⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/C/1 "Kearney's letters to his parents, September 1972 to November 1973"

³⁵ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 196-198

³⁶ Houston, "Interview with Paddy Kearney", 7

³⁷ Apelgren, Eric. Personal interview by author, 6 October 2020 in Durban (volunteer at Diakonia and local Government official)

³⁸ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

³⁹ Kearney, G Paddy. "Diakonia". *Serving Humanity – a Sabbath Reflection*. Stuart Bate ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1996) 192-197

Hurley resulted in Kearney being released after 17 days, mostly in solitary confinement though he was not tortured (unlike some other detainees).

The creation of 14 Community Resource Centres meant that Diakonia's reach went right out into local areas, providing practical help to those who most needed it.⁴⁰ Kearney and Diakonia were also involved in trying to address the increasing violence in Natal between various factions (principally supporters of the ANC and the IFP). The anti-Apartheid work of Diakonia culminated in a Freedom March organised by Kearney and others, again in defiance of State of Emergency restrictions, in September 1989 (in the end this was only a few months before the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990). It is a mark of the significance of Diakonia at this time that Mandela's first speech in Durban was at the Diakonia Centre.

During this period, Kearney was very closely connected, both professionally and personally, with Carmel Rickard. She was a noted legal and social justice journalist of the time who played a significant role in highlighting the work of Diakonia. Moreover, they lived together as a couple from 1975 and married (according to Church law at least) in 1983.⁴¹ Although they lived in modest houses in the centre of Durban, their chosen parish was the Catholic church in Wentworth, a 'coloured area' almost one hour's drive away, with an Oblate priest, Fr Cyril Carey, known for his strong commitment to social justice.⁴² They did not have any children. They separated in 2004 when Rickard left Durban, though they remained friends until Kearney's death.

Kearney took a year's sabbatical with Rickard between September 1991 and August 1992 when they both studied at Harvard in the USA and also travelled to Canada, El Salvador, the UK, Ireland and Italy.⁴³ On his return to Durban, unlike many fellow activists, he did not accept any offers of better paid jobs within the new establishment.⁴⁴ Instead he chose to continue as Director of Diakonia, which in 1994 re-formed to become 'Diakonia Council of Churches'. The organisation was influential in voter education and monitoring for the first democratic elections in April 1994; it also supported the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's work in Durban. Though he stepped down as Archbishop of Durban in 1992, +Hurley continued to be actively involved in Diakonia, and also in the life of the Church in the Durban city centre, being based at Emmanuel Cathedral until his final retirement in 2002.

Kearney's mother died in May 2000, his father in July 2002 and +Hurley himself in February 2004. Kearney's own health was also under pressure and a heart attack in 2003 led to a sabbatical period and the decision to step down from Diakonia, after 28 years, in April 2004. He joked at his retirement party that he had been in office longer than President Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe!⁴⁵

Although now almost 62, Kearney showed no sign of retiring. Over the next few years he spent time continuing to work with and mentor the other ecumenical organisations that he had helped set up, in the spirit of Diakonia, both for the Province as a whole (KZNCC) and also for regions within the Province. He also supported other organisations involved in education, social justice and non-violent resistance: serving as Chair of the Gandhi Development Trust, Co-Chair of a Social Cohesion Commission inaugurated by the Province Premier, a board member of the International Centre of Non-Violence at Durban University of Technology (ICON), a co-founder of the Active Citizens

⁴⁰ Houston, "Interview with Paddy Kearney", 8

⁴¹ Kerchhoff, Joan. Personal interview by author, 6 April 2022 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of head of PACSA)

⁴² Apelgren, Eric. Personal interview by author, 6 October 2020 in Durban (Volunteer at Diakonia and local Government official).

⁴³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/C/1 "Kearney's letters to his parents, September 1991 to August 1992"

⁴⁴ Gandhi, Ela. Personal interview by author, 18 March 2021 in Durban (Fellow worker on Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

⁴⁵ Houston, "Interview with Paddy Kearney", 6

Movement (ACM), and a Trustee of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Foundation. Also, during this time, he was an active member of the Emmanuel Cathedral Catholic parish, serving on the Pastoral Council and leading the Liturgy Committee.⁴⁶ Again (as in Wentworth) he found himself as one of the only white parishioners, but this time joined by an influx of Africans from other parts of the continent.

Kearney's main focus in his final years was on the legacy of +Hurley. He completed research (started while +Hurley was alive) to feed into memoirs and biographies of the Archbishop which were published in 2005⁴⁷, 2006⁴⁸, 2009⁴⁹ and 2012⁵⁰. Not content with written histories, Kearney also wanted to create (in his words) a 'living legacy'. The idea of the Denis Hurley Centre – a building and an NGO to respond to the needs of inner-city Durban – was first floated in 2006. Some people close to him thought he had 'lost his mind' to take on such a huge project at this time of his life.⁵¹ By 2010 a formal Trust was established with Kearney as Chair (a role he played actively until his death) as well as principal fundraiser; in February 2009 the foundation stone was laid; the NGO moved into the building in December 2014 which was officially opened on 9 November 2015, the centenary of +Hurley's birth. The uniqueness of the Denis Hurley Centre being an inter-faith collaboration to help the poor was a key motivation for Kearney's commitment to this cause.

Though never one to draw attention to himself or to court praise, Kearney was honoured in a number of ways in his final years: an honorary doctorate from UKZN in 2009, and the equivalent of one from St Augustine's Catholic College in 2017; the Andrew Murray Award for a theological book in English in 2010; the Sergio Vieira Human Rights Award in 2013, a Living Legends Award from eThekweni Municipality in 2014, and a Papal *Bene Merenti* medal in 2018. An edited collection of Kearney's own writings was published in 2017.⁵² His last great written achievement was a collaboration on an edited selection of +Hurley's letters, published in 2018 just months before his death.⁵³ Kearney died aged 76, unexpectedly on 23 November 2018 of a heart attack, having suffered from heart problems all his life (including rheumatic fever as a child).

His passing was marked (at his request) by an ecumenical/ interfaith ceremony at the Diakonia Centre, and then a Catholic Requiem Mass at Emmanuel Cathedral, followed by cremation and internment behind a very simple plaque at the columbarium in the grounds of the Cathedral. Though not his request, he was also honoured with a civic memorial at Durban City Hall initiated by the Mayor of eThekweni and the Premier of Kwa-Zulu Natal (the offer of a 'State Funeral' was made but refused, not least because it would have involved guns).⁵⁴ He had lived a materially very simple life and the bulk of his relatively small estate was left to the Denis Hurley Centre; his personal archive was entrusted by his family to this author before being placed as part of the Denis Hurley Library at St Joseph's Theological Institute Cedara near Pietermaritzburg.

⁴⁶ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

⁴⁷ Hurley, Denis. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005)

⁴⁸ Kearney, G Paddy ed. *Memoirs. The memoirs of Archbishop Denis E. Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: OMI, 2006)

⁴⁹ Kearney, G Paddy. *Guardian of the Light* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2009)

⁵⁰ Kearney, G Paddy. *Truth to Power* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2012)

⁵¹ Joseph, Hester. Personal interview by author, 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia and Denis Hurley Centre Trustee)

⁵² Kearney, G Paddy. *Faith in Action* (Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal Christian Council, 2017)

⁵³ Denis, Philippe, Kearney, Paddy & Argall, Jane eds. *A Life in Letters – selected correspondence of Denis Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2018)

⁵⁴ 'Kearney obituaries and sermons'. *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/kearney-obituaries-and-sermons> (accessed 8 September 2022)

Why Kearney's life matters

While Kearney was very keen for +Hurley to be officially named a Saint, he would be most embarrassed if that word were applied to him. But it should be remembered that St Paul applies the word 'saint' (*hagios*) to all the members of the churches to which he writes.⁵⁵ (Significantly, as I will explore in Appendix B, Paul never distinguishes between grades or orders, and never uses the language that is common in the church today of clergy and lay people.) So, by that definition, Kearney is a saint. Reflecting on the way that he lived his life 'among the saints of the church in Durban' (as St Paul might have said) gives us important lessons.

That is not just because of his character but also because of the decades through which he lived.

- It was a time of great change for the world: he was born during the Second World War, lived through the Cold War and the threat of nuclear catastrophe, and died in an age in which technology appeared to offer solutions to everything while poverty and climate change were sending billions of people backwards.
- It was a tumultuous period of change for South Africa – 'Grand Apartheid' was inaugurated when he was 6 years old; he spent most of his adult life fighting against it; it was dismantled when he was 52 years old; and he then lived through 24 years in which many of the promises of Liberation failed to materialise (even while some of his fellow-activists were now in Government).
- It was also an unprecedented era of change for the Catholic Church: his childhood and education were in the final years of a Church closed to the world; the Second Vatican Council took place when he was a Marist brother and he emerged from religious life into an excitedly open Church and archdiocese; his time as an activist was through the long reign of John Paul II, and the contrasting papacies of Benedict XVI and Francis (the last five years of Kearney's life).

With such richness to choose from, my focus on Biography as Theology as it relates to Kearney will take six key themes of Vatican II and connect them with six key themes of his life:

- The universal call to holiness of all people in the Church (Chapter 2): drawing on *Lumen Gentium* and *Apostolicam Actuositatem*
- The Catholic Church's changing relationship with other Christians (Chapter 3): drawing on *Unitatis Redintegratio*
- The commitment to be a Church in the modern world and challenging injustice (Chapter 4): drawing on *Gaudium et Spes*
- The experience of suffering as a way of coming close to Christ (Chapter 5): drawing on *Gaudium et Spes*
- The unique claims of Christianity and the growing respect for other faiths (Chapter 6): drawing on *Nostra Aetate*
- The development of Kearney's Catholic identity (Chapter 7) : drawing on *Apostolicam Actuositatem* and *Lumen Gentium*

⁵⁵ Eph 1:1

To a great extent, of course, I will be looking to the past, albeit the recent past. But McClendon points out: “The saints belong to communities of the past and [yet also] shape communities of the future”.⁵⁶ A number of people close to Kearney felt that writing about him was important because of the influence that his life could have on future leaders.⁵⁷ Ironically, some of those who expressed this are ones whom Kearney might have felt had failed to learn these lessons themselves.

The importance of images

McClendon ends the quotation above by saying that it is “images [that] are a central means of this communication.”⁵⁸ So while each chapter, after an appropriate verse from Scripture, will look at aspects of Kearney’s life, and the activities in which he was involved, they will begin and end with striking images that help us not only to understand him but also to be inspired by him. I will attempt ‘to discover some dominant images which unlock this biography’.⁵⁹ With apologies to those co-workers of Kearney and mine who are Jewish or Muslim or from the *iconoclastic* tradition within Christianity, I am placing myself firmly within the *iconographic* tradition, which is comfortable not only for Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox Christians but also for the Hindus and Buddhists with which Kearney felt some affinity. Again, to quote McClendon:

Austin Farrer said that holy images were the very mode of the inspiration of scripture, their metaphoric force turning what would otherwise be flat narrative into the inspired prose and poetry of the Bible.⁶⁰

So the images will help tell the story. Let me begin with the one that can be seen by any visitor entering the Denis Hurley Centre. In the middle of the far wall, there is a photograph of Kearney, as winner of the Living Legends award and holding his prize-winning biography of +Hurley. But the photo is intentionally in shadow, and the shadow is cast by the life-size bronze statue of +Hurley which dominates the central atrium. In death, Kearney is best understood in the place where he chose to spend almost all his life: ‘in the shadow of +Hurley’. Not a place where he was overlooked or restricted or unable to develop as a Christian, but rather the place which best suited his ‘ethic of character’. McClendon tells: “that such an ethic can best be learned within a community which displays and evokes that character.”⁶¹ +Hurley provided the communities in which Kearney’s character flourished.

Before this sounds too hagiographical, let me also take caution from McClendon:

Christians from New Testament times have been deeply interested in character, though more correctly in character as redeemed by Christ rather than in character as a natural or personal achievement.⁶²

⁵⁶ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 193

⁵⁷ For example, Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu. Personal interview by author, 26 May 2022 in Durban (Kearney’s successor as Director of Diakonia and sometime Patron of Denis Hurley Centre); Apelgren, Eric. Personal interview by author, 6 October 2020 in Durban (Volunteer at Diakonia and local Government official)

⁵⁸ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 193

⁵⁹ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 111

⁶⁰ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 192

⁶¹ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 22

⁶² McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 33

Kearney shared with me his pleasure at Pope Francis' words when asked by a journalist soon after his election how he would define himself: "I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon."⁶³

Sadly, I never asked Kearney how he would define himself but I suspect that he would connect with those words because they would define him in relation to the Lord. So while my focus will be on Kearney, and his focus was on +Hurley, the focus of all three of us must be on Christ if we are to call ourselves Christians. Because it is the way of a Christian, but also because it is the only justification that Kearney would have allowed for devoting so many words to him, I stress that in looking at Kearney's *Biography as Theology*, I do so because this is one way of reflecting on the life of the figure that Kearney and +Hurley (and I) try to follow:

For a biographical theology (though it acknowledges that the lives it attends to each incorporate convictions) the centre must be the lives themselves, or more accurately must be one life, the life of Christ. [Propositional theology on the other hand] is abandonment of the attempt to confront, or be confronted by, Jesus of Nazareth as Christ.⁶⁴

I recall standing on my own in the vast space of the empty cathedral after Kearney's coffin had been removed, and the crowds had left, feeling very alone. I was conscious that, almost 15 years earlier, Kearney might have stood in the same spot wondering what life would be like for him now that +Hurley had gone, also feeling very alone. And in that instant, I was most conscious of the consoling presence of Christ, saying to me as I imagined he had said to +Hurley and to Kearney, "I am with you, even to the end of time."⁶⁵

Positionality of the author

The aim of this thesis is to explore the life of Kearney as an example of the living out of the Second Vatican Council, in particular by reference to the documents and those focuses of the Council which were also focuses of his life. Anyone who had access to Kearney's writings and to those who worked with him, and who was knowledgeable about Vatican II, would be in a position to conduct such an analysis. I hope that is true of me. But as well as having an academic interest in writing this, I also have a personal interest. I therefore wish to set out, from the beginning, my own positionality with regard to the subject (the man) and the subject (the argument) in order to shed light on what follows.

I first came to know Kearney around 2010 when I had moved from the UK to work for the Church in another part of South Africa (about 600 km away) but visited Durban from time to time. That means that I did not know him for almost the first 70 years of his life, the time when he was most active. I had narrowly missed meeting him a few years earlier when he was due to launch his book *Guardian of the Light* in London; he had to let someone else do it because he had injured himself and could not travel. I was invited to attend the book launch because at the time I was working for CAFOD, the Catholic development charity for England & Wales which had been great supporters (from the 1970s to the 1990s) of +Hurley, Kearney and Diakonia. I had not heard of any of them before that point

⁶³ Spadaro, Antonio. 'Interview with Pope Francis' *Vatican website*
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130921_intervista-spadaro.html (accessed 8 September 2022)

⁶⁴ McClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 198

⁶⁵ Mt 28:20

but was keenly interested in the work of +Romero in Latin America; this was presented to me as of interest since it was a parallel that had been happening in South Africa.

My relationship with Kearney became very involved in the final four years of his life. Towards the end of 2014, he approached me to consider becoming the first director of the Denis Hurley Centre, the 'legacy project' for +Hurley which had been his focus since 2012. I accepted – discovering for myself the reputation Kearney had of getting people to agree to do things: 'being Paddied' as it is known in Durban. Thus, since soon after the opening of the building in late 2014 until Kearney's death in November 2018, he was my boss (as Director, I reported to the Trustees of which he was Chair). Moreover, he was not a distant chair and he was still actively involved in fundraising and many public events: I saw him at least two or three times a week and we probably exchanged at least 100 emails a month. He also drew me into some of his other activities (such as interfaith work).

This thesis is focused on Kearney's work as a Christian activist over five decades: I have the unusual position in having been completely distant from the first 90% of that period, and then deeply involved in the last 10%.

Shared motivation

But it is not just our working together that creates a position of common ground – it was the content of the work and what lay behind it. When asked by friends (who expected me to return to the UK) why I was staying to do this work in Durban I replied that there were four aspects that particularly appealed: that it showed the Church as engaged in the modern world; that it was focused on social justice; that it built on established co-operation between Christians of different traditions; and that it would aim to bring together people of other faiths. Subconsciously, I was articulating my motivation in terms that echoed four documents of Vatican II. And I believe, as I will explain, that this was also Kearney's motivation.

This shared motivation was evident (in retrospect) if I recall my first conscious awareness of Kearney. This was when the organisation I was running in Johannesburg (the Jesuit Institute) created an initiative called the 'Hope & Joy Network' to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the start of Vatican II in 1962. One of the activities was to bring together different parts of the Catholic network in each city to explore what were the key themes to celebrate and what means would be most effective. These workshops intentionally aimed to capture the spirit of Vatican II: so they involved bishops, theologians, religious sisters, lay men and women side by side; included people involved in parishes, education, welfare, training, liturgy and spirituality; and were certainly open to involvement by Christians of other traditions and people of other faiths. I facilitated such a workshop in Durban in April 2011 which was attended by about 30 people including the then Archbishop (Wilfrid, Cardinal Napier) and Kearney. I was aware that Kearney had written about +Hurley and was actively promoting a progressive reading of Vatican II; I was also aware of Napier's pride in having helped elect Ratzinger as Pope seven years earlier and his reputation for sharing Benedict XVI's reticence about aspects of the post-Vatican II Church. Thus, in this one room, I had examples of the hermeneutics of continuity and discontinuity.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Faggioli, Massimo. *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 2012) 8

The workshop did not end in a brawl or a major argument but instead a commitment by all present to engage people across each diocese with the anniversary. And at the end, Kearney took me to one side and simply said: “Denis Hurley would be so pleased with what you are doing in this initiative.”

Thus, I cannot disguise that I shared Kearney’s commitment to promoting Vatican II and to a belief that the work of the Council, far from being completed, still had a long way to go. This was clear in the Hope & Joy initiative of which he was a part, the Denis Hurley Centre project that we led together for almost four years, and my choice of Vatican II as the lens through which to understand his life and mission. I believe that this lens will say a lot about him; the choice of lens already says a lot about me.

My own book of reflections (written while I was holidaying in Durban, though without specific input from Kearney) reflects on my life as a Vatican II Catholic:

When the Council ended on 8 December 1965, I had been 6 weeks in the womb. I am, thus, literally a child of Vatican II, being born into a Church that was beginning to enact the changes of that monumental Council. In the almost 50 years I have spent practicing and growing as a human, I have also been practicing and growing as a Catholic – sometimes devout, sometimes wavering, hopefully well-informed, often loyal, mostly proud, always tied umbilically to this Holy Mother.⁶⁷

Similarity in elements of background

In addition to the above, I note that there are some unexpected similarities in the lives of me as author and Kearney as subject. This is despite the separation of distance of 13,000 km and the separation of age of about a quarter of a century (which is also, more or less, the age gap between Kearney the author and +Hurley the subject).

Both us were born into staunchly Catholic families: we each have memories of reciting the rosary with our grandmothers. If my exposure to non-Catholics happened earlier than Kearney’s (in my early teens not in my mid-20s), it was still a shock that I had to learn to process until I found the positive. Both of us were consciously part of a Catholic minority in a wider political society that was at the very least suspicious of Papist tendencies. 1970s Britain did not name it as *de Roomse gevaar* (‘the Roman threat’) but, when I was a child, the IRA in Northern Ireland were regularly referred as ‘Catholic terrorists’. Both of us had a complex relationship with an ethnic identity: Kearney was clearly (because of his name) from an Irish family though he was at pains to stress his allegiance to South Africa, while campaigning to change it to a better South Africa; I was clearly (because of my skin colour) from an Indian family though I was also at pains to stress pride in my British nationality.

I make all these points because, when I comment on issues of identity in Kearney’s life, I am inevitably influenced by own sense of identity. The parallels between us give me, I believe, some privileged insight into my subject.⁶⁸

Both us have chosen to work in the area of social justice, but not primarily from a personal experience of injustice. Both of us were born into well-off middle-class families and were educated at good schools whose aim was to prepare their boys (single-sex education for both us) for

⁶⁷ Correia, Frances & Perrier, Raymond. *Pilgrims the Modern World – daily reflections for Lent* (Johannesburg: Jesuit Institute, 2015) iii

⁶⁸ For more on this see Appendix A: “Kearney’s racial identity”.

professional lives that would be sheltered and comfortable. Kearney, as I shall explore, chose almost as soon as he could, to sacrifice himself to help others (and, even during the few years he spent in a respectable profession as teacher and lecturer, he was already operating at the cutting edge). Thus, almost all of his working life was devoted to the fight for justice. I was much further along the road to Damascus when I was thrown from my horse – in fact I spent 14 years working in advertising in London and New York: as far as one could get from ‘the cry of the poor’.⁶⁹ But I did change direction and have also made some sacrifices, working for the last twenty-one years in various social justice organisations and, like Kearney, all of them connected to the Church.

This is also the context for possibly the most important similarity in our lives. Though when we met we were both lay men, we had both spent a period of our lives in Catholic men’s religious orders. I shall explore how Kearney, having been taught by the Marist Brothers, joined that same congregation straight from school. He spent 10 years as a Marist, taking both simple and final vows, before leaving at the age of 27. My journey as a religious started later in my life (I was 35 when I joined the Jesuits), was shorter (only six years) and was a journey towards being a priest (which Kearney’s never was). But, because of our vocational journeys, we share three profoundly important experiences: the decision to respond to a call from God and thus prioritise that over other ways of life; an intense period of formation within a religious congregation involving immersion in a strong sense of mission and also the opportunity to see what was being achieved in reality; and the hugely disruptive decision to leave the religious congregation and find a new path and a new relationship with God and with the Church.

There are, of course, major differences between us as well. Kearney was married for almost 20 years (I have never been married); though Kearney travelled overseas he never lived further than 80km from where he was born (I have lived on three different continents); Kearney grew up (albeit involuntarily) as a member of a privileged white minority in an institutionally racist country (my own personal experience of racism has been much more nuanced).

I declare the similarities (and dissimilarities) between our lives since they inevitably affect the way in which I write about him. I believe that I have the advantage of being both insider and outsider.⁷⁰ I have lived in South Africa for 12 years but am not South African. I knew Kearney but was not involved in a large part of his life. I share his Catholic heritage while retaining his ability to look honestly at the Church. Like him, I was a member of a religious order but then chose to operate as a lay leader within the Church.

While there are some risks in being an insider, I suspect that are equally significant risks in being a total outsider – lack of empathy with the subject, poor familiarity with the background, difficulty in gaining the trust of those who knew the subject. I would suggest that in my position as a partial insider, the advantages have outweighed the disadvantages especially when I am keenly aware of this position.

The use of the documents of Vatican II as an organising principle

This thesis looks at various social and ecclesial challenges faced by Kearney, and by many other activists operating in South Africa in the last 60 years. My approach will be to examine those issues with specific reference to certain documents. But the choice of these documents might seem

⁶⁹ Prov 21:13

⁷⁰ Merrian, Sharan et al. “Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures”. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. (2010, 20:5) 405-416

curious since they were written by a group of celibate male clerics meeting in Rome right at the beginning of this period: they are documents promulgated by the Second Vatican Council meeting between 1962 and 1965. I will also be drawing on some of the extensive writings about Vatican II that explore developments before, during and after the four years of the Council itself.⁷¹ The reader might wonder why such attention is given to these documents when reflecting on the life of an activist like Kearney.⁷²

In deciding how to respond to the challenges that they face, people draw on their education, the leaders they admire, and a reflection on the situation they are in. But many also turn to texts for inspiration and for guidance. A number of religions have writings that they hold as paramount; though 'Sacred Scripture' is written at a place and a time in history, adherents regard it as transcending the particular and having application to every time and every place. All Christians (to a greater or lesser extent) thus draw on the Bible – the Hebrew Testament and the 'New' Testament – as a source of guidance.

But for Catholics there is another set of documents which, while not approaching the sacredness of the Bible, nevertheless are of significant influence: these are the documents of the Church. There are hundreds of these and it can be hard to navigate them. But there is a clear hierarchy of documents which places those that come from a Pope (and with grades within that set) above those that come from a Vatican Congregation (even if 'signed off' by the Pope), in turn above those that come from local or regional groups of bishops or even individual bishops. The general principle is that lower level documents can amplify and clarify but cannot contradict higher level ones.⁷³

At the top of this hierarchy are the documents produced by an Ecumenical Council (of which there have only been 21, according to the accepted counting, over the past 20 centuries).⁷⁴ The last Ecumenical Council was Vatican II and so these documents have pre-eminence in establishing the teaching of the Church at the end of the 20th century.

The 2,500 bishops at Vatican II probably hoped that all Catholics would be guided by the teaching of the Church and in particular by the documents of a Council. I think that is what is termed 'a pious hope'. But I do believe that in the case of the life and mission of Kearney focusing on the Vatican II documents is especially relevant for four reasons:

- *Vatican II is a key hinge in the life of Kearney.* Vatican II was clearly a hinge which defined a change in the Church's understanding of itself and of the world. Even if people debate what happened at Vatican II, there is no doubt that something momentous did happen (O'Malley questions this and then answers his own question).⁷⁵ But the period was also a hinge in the life of the young Kearney. From his birth in 1942, he was growing up in a Church which followed Catholic customs that we would now call 'pre-Conciliar': he would have attended

⁷¹ To mention a few examples: Alberigo, Giuseppe, Jossua, Jean-Pierre & Komonchak, Joseph A eds. *The Reception of Vatican II* (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987); Cassidy, Edward I. *Rediscovering Vatican II – Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2005); Faggioli, Massimo. *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 2012); Stacpoole, Alberic ed. *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there* (London: G Chapman, 1986); O'Malley, John W. *What happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge MA: Harvard, 2010); Orsy, Ladislav. *Receiving the Council* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2009)

⁷² See Appendices D and E for more detailed analysis of some of the most relevant documents, *Lumen Gentium*, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* and *Gaudium et Spes*.

⁷³ Sullivan, Francis. *Creative Fidelity – weighing and interpreting documents of the Magisterium*. (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1996) 12-27

⁷⁴ O'Collins, Gerald. *Living Vatican II - the 21st Council for the 21st Century* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 2006)

⁷⁵ O'Malley, John. *Vatican II: did anything happen?* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2007); O'Malley, John. *What happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge MA: Harvard, 2010)

services in Latin and presumably never questioned why this was so or if this would ever change. In 1960 he began formation in a religious order and was with them for the whole of the decade which included Vatican II. When he left the Marist Brothers in 1970, he emerged in to a Church which had changed in many visible and invisible ways. Just as the life of the Church can be considered in terms of before and after the 1960s (because of Vatican II), so Kearney's life as a Catholic can be considered in terms of before and after the 1960s (because of Vatican II and also his time as a Marist).

- *The influence of Denis Hurley, Archbishop of Durban.* Since he was so young when he became a bishop in 1947 (at 31, the youngest bishop in the world at the time), +Hurley was still relatively young when he attended Vatican II (he only turned 50 in the final weeks of the Council). Thanks to his formation as a member of a French religious order (the Oblates of Mary Immaculate), +Hurley was one of the few English-speaking bishops at the Council who could also move easily in the highly influential circles of francophone bishops and theologians. For example, he was *elected* by his fellow bishops to the Commission for Seminaries and Universities of Studies, a clear indication that he was known internationally. His importance at Vatican II is confirmed, for example, by the journalist who covered the Council for *Time Magazine*.⁷⁶ Partly at Kearney's encouragement, +Hurley was writing his memoirs when he died (in 2004) and the part that was published were his reflections on the Council under the title 'Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive'.⁷⁷ There is no doubt of the importance of the Council to +Hurley and we can deduce from that the importance of the Council to Kearney. The statue of +Hurley commissioned by Kearney for the Denis Hurley Centre has him holding a book – not the Bible but the documents of Vatican II. This reflects what Kearney saw as important to +Hurley and also, I believe, reflects what Kearney saw as important to his own life.
- *Reception of the Council by Kearney.* Even if others debate the degree to which Vatican II was 'received' by parts of the Church, I shall show plenty of evidence that Kearney personally received and implemented its teachings; moreover, he also worked with +Hurley and others in the Archdiocese of Durban to ensure a wider reception among clergy and laity. Reception is described as the assimilation and 'making one's own' of another's reality.⁷⁸ Some theologians argue that while a Council is the ultimate legislative body of the Church, its work is only complete once it is received by the whole Church. Many would go further and say a document (even if approved by the bishops) only become authoritative teaching once it is received by the people.⁷⁹ This concept of 'reception' has a long history. For example, the Council of Florence in the mid-15th century produced a document that would have enabled reunion between the Western and Eastern Churches but it was never 'received' by the Orthodox Christians who felt betrayed by it and so it was never implemented. Reception has been especially debated in the decades since Vatican II because of *Humanae Vitae* (1968) since it is one of the church documents in history most ignored by the faithful. Kearney's life gives every indication that the teachings of Vatican II were received by him and, he believed, should be received by the wider Church.

⁷⁶ Kaiser, Robert Blair. "Understanding the implications of Pope John's *aggiornamento*". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 42-48

⁷⁷ Hurley, Denis. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005)

⁷⁸ Rush, Ormond. *Still Interpreting Vatican II – some Hermeneutical Principles* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2004) 3

⁷⁹ "Technically speaking, the reception of ecumenical councils refers to 'what the Church made of them, what in their work the Church tested and found good and retained, or wanting and discarded' (quoting Komonchak). The study of the reception of Vatican II thus amounts to a critical study of what it has contributed and is contributing to our understanding of what the Spirit is saying to the Churches in our context today." Langefeld, Chris. "The Reception of Vatican II in South Africa". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 40

- *The overlap of the Council's concerns and Kearney's concerns.* If Kearney was primarily an academic, then documents would be a typical way of understanding his life. But Church documents are perhaps a strange choice for reflecting on the life of an activist, albeit a Christian activist. However, the ease with which one can map the concerns of the Vatican II documents with the issues on which Kearney focused suggests more than a coincidence. If one were to take an overview of what pre-occupied Kearney the list would readily be: the role and mission of the Church in the world, the fight for justice and human rights, the role of lay people within the Church, relations between Catholics and other Christians, relations between Christians and other faiths, the importance of public liturgy, the importance of the right kind of education. Each of these are the specific focus of at least one document of Vatican II and indeed between them cover 80% of the concerns of the Council. It is almost as if Kearney took the list of documents when he left the Marists in 1970 and used them to construct an agenda for his life.

I also think that the Council documents can be used in this way because they are inherently inspiring. O'Malley – who stresses that to understand the documents we need to be aware of the literary genre in which they are written – calls the style of language 'panegyric-epideictic':

It raises appreciation, it creates or fosters among those it addresses a realisation that they all share or should share the same ideals and need to work together to achieve them.⁸⁰

This is worth stressing since it is not the style of documents from many previous councils. And it was very nearly not the style used by this Council. One particularly famous challenge to improve the quality of the documents came from the Bishop of Umtali, Donal Lamont.⁸¹ He was appalled at the original draft of the decree on the Missions, and in the presence of Paul VI, urged the bishops to reject it, making a vivid comparison with the dry bones of Ezekiel (37:1-14).⁸²

Not only the redrafted *Ad Gentes* but all the Vatican II documents in the end live up to the challenge that John XXIII made to the bishops when he opened the Council:

The Church in every age has opposed errors and often has even condemned them and indeed with the greatest severity. But at the present time, the spouse of Christ prefers to use the medicine of mercy rather than the weapons of severity.⁸³

Spirit and Letter

In focusing on documents, I am not placing myself on this side of the line that distinguishes between 'the letter of the Council' and 'the spirit of the Council'.⁸⁴ Sometimes this distinction is used to place theologians favouring a narrow, restrictive, reading of Vatican II under the heading of 'letter' and those favouring a broader, expansive reading under 'spirit'. The former group say: "the conciliar documents, nothing more, nothing less"; the latter group suggest that we look not just at what the

⁸⁰ O'Malley, *What happened at Vatican II*, 48

⁸¹ It is interesting to note the similarities between +Lamont and +Hurley, both of Irish origin, with superb oratorical skills, devoted to Southern Africa, and a thorn in the side of oppressive Governments. +Lamont was later ready to appear at +Hurley's side during his 1985 trial.

⁸² Lamont, Donal. "Ad Gentes: a missionary bishop remembers". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 279

⁸³ *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* 16

⁸⁴ O'Malley, *Vatican II: did anything happen?*, 21

bishops wrote but what they intended. The former stress continuity; the latter are accepting of discontinuity.⁸⁵

Faggioli points out that this is a later reading of what was happening.

In the very first years after the Council, the ideological spectrum of Catholic theologians on Vatican II seemed to be unanimous in their enthusiastic acceptance of the final documents. The tensions between the letter and the spirit of Vatican II did not play much of a role at that time and neither did the supposed tension between the hermeneutic of continuity and the awareness of discontinuity.⁸⁶

Certainly, those who would position themselves on the side of the spirit of the Council would not see this as being in opposition to the documents produced by the Council. Rush sees the concept of 'the spirit of the Council' in the context of 'the Holy Spirit of the Council' and points out that John XXIII had prayed for the Council to be a 'new Pentecost'.⁸⁷ This reference to the Holy Spirit provides a useful echo with +Hurley's own episcopal motto *Ubi Spiritus, ibi Libertas* ('Where the Spirit is, there is Freedom').⁸⁸

Writing soon after the closing of the Council, McKenzie points out that one of the issues that Vatican II had opened up (that had been closed for many years) was the very question of authority in the Church. He points out that Church authorities had had a defensive posture since the Protestant reformation in the 16th century, further hardened by the intellectual and political revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, and the Modernist controversy at the turn of the 20th. Although John XXIII was still greatly venerated, McKenzie argues that his very act of calling the Council undermined the traditional prestige in which Church authority was held. He concludes that there is now an inevitable – and creative – tension in the Church between authority and freedom.⁸⁹ That very tension was already captured in the choice of the word 'freedom' in +Hurley's episcopal motto in 1947. And it is the tension that lies behind the battle for spirit and letter.

Rush concurs with Pottmeyer in seeing spirit and letter not as alternatives but rather part of a virtuous hermeneutical circle.

Despite the limitation of the conciliar texts, the 'spirit' of the Council is tied to them, because without them it would lack any direction. The 'spirit' of the Council makes itself known from the direction given in the texts. Conversely, of course, it is only in this 'spirit' that the texts are properly understood.⁹⁰

So I am drawing on the documents of Vatican II in order to examine both the letter and the spirit of the Council because I believe they help us to understand Kearney: a life and mission shaped by the Council and influenced by its documents, directly and also indirectly through +Hurley, consciously and also subconsciously through his work.

⁸⁵ For more on this, especially in relation to teachings that impact on the life of Kearney see Appendix B: "Vatican II and the Laity" and Appendix C: "Interpreting *Gaudium et Spes*."

⁸⁶ Faggioli, *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning*, 8

⁸⁷ Rush, *Still Interpreting Vatican II*, 26

⁸⁸ 2 Cor 3:17

⁸⁹ McKenzie, John. *Authority in the Church*. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966) 162ff

⁹⁰ Pottmeyer, Hermann J. "A new Phase in the Reception of Vatican II: Twenty Years of Interpretation of the Council". *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 42

Explanation of the range of Sources

This dissertation thus draws on four main groups of material which are explained in more detail below:

- A. Documents of Vatican II (and a few other Vatican documents)
- B. Archives of papers and press clippings, principally Kearney's own personal archives supplemented by those of +Hurley and the organisations with which they were associated
- C. Personal interviews with people who knew Kearney at different stages in his life
- D. Relevant books and papers that explore these themes (including some that Kearney wrote and some that he is known to have read)

A. Vatican Documents

Reference is made throughout to a range of Vatican documents all of which are accessible from the Vatican website.⁹¹ As explained above, the principal documents used are those of the Second Vatican Council which, following convention are referenced by their Latin titles. They are as follows (listed in order of date of promulgation):

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*)

Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication (*Inter Mirifica*)

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*)

Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*)

Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*)

Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church (*Christus Dominus*)

Decree on Priestly Formation (*Optatam Totius*)

Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*)

Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*)

Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educationis*)

Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*)

⁹¹ 'Archive', Vatican website <https://www.vatican.va/archive/index.htm> (accessed 12 November 2022). In addition, there are various published translations of Vatican II documents (though sadly all with gendered language) e.g. Abbot, Walter. *The Documents of Vatican II, with Notes and Commentaries By Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Authorities* (Freiburg: Herder and Herder, 1966)

Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*)

Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*)

Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*)

Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*)

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*)

In addition, other Papal encyclicals and addresses are referenced.⁹²

Since my aim is to explore the impact of the documents of the Council on the life of Kearney, it would have been wonderful to have his personal printed set of Vatican II documents, with notes in the margin in his neat handwriting: but that does not exist. We can be sure that he read the documents; we also know, from Kearney's own books and articles, of the influence of the Council on +Hurley. For example, Kearney clearly defines the Archbishop in the context of Vatican II ('a father and a son of the Council').⁹³ This, coupled with the record of Kearney's life, and the testimony of those who worked with him, justify me in using the documents of Vatican II as a key lens through which to explore Kearney's life.

B. Archives

Though we do not have any clear written statement by Kearney about how Vatican II shaped his life, my research has been informed by the large amount of relevant material that I have been able to access from archives. This is fortunate and unusual.

Commenting specifically on religious archives in South Africa, Francis Garaba writes:

It is important to note that much of our national heritage is recorded in the archives of our religious institutions, hence the need to ensure that a continuum of care is provided for this Christian heritage from the point of creation to the retirement of those records with enduring value.⁹⁴

Garaba warns that the lack of professionalism and disconnectedness of religious archives in South Africa is a great risk for future researchers. Thankfully, in my case, this was not true.

The principal archive materials used are the papers found in Kearney's home after his death in November 2018; what I have termed his 'personal archive'. To give a sense of scale there was the equivalent of about 100 A4 archive boxes containing personal papers, letters, press cuttings, reports, tapes and photographs. It was clear that, up to his death, Kearney had been preparing his papers and that this task was largely complete. He had worked on his own (and also with his niece Sarah

⁹² See Appendix for more details.

⁹³ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 144; also: "The Archbishop of Durban was, and still is, a son of the Council. But he is also one of its fathers – if one may be forgiven for using this politically incorrect term." Denis, Philippe. "Archbishop Hurley's contribution to the Second Vatican Council". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 15

⁹⁴ Garaba, Francis. 'Disembodied archives: The disconnectedness of records and archives management practices within the Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Libraries, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', *Verbum et Ecclesia* (36:1, 2015) 1

Kearney who mentions this in her interview⁹⁵) to filter through his papers, discard some, and collect them together thematically and tidily into archive boxes and lever arch files. Having worked extensively with the +Hurley archive (see below), Kearney would have had a keen understanding of the importance of good archiving. The way in which he prepared the archive and organised the filing indicates clearly to me that he intended them to be accessible for someone else to read.

The existence of these papers, and the fact that they were prepared by Kearney himself, is very significant. We can, with confidence, deduce that these were the papers that Kearney himself thought were most important (at least out of those that he still had in his possession). We can also assume that he would be happy for someone who was doing research (about him or organisations he was linked to) to read this material (which is especially relevant when, as I indicate, some more sensitive material is discovered).

Verne Harris, reflecting specifically on the use of archives in South Africa history, challenges the usual view that an archive is a mirror that reflects reality. He instead suggests that we are wiser to regard an archive as ‘the sliver of a window’ and one that is shaped by many forces, no less true in liberated South Africa than during the days of Apartheid.⁹⁶ Given that all archives are shaped, the fact that in this case the sliver is the one that the subject himself wanted to bequeath does not make it authoritative but certainly makes it significant.

Soon after his death, Kearney’s younger brother Brian entrusted the archive to me and it has now been placed as part of the Archive of the Denis E Hurley Library at St Joseph Theological Institute (SJTI) based at Cedara near Pietermaritzburg. I kept the papers in the files and sets that Kearney had used. But, to make them more easily accessible to future researchers, I have created archive references that are in line with the system used by SJTI so that can be more readily integrated into that archive.

Since most of the material is related to Paddy Kearney, it has the primary reference ‘SJTI Archive: BIO-496’. The section on Printed Sources contains a fuller overview of the various sections of this part of the archive. Note that most of these are papers collected by Kearney, or written by Kearney about others; there is very little that Kearney wrote about his own life.

In the SJTI archive, materials that are referenced ‘SJTI Archive: BIO-11’ are related to +Denis Hurley. The +Hurley material in the SJTI archive is the result of at least four main sources:

- +Hurley’s own personal archive which, on his death, was left to the library that is named after him, at the institution that he himself has founded
- Papers related to +Hurley from the archive of the (then) Natal Province of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (+Hurley was a member of the OMIs, and SJTI is an OMI institution)
- Some papers related to +Hurley from the archive of the Archdiocese of Durban (though the majority of papers from his time as Archbishop remain in the Archdiocesan archive – see below)
- Papers collected by Kearney during the preparation of his biography of +Hurley which were then donated to the SJTI archive

Note that Kearney drew substantially on this archive when preparing his various books about +Hurley and also supplemented it.

⁹⁵ Kearney, Sarah. Personal interview by author, 17 September 2020 (niece of Kearney)

⁹⁶ Harris, Verne. “The Archival Sliver: Power, Memory and Archives in South Africa”, *Archival Science*. (2, 2002), 63-86

At SJTI's request, Kearney papers about the Denis Hurley Centre have been coded under +Hurley with the reference 'SJTI Archive: BIO-11/W/3' (alongside other institutions named after +Hurley). This covers minutes of meetings, press clippings and correspondence.

In addition, I have had permission to access the archives of the Archdiocese of Durban, of Diakonia, and of the Marist Brothers of South Africa. As Director of the Denis Hurley Centre, I also have direct access to the archives of this organisation.

One general archive resource that has also been used is the *South African History Archive* which I have accessed on line (<https://www.saha.org.za>) and also at their reading room at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

It might be helpful to give an overview of the archival materials that I have used in terms of their (descending) order of importance:

- The relatively few comments that Kearney made about his own life, in written interviews with others and a radio interview and a television interview
- 'Morning Papers', a daily journal that Kearney kept when travelling to UK and USA (mid-2005) and UK and Ireland (mid-2006)
- Personal letters from Kearney to his parents when travelling overseas at three periods of his life: pilgrimage to Europe (1958), travelling in USA, Mexico and UK (1972-1973), studying in the US (1991-1992)
- Kearney's dissertations for his B.Ed.⁹⁷ and M.Ed.⁹⁸
- Kearney's own selection of his papers that were published in an anthology⁹⁹
- Kearney's extensive writings about +Hurley, speeches, articles and books, which often refer to Vatican II and to Conciliar themes
- Kearney's personal archives of papers which includes speeches, newspaper articles, reports and minutes.
- General archives of +Hurley, Diakonia and the Denis Hurley Centre and those parts that are most relevant to Kearney
- Tributes about Kearney on the granting of awards and honorary doctorates; and obituaries and tributes after his death

C. Interviews

I have also been able to draw extensively on reflections on Kearney's life gleaned from 70 interviews with people who knew him well.¹⁰⁰ The template of the interview shows how I was especially keen to probe for opinions about what people felt motivated Kearney, who and what inspired him, and why they felt that he should be remembered.

The number of interviews was higher than originally planned because of the ease of interviewing people and also the keen-ness of early interviewees to recommend me to others. In most cases, the interviews were conducted in person though, in a few cases, via Zoom (because of distance or COVID

⁹⁷ Kearney, G Paddy. "A Study of School Leavers from a High School for African Girls", B.Ed. dissertation (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1972)

⁹⁸ Kearney, G Paddy. "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", M.Ed. dissertation (University of Toledo, 1973)

⁹⁹ Kearney, G Paddy. *Faith in Action* (Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal Christian Council, 2017)

¹⁰⁰ See "Oral Sources: List of Interviewees" for a list of names, dates and back-up documentation.

restrictions). Consent forms and contemporaneous notes from the interviews (plus, in most cases, live recordings) have been archived.

There were a few noticeable gaps: in particular, Kearney's older brother (Jack) was too sick to be interviewed (and indeed has now passed away); Kearney's younger brother (Brian) and Kearney's wife (Carmel Rickard) both declined to be interviewed. Nevertheless, the interviewees between them cover every aspect of Kearney's life: his childhood; his time as a Marist Brother; working at the University of Natal, Diakonia, the Denis Hurley Centre and some of his other projects. Importantly, the list includes people who knew him professionally and also personally. A few people were contacted and did not reply but, when this happened, there were other people interviewed who knew Kearney at that same period in his life and so there are no noticeable gaps.

Oral history makes a critical contribution, especially when exploring the story of those, like Kearney, who were active within living memory. But I am also conscious of some of the challenge that oral history can pose and especially the dangers of relying on people's memories.¹⁰¹ I think that the quality of the accounts that I received was enhanced by the fact that, without exception, interviewees were very pleased to be contacted, delighted to talk and often spoke more widely and at greater length than had been requested. This reflects the high degree of affection that they held for Kearney – many of them explicitly said this – and thus their desire to ensure that his story was told.

I think that this is also indicative of a group of people mostly now in their 60s, 70s and 80s who realise that time is running out to share their own stories. Though many of the interviewees have made significant personal contributions to South African history, with only one or two exceptions none of them has published versions of their own stories (written by them or someone else). It also helped that in 90% of cases I was contacting people whom I already knew to some degree.¹⁰² Age did have an impact for a few on their ability to recall details, especially dates, though where possible I have been able to verify through cross-referencing to other interviewees or to archives. I also recognise that – again conscious of their own legacies – interviewees may have depicted events in ways which were likely to show them more favourably in retrospect.¹⁰³ Where I feel that this has skewed what was shared, I make a comment to this effect.

D Printed Literature

The final source is of course printed literature – books and journal articles – and this is detailed in the Bibliography. I hope that I have covered the major authors that deal with the themes that I am discussing. Of course, some of these are books that Kearney is unlikely to have read and so we cannot attribute any direct influence from these authors. I cite them instead because they demonstrate themes that emerge in looking at his life and demonstrate that these themes are part of a wider theological reflection on the Council.

But there are some situations in which the links between Kearney and the authors are more distinguishable:

- Reviews of books by Kearney (often about Vatican II figures or on Conciliar themes)

¹⁰¹ Abrams, Lynne. *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010) 78-105

¹⁰² See the comments earlier in Chapter 1 on my own positionality with respect to Kearney.

¹⁰³ Grele, Ronald. *Envelopes of Sound – the art of oral history*. (Chicago: Precedent, 1985) 216-221

- The reviewed books themselves since we know that Kearney read them (and in a few cases, his own copies of those books with a few notes in the margins)
- Other books that he is very likely to have read since they are by theologians that he knew well and admired
- Books on conciliar themes that he may well have read and which would have been influential on him since they were significant books at the time

We do know that Kearney had access to +Hurley's own extensive theological library, that he created a library at Diakonia (which, to some degree, still persists), and that he borrowed books from the library at SJTI and also donated books. Sadly, SJTI does not have a record of the books taken out by individual lenders, nor even a record of who donated certain books, and so – apart from the books that were donated on his death – we cannot know for certain which books he read (apart from the very few, serendipitous examples when I found his handwriting in pencil in the margins).

Conclusion

All biography, even of someone recently deceased, is inevitably skewed by what information can be found, which may or may not be what is most important.

Bonk warns of 'the streetlight effect': we are looking for our keys in the place where we can see, even if it is not the place where we actually lost them. He also warns against the danger of the *Mappa Mundi* effect: we exaggerate what we do know and then put dragons to cover up the bits that we do not; we locate ourselves in the *Terra Firma* to try and survey the *Terra Incognita*.¹⁰⁴ There is, thankfully, a lot of *Terra Firma* (positions supported by Kearney's own writings, the interviews and surrounding literature); but I have also had to make some informed guesses to avoid too much *Terra Incognita*. The reader will have to decide if I have been successful.

In the same book, the editor Robert Dana re-tells a famous admonition (variously attributed to Francis Bacon, Roger Bacon and Aristotle):

In the year of our Lord 1432, there arose a grievous quarrel among the brethren over the number of teeth in the mouth of a horse. For thirteen days, the disputation raged without ceasing. All the ancient books and chronicles were fetched out, and wonderful and ponderous erudition, such as was never before heard of in this region, was made manifest.

At the end of the fourteenth day, a youthful friar of goodly bearing asked his learned superiors for permission to add a word, and straightway, to the wonderment of the disputants, whose deep wisdom he sore vexed, he beseeched them to unbend in a manner coarse and unheard of, and to look in the open mouth of a horse and find answer to their questionings.¹⁰⁵

I hope that I have consulted a sufficient number of the 'ancient books and chronicles' and that I have applied some 'wonderful and ponderous erudition'. And while I am far from youthful and, even when a friar, was not of goodly bearing, I hope that alongside the extensive sources that I have

¹⁰⁴ Bonk, Jonathan. 'Modern African Church History and the Streetlight Effect: Biography as a Lost Key' in *African Christian Biography*. Robert Dana ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2018) 2

¹⁰⁵ Robert, Dana. *African Christian Biography* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2018) 11-12

mentioned, my own proximity to the subject gives me permission to express opinions. I have opened the mouth (metaphorically rather than literally) and so present my case having counted the teeth for myself.

But I should therefore comment, in closing, on while I feel entitled to present this material and, in particular, to access Kearney's personal archive (including some family letters). Kearney was a famously private man – a comment repeatedly made by interviewees. But occasionally, in the last four years of his life when I was working closely with him, he would share some story about his own experiences. Given that he had written such an eloquent biography of +Hurley, I asked him why he did not now write his own life story. With characteristic humility, he said he would not do that. I replied that if he would not write his story, would he let me write it for him? And his exact words of reply were: "For as long as I am alive, you cannot write my story." I am confident that, from a better place, Kearney – even if embarrassed by the attention that this work focuses on him – is prepared to smile benignly on my efforts to share his inspiring story.

Chapter 2: Kearney's Vocation

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tender-hearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. (Col 3:12)

Introduction

One of the most significant changes brought about by Vatican II was a focus on the role of 'lay people' in the Church. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* was the first Church document in 2,000 years, and through 21 Ecumenical Councils, that specifically addressed the very notion of lay people existing, let alone having a role.¹⁰⁶ And yet, based on Vatican statistics from the end of 2020, the 1.36 billion members of the Roman Catholic Church include only 464,000 ordained men and a further 669,000 vowed religious – i.e. lay people are 99.92% of the members of the Church.¹⁰⁷

But the Decree on the Laity is possible only because, a year earlier, the 'Dogmatic Constitution of the Church' set out a model for the Church which – literally – turned previous models upside down. Instead of starting with the Pope and then working down through the hierarchy, the Council Fathers chose to present the Church, first and foremost, as the People of God.

At all times and in every race God has given welcome to whosoever fears God and does what is right. God, however, does not make people holy and save them merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather has it pleased God to bring human beings together as one people, a people which acknowledges God in truth and serves God in holiness.¹⁰⁸

This is a major shift from the Tridentine view of the Church as 'a perfect and unequal society'. Congar argues that these ecclesiological values "have not been rejected or forgotten but they are no longer regarded as the door by which we enter into the reality of the Church, nor are they the dominant values."¹⁰⁹ Congar further points that the Latin term *laicus* (used as a noun) appears 200 times in Vatican II documents whereas it was not used at all in Vatican I.¹¹⁰

Lumen Gentium goes on, in paragraph 39, to describe a 'Universal Call to Holiness'. Traditionally, this had been language reserved for people with a vocation to religious life; but Vatican II extends the word 'holy' to all the people of God (as in fact St Paul had done 1900 years earlier). What makes Kearney's response to this call especially interesting is that he spent part of his life as a member of a religious order, part as a single lay man and part as a married lay man. What I intend to show is that there is a unity in how Kearney lived out his vocation in that he is consistently responding to the 'call to holiness'.

¹⁰⁶ Appendix B explores in more detail what Vatican II says about the role of laity, the possible inconsistencies, and some developments in practice since the Council.

¹⁰⁷ "Vatican Statistics show global imbalance". *Catholic News Service*. 18 February 2022 <https://catholicnews.com/vatican-statistics-show-global-imbalance-in-ratio-of-catholics-per-priest/> (accessed 18 August 2022)

¹⁰⁸ *Lumen Gentium* 9

¹⁰⁹ Congar, Yves. "Moving towards a Pilgrim Church". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 135

¹¹⁰ Congar, "Moving towards a Pilgrim Church", 137. Congar in fact lists a number of other words that are popular in Vatican II and absent from Vatican I: *ministerium/-strare* (148 times), *amor* (113), *servire/-vitium* (97), *fraternus/-ne/-nitas* (87), *evangelizatio/-zare* (49), *pauper* (42), *dialogus* (31).

In each chapter, in line with the ideas of McClendon, I will start and end with ‘some dominant images which will unlock this biography’.¹¹¹ Two images of Kearney, from opposite ends of his life, provide a stark contrast. The first is a photo from 1969 when he was teaching as a Marist brother at St David’s School in Johannesburg. The 27-year-old Brother Paddy is dressed in ‘clerical’ robes and surrounded by his charges, a group of Catholic school boys.¹¹²

The second is an image in my own archives from one of the first times I met Kearney. It was a ‘Hope and Joy’ workshop that I was hosting in Durban around 2011 to explore ways of reconnecting with Vatican II, in preparation for the 50th anniversary. Kearney was one of about 40 people present: most were lay men and women, some were priests, some religious sisters, one of them a Cardinal Archbishop. But all were mixed up around the room – standing, sitting or crouching on the floor – working together on some question about the role of the Church in the world.

If the word ‘vocation’ had come up in relation to the first picture, it would be assumed to apply primarily to the clerically-clad brother and possibly to one or two of the ‘select boys’ who were ‘joining the Church’. In the second picture, it was clear that everyone in the room had a vocation, and they were exploring how they could work together to develop their own and each other’s vocations. In the intervening 42 years, the word vocation had widened to embrace all Christians by virtue of their Baptism. I want to understand how Kearney grappled with and nurtured his vocation, and so I will look at his time as a Marist and his life after that.

From a personal point of view (as explained earlier in Chapter 1), this is also a question with which this author has struggled and so I cannot pretend that my comments on this subject are ones which do not also touch my own Christian vocation in very deep ways.

Kearney’s choice to become a Marist

For 10 years (1960-1969) Kearney was a member of the Marist Brothers, a Catholic male religious congregation founded in Lyons in 1817. By the definition given in *Lumen Gentium* 31 this means that he was not a lay person since it excludes ‘those in the state of religious life’. On the other hand, by the definition of Canon Law, which is focused on the presence or absence of ordination, it means that he was still a lay person even when a Marist (hence the reference in Vatican documents to ‘lay brothers’).¹¹³ I would like to show that from the style of life and the self-understanding of Marists in the 1960s, Kearney was definitely not a lay person. If the laity are those *in the world* as distinct from those who have been *separated from the world*, for 10 years Kearney was certainly separated from the world.

Kearney’s route into the Marists was quite typical – he joined them straight after attending a school (St Charles College in Pietermaritzburg) which at the time was run by the Marist Brothers and had a good number of Marists on the staff. As part of the research, it has been possible to speak to four of Kearney’s contemporaries from his time as a Marist: their memory is of how many of their cohort had also been schooled by the same order. It was very typical at the time that, after the influence of being taught by members of a religious order for five, sometimes twelve years, students were drawn

¹¹¹ McClendon, James W. *Biography as Theology: how life stories can remake today’s theology* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1974) 193

¹¹² Marist Archives, Johannesburg: *St David’s College Review* (December 1969, Page 66)

¹¹³ *Perfectae Caritatis* 10

to join the same order – young men became brothers and priests, young women became sisters.¹¹⁴ It is also typical that they joined straight from school. In many cases, in fact, they left school early and joined a 'Juniorate', a residential semi-monastic community where they would complete their high school studies away from the temptations of teenage life and prepare for a later vocation (as minor seminaries did for diocesan vocations). Peter Taylor had this experience and recalls that it was only much later that the Marists encouraged young men to spend a few years 'in the world' after school before joining.¹¹⁵

Before exploring Kearney's life as a Marist Brother, it is worth asking about the possibility of a priestly vocation. There were a number of men who went to Marist schools and who chose to become priests and not brothers (including +Hurley himself and his Vicar-General and Kearney's collaborator, Mgr. Paul Nadal). Even someone greatly influenced by Kearney, one of his star pupils from his years at St David's, Graham Lindegger, left school to start training as a priest. (He joined the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the order that dominated large parts of South Africa, before eventually leaving). Indeed in the 1969 copy of the school magazine (which Kearney helped edit), Lindegger is one of four old boys who wrote about their experience in formation as Oblate priests.¹¹⁶

Though influenced by the Marists at school, Kearney was also very friendly with the Oblates in his parish (and had indeed travelled with some on his visit to Europe aged 16).¹¹⁷ Though we do not know that Kearney considered joining the Oblates (or even becoming a diocesan priest), it is highly likely that he would have, given his family culture, his education, his social class and his interest in the Church. It seems, then, that Kearney's decision to become a Marist was very intentional.

The Marists were an order of brothers not priests. Could this be interpreted as a conscious decision on the part of Kearney to avoid the clericalism of priesthood? My conclusion is that it was not. Though brothers are not ordained, and so canonically are lay people, the style of life of a Marist Brother in the 1960s was so much like that of a religious priest that Kearney's experience was that he was leaving the laity.

Mario Colussi, one year ahead of Kearney as a novice, points out that during the novitiate, which is when a candidate is especially reflecting on how God is calling them, there was no particular stress on the vocation of the brother (as distinct from a priest). But they did learn how their founder, Marcellin Champagnat (a Marist priest) wanted to extend the order to include brothers because he wanted men who were free to teach (and not be involved in parish work). As the number of brothers grew, Champagnat was unhappy that a Marist Priest still had to be their Superior and so he created the order of 'Little Brothers of Mary' which only contained brothers. The order was thus rejecting governance by a priest; it was not rejecting the principle of clericalism.

Tim McCrindle also stresses that, at their schools, the Marists never discouraged a boy who wanted to be a priest. The sense of being a brother and not a priest was really tied up with the identity of their institutions (the schools) not their clerical status. He also pointed out that Kearney's link to the Marists was even stronger since his father had been taught by them and was in fact chair of the Marist Old Boys' Association.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ My own mother, a near-contemporary of Kearney, attended a school in India run by a religious order and four of her six sisters joined that same religious order.

¹¹⁵ Taylor, Peter. Personal interview by author, 1 February 2021 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney)

¹¹⁶ Marist Archives, Johannesburg: *St David's College Review* (December 1969, Page 40)

¹¹⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/C/1 "Kearney's letters to his parents, May 1958 to June 1958"

¹¹⁸ McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

When Kearney was later studying as a Marist in Pietermaritzburg, he met a Dominican sister Marie-Henry Keane with whom he would stay friends until his death 52 years later, and so through many phases of his life. She was living in Alexandra Road (near his parents) and the two of them were giving catechism classes together at St Mary's Church in Loop Street. She recalls Kearney being very dedicated to education and she concludes that the desire to be a teacher is "why he chose the brothers not priests."¹¹⁹

This insight is reinforced by a discussion Kearney had with a fellow Marist around the same time. When exploring the question 'what do you want to do with your life', Taylor recalls that Kearney had said: "I want to be a teacher and a brother".¹²⁰ I think it is fair to conclude that Kearney's decision to be a brother was a positive decision about wanting to be a teacher and not a negative decision about not wanting to be a priest.

Kearney's life as a Marist Novice

Religious life starts with a structured period of isolation from one's previous life, to enter into a deep and intense experience of the new life as a religious. For Marists, this comprised six months as a 'postulant' and twelve months as a 'novice'. During this time, a lot of focus was on learning about the life of the founder, the history and 'Rule' of the order. One of the key texts he read was *The Chronicles of the Little Brothers of Mary* written in the name of the order's founder (though probably supplemented by his early followers). The English version Kearney read was published in 1927 and would have offered great reassurance to an 18-year-old leaving the world and committing himself to religious life:

A brother is someone predestined for great piety, a very pure life and solid virtue, a soul for whom God's mercy has special plans.¹²¹

It would also have reminded him of the importance of the long process of formation:

A brother is a young plant that needs to be grafted...a plant that needs pruning...a flower....an unripe fruit...a child who cannot walk by himself....weak, inconstant and inexperienced.¹²²

In the case of Kearney and his contemporaries, the first stages of formation were especially isolating since they happened in Australia. Colussi, who was one year ahead of Kearney, shared vivid memories of this experience.¹²³ He explained that before the Second World War, South African novices had been sent to Europe but now, for 18 months, they joined a group of Australian and New Zealand candidates in Mittagong (halfway between Sydney and Canberra) at a remote, rural farm with cattle, pigs and an orchard. (The pigs were called Ethel and Red in honour of the Master of Novices, Br Ethelred!).

Each cohort started off usually as about 20 members (including about 4-6 South Africans); with two cohorts on site for at least part of the time, plus formators, that meant a substantial community of

¹¹⁹ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

¹²⁰ Taylor, Peter. Personal interview by author, 1 February 2021 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney)

¹²¹ Champagnat, Marcellin. *Chronicles of the Little Brothers of Mary: listen to the words of your father. Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions* (Lyons: Little Brothers of Mary, 1927) 15

¹²² Champagnat, *Chronicles of the Little Brothers of Mary*, 27

¹²³ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

40-50 celibate men. Much of their time was spent working on the farm: *manualia* was thought to encourage all of the religious virtues: poverty, obedience and chastity. There was daily Mass (with an Irish chaplain), practice of singing Gregorian chant, recitation of the Office, some lessons on Scripture, and long periods of silence. The saying of the Office – set prayers at set times of day in unity with thousands of other priests and religious around the world – was a key mark of ‘clerical’ life. It was an inheritance of a monastic model and the young Marists followed this by getting up at 5am and then stopping to recite the Office at the due hours, even when in the fields. Their founder had explained why this was important; one wonders how the older more open-minded Kearney felt if he recalled these words:

To say your Office well, remember that you are praying for the entire universe and for the needs of all men and women. Remember the huge number of infidels who populate Africa....the huge number of heretics and schismatics for whom you are deputed to request their return and submission to the Church.¹²⁴

McCrindle (one year behind Kearney) recalls the spiritual life being very pre-Vatican II.¹²⁵ Although there were some prayers in English, most were in Latin as was the Office, the Mass and the readings during meals (since meals were taken in silence except on Feast Days). Whilst this was supposed to be a period of spiritual development, there was very little personal accompaniment or counselling, with a one-to-one interview with the Master of Novices only three or four times a year.

Taylor (two years behind Kearney) wonders in retrospect about the quality of the spiritual formation.

As religious brothers we went to say prayers – but not to pray. We knew the psalms off by heart but did we pray them? We were concentrating more on performance and not actually meditating on the words. And even though we were exposed to Scripture, through the Office and Mass, we never really studied it. We never shared our faith, never talked about spiritual life. We spent many hours in silence and were encouraged to isolate from each other.¹²⁶

The main change during the process was that postulants did not have to wear the habit whereas novices did; they all had to sleep in a shared dormitory but the novices at least had curtains between their beds. The religious habit was a black or white soutane (a full-length robe, buttoned down the front) with white bands around the neck (not a Roman collar).

Colussi reminisces:

The rule about wearing the habit was observed quite strictly ... even when doing manual work in the garden, or orchard, or taking part in the annual cricket match novices vs postulants ... I guess the postulants were already betting favourites before the match began because they did not have to wear habits!¹²⁷

All Kearney’s fellow Marists recall that there was very little contact with the outside world. There was no radio or television; only occasionally was a newspaper left out. Otherwise, the only news they heard was what the Master of Novices read to them.

¹²⁴ Champagnat, *Chronicles of the Little Brothers of Mary*, 125

¹²⁵ McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹²⁶ Taylor, Peter. Personal interview by author, 1 February 2021 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹²⁷ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

Contact with families was limited to receiving and sending letters once a month. Colussi remembers that they were handed over in an open envelope so you knew that the letters could be read by the Master of Novices (even if often they were not). The families of Australian novices could come and visit at Easter and Christmas for the day (though that clearly did not help South African novices).

They were sent out to teach in a local Marist school with other Marist Brothers; once or twice they did a little bit of teaching in a local reformatory or led religious classes in the local parish. There was a women's religious house nearby (the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary) but they never visited them. In no way, according to Colussi, were they being prepared for the apostolic life that lay ahead of them. But he does feel that it was a supportive environment. He points out that the traditional humiliating practice of the 'Chapter of Faults' (where novices would sit in a circle and accuse themselves of their failings and seek 'fraternal correction') had disappeared by the end of his time as a novice.¹²⁸ He also points out that in their time there was no use at all of the 'physical disciplines' that had been used by previous generations of religious 'to mortify the flesh'.¹²⁹

At the end of the novitiate, those who survived took their simple vows for the first time (which were then renewed every year until final vows, five years later). Earlier, at the end of the postulancy, some of them also took a new name. This was an ancient practice of religious life to mark clearly the transition from the old person to a new person; by receiving a name from the order, it also marked the individual now as a member of a religious family in contrast to their biological family. The practice finally ended for most religious orders in the 1970s. At the time when Kearney was a Marist, it was not required but was still an option. Kearney did not change his name and so became Brother Patrick (though bear in mind that 'Patrick' was his middle name and that his first name was Gerald). Colussi went from Mario to Br Bosco, though he did change back to Br Mario later. His contemporary Br Jude Pieterse did not revert to his original name.¹³⁰ Colussi recalls that the Master of Novices tended to give the most difficult names to the most difficult novices.

(The custom of taking a name in religion enables me to share a fascinating piece of Struggle history which, as far as I know, has never been reported. One of the most controversial Catholic priests at the time was the Dominican, Albert Nolan, who was often being sought by the security police and border guards. But they did not realise that the name by which they knew him 'Albert' was in fact his religious name. So when asked to present his documents, which carried his birth name, they saw instead 'Denis Nolan' and so allowed him through since they were looking for Albert Nolan. Such is the unexpected advantage of a religious name!)¹³¹

It seems clear to me that everything about Kearney's experience as a novice firmly made sure that he and his contemporaries no longer saw themselves, or were seen by others, as lay people: the separation from the world, the isolation, the marking out through dress and name, the spiritual practices, the use of Latin, the lack of involvement with secular affairs, the fact that almost all contact was just with other celibate men.

Marists in the 1960s subscribed to the idea that contact with the real world was harmful to religious life. The common rules of the Marists still warned against such temptations:

¹²⁸ Marist Brothers of the Schools. *Common Rules of the Institute* (Rome: Little Brothers of Mary, 1947) 20-22

¹²⁹ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney)

¹³⁰ Pieterse, Jude. Personal interview by author, 13 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney). Note that Pieterse has increasing dementia and at the time of the interview was able to recall only in part and usually assisted by the presence of Colussi.

¹³¹ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 18 Oct 2020 in Boksburg GP (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

Intercourse with outsiders is one of the great dangers of religious life; it is by too frequent communion with these that the religious spirit departs from communities and that the spirit of the world enters with its train of abuses, relaxation and vices. The brothers shall never, without real necessity, have any connection with outsiders.¹³²

Osborne gives a quotation that explains this perspective (from the 1950s in France when religious were made to withdraw from the worker priest movement): “[we must make sure] that religious would stay religious, clerics would remain clerical, and seminarians would remain as untainted as possible by the secular world.”¹³³

Kearney’s life as a vowed Marist Brother

On his return to South Africa in the middle of 1961, Kearney was now a fully-fledged Marist. However, even though he was no longer a novice, his degree of involvement with the secular world was still very limited.

In 1961-62, he taught at the Marist primary school and high school in Port Elizabeth; from 1963-65, he lived in Pietermaritzburg doing a degree at the University of Natal (with first Biblical Studies and then English as his major); then, from 1966-69, he taught at St David’s School Inanda, Johannesburg while also studying part time for a B.Ed. at Wits University. In all these towns, he lived in Marist communities with other vowed brothers; he had very little independence (always moving in pairs); he socialised mostly with other Marists or priests or other religious (at least at first); and he dressed in a Marist habit (Colussi recalls that sometimes it was a dark suit rather than a soutane, though still with a brother’s Roman collar).¹³⁴ Even in Pietermaritzburg, where his family still lived, Kearney had limited opportunity to associate with them; the Marist house, Colussi recalls with irony, was in a part of Pietermaritzburg known as ‘Worlds End’ (near Prestbury).

During the Council itself (1962-1965) Kearney would have had access to the extensive reporting about it in the Catholic weekly paper, *The Southern Cross*.¹³⁵ Henriques assesses that in total there were 450 articles over the four years of the Council and not only were there news reports and editorials by Fr Stubbs, but also 32 ‘eye-witness accounts’ from a ‘Special Correspondent’, later revealed to be +Hurley himself.¹³⁶ Reviewing these, Henriques comments:

I was struck by the phenomenal extent to which all these lay readers were being exposed to the changes taking place at the Second Vatican Council, through the medium of the articles that appeared in *The Southern Cross*. It was in effect a massive catechetical exercise.¹³⁷

He further points out that many of the articles dealt with the laity (by James O’Neil, John Cogley, Albert Ripberger) and also ecumenism (Placid Jordan – even giving the perspective of Lutherans!). A few examples give a sense of what seeds were being sown in the mind of our young teaching Marist:

¹³² Marist Brothers, *Common Rules of the Institute*, 105

¹³³ Osborne, Kenan B. *Ministry – lay ministry in the Catholic Church, its history and theology* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist 1993) 522

¹³⁴ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹³⁵ Egan, Anthony. “How Vatican II renewed South African Catholicism - as perceived by *The Southern Cross* 1962-1968” *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* (2013, 39:2)

¹³⁶ Henriques, Alan. “Vatican II in *The Southern Cross*”. *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 31

¹³⁷ Henriques, “Vatican II in *The Southern Cross*”, 31

In June 1965, Albert Ripberger describes “the oversimplified formula hierarchy-laity” and rejects “the negative explanation [of the laity] that they do not belong to the hierarchy.”¹³⁸ At the end of the Council (15 Dec 1965), the editorial states:

...the Church faces the world not as an enemy to be fought but as part of God’s household to be served with the understanding of Christ... The world indeed remains, always, to be won. But it is won not by conquest, combat, compromise but by the power of God’s love, showing itself in sympathy and service in that humble give and take that we now call dialogue.¹³⁹

What Kearney is reading about from Rome is also beginning to be experienced in his life as a Marist because, although separation was still key, slowly the hard line between religious and lay was being softened. This was partly as the implications of Vatican II for religious life started to be felt by the Marists, but mostly as Kearney was exposed to broader experiences. Colussi points out that while at the University of Natal, Kearney would have been studying alongside a mix of other students which would have put him in touch, probably for the first time, with an ecumenical and even an inter-racial dimension to South Africa life.¹⁴⁰

McCrindle recalls that they occasionally went to St Charles for sports events (where they would have mixed not only with the boys but also their parents), that they sometimes associated with women, and that they were not expected to observe the Hours of the Office when outside the community. He saw this a part of their maturing as Marists and also the impact of Vatican II: a move from ‘what is imposed by the Rule to taking responsibility for your own prayer life’. He recalls that some people found this quite difficult and that Kearney tended to still be very obedient as a scholastic.¹⁴¹ Because of Vatican II, religious life was (in McCrindle’s opinion) in turmoil at that stage but Kearney seemed very committed to the cause.

Taylor recalls him around 1964 producing a pamphlet about the Marists ‘to show the life of a strong brother’. (Taylor was in the centre of the brochure and this was their first close contact.) He also recalls that with the Vatican II impact of vernacular in the liturgy, Kearney was organising choir practices since the hymns were now in English. “If no one else would do it Paddy would do it,” he commented.¹⁴²

But it was still a situation of relative isolation in which no one got to know each other very well because that was the system. Taylor however recalls that it was common practice to walk around after supper and remembers a conversation (probably around 1965) in which Kearney asked him: “What do you really want to do in your life?” Taylor was surprised at the idea that he had to decide for himself what he wanted and especially that Kearney suggested: “if you want to do something different, you are not being disobedient.” It seemed to him, looking back, that Kearney was thinking outside the box and recognising that they could be members of a community but still be individuals. This was not necessarily rebellion, though it might have been seen as that. Taylor replied to Kearney that he was not sure that he wanted to be here and, in fact, left the Marists in 1967.

(Taylor remained connected with Kearney in Durban in the 1970s as he was involved in the Renew programme at Holy Trinity parish and was part of YCW with Fr Albert Danker; he later moved to

¹³⁸ Henriques, “Vatican II in *The Southern Cross*”, 32

¹³⁹ Henriques, “Vatican II in *The Southern Cross*”, 32

¹⁴⁰ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹⁴¹ McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹⁴² Taylor, Peter. Personal interview by author, 1 February 2021 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

Australia and lived in a *L'Arche* community for 36 years where he found the spirit of 'relationship at the heart of the community to be the complete opposite of my experience of religious life'.)

Kearney's exposure to the world grew broader still when in 1966 he moved to teach at St David's, in a wealthy part of Johannesburg which, at the time, was 100% white boys and predominately Catholic. McCrindle credits some of this broadening to the Community Superior and School Principal, a Scot called Br Tony (Anthony McDocherty).

He was a similar type to Paddy, interested in outreach to the downtrodden, even if he [Br Tony] was more of a free spirit. Br Tony could mix with the very wealthy but also the poor – something that Paddy showed later. Br Tony later went on to work with Coloured communities on the Cape Flats and near Kuruman. Paddy did things at St David's which were ahead of their time but he was permitted to by Br Tony.¹⁴³

Colussi (who was already at St David's though seemingly less influenced by Br Tony) recalls that when Kearney arrived he already gave the impression of being someone who was 'progressive in his thinking, left-wing, and aware of social oppression'. Perhaps he was already showing the influence of having taken a wider interest in university life while in Pietermaritzburg.

He used to encourage us to talk about issues at night. What should the Marist Brothers be doing for the needs of society? In this he might have been seen by some of the brothers as an irritation; all the more so because he did not coach sports teams. Paddy was not necessarily a lone voice but he was a voice ahead of others.¹⁴⁴

One example of this that Colussi particularly remembers was how in 1967 Kearney arranged a series of Lenten lectures for which he invited non-Catholic speakers: a radical enough move but even more so since one of them was the head of the controversial Christian Institute, Beyers Naudé. The *College Review* commented that "attendance was by application only and that the Chapel was almost full for every talk."¹⁴⁵ Colussi also recalls that Kearney was involved in organising the Mass for the Silver Jubilee of St David's in 1966 and asked the priest if communion could be given under both kinds: at the time a radical innovation.¹⁴⁶ The priest, Fr Albert Plesters, who was then also in charge of liturgy for the Diocese of Johannesburg replied: "Liturgically no, but pastorally yes."¹⁴⁷

Lindegger, one of his students, recalls Kearney as one of the few Marists who was interested in Social Justice and who exposed the students to it.

We used to go to the Noordgesig township to teach catechism and to help at the school. We were a volunteer group and we visited regularly. This was arranged by Paddy as a way of

¹⁴³ McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹⁴⁴ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹⁴⁵ Marist Archives, Johannesburg: *St David's College Review* (December 1967, Page 9)

¹⁴⁶ The Bishop John Moorman, who led the Anglican delegation of observers at Vatican II points out that communion under both kinds had been the norm until the 13th century. However, it had instead become a great symbol of division: the churches of the Reformation recovered the practice (citing Scripture, Jn 6:53) and so the Council of Trent formally justified its exclusion for Roman Catholics creating the doctrine of 'concomitance'. Kearney may not have known the history but was certainly aware that communion under both kinds could be viewed as dangerously Protestant. See Moorman, John. "Observers and Guests of the Council". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 158

¹⁴⁷ It is possible that though communion under both kinds had been officially endorsed by this date, it had not yet become the norm in South Africa. The fact that this comment was made by the priest in charge of liturgy for the diocese would reinforce this.

exposing wealthy kids to the reality of South Africa. We even visited the house of a local family.¹⁴⁸

He contrasted this with the policy of St David's to make sure that old school uniforms were carefully thrown away instead of being given to poor black children in case they ruined the reputation of the school.¹⁴⁹ He recalls not just the visit to the school of Beyers Naudé but how Kearney arranged for a small group of students to meet at the Dominee's own house and spend a few hours talking with him. It seems that Kearney was being discrete in how he introduced social justice issues since Lindegger's recollection was that in the (more public) debating society, which Kearney also organised, there was 'no politics, nothing of any relevance'.

Kearney himself, in a rare interview, recalls what happened when he tried to raise social awareness at St David's:

It was the time of Martin Luther King and I began to see these movies that were being sent around by the American Embassy and they had a kind of section for the cultural, I think it was called the cultural unit and I used to borrow these films and show them to the students at the school... one of the boys said to me: 'My father wants to know why are you showing these films'. It was a bit of a threat you know but nothing happened.¹⁵⁰

Lindegger is not as complimentary as Colussi about life at St David's. In particular, he is critical of the commitment of the Marists to faith and spirituality. He points out that having been founded to serve poor French boys, the Marists had created St David's as an élite flagship. He recalls many of the brothers as having been 'such a bad influence, so sadistic, so cruel'.

They were only interested in rugby and élitism. I have no memory of a Marist with any religious interest and, though the Oblates gave them retreats, there seemed to be no religious content.¹⁵¹

He particularly remembered Br Lewis 'an old drunk in charge of the chapel'. Kearney had been trying to make the liturgy more meaningful and relevant and Br Lewis ended up having a fight with Kearney and chasing him out of the chapel.

For Lindegger, Kearney was the only Marist brother who did anything religious, leading a regular rosary, attending Mass every day and Benediction on a Sunday. Kearney was involved in the 'Sodality of Mary' which later modernised as the 'Christian Life Group' (under the influence of a Jesuit chaplain). At the same time, he recalls that Kearney was very uptight and did not have a warm relationship with the students but he stood out as being committed to his faith. A particular memory he has is that Kearney pushed for Lindegger to be a prefect, even though he was not part of the 1st XV Rugby team, because Kearney thought there should be people with an alternative perspective to bring in different qualities of leadership.

It was mentioned earlier that, when Lindegger left school, he began training as an Oblate priest and he explains that his attraction to the order was due to the OMI chaplain at school. This helped him

¹⁴⁸ Lindegger, Graham. Personal interview by author, 1 November 2020 in Pietermaritzburg (student at St David's Inanda)

¹⁴⁹ While working with Kearney at the Denis Hurley Centre around 2016, the author recalls seeing a homeless man in an old blazer from St Henry's, the sister school of St David's in Durban. Kearney was most amused by this, perhaps recalling the less inclusive policy of St David's in the 1960s.

¹⁵⁰ Houston, Gregory. "Interview with Paddy Kearney". *Unsung Heroes and Heroines of the Liberation Struggle* (Cape Town: Human Science Research Council, 2013) 3

¹⁵¹ Lindegger, Graham. Personal interview by author, 1 November 2020 in Pietermaritzburg (student at St David's Inanda)

see that beyond the 'repressive religious devotions' followed by the Marists – reciting the rosary, repeating learnt prayers – there was room for meditation and reflective practice as he found later with the Jesuits and CLG.

I did not see the Marists as being in the same sort of religious life as the Oblates. There was nothing attractive about the Marists as a form of religious life.¹⁵²

As well as the witness of people inside the Marist circle, it has also been possible to interview four people who knew him at this time but were just outside the circle. They were all members of the Grail Community in Johannesburg in the late 1960s and beyond. This movement had started in the Netherlands in 1921 and had been in South Africa since 1951. The Grail was unusual in that, although it appeared to be like a community of nuns or vowed religious sisters, the women did not take formal vows, simply promises to live in community. Moreover, they were not committed to celibacy and, over time, a number of them did in fact marry (while remaining linked to the Grail).

Thus the Grail, was an interesting contrast to the religious life that Kearney lived with the Marists: they are all women, and committed to a form of religious life that was not weighed down with centuries of rules and traditions. *De jure* the status of Grail members and Marist brothers was similar – neither were ordained, both had taken vows or promises to live a certain kind of Christian life. But *de facto* there was a huge difference between them: the Marists trying to be as separated from the world as possible, the Grail trying to be as involved as they could be.

Kearney had a family link to the Grail since one of the Johannesburg members was Annami Galway, whose sister Mary had married Kearney's brother Jack in 1964. A member of the Grail, Marilyn Aitken commented: "Paddy was like a brother to us" and this was not just because of his connection through the Galway family but also, she felt, because they shared similar values.¹⁵³ It is likely though that the family connection made it more acceptable for Kearney as a young male celibate to travel on his own to visit a house full of (then) un-married women!

Another Grail member, Loek Goemans, who remained a lifelong friend of Kearney, recalls how Kearney, as a young Marist brother, used to visit the Grail house on Loch Avenue in Johannesburg.¹⁵⁴ Here, in contrast to the Marist community at St David's, he would have listened in on excited conversations about the Second Vatican Council; and he would have heard about and seen concrete examples of the ecumenical movement.

A key influence was another member, Ines Ceruti, with whom Kearney was especially friendly and who, 13 years older than him, acted as a kind of mentor, according to Aitken. Kearney and Ceruti taught together at St David's but they also taught in a very different place. 50 years after the events, and now in her late 80s and experiencing some forgetfulness, Ceruti recounted with glee the stories of how she and Kearney went to teach in Soweto around 1968:

We thought that young black children should be able to get the same quality of education we were giving at St David's. Since they could not come to us, we would have to go to them. We had to smuggle our way in to Soweto since it was illegal for white people to travel there without good reason. I put on a blue scarf and pretended I was 'Sr Agnes', a Mercy sister (since they had a permit) even though I was not. Paddy pretended to be my driver and signed the entrance book as BP Kearney ('Brother Paddy Kearney'). And we made it to

¹⁵² Lindegger, Graham. Personal interview by author, 1 November 2020 in Pietermaritzburg (student at St David's Inanda)

¹⁵³ Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

¹⁵⁴ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

Regina Mundi [the Catholic church in the heart of Soweto] and set up classes in the choir loft on a Saturday morning.^{155 156}

Ceruti commented that she felt that Kearney liked being at St David's, that he was popular with the boys because he had a sense of humour, and that he never used the cane.

But also Paddy was a bit political. I think he was supporting the Progressive Party and we went to some meetings together. He cared quite a lot about justice. It was Br Anthony [the Principal] who encouraged him; he was very fond of Paddy.

Goemans recalls 'Ines was a breath of fresh air for Paddy'.¹⁵⁷ She thought this especially important because Kearney had come from a conventionally Catholic family, had joined the Marists (which she thought was not at all surprising), and now found himself in a fairly conservative community of brothers.

During the time of the Council (1962-1965), the Grail community's house in Observatory had regularly hosted +Hurley to give feedback talks about the Council as he was travelling from Rome back to Durban. Although Kearney would not have been in Johannesburg to attend any of these himself, there were still people coming from overseas to give lectures there and Kearney would have been influenced by those. It was almost certainly through the Grail that Kearney met Beyers Naudé since he and his wife (Ilse) lived round the corner and would often meet visitors at the Grail since they knew that their own house was bugged by the security police.¹⁵⁸

So we have a picture now of Kearney in religious life in Johannesburg – still a Marist but distinctly less clericalised than his initial experience had been as a novice. This was partly because of the opportunities to which he was exposed (and which he grasped) but also the *aggiornamento* that Vatican II had promised. In this period, we see Kearney's growing interest in ecumenism, liturgy and social justice, and all are in keeping with the developments of Vatican II. He had arrived at St David's only two months after the Council had closed, and it would have continued to be part of the conversation at the Grail community at that time.

That was not, however, the case at the Marist community in Inanda. McCrindle has no recollection of the young Marists studying the documents of the Council. Lindegger corroborates this saying that he has no recollection of any mention of Vatican II while at school.¹⁵⁹ Colussi has a clear memory of where conversations were focused:

It was not that we had a conservative attitude about the changes; it was just that the conversation at the table was more about the 1st XV Rugby match than about social issues. Perhaps the Jesuits were discussing the Council, but were too busy running a school.¹⁶⁰

The failure of Kearney's Marist community at St David's to engage with Vatican II was especially surprising given that one of the documents of the Council (*Perfectae Caritatis*) was specifically about religious life. Every order was urged to spend time on:

¹⁵⁵ Ceruti, Ines. Personal interview by author, 8 April 2019 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹⁵⁶ A coincidental link to Vatican II is that the foundation stone of Regina Mundi had been laid in 1962 by Cardinal Montini who went on to be Pope Paul VI.

¹⁵⁷ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹⁵⁸ Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

¹⁵⁹ Lindegger, Graham. Personal interview by author, 1 November 2020 in Pietermaritzburg (student at St David's Inanda)

¹⁶⁰ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

... the adaptation and renewal of the religious life [which] includes both the constant return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original spirit of the institutes and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time.

There is no evidence of this, nor of the following:

Institutes should promote among their members an adequate knowledge of the social conditions of the times they live in and of the needs of the Church. In such a way, judging current events wisely in the light of faith and burning with apostolic zeal, they may be able to assist people more effectively.¹⁶¹

Kearney had to go outside his community to engage with 'social conditions'. But by doing so he found a way of being a Marist, being engaged in political discussions, learning about the changes in the Church and in the world, and broadening his network beyond a small group of sports-mad, Catholic, celibate male teachers. He appeared to be settled, and he took his final vows as a brother in 1967. And yet he clearly was not. And by the end of 1969, Kearney had left the Marists.

Kearney's decision to leave the Marists

Departures from the priesthood and religious life after the Second Vatican Council were very common and South Africa was no less affected by this. For example, according to Denis, the Dominicans in Stellenbosch in four years (1968-1972) lost eight priests, four students and two brothers; combined with departures to Europe and deaths this represented a shrinkage to 30% of their earlier size.¹⁶²

In fact, it was such a widespread phenomenon that we need to be reminded what a change in attitude it reflected. Before Vatican II, a vocation to the priesthood (if a man) or to religious life (as a man or a woman) was regarded as the greatest gift from God. Not to pursue that vocation was akin to rejecting God's gift. Keane recalls that in those days someone who gave up a vocation was commonly referred to disparagingly: 'a ruined priest', 'an ex one', 'he didn't make it'.¹⁶³

This was the general Catholic culture in which Kearney was brought up; it was emphasised even more strongly during his formation. The book in Marcellin Champagnat's name has a sub-title which admonished Marist novices to 'listen to the words of your father'. For Kearney or anyone else who wavered about being a Marist, these words were very severe as they threatened a graded descent into the abyss.¹⁶⁴

The first caution is for those who are not sure about taking vows:

To miss your vocation means to be unaware of God's plans for you. It means not knowing your vocation or having only a confused and incomplete notion of it.

The second warning is for those who have taken first vows:

¹⁶¹ *Perfectae Caritatis* 2

¹⁶² Denis, Philippe. *The Dominican Friars in Southern Africa (1577-1990). A Social History* (Leiden: Brill, 1998) 146

¹⁶³ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

¹⁶⁴ Champagnat, *Chronicles of the Little Brothers of Mary*, 39-41

To lose your vocation [after simple vows but before solemn profession] means...not having known at all how or what to do to cultivate, maintain, strengthen and preserve a vocation which was really given by God, or not having wanted to do so.

The wavering Marist is alerted that he might have caused God to 'withdraw that special favour' for one of the following reasons:

- Abuse of grace and contempt for little things
- Uncontrolled passion for study or some material thing
- Infidelity to the Rule
- Neglecting the exercises of piety
- Violent temptations followed by repeated grave faults
- Finally, discouragement, which is the most common cause for the loss of vocation.

Note that all of these are presented as faults of the individual. It is not contemplated that the person might simply have needed time to discover that they are not called to be a Marist. Furthermore, there is no possibility considered that the fault might lie in the community.

But the harshest remonstrance is reserved for someone, like Kearney, who left having taken final vows:

To apostatise from one's vocation means abandoning after profession. Profaning one's vocation and the holy covenant one has made with God often brings on the total ruin of one's salvation. It is like a shipwreck on the high seas; after such a disaster it will be very difficult, perhaps impossible, to reach port. It is total bankruptcy; the entire economy of one's salvation, one's whole spiritual fortune is endangered and perhaps ruined forever. There is nothing worse than an apostate religious. St Augustine's opinion of them was: "I have never seen more perverse and more deeply corrupted individuals than those who went bad in religious life."

And if this were not enough, the book offers further curses from a Dominican (St Thomas Aquinas), a Jesuit (St Robert Bellarmine) and even St Paul (especially curious since vowed religious life did not exist in the early church!).

Faced with warnings like this, it is hardly surprising that people rarely had the courage to leave. But Vatican II, through its reforms of the Church and of religious life, suddenly made it possible to contemplate ending one's vows without losing one's soul. There were clearly people who were already unhappy but now finally were able to leave in good conscience. There were also those who wanted to leave and get married and have families and now were able to do so and (after due process) still be in good standing with the Church.

There were some who left because the changes in the Church were so undermining of their identity: if you had been told all your religious life that you were a more perfect Christian by virtue of having taken vows, and now you are told that you are the same as everyone else, you might feel you no longer had a reason to stay. But there were others who left because the changes opened up a window which showed them that they could still serve their vocation and be a lay person: many women who wanted to be Catholic nurses had become nuns but now realised that they could still be Catholic nurses as lay women.

Unhappiness, a desire to get married, a loss of identity or a change in vocation – which of these were the reason for Kearney’s departure? In an unusual example of self-disclosure, Kearney seems to answer this question in his interview with Gregory Houston:

My idea of the Marist Brothers is that they had been founded to teach the poor and here they were teaching the richest kids in South Africa and they didn’t have a single school for black people and I used to complain about that and they would say “well, you know, whites have also got souls”, which was a very feeble response. So I left the Marist Brothers, you know, I wasn’t happy, you know, with the difference between what they were supposed to be doing and what they were actually doing.¹⁶⁵

This suggests that it was a principled act based on a frustration not with his own vocation but the vocation of his religious order. It is interesting, though, that Kearney did not express this view so clearly to anyone else when he was leaving. The interview with Houston was in 2013 by which point Kearney’s international reputation as a champion of justice was well established. He could be forgiven, therefore, if his interpretation of his motivation 44 years earlier seems clearer than it might have been at the time.

The most striking thing about Kearney’s leaving is that he seems to have given no hint of it to any of those closest to him (at least based on those who were interviewed for this research). At the end of the school term in November 1969, Kearney left St David’s, and was on the Marist list to return in January 1970. But he did not go to his family in Pietermaritzburg nor to another Marist community. Instead, Colussi recalls, the then bishop of Bethlehem, +Peter Kelleter CSsP, contacted his friend Jack Kearney (who was Paddy’s older brother) to tell him not to worry about Paddy because he was living with +Gerard Van Velsen OP, the Bishop of Kroonstad. We do not know why Kearney specifically went to stay with +Van Velsen; but we do know that Kearney did not return for the new term in January 1970. (I shall explore this influence later in Chapter 3).

Colussi points out that there had been others who left between 1963 and 1969 and that there was a ‘normal departure process’: you inform the Provincial and then you let your brothers know.¹⁶⁶ But when Kearney left, he just disappeared with no farewell to Colussi or anyone else. And even at the start of the next school year, there was no official statement such that Colussi recalls someone asking him “Has Br Patrick left?” and him having to reply “I don’t know.” He did not confide in his brothers nor in any of those he was close to at the Grail even though, according to Aitken, it was very much part of his support system at the time.¹⁶⁷

Even more interestingly, it does not seem to be something that he discussed with any of these people after he left, even though he stayed in touch with some of them for 48 years until his death. That is what makes the clear explanation to Houston so out of character. But those interviewed did share their thoughts in retrospect.

McCrindle remembers other brothers who left around the same time and in particular a Spanish brother at St David’s who just went home and did not come back. He did not see Kearney as someone ‘looking to get out’ but, in retrospect, he could see why. He points out that Kearney took his final profession at the same time as himself which meant he delayed by one year (from 1966 to 1967) and that this indicates, when seen now, some sort of questioning. But given the strong family

¹⁶⁵ Houston, “Interview with Paddy Kearney”, 3

¹⁶⁶ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹⁶⁷ Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

spirit in Marist life and the sense of community (which Kearney shared), his unannounced departure was surprising.

However, McCrindle feels that Kearney was a visionary and that it was good that he did leave. "When I heard what Paddy was doing in Durban it seemed not at all surprising and, I guess, that is why he linked up so easily with +Hurley." McCrindle was conscious that the brothers were not moving fast enough against the Apartheid system and gives the example of the promotion of the cadet corps which he regarded as effectively a recruitment strategy for the Apartheid-era military and was made to do under obedience. (McCrindle himself left the Marists 26 years later to get married but only after having become Provincial).¹⁶⁸

Colussi does note that the rate of attrition in brothers' congregations was higher than in priestly congregations partly because of the work ethic. He recalls the Superior, Br Anthony, saying at the time "You will never know why Br Patrick left" but is not sure what this meant. Colussi's feeling is that Kearney was possibly disappointed that the Marists were not progressive enough, or aggressive enough, in their engagement with social justice. He feels now that Kearney was 'guided by the spirit' and speculated that Kearney felt he could not do with the Marists the good that he could do in another situation.¹⁶⁹

It was with Taylor that Kearney had had the conversation a few years earlier asking the question 'what do you want to do with your life' and Kearney making the point that doing something different was not necessarily being disobedient. Taylor recalls that Kearney had said: "I want to be a teacher and a brother" and that perhaps this way round of listing his desires suggested that being a brother was less important to Kearney than being a teacher. Taylor also speculates that the Marists would not have freed up Kearney to run something like Diakonia.¹⁷⁰

It would have been unlikely for Kearney to confide in any of his students, but Lindegger recalls that he was not at all puzzled at Kearney's leaving since he seemed to be so different from the other Marists. He also mentioned another brother who departed around the same time and commented sadly: "It was all the positive ones who left."¹⁷¹

As mentioned, Kearney did not discuss with his friends at the Grail why he left but, since he stayed in touch with them, and they worked together on social justice issues in Durban, some of the Grail members feel informed to comment on why he did so. Aitken surmises that it was because the Marists were not very involved in justice issues and that Kearney was very frustrated. She points out that, for example, in terms of desegregating schools the congregations of sisters were miles ahead of the brothers who seemed much more afraid of the Government.¹⁷² In fact, Pieterse (the same Br Jude mentioned above) suggests that the stance of the sisters was much more principled than that of the brothers.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹⁶⁹ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹⁷⁰ Taylor, Peter. Personal interview by author, 1 February 2021 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney)

¹⁷¹ Lindegger, Graham. Personal interview by author, 1 November 2020 in Pietermaritzburg (student at St David's Inanda)

¹⁷² Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

¹⁷³ Pieterse quotes this from 1975 "[The Association of Teaching Brothers] is in favour of integrated education, as far as it is in conformity with educational norms, involving as it does the admission of Black children to our White schools. The AGM agrees that the Brothers work towards this end in a manner which is within the laws of the land, at the same time taking all practicable steps to have the laws amended." And he contrasts this language to the earlier statement from the Association of Women Religious which mentions 'witness to social justice' and does not mention 'the laws of the land'. Pieterse, Jude. *The Open Schools Era (1976-1986)*. (Johannesburg: Marist Brothers, 2020) 18

Goemans does not recall him saying as such but that he certainly indicated, that he 'had to leave the Marists because their conservatism cramped his style'. He said he felt that he could do more, and that Church authorities would watch him less if he was not a Marist and could get around more. She recalls him saying that he was worried that he could have got the school into trouble and that it was 'safer to be away from the school'. She remembers him as the most political of the young Marists although there were others who were also quite socially aware.¹⁷⁴

A friend much later in his life, Berenice De la Croix, gave an explanation (though I am not sure of the basis for it) that Kearney was not happy with the racism in the Church and that even after he made a formal complaint, nothing changed and so he left.¹⁷⁵

Keane, who has herself spent almost 70 years in religious life, speculates that it would have taken Kearney great courage to say goodbye to the Marists. She had earlier seen the nurturing of Kearney's vocation as a teacher, and concludes that he left because he decided 'this is not for me' but notes that when he left he did not break with the past but continued as a teacher. "The teacher did not die in Paddy."¹⁷⁶

Sydney Duval who also knew Kearney over many years, and had also opted out of religious life, realised that he and Kearney had never talked about their respective vocations "even though I am accustomed to asking direct questions!" He made a comment about himself which he felt could also have applied to Kearney: "'When I left the seminary I was heart sore – but I have come to realise that we need a Catholic journalist more than we need another priest."¹⁷⁷

Overall there is no suggestion that Kearney left because he felt his identity as a separated religious was being undermined – far from it; nor that he left in order to get married which he would not do for another 13 years. It seems to be a combination of unhappiness – not with himself but with what he perceived as the failures of the Marist Brothers to engage with social justice – and the realisation that what he wanted to do to serve the Church, he could do as a lay person. Not surprisingly, given his desire 'to be a teacher and a brother', the first settled thing he did after leaving was to get a job as a teacher. Inanda Seminary School gave him all the scope that he wanted to teach. But it was a girl's school, it was for black students, and it was run by the Congregational Church; so it was a decisive way of showing that the vocation to be a teacher could outlive his vocation to be a Marist.

Kearney's professional life after the Marists

As a Marist, Kearney had had a very clear vocation within the Church. As he emerged into his life after the Marists, it is interesting to explore what new vocation(s) he took on. A good insight comes from the aforementioned Dominican theologian, Albert Nolan, who first met him in this period.¹⁷⁸ It is interesting that in the interview with him, Nolan mistakenly recalled that Kearney had been not a Marist Brother but a Christian Brother (the other main order of Catholic brothers running schools in South Africa): that would suggest that Kearney's identity as an ex-Marist was not one that he carried forcefully.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹⁷⁵ De la Croix, Berenice. Personal interview by author, 30 September and 9 October 2020 in Durban (personal friend)

¹⁷⁶ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

¹⁷⁷ Duval, Sydney. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (Catholic activist and journalist)

¹⁷⁸ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 18 Oct 2020 in Boksburg GP (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

¹⁷⁹ I make this point because, 15 years after I left the Society of Jesus, some people still mistakenly believe I am a Jesuit.

Nolan knew from the outset that Kearney was a friend of +Hurley though he could see that this was a developing relationship which would become more prominent later. Nolan felt that there was no issue for +Hurley that Kearney was not a cleric. He recalls being conscious of this because there were others in the circle of progressive Catholic thinkers who had left priesthood and/or religious life and who also continued to work for the Church such as Cosmas Desmond (an ex-Franciscan), Augustine Schutte (an ex-Dominican) and Brian Gaybba (a former priest of the Archdiocese of Cape Town). Whilst the most common reason why they left was to get married, there were other reasons as well; yet all were still continuing some kind of apostolic work. “There was no awkwardness about this among the people I mixed with,” Nolan explained “and for some of them instead of limiting their apostolic possibilities it actually multiplied them.” He specifically recalls Kearney saying that being a brother had limited him rather than giving him scope. (There were, of course, other outcomes: Schutte was not allowed to continue teaching at the seminary in Hammanskraal; and there were others who left who did not want anything to do with the church.)

Nolan recalls discussing theology with these lay people; he concludes that, even if they did not actually quote *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, they were becoming comfortable with the idea that ‘vocation’ meant more than just priesthood and religious life and that marriage was increasingly being seen as a vocation. In this, he wondered if there was some influence from his fellow Dominican, Bishop Van Velsen of Kroonstad who was, according to Nolan, convinced that the married men he was ordaining as deacons would all eventually be allowed to become priests.

Nolan’s reference to *Apostolicam Actuositatem* is the following passage:

Since the Creator of all things has established conjugal society as the beginning and basis of human society and, by His grace, has made it a great mystery in Christ and the Church (cf. Eph. 5:32), the apostolate of married persons and families is of unique importance for the Church and civil society.¹⁸⁰

Kearney was not to marry until 13 years after he left the Marists, but Vatican II’s document on the laity also recognises (for perhaps the first time in the history of the Church) that there are Christians who might choose not to marry and also not to take a vow of celibacy.

Deserving of special honour and commendation in the Church are those lay people, single or married, who devote themselves with professional experience, either permanently or temporarily, to the service of associations and their activities [of the apostolate].¹⁸¹

Whereas Kearney’s first formal jobs were with a non-Catholic institution (Inanda Seminary in 1971) and then with a secular institution (University of Natal 1972-3), he soon found himself drawn into the ambit of Catholic organisations. When a junior lecturer in the Education department at the University of Natal, Kearney first got to know Doug Irvine who remained a lifelong friend.¹⁸² Irvine had attended the first Archdiocese of Durban Synod which +Hurley called in 1968, for the first time bringing lay people into a discussion about the Church on a par with priests and religious. At that synod, +Hurley appointed a number of commissions including Justice & Peace with Irvine as member and Roy Lailvaux as the first Chair. In fact, Irvine recalls, Justice & Peace was chaired by lay people from the outset which meant that a lay person was presiding over the Vicar General (at the time Fr Charles Langlois) who was merely a member of the Commission. Justice & Peace was the vehicle for

¹⁸⁰ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 11

¹⁸¹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 22

¹⁸² Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (personal friend and involved in Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace)

+Hurley to draw Kearney's talents and skills into the work of the Church. We have Kearney's own words on this which are worth quoting a length:

I was aware that the Catholic Archdiocese of Durban had just had its first synod and, in the Catholic Church, we didn't have synods, ever. But after the Vatican Council, Archbishop Hurley introduced the first synod in Southern Africa in 1968 and as a result of that synod, a number of commissions were established which lay people served and they were to promote different things like inter-church relations, justice and peace, liturgy and so on because there were a lot of changes taking place. So I thought that would quite fun to join one of those commissions [and I wrote to +Hurley].

Got a letter back straight away saying you will join the Justice and Peace Commission ...So that, that pushed me completely into a new realm and I mean I was very excited about that and was able to do quite a lot and obviously came to the attention of Archbishop Hurley ...what he said was 'I'm going to start this new organisation called Diakonia and I would like you to be the director.'

I came back to him and I said: 'No, I really don't think it's me, I'm sorry, I can't do it.' So then nothing happened. You know, I didn't hear anything about Diakonia anymore. So I kind of got a message back to him to say: 'Look, I mean, don't not do it because I'm not agreeing to do it, to help you with it. I would help you to get it started and then we'll add the tiers and we'll find somebody to do it and I'll bow out.'

So that's what I did, I organised some consultations, brought people together, helped them understand what it was all about and then we drew up a constitution and advertised the post, got some applications, interviewed the people, appointed somebody and she didn't take the job. So, nothing happened again. So then I thought, I better go and see him. I went to see him and I said: 'OK, I'll do it.'¹⁸³

This foreshortened version of the story explains how – with just a five-year gap of not formally working for the Church – Kearney went from 10 years with the Marists to 29 years (1975-2004) working as a lay man for the Catholic Archbishop, leading an ecumenical organisation.

Whether consciously or not, Kearney is beginning to live out the opening words of the Decree on the Laity:

The Apostolate of the Laity derives from their Christian vocation and the Church can never be without it.... Our own times require of the laity no less zeal: in fact, modern conditions demand that their apostolate be broadened and intensified. With a constantly increasing population, continual progress in science and technology, and closer interpersonal relationships, the areas for the lay apostolate have been immensely widened particularly in fields that have been for the most part open to the laity alone.... An indication of this manifold and pressing need is the unmistakable work being done today by the Holy Spirit in making the laity ever more conscious of their own responsibility and encouraging them to serve Christ and the Church in all circumstances.¹⁸⁴

Conscious of this responsibility, Kearney created and led Diakonia, and then worked with a range of other organisations culminating in the Denis Hurley Centre, to contribute to what Vatican II calls

¹⁸³ Houston, "Interview with Paddy Kearney", 5

¹⁸⁴ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 1

‘God’s plan for the world ..that people should work together to renew and constantly perfect the temporal order’.¹⁸⁵ The things that are listed in this section of the document as making up ‘the temporal order’ can be seen as Kearney’s agenda for the next forty years of his life: ‘the good things of life, the prosperity of the family, culture, economic matters, the arts and professions, the laws of the political community, international relations, ...development and progress’. Moreover, I think that Kearney agreed with the Council Fathers that these ‘not only aid in the attainment of a human being’s ultimate goal but also possess their own intrinsic value’.

Kearney’s lifestyle after the Marists

As will be discussed more in Chapter 7, Kearney does not seem to have spoken much about his life as a Marist after he left. On the other hand, the way that he lived his life now that he was no longer a Marist was spontaneously described by a number of interviewees as typical of someone living a religious life (even if not the life of a religious).

Keane recalls that he was most abstemious even when he was taken out for dinner. “It was his asceticism – the brother was not left behind.”¹⁸⁶ Aitken also noticed his simple lifestyle. “The option for the poor was reflected in the way he lived.”¹⁸⁷ Liz Mkame who was his first co-worker at Diakonia remembers that Kearney would sometimes forget his pay cheques. “It was almost as if he was still a monk.”¹⁸⁸ She added that she felt that Kearney was conscious, in a positive way, of being a lay man among clerics.

Colleen Irvine recalls: “I went into his little flat and thought it was like a monastic cell – but the difference was that he was free to come and go as he wished.”¹⁸⁹ The flat referred to is in the final years of his life when Kearney was on his own. But a similar description was given about the house in Morningside that he shared with Carmel Rickard when they were married: ‘clerical, bare, not homely, food very meagre’.¹⁹⁰ This comment was made by Dina Cormick who added: “To my mind, Paddy was always a brother. He was so modest.” She found it intriguing that even though she too had left an order (she had been a Carmelite), and was conducting research about former religious, Kearney never discussed this issue with her.

In choosing a simple lifestyle, Kearney would also have been inspired by +Hurley who sold the ‘palatial’ Lillieshall House to move into a flat behind the new chancery offices.¹⁹¹ Later, he retired to modest quarters with fellow Oblates. Dunne’s comment about +Hurley could equally be about Kearney: “Simplicity of life and vigour of commitment are some of his enduring strengths.”¹⁹²

One of his nieces, Sarah Kearney, also remembers the simple lifestyle of Kearney and his wife recalling an image she had of them in 1975 when she was 5 years old:

¹⁸⁵ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 7

¹⁸⁶ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

¹⁸⁷ Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

¹⁸⁸ Mkame, Liz. Personal interview by author, 17 December 2020 in Pinetown (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹⁸⁹ Irvine, Colleen. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (personal friend and involved in Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace)

¹⁹⁰ Cormick, Dina. Personal interview by author, 21 December 2020 in Durban (freelance designer at Diakonia)

¹⁹¹ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 314

¹⁹² Dunne, Tim. “Who shall dwell on your Holy Mountain?”. *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 182

They [Paddy and Carmel] prided themselves on eating simply. In the 1970s the mantra of the enlightened few was 'less is more'.

She added that other members of the family were less impressed. Her mother Mary (wife of Jack Kearney) was convinced he was anorexic and she would mock Paddy, according to Sarah, saying: "He's a pipecleaner in shoes; he starves himself to show his noble intentions." By contrast, Sarah felt that he denied himself because of his spiritual principles. "He was so aware of the poverty around him – how can you have excess when others have so little?" When asked if this was a problem when her uncle was living with Carmel Rickard, she replied: "Paddy was married to his work. He would wake up and go straight to do his emails. And he would do his morning prayer while walking for an hour each day."¹⁹³

Whilst this commitment is admirable, it also runs the risk of alienating lay people who do not feel they can live up to such a high standard. In trying to answer why Catholic Social Teaching remains 'the Church's best-kept secret', Hinze quotes David O'Brien:

Because it is presented either under a guise that makes it so demanding that it negates lay life, or so modest that it makes no real difference. Until a third way, at once demanding and responsible emerges with greater clarity, the rich vital body of CST would likely remain too little known.¹⁹⁴

It was not just his lifestyle but the way he conducted himself that was interpreted by others as different from an ordinary lay person. Eric Apelgren, whom Kearney first knew when he was a parish youth worker and who then went on to high office in the Municipality commented:

I was very surprised when Paddy married Carmel. I thought he was destined to be a priest and we always treated him that way. It is because he was always a person of deep reflection, very philosophical. He never got caught up in his emotions, never got angry – even during a protest march. That's how we thought a priest should have behaved. What is more Paddy never saw himself as a leader; no ambition to lead – that is why people thought he was like a priest.¹⁹⁵

The public side of Kearney's personal relationship

The comments above include reference to Carmel Rickard. The status of 'lay person' in Catholic theology covers both those who are married and those who are single (as was shown above in the quotation from *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 22). In his first years after leaving the Marists, Kearney was on his own. According to Mary de Haas (who was very friendly with the Kearney family and later was connected to them through marriage) for Kearney 'not being married was an advantage because it meant he was free to act' (in contrast to his two brothers Jack and Brian who had both settled down with families).¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Kearney, Sarah. Personal interview by author, 17 September 2020 (niece of Kearney)

¹⁹⁴ Hinze, Christine. "Straining towards Solidarity in a Suffering World – *Gaudium et Spes* after 40 Years". *Vatican II – 40 years later*. in William Madges ed. (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2006) 185

¹⁹⁵ Apelgren, Eric. Personal interview by author, 6 October 2020 in Durban (volunteer at Diakonia and local Government official)

¹⁹⁶ de Haas, Mary. Personal interview by author, 30 September 2020 in Durban (fellow activist and mother-in-law to Kearney's niece)

But according to Kerchhoff (corroborated by the memory of Sarah Kearney quoted above) by 1974 or 1975, Kearney was living as a couple with Carmel Rickard, a well-known human rights journalist.¹⁹⁷ But they were not married, a fact that might not have been worthy of comment in the 1970s in Europe or North America, but certainly was in South Africa at that time, especially since Kearney was working in a very public way for the Church and specifically for the Catholic Archbishop.

The reason that they did not marry was confirmed by Richard Steele since he and his partner Anita Kromberg had made a similar decision (and as a couple they were closely associated with Kearney and Rickard). Conscious that the Apartheid 'Morality Laws' made it impossible for mixed race couples to marry, they decided that to get married under the same laws would be to condone them. "It was thus a public non-violent action to refuse to be married legally." Steele added – without suggesting that the same applied to Kearney and Rickard – that he and Anita had decided not to have children having so often seen the children of activists being neglected. "It did seem to me that Paddy immersed himself and his meaning and his identity in his service work."¹⁹⁸

Further insight is given by Charles Yeats who recalls that when he first knew Kearney, it was known that he and Rickard were living together:

I questioned how he could hold his Christian position while flouting it in his private life, adding that this was a view expressed by a number of more conservative Christians in Durban. He explained that his involvement in the cause for justice eclipsed those concerns. I felt that as a layperson, he had a freedom to live the way he wanted to – and respect Carmel's strong feminist beliefs. In fact I suspect it was Carmel who did not want to get married.¹⁹⁹

Cardinal Napier feels that Rickard and Kearney living together was a source of embarrassment for +Hurley and that that is why he eventually challenged them to get married, at least in church.²⁰⁰ They did so, in Emmanuel Cathedral in January 1983 with Doug Irvine as best man but with +Hurley not presiding because his presence there 'might have raised eyebrows.'²⁰¹ Bishop Nuttall confirmed that this was a Church marriage and was never registered as a Government marriage so the political principle was still honoured, adding that this also made their separation process easier later.²⁰² (Kearney and Rickard separated in 2004 though remained on good terms).²⁰³

The idea of Kearney and Rickard using their life together as a political statement is also shown in another way. Bishop Rubin Phillip recalls that he first met them, when he was posted as a young priest to the Anglican Church in Wentworth, because they used to go to the nearby Catholic Church. Wentworth was designated by Apartheid law as a coloured residential area and it was because of their consciousness about the Apartheid situation that Kearney and Rickard were committed to being part of a non-white parish. +Phillip recalls that they were warmly received and that they also

¹⁹⁷ Kerchhoff, Joan. Personal interview by author, 6 April 2022 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of head of PACSA)

¹⁹⁸ Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

¹⁹⁹ Yeats, Charles. Personal interview by the author, 18 May 2022 via Zoom (Conscientious Objector)

²⁰⁰ Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban); it should however be noted that in 1983, Napier was Bishop of Kokstad and so would not necessarily have been very involved in what was happening in Durban about four hours drive away.

²⁰¹ Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (personal friend and involved in Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace)

²⁰² Nuttall, Michael. Email to the author, 8 October 2020

²⁰³ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban. (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre); Note that Carmel Rickard was approached on a number of occasions but declined to be interviewed for this research.

made a point of not participating in a leadership role in the parish “so that it did not look as if they had come there to take over.”²⁰⁴ ²⁰⁵

Whilst the private relationship between Kearney and Rickard is outside the scope of this research, the public dimension of this is relevant. It shows that after leaving the Marists, Kearney clearly saw himself as a lay person free to marry according to Canon Law (though choosing not to do under secular law). But it also shows that while he was with his wife, and even more so after they separated, Kearney lived a style of life which had much in common with his Marist spirituality. These words of Champagnat could still be applied to Kearney many decades after he was no longer a ‘Little Brother of Mary’:

Little before God, little before our superiors, little before the authorities, little before our brothers, little even before our students, little in our teaching, little before ourselves.²⁰⁶

Kearney’s position after he left the Marists was certainly not as easy as it would have been if he had stayed. He had to negotiate having a position of responsibility in a clerical Church but without a clerical title, and as a Catholic working with other Christians; he had to work out how he would mark his personal romantic relationship; he had to decide for himself how he would live a simple Christian life. Whilst he was no longer bound by the religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, they were still important principles that guided his decisions. And though Vatican II had opened up possibilities for him, reform in the Church was at best work-in-progress. Osborne’s comment thus has some traction:

The Church’s approach to missionary activity, its approach to the ecumenical movement and its approach to lay people were all affected by the same ‘hierarchical and papal factor’.²⁰⁷

But the views of Nuttall, an Anglican bishop who understands Catholic theology but at one remove, summarise well the position that Kearney was able to adopt:

He seemed to me to thrive as a lay person, having made the difficult decision to leave the Marist Brothers after a professed membership of some ten years. This act of courage and conviction made him, surely, a convinced layman, not a nominal one. His subsequent work in important lay roles (university lecturer, director of Diakonia, founder and director of the Denis Hurley Centre) demonstrated this truth.²⁰⁸

The definition and role of lay people

Appendix B contains a more detailed account of what Vatican II prescribed as the role of lay people particularly looking at *Apostolicam Actuositatem* and *Lumen Gentium*.

I start by showing that there has been a process of hardening the lines of distinction from the time of the New Testament up until the dawn of Vatican II.²⁰⁹ I argue that the Council documents make

²⁰⁴ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

²⁰⁵ For more on this see Appendix A: “Kearney’s racial identity”

²⁰⁶ Champagnat, *Chronicles of the Little Brothers of Mary*, 10

²⁰⁷ Osborne, *Ministry*, 517

²⁰⁸ Nuttall, Michael. Email to the author, 8 October 2020

²⁰⁹ Appendix B, 361-362

significant progress in not only recognising lay people but in attributing to them their own apostolate.²¹⁰

However, I argue that Vatican II still leaves a number of questions unanswered and presents several ambiguities and contradictions.²¹¹ For example, at first it appears that there is a clear distinction drawn between two categories: clergy and lay people. But I demonstrate that this is not in fact so clear since there is ambiguity about which side of that line should be placed un-ordained vowed religious (such as Kearney was for 10 years). I also argue that for as long as 'lay person' is a negative category without any act of initiation, it will result in the contradictions of language that appear in Vatican II documents whereby sometimes a term defines a category that includes everyone and sometimes the same term defines a category that only includes lay people. I also draw on the work of Osborne and Rademacher to show how little basis there is in the New Testament Church for any kind of hard distinction between categories of Christians.²¹²

I show that in *Apostolicam Actuositatem* it also appears that there is clarity about the respective roles of the two groups: lay people in the temporal order and clergy in the ecclesial order. But then the documents themselves blur this line, giving each group a role in the other order. This has become further exacerbated by the practice of clergy and lay people since Vatican II.²¹³

The best I can conclude, with Rademacher, is that while Vatican II makes definite progress with regard to the role of the laity, it cannot in one move make up for 2,000 years of neglect:

The term 'lay person' is still weighed down, not only with an historical and cultural linguistic usage expressing contrast, but also one expressing a relative identity that seems to be negative and that *Lumen Gentium* was not able to avoid, although it reduced it to a minimum.²¹⁴

The discussion about how successful Vatican II was in addressing the laity appears in Appendix B since it does not, I believe, fatally undermine the challenge of *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. But it does mean that some apparently hard lines are a bit more blurred. Thus, though we can explore Kearney's life as a lay person in the light of Vatican II, we need to be cautious when examining what he saw as his role. I also want to try and understand where he drew his spiritual nourishment for carrying out this role.

The role of lay people in the world

It is clear from his commitment to ministry after he left the Marists, that Kearney was in no doubt that he had a role to play. Vatican II sets 'the temporal sphere' as the main focus for the apostolate of the laity. In doing this, the Council Fathers were reflecting the position of the wider Christian community at the time. The World Council of Churches when they met a decade earlier in 1954 in Evanston, Illinois stated:

The time has come to make the ministry of the laity explicit, visible and active in the world. The real battles of the faith today are being fought in shops, offices and farms; in political

²¹⁰ Appendix B, 363-366

²¹¹ Appendix B, 366-367

²¹² Appendix B, 368-371

²¹³ Appendix B, 372-379

²¹⁴ Rademacher, William. *Lay Ministry – a theological, spiritual and pastoral handbook* (New York NY: Crossroad, 1991) 81

parties and government agencies; in countless homes, in the press, radio and television; and in the relationship of nations. Very often it is said that the Church should 'go into these spheres'; but the fact is that the Church *is* already in these spheres in the persons of its laity.²¹⁵

For a lay man like Kearney facing this challenge in South Africa in the 1970s, the 'battles of faith' being fought in shops, offices and farms, in government and in media had a particular enemy because of Apartheid. In responding to this, Kearney and others had the inspiration of a leader in the Struggle who was also a Christian but not a pastor, and who saw that he had a definite apostolate as a lay person. Writing in 1962, Albert Luthuli as leader of the ANC had written:

For myself, I am in the Congress precisely because I am a Christian. My Christian belief about human society must find expression here and now, and Congress is the spearhead of the real struggle... My own urge, because I am a Christian, is to get into the thick of the struggle with other Christians, taking my Christianity with me and praying that it may be used to influence for good the character of the resistance.²¹⁶

At the beginning of his papacy, Pope John Paul II (speaking in Puebla Mexico on 25 January 1979) set a similar challenge:

Is it not the laity who are called, by reason of their vocation in the Church, to make their contribution in the political and economic dimensions, and to be effectively present in the safe-guarding and advancement of human rights?²¹⁷

One can imagine the relatively young Kearney, in charge of the newly formed Diakonia, and faced with the increasingly repressive practices of Apartheid, being fired up by those words. But this is more than just a call to Catholic Christians to join others in politics or the fight for social justice. The Church believes that people of faith bring a radically new perspective because of their belief in redemption. A pithy quotation captures this and is all the more interesting in that it is not from a theologian or a bishop or pope. In fact, it is from a lay Catholic man, albeit one who, as a member of the Kennedy clan, had an Ambassador as his father-in-law, plus brothers-in-law that included a President, an Attorney General and a Senator. Sargent Shriver, the founder of the US Peace Corps, wrote:

We believe, not only that the world can be saved but that in principle, in the person of Jesus, the world has been saved.²¹⁸

This quotation is from a series of short essays from 1980, all by American authors, who are reflecting on the 'Challenge to the Laity'. Many of the authors quoted in this chapter (Barta, Novak, Marciniak) are contributors to that book. Being 15 years after the end of the Council, and at the start of the 35 years in which John Paul II dominated the Church (directly and then indirectly through Benedict XVI), it is a good vantage point from which to examine the role of the laity. We do not know if Kearney read this book, but it gives a good insight into a time when the zeal of Vatican II was waning and the contradictions of the real world were impinging.

²¹⁵ Goldie, Rosemary. "Lay, Laity, Laicity: a bibliographical survey of three decades". *Elements for a Theology of the Laity. The Laity Today – bulletin of the Pontifical Council for the Laity* (1979, 26) 140

²¹⁶ Luthuli, Albert. *Let My People Go* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2006) 138

²¹⁷ Barta, Russell ed. *Challenge to the Laity* (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) intro

²¹⁸ Shriver, Sargent. "Religious Values and the Good Society". *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 123

In the preface to the book, William McManus, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend TX, makes it clear that the two-spheres concept (the ecclesial and the temporal) does not absolve the Church from applying *ad intra* what it fights for *ad extra*.

Whether the Church is described as a hierarchical institution or a community of faith or both, it cannot be absolved from its basic obligation to practice what it preaches about human rights, economic and social justice, affirmative action against racism, and the practical consequences of the virtue of charity in the whole realm of human behaviour.²¹⁹

Kearney's work, and in particular the activities of Diakonia, could be seen as a useful blurring of the two spheres. On the one hand, its visible enemy (the Apartheid régime and the economic, social and political oppression that it created) was firmly in the temporal order. But the whole point of Diakonia was to bring together and mobilise the ecclesial order to fight against Apartheid. And, in doing that, Kearney was clear that there was also a need to challenge the injustices within the ecclesial order itself (the Church institutions, leaders, members and traditions that made up Diakonia). I think he would have agreed with Marciniak who saw this as a way for people of faith not only to save the world but also to save the Church.

If as Christians behind a desk or on an assembly line or in the lettuce fields or in the neighbourhoods and inside government, we reflect the faith that does justice, we can keep the church (small c) from turning into the Church (capital C).²²⁰

Working with others

A key aspect of Kearney's approach was to work with others and in this he was responding to part of the challenge of the Council:

The laity must take up the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation. ... As citizens they must cooperate with other citizens with their own particular skill and on their own responsibility. ... The temporal order must be renewed in such a way that, without detriment to its own proper laws, it may be brought into conformity with the higher principles of the Christian life and adapted to the shifting circumstances of time, place, and peoples.²²¹

There is an important sensitivity in this statement because it recognises the value of co-operation to bring about God's justice, but in a way that is still respectful of the independence of the temporal realm (and presumably some of the temporal partners).

This destination, however, not only does not deprive the temporal order of its independence, its proper goals, laws, supports, and significance for human welfare but

²¹⁹ Barta, *Challenge to the Laity*, 3

²²⁰ Marciniak, Ed. "On the Condition of the Laity". *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 33. (Marciniak characterises the 'small-c' church as the one which is at the service of the world and the 'big-C' Church as one which tries to rule the world. My use does not follow his practice but instead I have throughout used 'Church' to refer to the institution and individual denominations; 'churches' to refer to multiple denominations and 'church' to refer to the building.)

²²¹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 7

rather perfects the temporal order in its own intrinsic strength and worth and puts it on a level with humanity's whole vocation upon earth.²²²

That respect is important because the Church – through the laity – are not outsiders seeking to transform an alien realm: the Church is in the world. *Gaudium et Spes* in its subtitle stresses that it is writing about 'the Church *in the* Modern World' – not *outside*, not *opposite*, not *against*, not even *observing*, but *in*. So we should avoid falling into the trap of thinking that the Church can only change systems as an outsider.

Such ideas clearly depart from the mainstream of Catholic social thought which regards the advance of social justice as essentially the service performed within one's professional and occupational milieu. The almost exclusive pre-occupation with the role of the outsider as the model of social action can only distract the laity from the apostolic potential that lies at the core of their professional and occupational lives.²²³

That means not only working as individuals but also working through institutions of every sort. Sometimes they will be institutions that are faith-based; sometimes they will be secular. Commenting on Jacques Maritain's *Christianity and Democracy*, Barta stresses:

If we [un-ordained] have a special Christian vocation – and without a doubt we do – that vocation is to understand, to experiment with, and to advance the body of praxis that incarnates in social, political and economic institutions the evangelical inspiration that breathes in us. We are called upon to realise in institutions of every sort the Gospel message.²²⁴

Kearney's response was similarly to work not on his own but with institutions. Initially he worked within educational institutions (Inanda Seminary, which was Christian but not Catholic; and the University of Natal, which was secular). Then for over forty years, he created and nurtured institutions that were based in faith communities but committed to the perfection of the temporal order: Diakonia, the various KZN Christian networks, the Gandhi Development Trust and then finally the Denis Hurley Centre. By working through effective institutions, he sought to ensure that the work was wide enough in scope and able to draw on the breadth of resources needed. There is a mandate for this in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*:

In regard to the Christian renewal of the temporal order, the laity should be instructed in the true meaning and value of temporal things, both in themselves and in relation to all the aims of the human person. They should be trained in the right use of things and the organisation of institutions.²²⁵

Furthermore, this is a mandate which Kearney embraced (as will be discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 6) to work with like-minded people whatever their background:

The quasi-common heritage of the Gospel, and the common duty of Christian witness resulting from it, recommend and frequently require the cooperation of Catholics with other Christians, on the part of individuals and communities within the Church, either in activities or in associations, in the national or international field. Likewise, common human values not

²²² *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 7

²²³ Barta, *Challenge to the Laity*, 23

²²⁴ Novak, Michael. "What the Laity can Teach the Church". *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 52

²²⁵ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 31

infrequently call for cooperation between Christians pursuing apostolic aims and those who do not profess Christ's name but acknowledge these values.²²⁶

The Order of Deacon

Before moving on, I want to explore a vocation option that was open to Kearney but that he clearly chose not to explore.

Recall that he had chosen not to separate himself through ordination to the priesthood. He also later reversed his earlier decision to remove himself from the world as a celibate religious. But Vatican II opened up a third possibility for him which was to be an ordained but non-celibate deacon. But interestingly, he also chose not to exercise the option. This lacuna is especially intriguing since his friend and partner in Pietermaritzburg, Peter Kerchhoff (the head of Diakonia's sister organisation PACSA) was ordained as a deacon in the Anglican Church. Is this something that Kearney considered and why might he have rejected it?

The 'recovery' by Vatican II of the office of deacon is sometimes held up as one of the great innovations of the Council. In fact the debate about deacons, at the Council and since, has been complex and the implementation of the ministry has varied over time and geography. Nevertheless, Vatican II changed what was the norm at the time that almost the only people ordained deacon were men on their way to becoming priests. It was no longer just to be a temporary role held only by celibate men:

Since these duties, so very necessary to the life of the Church, can be fulfilled only with difficulty in many regions in accordance with the discipline of the Latin Church as it exists today, the diaconate can in the future be restored as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy. ...With the consent of the Roman Pontiff, this diaconate can, in the future, be conferred upon men of more mature age, even upon those living in the married state. It may also be conferred upon suitable young men, for whom the law of celibacy must remain intact.²²⁷

Since for some it remained a step towards priesthood²²⁸, it was a role that was still conferred by ordination and so only admissible for men (the document's gendered language here is intentional). Moreover, *Lumen Gentium* stresses that deacons are at 'a lower level of the hierarchy' compared to bishops and priests. Thus, the permanent diaconate, rather than challenging the traditional hierarchical view of the Church, actually reinforces it by pushing the lay person down another tier. 'Hierarchology' (a term that Congar claims to have coined in 1947) is alive and well.²²⁹

Note also that, though it could be conferred 'even upon those living in the married state', this is presented as a rather reluctant exception; it is quickly balanced by the idea (more honoured in the breach than in the observance) that an unmarried man could also be ordained deacon (but must thereafter remain celibate).

Nevertheless, the order of deacons is presented with a degree of dignity:

²²⁶ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 27

²²⁷ *Lumen Gentium* 29

²²⁸ *Optatam Totius* 12

²²⁹ Congar, Yves. "Moving towards a Pilgrim Church". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 133

For, strengthened by sacramental grace, in communion with the bishop and his group of priests, they serve in the diaconate of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity to the people of God.²³⁰

Surely this is what Kearney was doing – he was involved in liturgy, the word and charity. Would he not want to be ‘strengthened by sacramental grace’? Besides, the justification for the role is presented as deeply scriptural, invoking Acts 6:1-6 in which seven men are chosen from the community and (it is claimed) are ordained as the First Deacons. Their main focus is care of the poor and that was exactly the focus of Kearney’s ministry. Moreover, he was running an organisation which had ‘deacon’ built into the title. In fact, in a talk given to the Natal Council of Churches (25 January 1974) +Hurley made just this joke:

Anyone accepting the job of director of Diakonia (or should it be ‘the Deacon of Diakonia’?) could not be expected to tackle more than a fraction of the problems referred to.²³¹

Any anxiety Kearney might have had about separation from the people of God was surely addressed through the new recognition by Vatican II that a deacon was not just a half-baked priest. Certainly, according to his widow, Peter Kerchhoff (and also his fellow Anglican activist, John Aitchison) never wanted to move on from being deacons to become priests, because they saw the focus of the deacon was on bringing the needs of the poor to the Church. (She adds that they were admitted to the diaconate without having to do any theological training purely on the recommendation of the then Dean, John Forbes.)²³²

For Anglicans, the fact that married men could be deacons was less relevant since they could also be priests. But, for a Catholic like Kearney, it should have been a significant concession that a married man could be a deacon. However, recall that between 1974/5 and 1983, Kearney was living as if married but not actually married in the eyes of the Church. Perhaps, the complexity of his married/non-married status was part of the hesitation: had he become a deacon in that period (even if he had been allowed to), he would not have been able to marry later.

We have no evidence that Kearney considered becoming a deacon but rejected the idea; nor do we know that he actually wanted to be a deacon but was refused. +Phillip has an uncertain recollection about this: “+Hurley mentioned that he thought Paddy should have been ordained. But I have no recollection that he encouraged Paddy to become a deacon.”²³³

My assessment is that Kearney would not have considered it as a serious option since there was nothing that he wanted to do in the Church for which the status of deacon would equip him. Moreover, to be ‘elevated’ to such an order (even if it is ‘a lower level of the hierarchy’) would have immediately distanced him from those who were doing the same work but did not have the title of deacon (including all women).

The main focus of the deacon, as per the Scriptural reference to Acts 6, is the care of the poor and this is clearly something that has been done for centuries by men and, even more so, by women in the Church without the need to be ‘strengthened by sacramental grace’, both lay people and

²³⁰ *Lumen Gentium* 29

²³¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/1 “Talk to Natal Council of Churches” (25 January 1974)

²³² Kerchhoff, Joan. Personal interview by author, 6 April 2022 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of head of PACSA)

²³³ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

religious brothers and sisters. In fact, to suggest that ordained deacons would do this better than those who are not ordained would seem unjustified by history or theology.

What of the other duties in the long list that *Lumen Gentium* 29 says can be assigned to a deacon 'by competent authority' (i.e. the bishop)?²³⁴ When looked at in more detail, many of these turn out to be 'straw men'. Many of them are tasks that were already being carried out by lay people (both men and women) or which would soon be carried out by lay people through other changes in the post-Conciliar era: distributing communion (if it has already been consecrated), reading the Sacred Scripture (except the Gospel), instructing and exhorting people (as long as you do not call it a homily), presiding over worship and prayer of the faithful (except the Eucharist), administering sacramentals, officiating at funeral services. Some are tasks (such as baptism and bringing Viaticum to the dying) which can already be administered by any Christian, at least in a case of emergency. So that only really leaves assisting at and blessing marriages in the name of the Church!

In the meantime, the two services that Catholic laity most look to clergy to provide – Mass and Confession – are ones precisely not extended to deacons, whereas strangely other sacraments (Baptism, Marriage and Viaticum) are. It is almost as if deacons are designed not to be useful! There is a danger that a move, that was supposed to expand access to ministry by admitting ordained married men, actually ends up limiting it for everyone else. If the main useful duties that can be carried out by deacons are ones that most lay people are doing anyway (reading at Mass, distributing communion, leading non-Eucharistic services, tending to the poor), deacons might intentionally or unintentionally discourage lay people from pursuing these. Barta warns:

...African bishops don't want to hear about a permanent diaconate. They say it will kill the laity in the Church. It will kill the laity in the Church because it will reinforce the conviction already existing that to work for the Church you must be ordained.²³⁵

He makes this point in relation to Africa because here, where there is a lower number of priests, the role of Catechist – a man *or woman* in the community trained to carry out many liturgical and pastoral functions – has been most developed.²³⁶ But I think this could also apply to other parts of the world as more and more lay people (men *and women*) started taking on ministries in the post-Conciliar age without the necessity of being ordained.

Since the institution of permanent deacons, in South Africa they have mostly been deployed to work in parishes and assist parish priests. This would certainly have been a distraction for Kearney from his work at Diakonia though, one assumes that +Hurley could still have assigned him as a deacon to work full time for the organisation. Instead, my belief is that Kearney, considering the function of the deacon, would have concluded that it added little to what he was already doing and would have detracted from what others were doing. (The same accusation might not necessarily apply in the Anglican Church where there are some differences in the tradition of the Deacon). But I think there is a more profound reason than this for Kearney not to be attracted to the role of deacon; and that is that the role itself is spurious.

The title 'Deacon' is clearly drawn from the Greek word *diakonia* which translates as service. That is why the organisation that Kearney set up for +Hurley – at the service of the Church and of the people of God – was called Diakonia. Osborne makes the point that *diakonia* is also the standard

²³⁴ *Lumen Gentium* 29

²³⁵ Barta, *Challenge to the Laity*, 22

²³⁶ It is noteworthy that the furthest any South African has yet proceeded on the road to canonisation is a man who was a Catechist (Bl. Benedict Daswa) and not a monastic-founder (Ven. Abbot Pfanner) or even, despite Kearney's best efforts, a world-renowned Archbishop like +Hurley!

Greek word for ministry; and not, for example, the word *kleros* which leads to the word 'clergy'.²³⁷ So anyone engaged in ministry or service could rightly be termed a Deacon.

But what of the 'Institution of the First Deacons' by the laying on hands referred to in Acts 6:1-6? Rademacher points out that the Greek text simply says that seven men were selected and commissioned in order to serve or to minister. (The word could also mean to wait at table, to supervise the meal, to manage the money table.) The text uses the verb *diakonein* to describe their function; it does not create a noun to describe their status.²³⁸ Thus, Acts 6:1-6 should not be referred to as 'The Institution of the First Deacons' but simply as the 'The Institution (or the Formalisation) of Service'.

Rademacher goes on to analyse Acts 6 and concludes that, if it sets out any model, it is not for specific ministers but rather a blueprint for ministry as follows: a) the ministry emerges in response to the community, b) the need for it precedes the formation of ministry, c) those who carry out the ministry are from the community itself, d) the ministry is broad and flexible, e) those who are commissioned to carry out the ministry have relevant qualifications, and f) they are elected by the community even if they are then confirmed by the religious leaders.²³⁹

He concludes: "Christian *diakonia* refers to any service of genuine love.... all significant activity for the building up of the community."²⁴⁰ That would seem to fit very well with a description of what Kearney did while at Diakonia and what he did throughout his life as a Christian.

Andrew Warmback, an Anglican priest who was also a co-worker at Diakonia points out that the organisation was always about strengthening the Church to do the work of service; not about building up the organisation itself:

Even if Diakonia provided the resources, they were then available for the work of the clergy and of lay people. Moreover, it provided the only space in which clergy from different traditions could come together and also where clergy and lay people could come together. In this way, it did a lot more for organic church unity than sitting down and discussing the issues. There were indeed clerics on the staff (such as myself, Mike Vorster, Mbonambi Khuzwayo, Sue Brittion, Deon Snyman) but Diakonia deliberately recognised the lay stratum and treated everyone as equal with no sense of deference to the clerics. Paddy did not like clericalism – he saw it as a block to a social movement. I think he achieved a lot more by being an involved lay person. Others looked at him and said 'Here is someone like us'.²⁴¹

The title of Deacon would have blocked that. Moreover, since everyone at Diakonia was already involved in *diakonia*, all of them had been selected from their communities, all were chosen because they had relevant skills and qualifications, and all had been endorsed by religious leaders (the Diakonia Council), they were all comparable to the seven commissioned 'to serve' in Acts 6. If the title 'Deacon' mattered at all, they were all entitled to claim it, lay and cleric alike, male and female.

²³⁷ Osborne, *Ministry*, 14

²³⁸ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 35

²³⁹ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 37

²⁴⁰ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 41

²⁴¹ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 Oct 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest and co-worker at Diakonia)

Kearney as crossing the temporal and ecclesial orders

I believe that one of the confusions created by the Order of Deacons is to take a role that is seemingly engaged with the 'temporal order' (if Acts 6 is to be its foundation) but then, by clericalising it, make it part of the 'ecclesial order'.

In any case, it seems that Kearney did not see such a hard line between these two 'spheres' and that would be another reason why becoming a Deacon would not have been attractive or necessary. After all the main invitation of *Apostolicam Actuositatem* is for lay people to engage in the saving mission of Christ: not just in one part of it.

Through this holy synod, the Lord renews His invitation to all the laity to come closer to Him every day, recognising that what is His is also their own, to associate themselves with Him in His saving mission.²⁴²

An insight comes from outside the Catholic world and from a pastor who was at one stage expelled from his own church. Frank Chikane describes himself as having been a 'defrocked priest' but appreciated that that meant (like Kearney) he had more freedom to participate in the Struggle as a lay person. "I feel that Paddy and I both share a similar view. We understand that there are no boundaries between the secular and the sacred – we believe in an integrated theology."²⁴³

Vatican II tries to establish the role of lay people – and redeem the role of the Church – by espousing a positive relationship to secularity. Indeed, one of the main criticisms of *Gaudium et Spes* (the document which focuses on 'the Church in the Modern World') was that it was too positive in its attitude towards the secular.²⁴⁴

This is hardly surprising given what a dramatic change there has been in what mattered for the Church. One good test, applied by Congar, was to look at the entries in the monumental *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (produced between 1903 and 1950). Whereas *Gaudium et Spes* opened by talking about 'joy' and 'suffering', neither of these terms merited an entry in the *Dictionnaire*. In fact, Congar calculates that across 15 volumes there is not a single entry at all on the following: trade, work, economy, politics, technology, science (as opposed to 'sacred science'), history, earth, world.²⁴⁵ Even the secular areas that are seen as a natural sphere for the Church have no entries: family, fatherhood, motherhood, woman, friendship, pleasure. And he adds that the only article about power is a lengthy one (103 columns long) but is all about the power of the pope in the temporal order!

The Council Fathers are now interested in what is secular but Goldie feels that the post-Conciliar Church never fully delivers on this promise. She quotes Schillebeeckx:

It has not been sufficiently understood that lay men and women (as members of God's people) precisely because they are non-clerics, have a positive relationship to secularity (even in the exercise of a purely and primarily religious apostolate). As a result the lay person's specific contribution to evangelisation is not given its full value, and where this contribution is really effective, it takes on 'clerical' forms to the detriment of its authentically lay character.²⁴⁶

²⁴² *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 32

²⁴³ Chikane, Frank. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2021 via Zoom (Secretary General of SACC 1987-94)

²⁴⁴ O'Malley, John W. *What happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge MA: Harvard, 2010) 261

²⁴⁵ Congar, Yves. "Moving towards a Pilgrim Church". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 144

²⁴⁶ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 119 (gendered language adjusted)

Rademacher sees evidence of this in the language used:

It is not unusual to hear Catholic laity say: 'We take care of the material things so Father can take care of the spiritual.' In Catholic parishes, the people who distribute the Eucharist in the sanctuary are called ministers, the members of the SVDP who feed the hungry are not called ministers; lectors who serve in the holy sanctuary are called ministers, members of the legion of Mary are not. Jesus on the other hand ministered in the streets, not in the Temple. He served as Lector once, but mostly ministered in the secular world of lepers, lawyers, fishermen, Samaritans, outcasts, prostitutes and tax collectors.²⁴⁷

Langefeld, by contrast, notes that the SACBC 1989 Pastoral Plan goes beyond Vatican II in using the term 'ministry' beyond ordained ministry to include the full range of roles played by lay people: 'readers, acolytes, youth ministry, ministers of the sick, funeral ministers, counsellors, leaders of small Christian communities, social justice co-ordinators, financial administrators'.²⁴⁸

In the list of official/ unofficial ministries mentioned by Rademacher above it is also noteworthy that it is only the 'sacred' and not the 'secular' ministries that typically are marked with some kind of commissioning ceremony. He questions the value of such ceremonies:

If such ministry is a way of exercising the call received at baptism, what can justify this commissioning? Why is it necessary to commission laypersons, and even to set up special canonical offices, for services that are normally theirs in virtue of their membership of the Christian community?²⁴⁹

He suspects, I think rightly, that it comes back to the desire for control by the hierarchy: there is a noticeable distinction between ecclesial activities (that the bishop/ priest feels he can and should control) and charitable ones (which seem to matter less). Even the new order of permanent deacon (re-)created by Vatican II, though ostensibly to serve the poor, is mostly exercised by deacons in the ecclesial realm where they can be controlled by the priest.

An addition to the dualities listed above could be the one of 'controlled /not-controlled', the implication that this is a binary with no positions in between. Rademacher points out that neither Vatican II nor any subsequent synods ever had on their agenda 'the discernment of the usefulness of hierarchy', perhaps because in a binary world this was too hard a question to ask.²⁵⁰ But he suggests that there are many other alternatives:

The opposite of anarchy is not necessarily hierarchy. Order can come about through democracy, through the responsible cooperation of all the ministers, through prayerful discernment, through 'little councils' and through participative management.²⁵¹

The Catholic hierarchy – neither in South Africa nor in the Vatican – has been unwilling to experiment with 'participative management'. But this is something that Kearney as a lay person was able to explore creatively in the various organisations that he created.

²⁴⁷ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 127

²⁴⁸ Langefeld, Chris. "The Reception of Vatican II in South Africa". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 40 (This article was retained by Kearney in his personal archive).

²⁴⁹ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 97

²⁵⁰ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 172

²⁵¹ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 100

The dualism mentioned above is a theology that Waliggo sees should be regretted: one that separates the religious from the secular sectors of life, the soul from the body. He decries the view that:

A good Christian would be one who kept aloof from politics which are dirty, from economics which endanger salvation of the soul, from culture which contaminates pure Christian faith, from development which erodes the good virtues of Christianity.²⁵²

Kearney certainly did not keep aloof from any of those; yet people who knew him well would say that he avoided becoming dirty, endangering his soul, contaminating his pure Christian faith, and eroding the good virtues of Christianity! Bishop Phillip, as mentioned above, first knew Kearney when he was a young priest, and then worked closely with him in a range of projects over 40 years. He commented:

Paddy was not just politically motivated but he was motivated by his own faith – they both played an equally important role for him. Because of that he was able to give the Church a really necessary visibility in the public space (and in a way that was self-effacing).²⁵³

In this, +Phillip argues, Kearney was just fulfilling the vocation that we all have as baptised Christians. But, as Rademacher points out, the formal Church does not always celebrate that:

The call or vocation comes through baptism. It goes out to all people, it is not limited to those who hope to be ordained to the priesthood or hope to take solemn vows. However, the pastoral practice of the Church, in spite of Vatican II, still has a long way to go to reconnect vocation to baptism.²⁵⁴

For Kearney, this reflects an integrity of purpose – not temporal vs ecclesial but temporal *and* ecclesial. That also means there needs to be integrity in how Christians live their lives when it is so hard to practice what you preach. Rademacher gives the examples of people who are in ministry one day and the next day are selling slaves, or exercising racial discrimination, or excluding people of colour or women from the positions of leadership.

The history of ministry is a tale of glory and of frailty, of Grace accepted and of Grace rejected, of the Spirit received and of the Spirit quenched.²⁵⁵

Thus, when people comment on Kearney living ‘a monastic life’ or ‘starving himself to show his noble intentions’, what he is actually doing is living up the challenge that the Council places before all lay people:

The laity fulfil this mission of the Church in the world especially by conforming their lives to their faith so that they become the light of the world They fulfil their mission also by fraternal charity which presses them to share in the living conditions, labours, sorrows, and aspirations of their brethren with the result that the hearts of all about them are quietly prepared for the workings of saving grace. Another requisite for the accomplishment of their task is a full consciousness of their role in building up society whereby they strive to

²⁵² Waliggo, John-Mary. “Christianity and Liberation in African: Some Obstacles” *Towards African Christian Liberation*. Leonard Namwera et al (Nairobi: St Paul, 1990) 32

²⁵³ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

²⁵⁴ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 26

²⁵⁵ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 50

perform their domestic, social, and professional duties with such Christian generosity that their manner of acting should gradually penetrate the whole world of life and labour.²⁵⁶

A good summary of Kearney's integrity comes from a partner in mission who was not a Catholic, not in fact a Christian. A V Mahomed is the Chair of Jumma Masjid next door to Emmanuel Cathedral. He says that he connected with Kearney because they were both members of big religious institutions and both of them not priests. This led to the mutual respect with which they treated each other.

His occupational therapy was to serve God and to serve people – and the more he did this the more it fed his appetite. He never worried about how he was dressed. He was more modest than the word 'modest' could describe. I would sum him up by saying 'he was a soul concerned about other souls'.²⁵⁷

Kearney's Spirituality

As we reflect on how Kearney lived out his Baptismal calling, we need to ask what fed it: how did he grow in what *Lumen Gentium* 39 described as 'the Universal Call to Holiness'?

The laity have already been associated with priests under the rubric of 'the priesthood of all believers'; now they are being associated with the religious since historically it was those who took religious vows who were seen as 'called to holiness'. Kearney had never wanted to be an ordained priest and he also decided to be dispensed from his religious vows. But the call to holiness was no less part of his Christian journey than that of +Hurley (who was ordained deacon, priest and bishop and lived for over 70 years under religious vows).

Lumen Gentium sets it out thus:

Therefore in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness... this holiness of the Church is unceasingly manifested, and must be manifested, in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful; it is expressed in many ways in individuals, who in their walk of life, tend toward the perfection of charity, thus causing the edification of others.²⁵⁸

The passage goes on to refer to those in religious life but obliquely: it does not use that term, nor indeed refer to vows, but instead uses the more open language of the 'evangelical counsels' (another traditional way of referring to poverty, chastity and obedience) but in a manner that *could* include people like Kearney who were dedicated but not vowed:

..in a very special way this (holiness) appears in the practice of the counsels, customarily called 'evangelical'. This practice of the counsels, under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit, undertaken by many Christians, either privately or in a Church-approved condition or state

²⁵⁶ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 13

²⁵⁷ Mahomed, AV. Personal interview by author, 15 September 2020 in Durban (Chair of Jumma Masjid Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

²⁵⁸ *Lumen Gentium* 39

of life, gives and must give in the world an outstanding witness and example of this same holiness.²⁵⁹

The evangelical counsels had been seen as a mark of the 'consecrated life': the assumption behind that phrase is that consecration is a one-off act and that it applies to some people and not to others. But Rademacher warns against seeing 'consecration' as a one-off action whereby something that was not holy becomes holy. He recommends instead that we see it as an ongoing process, thus baptismal consecration is the work of a lifetime, not an event in the life of a baby.

With this truth clearly understood, we can reflect on the various principles and methods for growing in the holiness planted within us as a small seed during our baptism.²⁶⁰

He offers eight principles for someone to develop their spirituality or holiness: 1) link it to the baptismal vocation; 2) that it should be nourished by the Word; 3) that it should be centred around Jesus; 4) an ongoing disposition towards conversion; 5) compassion; 6) holiness of everyday things; 7) contact with the Spirit; 8) reverence for holy time; and 9) the movement towards holiness is a movement towards wholeness.²⁶¹ All of these would apply to Kearney.

What feeds this movement towards holiness is spirituality. But what do we mean by that? Rademacher warns us that it can become an empty, catch-all expression:

We are all for spirituality. We are also all for motherhood, apple pie and lower taxes. As long as no one defines it, it seems harmless enough. There is nothing controversial like women's ordination or capital punishment.²⁶²

Lumen Gentium does not define the term – in fact does not even use it. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* does refer to 'growth in the spiritual life', and stresses that it needs to be specific. But it then does not attempt to specify what it would look like:

This plan for the spiritual life of the laity should take its particular character from their married or family state or their single or widowed state, from their state of health, and from their professional and social activity. They should not cease to develop earnestly the qualities and talents bestowed on them in accord with these conditions of life, and they should make use of the gifts which they have received from the Holy Spirit.²⁶³

So the idea of a spirituality of the laity is hinted at (to feed the Apostolate of the Laity which is stated specifically). But, just as the definition of laity is a negative one in opposition to what it is not, there is a danger that lay spirituality is defined by what it is not, as Shriver warns:

Our understanding of holiness has probably become too ecclesialised, too churchy and too ethereal. Holiness, to many Catholics today, and perhaps to many other Christians in the West, probably means withdrawing from life, praying, being uninvolved in conflictual situations in this world. Yet the task for lay Christians has much to do with all manner of

²⁵⁹ *Lumen Gentium* 39

²⁶⁰ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 192

²⁶¹ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 193-199

²⁶² Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 189

²⁶³ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 4

highly conflictual, highly technical and highly politicised situations in which intelligent, decisive and perhaps even aggressive action is required.²⁶⁴

If an appropriate spirituality is not offered, lay people might mistakenly revert to an inappropriate spirituality. Osborne argues that even before Vatican II there was a growing sense of ownership of the Church and responsibility on the part of the lay person which was now communal and not private, but that this was out of step with the privatised spirituality which nourished lay people.

This form of spirituality generally reinforced the basic premise of Catholic Action, namely that lay people participated in the Apostolate of the hierarchy. Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin were atypical, rather than typical, of approved models of lay Christian life.²⁶⁵

The lack of Lay Spirituality might not only lead to a misunderstanding of the lay apostolate but could even drive lay people away from the Church. Albert Nolan described how young people were seeking liberation outside the Church because they did not find credible the person who argues from abstract ideas and they instead look to people speaking from experience. Kearney was likely to have had a similar experience since, like Nolan, he also had exposure to young people and students.²⁶⁶

Thus Marciniak fears:

The abiding hunger for a truly lay spirituality (not a spirituality for lay people) is not being satisfied. The laity are starving. They feel it. Is it any wonder many young people have turned to nibbling at fad foods served up by religious cults?²⁶⁷

Nolan's caution above against abstract ideas reminds us that *Apostolicam Actuositatem* indicates that spirituality needs to be specific. That means it will be based on the situation of the individual minister (a term which Rademacher uses in the broadest sense of every Christian, since all are called to ministry).

Ministers who truly believe in the incarnation will have a reverence for the grace of specific times and places, the actual situations, in their ministry. In the incarnate Christ, ministry occurs when Jesus actually met the leper, the tax collector. In the same way, it will be the actual pastoral situation that will be a grace-filled sacrament and that will shape the minister's spirituality. ...For this reason, we can conclude that the minister's particular situation, to some extent, gives birth to a situational spirituality.²⁶⁸

For Kearney, and many lay people like him, the spirituality that appeals is what Falkiner calls 'the Spirituality of Justice'. He sees this as emerging from Pope Paul VI's 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio* which saw the need for people to develop an appropriate spirituality to achieve Justice and Peace in the world and that this was a spirituality for the laity and not just for clerics.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ Shriver, "Religious Values and the Good Society", 118

²⁶⁵ Osborne, *Ministry*, 522. (Maurin and Day are the co-founders of the Catholic Worker Movement, which is one of the lay movements embraced under the heading of 'Catholic Action'. Maurin was not a priest but was a religious brother; Day was a lay woman.)

²⁶⁶ Nolan, Albert. *God in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 23

²⁶⁷ Marciniak, "On the Condition of the Laity", 41

²⁶⁸ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 205

²⁶⁹ Falkiner, Joe. "Re-living the Memories of Pope Paul VI and his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*". *JustMeCatholicFaith*. <https://justmecatholicfaith.wordpress.com/2012/08/19/re-living-the-memories-of-pope-paul-vi-and-his-encyclical-populorum-progressio/> (accessed 3 May 2022)

Osborne develops a similar line arguing that a spirituality for the non-ordained ministry needs to be *centred in God* rather than just being based on *belief in God*. The description of God that he then gives is one which, I suspect, would have appealed to Kearney, even if many other lay Catholics would be baffled by it:

God is not a Roman Catholic. God is not even a Christian. God is not Jewish. God is not Islamic. Rather, God is the God of all. God is a God in whom women as well as men can believe. God is a God in whom the marginated and poor, as well as the comfortable citizens, can believe. Indeed, only that understanding of God which sees God as preferentially the God of the poor, the God of the marginated, the God of the second-rate, will stir up any embers of human faith.²⁷⁰

He then develops this further as a spirituality centred in Jesus and in particular focused on the human-ness of Jesus; he points out that often liberation theology has, as a point of departure, the historical Jesus and those influenced by such a theology look to connect the historical Jesus with their own history.²⁷¹

It is a spirituality which needs to be 'enscriptured': neighbourhood groups of men and women who gather to read the enscriptured word, to pray the enscriptured word, and to let the enscriptured word activate in their daily lives.²⁷²

Mkame has used similar words to describe Kearney's spirituality:

I see in him the image of Christ mixing with ordinary people and prostitutes; the problem with priests is that they can become too aloof, they do not want to plunge themselves into the real lives of people. Paddy understood the contextualisation of the gospel.²⁷³

Those outside the world of social justice might be surprised to see the words 'Spirituality' and 'Liberation' linked in this way. Bellagamba argues against this dichotomy ('the great fallacy of religion') which says:

Spirituality belongs to the soul, while liberation to the body; the former has to do with God, the latter with the world; spiritual people are found in places of worship; liberationists in the street and marketplaces. One excludes the other; the two are irreconcilable. The spiritualists look at the liberationists as 'extremists' 'kind of outcast'; the liberationists consider the spiritualists outside of reality, dreamers, wasting time.²⁷⁴

He offers an alternative definition as follows:

Spirituality is a way of being, relating and consequent action, with God and creatures, in keeping with the signs of the times and inspired by the teaching and example of Jesus. Liberation is a way of acting out our spirituality in situations of oppression, poverty and any other injustice to bring holiness and wholeness to all of life... Spirituality and Liberation

²⁷⁰ Osborne, *Ministry*, 601

²⁷¹ Osborne, *Ministry*, 602

²⁷² Osborne, *Ministry*, 604

²⁷³ Mkame, Liz. Personal interview by author, 17 December 2020 in Pinetown (co-worker at Diakonia)

²⁷⁴ Bellagamba, Anthony. "Spirituality and Liberation". *Towards African Christian Liberation*. L Namwera et al (Nairobi: St Paul, 1990) 248

would be the two sides of the same coin; the coin is the Mission of God on earth, the two sides make that mission possible and Christian.²⁷⁵

The authors quoted were all writing long after Kearney had started his work and was clearly already finding a way to nurture his spiritual life. A text from near the beginning of his apostolic life as a lay man, and one which we can be sure Kearney would have read several times, is Nolan's ground-breaking *Jesus before Christianity*.²⁷⁶ In this book, Nolan argues that Jesus was middle class but 'became an outcast by choice' (as indeed did Kearney);²⁷⁷ that "Christians first used the noun 'gospel' or 'good news' (*euangelion* Mk1:1, 14) as a way of referring to the content or message which Jesus proclaimed to the poor and oppressed";²⁷⁸ and that "the values of the kingdom are different from and opposed to the values of this world."²⁷⁹ We see the result of this in the fact that Jesus' solidarity with people was not a vague abstract attitude towards humankind in general. Instead, it was relationships with specific individuals, which included people who were poor and oppressed.²⁸⁰

Nolan concludes that since we do not know what God is like, but we do know what Jesus is like, then we can say what God is because we know what Jesus is: one who serves, who takes the lowest place, who is not feared, who is recognised in suffering of the poor, who is committed to the liberation of humankind.

If this is not a true picture of God, then Jesus is not divine. If this is a true picture of God, then God is more truly human, more thoroughly humane, than any human being. God is what Schillebeeckx has called a *Deus humanissimus*, a supremely human God.²⁸¹

This suggests a depth of spirituality which would explain what nourished Kearney over many decades and also what enabled him to keep his faith and his activism ('liberation') so interconnected. Kearney's faith, it seems, was something that for others was self-evident. Thus, the comment of one Anglican bishop with whom he worked closely:

It was a profound faith even though he never uttered any passionate feelings about his faith and never flaunted his faith. His faith was a given. I do wonder if he ever had doubts.²⁸²

This lack of flaunting might have led some, even those close to him, to underestimate Kearney's spirituality. Stephen Tully, who worked closely with Kearney for many years both in the Cathedral parish and in setting up the Denis Hurley Centre, spoke of his spirituality in rather bland terms:

He was the good lay Catholic, it was nice to have him around. He did use Scripture when he gave presentations but not in an evangelical way. He was a traditional Catholic with a feeling for the faith so he lived it before he knew it. It was what he had always done.²⁸³

Others speak of Kearney's spirituality with a greater richness. Alex Campbell is a friend who had known Kearney when he had been an Oblate priest in Durban. He left the priesthood in 1977 and is

²⁷⁵ Bellagamba, "Spirituality and Liberation", 250-251

²⁷⁶ Nolan, Albert. *Jesus before Christianity* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1976)

²⁷⁷ Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity*, 34

²⁷⁸ Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity*, 56

²⁷⁹ Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity*, 60

²⁸⁰ Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity*, 79

²⁸¹ Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity*, 167

²⁸² Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

²⁸³ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

now married and living in Canada; he recalls a story which exemplifies Kearney's spirituality and how it was inspiring to others:

In 2013 my grand-daughter was doing a Masters in Reconciliation at St Paul's Ottawa and visited South Africa and Diakonia. I remembered Paddy and introduced her to him because I knew that Diakonia was one of the first places where I felt spirituality and activism were side by side. In North America, we separate the two. My grand-daughter told me that a few of the students would have joined that kind of religious community if it existed in Canada. They admired how people share their spirituality in their lives and in their work and combine the two.²⁸⁴

His description is a neat reply to the fear voiced above (by Nolan and Marciniak) about how the Church responds to the spiritual needs of young people (and bear in mind that at the time of this encounter Kearney would have been 71 years old). Someone else who knew him over many years also captures the importance in Kearney's spirituality of integration:

When meeting Paddy, I was aware of being in the presence of someone who was supported by his own spirituality. Paddy did not express this publicly but I knew I was in front of someone who was more than just an activist. Paddy was an example of the '*méditants-militants*'.²⁸⁵

Some of those who knew Kearney well during the Diakonia period commented on his obsession with work as what drove him:

It wasn't even a possibility for Paddy to give up; there was no way he could give up. It would be like giving up life.²⁸⁶

Paddy would have never stopped; it was his mission in life.²⁸⁷

He got a lot of joy from his work. There was endless creativity though he would not admit it.²⁸⁸

His life was his job. Paddy did not need to recreate himself. That was clear by his choice of a simple pine coffin with sisal handles – the very opposite of a modern ANC funeral.²⁸⁹

His niece Ursula de Haas, said that this dogged-ness was inherited by Kearney from his mother, Margie Walsh, and attributed it to all three of the Kearney brothers. "None of them can relax."²⁹⁰

²⁸⁴ Campbell, Alex. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 via Zoom (former Oblate priest)

²⁸⁵ Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author, 17 January 2022 via Zoom (manager at Entraide et Fraternité, Belgium-based donor). (He describes this term as a 'rich approach' from two theologians: a Belgian former NGO officer and later orthodox priest, Thierry Verhelst; and a Swiss sociologist, journalist and orthodox theologian, Michel Maxime Egger.)

²⁸⁶ Kerchhoff, Joan. Personal interview by author, 6 April 2022 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of head of PACSA)

²⁸⁷ Goad, Daphne. Personal interview by author, 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

²⁸⁸ McKay, Anne. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2021 in Durban (communications officer at Diakonia)

²⁸⁹ Moran, Brendan. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (member of End Conscription Campaign)

²⁹⁰ de Haas, Ursula. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (niece of Kearney)

+Hurley's successor as Archbishop of Durban witnessed the same drive and determination: 'he was married to Diakonia'. But Napier saw it specifically as originating from a strong sense of self-sacrifice from his time in religious life.²⁹¹

The agnostic Richard Steele also used the term self-sacrifice.

Where did his drive come from? I suppose it was the Western European work ethic which sees work as holy and being lazy as sinful. It was an almost simplistic understanding of the call: you must be prepared to sacrifice, to serve God. Any focus on the self would be sinful and selfish.²⁹²

But Keane, though recognising the single-mindedness ("When he was at Diakonia the married man disappeared") also saw his spirituality as more than just activity for the sake of activity: "Paddy was always very generous; he was never the key pin. He was always interested in lifting people up."²⁹³

A Christian leader from outside Catholic circles, Frank Chikane, who knew Kearney at a distance, suffered violence because of his resistance against Apartheid. He described spirituality as a reference point which means there is an end beyond yourself; an external reference point means you are able to survive.

Some people took their spirituality more seriously than others. But Paddy was completely motivated by his spirituality. It was the thing that held him together. Everyone could see the spiritual in him; it was not pretence. Some used the Church as a strategy but their commitment was not there. I have seen what my comrades are capable of doing, even killing each other. I see that they were not committed to helping the poor or fighting for justice – they just joined the Struggle as a strategy to get rid of the racist system. Paddy had a total commitment to his God and what God required of him. It was, in some ways, a simple form of spirituality. He was confident that he was totally committed to justice and to God's justice.²⁹⁴

This was reiterated by +Phillip:

What led to his deep and fearless commitment? It was so strong that he was not afraid of imprisonment. Fundamentally it was not political but theological. We used to have so many discussions about the Bible and the poor; we were both influenced by the Latin American theologians. That is an approach in which you are not compartmentalising the Church and the world. In Paddy it became a passion for the plight of the poor.²⁹⁵

A spirituality which integrates Church and society is one which is strongly associated with the Methodist tradition. It is therefore interesting to see how a number of Methodists, who were close associates of Kearney at Diakonia, saw in him a spirituality that could bring aspects of life together. Nomabelu Mvambo-Dandala, his eventual successor, explained how, as a trade unionist, she had been involved in social issues but that these had no connection with her faith. "I was excited by the possibility of linking faith and life. Paddy has always been Paddy; always humble. It has always been

²⁹¹ Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

²⁹² Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

²⁹³ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

²⁹⁴ Chikane, Frank. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2021 via Zoom (Secretary General of SACC 1987-94)

²⁹⁵ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

clear that this person is committed and also a Christian.”²⁹⁶ Vorster commented: “Paddy was kept going by his faith, his commitment to another better world. His was a realised eschatology.”²⁹⁷

Methodist Bishop Norman Hudson and his wife, Estelle, saw in Kearney’s spirituality something that not only nourished him but drew others to join forces with him.

He was what the Christian witness should be. Paddy enabled ordinary people to join him in social justice because he had a passion that justice should be seen to be done and that the Church was the channel through which justice would happen. This enabled him to bring together a community of people and you knew they all thought like you.²⁹⁸

A woman who became a friend in his later years, and was actually outside his usual faith circles, is in a position to draw these threads together.²⁹⁹ De la Croix said that she had the sense that his faith was very important.

He went to church every Sunday; he took praying for people very seriously. And his work ethic was the core of his life. I found it funny that in December he only stopped working because he could not get anything done because other people had stopped! So he put all his energy into making a difference in the world. In that regard, he proves Victor Frankl’s thesis that the people who survive are those with a purpose and a purpose that is never completed. Paddy never felt his work was finished, he always felt he could add more value. He was driven to fill the gaps that were there and would not rest easy until he did.

He always wanted to do his duty and stretch himself because it fitted with his bigger vision and sense of purpose. And because he had a life of prayer he knew that concrete outcomes were not linear. He would try and make a difference even if things took longer. He felt that he could influence the atmosphere of things and their motivation. So what was important to him was his work and his faith – nothing else counted.

In summary, we see in Kearney a spirituality which could be termed a lay spirituality – even if it would not be appropriate for all lay people. It is based on a profound faith which is firmly part of a particular religious tradition. It is also rooted in a specific time and place and an experience of injustice. It drives outwards towards activity but the activity is not an end in itself but a means to an end, achieving justice and bringing God’s kingdom closer to the here and now (‘a realised eschatology’). And it is a spirituality to be shared with others and to be used to draw together people of like mind.

Role of Small Christian Communities

One of the ways in which Kearney could connect with like-minded people was through the Small Christian Communities or ‘Basic Communities’ that were a feature of Catholic Christianity, and especially the progressive wing of the Church, in this period. Effectively, the first example of this that Kearney would have encountered was the Grail Community in Johannesburg when he was still a

²⁹⁶ Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu. Personal interview by author, 26 May 2022 in Durban (Kearney’s successor as Director of Diakonia and sometime Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

²⁹⁷ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia and Methodist Bishop)

²⁹⁸ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Pinetown (Methodist Bishop and wife)

²⁹⁹ De la Croix, Berenice. Personal interview by author, 30 September and 9 October 2020 in Durban (personal friend)

Marist, given that the Grail extended beyond the resident community and included people who lived in their own homes with their families. He would have heard more about other Basic Communities, and seen them for himself, when as part of his Fulbright studies in Ohio he visited Mexico and met Ivan Illich in 1973.

Goemans recalls that Kearney and Carmel Rickard visited the Sant'Egidio community in Assisi Italy in 1986 and were very influenced by this.³⁰⁰ In turn, Kearney later urged Goemans to go to Rome to meet Sant'Egidio as part of her sabbatical. He started a Sant'Egidio-style community in Durban though he called it the Shalom Community. It was mostly made up of married couples (e.g. Kidian, Davies, Money, Cason, Lambert and Salmonsens; Mr Salmonsens had once been a priest). Note that this meant that they were not all white and included at least one 'coloured' couple (and thus a form of mixing that was contrary to the principles of Apartheid). They had friendly Oblates as chaplains: Fr Albert Danker, Fr Paul Decock and Fr Theo Kneifel (and also a Dominican, Fr Bernard Connor). They met usually once a week for a faith-sharing session, in different houses or in the circular chapel at St Philomena's. Although they were all Catholics, ecumenism was not an issue and the feeling was that non-Catholics would have been welcome.

The Casons described the process thus:

Paddy got a group of J&P people together and decided to start a parish that was not based in a physical area. We must have been noticed because members of the community used to get threatening telephone calls from the Security Branch.³⁰¹

Another member, Dina Cormick comments:

Since it was mostly people with children, it was like our own Sunday school. We had Mass together once a month – on other Sundays people would go to their own parish. We all decided what prayers would be said and the sermon was collaborative [in the Latin American basic community style]. But I notice that we never had a woman in a priestly role.³⁰²

Since they all lived in their own homes they regarded themselves as 'an intentional rather than a residential community'. Goemans says "They were an inspirational community; they inspired each other." They were also involved in social outreach for example she recalls that one Christmas they hosted a Festive Dinner for the homeless at St Anthony's Hall (following a Sant'Egidio tradition). The community however only lasted 2-3 years, since many members left to live abroad 'as the situation in South Africa became harder for growing families'.³⁰³

One of the reasons for such intentional communities was the frustration that the natural lay church community (the parish) did not usually offer an ideal place for spiritual growth. +Hurley talked about this in a talk he gave in 1981 to the South African Council of Catholic Social Services.³⁰⁴ He reflects on how communities are reluctant to change and often church communities have been untouched by the theological changes of the last hundred years because of the poor training of

³⁰⁰ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail). Chapter 7 describes how +Hurley had been impressed by Sant'Egidio when he first visited a community in 1967. +Hurley in his later years is more and more drawn to the organisation as shown in some of his correspondence. See Denis, Philippe, Kearney, Paddy & Argall, Jane eds. *A Life in Letters – selected correspondence of Denis Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2018) 410, 454-7, 473

³⁰¹ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

³⁰² Cormick, Dina. Personal interview by author, 21 December 2020 in Durban (freelance designer at Diakonia)

³⁰³ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

³⁰⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/1 "Talk to South African Council of Catholic Social Services" (16 October 1981)

clergy. He finds this all the more disappointing given the success of [Cardinal] Joseph Cardijn in revolutionising methods of training Catholic youth. +Hurley connects this need for training of laity with the inter-diocesan pastoral consultation of 1980 which identified formation within the Church as key, including formation for justice, social concern, reconciliation and peace. But he also notes the high point of the success of Catholic Social Teaching in post-war Europe (Schumann in France and Adenauer in Germany) and also in Latin America. Such change can be achieved:

..through the widespread phenomenon of basic communities by means of which hundreds of thousands of people are being helped to relate their faith to their social life.³⁰⁵

Writing from an English perspective, Worlock points out that *Apostolicam Actuositatem* sees the parish as the starting point for lay activity (and from that building to diocesan and inter-diocesan levels) but also recognises that the parish may not be the best vehicle:

The parish may well be the scene in which consciousness of what needs to be done may exist. But if the secular order is to be renewed [as per *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 13] the base from which the effort is to be launched must be more widespread. The formation needed must frequently be more profound and even specialised than can be given in and by the local community.³⁰⁶

Around the world, Small Christian Communities are adopted as a more effective vehicle for the formation of the laity and +Hurley made a significant commitment to encourage SCCs as part of the Renew process which he introduced into the Archdiocese of Durban.³⁰⁷ In fact, the Renew process was launched in July 1989 to coincide with Hurley's 50th anniversary of priestly ordination.³⁰⁸ The programme was led by his Vicar-General, Paul Nadal; though Kearney was involved in the Renew programme he was not particularly a leader in this.

For many at that time SCCs were seen as a way of rescuing the mission of the Church. For example. Küng is quoted in 1986 as seeing them as the most recent in a range of different paradigms of the Church throughout history: the house church in the 1st century, monasteries in mediaeval times, parishes in recent centuries; and 'now perhaps the parish model is no longer appropriate and the SCC is a better paradigm'. Küng gives the example of a Tanzanian diocese which shifted focus from 17 parishes (each of which had a roving priest), to 55 centres (traditionally called out-stations) and 250 small Christian communities. The diocese then becomes the Communion of Centres and each Centre a Communion of SCC's.³⁰⁹

Ngcobo (a diocesan priest who as Cathedral Administrator from 2015 to 2019 was Kearney's parish priest in his final years) points out that the establishment of lay ministries also needs to be acknowledged as these help create, maintain and advance communities.

Some of the lay ministries are concerned with visiting the sick in the community or ward, offering catechesis, liturgy, counselling, address questions of justice and peace, while there is also a maintenance team. ... To avoid monopolising and status seeking, any given tasks

³⁰⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/1 "Talk to South African Council of Catholic Social Services" (16 October 1981)

³⁰⁶ Worlock, Derek J H. "Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 244

³⁰⁷ Ward, Edwina "Different ways of increasing community Spirit". *Becoming a Creative Local Church - Theological Reflections on the Pastoral Plan*. Patrick Hartin, Bernard Connor and Paul Decock eds. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1991) 65-80

³⁰⁸ Abrahams, Mervyn. "Denis Hurley and the Reception of Vatican II." *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 249

³⁰⁹ Healey, Joseph. "Beyond Vatican II: reimagining the Catholic Church of Nairobi I". *The Church we want – African Catholics look to Vatican III*. Agbonkhanmeghe Orobator ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016) 196-7

should be distributed among community members and when making decisions all community members should be involved. Leadership of lay associations should periodically be changed. This would not only create a profound sense of belonging among all community members, but it would also lead to well informed decisions as a result of community inputs and discussions.³¹⁰

This commitment to lay participation in decision-making is an echo of the words of Archbishop Hélder Câmara, an icon of the progressive wing of the Church, when he was talking about both secular and ecclesial institutions in a lecture to the Catholic University of Chile in 1969: “the most evident political fact of our continent is the absence of popular participation in decision-making.”³¹¹

There were earlier precedents for bringing lay people together such as the Kolbe Society (or Association) which was founded in Cape Town in the 1930s and had a branch in Durban. This had been set up to provide access to theological training and input for lay people.³¹² It catered to a group that Egan identifies in his paper exploring the impact of Vatican II on South Africa in the 1960s:

Yet one must also note that, though the Church was essentially conformist even before the Council, there were rumblings about change. A minority of white Catholics (many of them products of the excellent Catholic school system), and a tiny group of black Catholics, went to university, became professional people and academics. Though small, and often cautious, these Catholic intellectuals had already started to ask questions not only about the state they lived in, but also the Church in which they worshipped.³¹³

But in a letter to his friend Eddie Higgins, +Hurley in 1972 was already reflecting on the uncertainty of progress in developing the laity.

Our little Kolbe Association is still struggling along. A few faithful spirits keep it in existence, but I wonder if it has very much of a future ahead of it. It will be sad to see it go, if it does go, but there is the consolation that many other activities are coming into existence, and there is quite a ferment of catechetical work, justice and peace involvements and lay apostolate of all sorts. The lay apostolate is still, perhaps, more talk than action, but we are gradually getting there.³¹⁴

The key to all these initiatives is that they were rooted in their communities, a specific and direct response to what members of those communities saw as their needs. This reinforces the argument that Kearney’s spirituality was one that was focused on the specific, on reflection and action (the ‘See-Judge-Act’ mantra of Cardinal Cardijn). Writing from a different part of Africa, Chu Ilo offers an interesting gloss on 1 Corinthians 13 which captures the importance of this specificity:

If my theological formulation is of no interest or relevance to the people of Africa, I’m only a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I formulate, with great eloquence and scholastic language, inculturation theologies or Marxist theologies of liberation, feminist theology, eco-theology or theologies of transformation for fellow Africans, but they that are not relevant

³¹⁰ Ngcobo, Nkosinathi. “The Evangelisation of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa: Community Serving Humanity”. M.Th. dissertation. (Durban: University of KwaZulu Natal, 2016) 31

³¹¹ Câmara, Hélder. *Race against Time* (translated from French) (London: Sheed & Ward, 1971) 103

³¹² de Haas, Mary. Personal interview by author, 30 September 2020 in Durban (fellow activist and mother-in-law to Kearney’s niece)

³¹³ Egan, “How Vatican II renewed South African Catholicism”, 2

³¹⁴ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 256

to their faith and social context, I have accomplished nothing. If I use all kinds of indigenous and foreign categories to explain the mysteries of faith that I propose could move mountains and bring down powers and principalities but that have no relevance to ordinary African Christians and their daily lives, my theology will be of no good to Africa.³¹⁵

Conclusion

The two images proposed at the beginning of this chapter provided a stark contrast between two different understandings of vocation. There is continuity between them: both start from the premise that vocation is a call from God; that it invites a free response from the individual; that whatever the vocation is it is to build God's kingdom and thus to benefit others and not just oneself; that vocation is always in the context of the vocations of other people (even if the scope of 'other' is now broader); and that vocation needs to be nurtured through spiritual practices.

Despite the continuity, there is also a marked degree in which each of these elements changes between Kearney's life as a Marist brother and his life as a lay activist. Kearney went through a significant journey – from Marist to lay man. His journey parallels the journey that the Church went through at the Council and has been continuing ever since to achieve two sometimes conflicting goals: to honour the common matrix of all the people of God (laity, religious and priests) and to honour the distinct roles within the Church that have become linked to specific categories of people. The tension here between unity and diversity is not surprising: it is one identified 1,900 years ago by St Paul in his famous image of the Church as the body of Christ.³¹⁶

Thus, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* draws on this image to distinguish between the shared vocation of all Christians and the specific vocation of each Christian:

All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of the goal [of spreading the kingdom of Christ] is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through all her members. For the Christian vocation by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate. No part of the structure of a living body is merely passive but has a share in the functions as well as life of the body.

Indeed, the organic union in this body and the structure of the members are so compact that the member who fails to make his proper contribution to the development of the Church must be said to be useful neither to the Church nor to himself....In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission.³¹⁷

Kearney in having had the freedom and courage to explore his own vocation and to make dramatic changes turned out to be 'useful to the Church and to himself' – and indeed to the wider world in which he lived. *Lumen Gentium* meant that whatever his status in the Church he could pursue the call to holiness. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* gave him a validation for this which would have been much harder for him to find if a distinct Apostolate of the Laity had not been recognised.

³¹⁵ Chu Ilo, Stan. "Methods and Models of African Theology" *Theological Re-imagination – conversations on Church, Religion and Society in Africa*. Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator ed. (Nairobi: Paulines, 2014) 128

³¹⁶ 1 Cor 12: 12-31

³¹⁷ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 2

Chapter 3: Kearney the Ecumenist

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one Baptism. (Eph. 4: 4-5)

How did Kearney Navigate the Ecumenical Tides of the past 60 years?

I want to explore what I term the ecumenical problem and the way in which Kearney and others responded to this in Durban from the 1970s. I will do this with particular reference to *Unitatis Redintegratio*.³¹⁸ I argue that the scale and the style of the approach in Durban was different from other parts of the Catholic Church in South Africa and that this was in part because of the personality and approach of Kearney. While Kearney's Catholic identity never appeared to be in doubt to him or to others, he was still able to successfully lead two organisations that had a clear commitment to ecumenism, and inspire others to follow in his footsteps.

This did not mean that he did not face challenges, especially with regard to shared communion and also lack of support from certain quarters, but he seems to have navigated these successfully. One of the ways in which Kearney did so was by anticipating a concept of 'Receptive Ecumenism' which he instinctively espoused many decades before he would encounter it formally at Durham University.³¹⁹ His commitment to ecumenism coincided with, and paralleled his commitment to liberation in South Africa. I argue that for Kearney these two fed each other and provided mutual support because reconnecting with the separated brethren and reconciling with the segregated neighbours were two sides of the same coin.

The opening image for this chapter is unfortunately only in the memory of people now in their 70s or 80s since the school magazine has a report but no photograph.³²⁰ But it is a vivid image from 1967: the chapel at St David's Marist College Inanda, full of white Catholic schoolboys in their dark blue blazers with double yellow stripes; and, at the front, young Br Patrick Kearney in clerical robes introducing Dominee Beyers Naudé. I imagine a look of surprise on the faces of the boys, only to be matched by the look of shock when they later recounted the event to their parents. And one wonders which would have shocked them more?: the presence in a whites-only school of a vociferous and politically dangerous opponent of Apartheid? Or the presence in a Catholics-only school of a minister from the Dutch Reformed Church?³²¹

³¹⁸ This is the 'Decree on Ecumenism' promulgated by Pope Paul VI towards the end of the 3rd session of the Council in November 1964. At over 7,000 words, it is the 8th longest of the 16 documents of Vatican II.

³¹⁹ This concept will be explored in more detail later. It is a way of focusing on ecumenism not in terms of a movement towards unity but rather an on-going process of sharing gifts. Murray, Paul. *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning – exploring a way for Contemporary Ecumenism*. (Oxford: OUP, 2008)

³²⁰ Marist Archives, Johannesburg: *St David's College Review* (December 1967, Page 9)

³²¹ +Hurley had a great respect for Naudé and wrote a tribute about him for Peter Randall's *Not Without Honour* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1982). Philippe Denis comments that it is a mark of Hurley's respect for Naudé that he affirms him as a Calvinist and a Catholic 'because he has a universality that transcends many barriers'. (Denis, Philippe. *Facing the Crisis – selected texts of Archbishop D E Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1997) 144)

What is the Ecumenical Problem?

The words of St Paul above are quoted on the first page of Vatican II's document on ecumenism and set out starkly the challenge of the document.³²² Unity – one Lord, one faith, one baptism – are unquestionably central to the Christian message. And yet the reality on earth is that the followers of Christ are anything but united.

The ecumenical problem is highlighted by an all too visible gap. On the one hand, there is Christ's vision for his Church as voiced to his Disciples at the Last Supper: "that they all may be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me."³²³ And then there is the reality (painfully enunciated in UR 3) that from the very beginning there have been rifts and divisions between Christians, most starkly characterised in the 11th century 'Great Schism' between the East and the West; and then by the Reformation in which Christian groups in Europe broke away from Rome and then from each other, for political and religious reasons, from the 16th century onwards.

Whilst this is a challenge to the Church anywhere in the world, its impact has been a particularly significant aspect of the history of the Church in South Africa. First of all, the denominational differences (both national and confessional) of Europe were exported to South Africa (and other parts of the continent) by the various groups of European missionaries who carried these distinctions with them. A Nigerian Spiritan priest now teaching in the United States sums it up thus:

The missionary movement transmitted the Christian message in Africa in all the denominational divisiveness. The denominational churches that emerged from the Western, post-Tridentine, post-Reformation conflict were radically anti-Catholic on the one hand and radically anti-Protestant on the other.³²⁴

More specifically, Saayman says: "South Africa has been described as the most over-denominationalised mission field in the world....the [lack of] unity of the Church in South Africa is a serious obstacle to effective mission."³²⁵

Despite efforts to bring together at least non-Catholic Christians, the different parts of the Church were more focused on what set them apart than what they had in common. Thus, over 30 years after the founding of the Christian Council of South Africa in 1936, the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society ('SPRO-CAS'³²⁶), could still condemn the lack of unity in Church for creating a situation in which the Church's message of reconciliation between 'man and man' (sic) is 'compromised and contradicted'. It warned that this not only reduced the Church's witness but also its effectiveness: "The division of the Church into denominations results in an immense waste of its resources of manpower and money" The report also warned against spiritualising the problem as a way of disguising its reality: "The idea that the Church and therefore its attributes, including its unity, is essentially invisible and not to be visibly realised is ultimately unbiblical."³²⁷

³²² *Unitatis Redintegratio* 2

³²³ Jn 17:21

³²⁴ Uzukwu, Elochukwu. "A Theology of Christian Unity for the Church in Africa". *The Church we want – African Catholics look to Vatican III*. Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016) 114

³²⁵ Saayman, Willem. "Christian Missions in South Africa". *Christianity in Africa*. Martin Prozesky ed. (Bergville: Macmillan, 1990) 34

³²⁶ There were two 'rounds' of SPRO-CAS: the 'Study Project on Christianity in an Apartheid Society' (1969-71) and the 'Special Project on Christian Action in Society' (1972-74). The numbers used refer to the Volume numbers not the rounds of SPRO-CAS and SPRO-CAS2

³²⁷ Randall, Peter ed. *SPRO-CAS Vol 8: Apartheid and the Church*. (Johannesburg: Christian Institute, 1972) 27, 83

Some have gone further and argued that this lack of unity had an active and not just a passive role in diminishing the effectiveness of the Church: “Government took advantage of Christians being conflicted between denominations and also within the same denomination.”³²⁸

There is therefore an ecumenical challenge to any Christian in South Africa who wants to see the Church become what it was called to be by its founder. For someone like Kearney, who describes himself as being born into “a staunch Catholic family”, this poses an even greater challenge.³²⁹

This is because of the self-perception of the Catholic Church that Kearney would have encountered until his 20s. United around the Bishop of Rome, it always saw itself as the unbroken continuation of the Church founded by Christ; thus all other Christians had separated themselves and created disunity. As a result, the traditional Catholic response to disunity had been to call other Christians to ‘return to Rome’ and thus undo the damage that they were seen to have created. Vatican II sets out to change that self-perception dramatically.

Background to *Unitatis Redintegratio*

It is important to note that the modern ecumenical movement substantially pre-dates the reforms of Vatican II. One event often seen as a starting point is the World Missionary Conference of 1910 held in Edinburgh, Scotland and bringing together major Protestant and Anglican missionary organisations from Northern Europe and North America.³³⁰ This was a key moment at which different Christian groups started seeing each other as sharing in a common mission rather than in competition. It was specifically influenced by missionary experience in places like Africa. But the Catholic Church did not send representatives to Edinburgh; and Uzukwu points out that no African church leader was invited to the 1910 Edinburgh Conference.³³¹ The movement then grew to culminate in the creation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Amsterdam in 1948 – but again the Catholics were notable for their absence from that Assembly. (Indeed, to this day, the Catholic Church is not a full member of the WCC but instead enjoys ‘observer status’.)

Whilst there were pioneers like the Dominican Yves Congar (whose first ground-breaking book on ecumenism appeared in 1937), most of the Catholic Church until the 1960s was still content to see itself as the sole reference of the word ‘Church’, denigrating others who claimed to follow Christ as schismatics and heretics. Rev Frank Chikane, a Pentecostal minister and Secretary-General of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in the 1980s, confirmed that +Hurley was unusual among the Catholic bishops of his day in *not* using the word Church as the definition of one denomination.³³²

On this self-understanding, there was thus no need for the Catholic Church to engage in ecumenism because the only unity worth achieving would be if all other Christians returned home to the Catholic Church (presumably after due penitence). The Nicene Creed (whose profession has been regarded as a mark of Christian orthodoxy since 325 AD) refers to ‘one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church’: Roman Catholics would equate their Church, united with Pope, as equivalent to the Church

³²⁸ Abraham, Garth. *The Catholic Church and Apartheid 1948-1957* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1989) 125

³²⁹ Kearney, G Paddy. *Faith in Action* (Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal Christian Council, 2017) 10 (“Introduction”)

³³⁰ Moorman, John. “Observers and Guests of the Council”. *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 163

³³¹ Uzukwu, “A Theology of Christian Unity for the Church in Africa”, 116

³³² Chikane, Frank. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2021 via Zoom (Secretary General of SACC 1987-94)

mentioned in the Creed, interpreting 'catholic' as the nominator of a group of Christians rather than simply the Greek word meaning 'universal'.

But before Vatican II, steps were slowly being taken to chip away at this rock face of intransigence and to begin to recognise that 'Church' might have a broader scope. Having had no Catholic presence at the WCC meetings in Amsterdam in 1948 and in Evanston in 1955, there was at least a token appearance in New Delhi in 1961.³³³

Evidence of a warming of relations at a personal level can be seen in the meeting in Rome in 1960 between Pope John XXIII and Geoffrey Fisher (Archbishop of Canterbury and so head of the worldwide Anglican Church); and then in Jerusalem in 1964 between Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras ('first among equals' of the leaders of the Eastern Orthodox churches). These high level meetings were increasingly being matched by warmer relations on the ground between local bishops, between local priests and between members of neighbouring church congregations.

So when almost 2,400 Catholic bishops gathered in 1962 for the opening session of the Second Vatican Council, many of them already knew and were beginning to trust Christian leaders from other traditions. Included among these was the still young 46-year-old Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban who had already built good relations with at least one Anglican bishop of Natal, Vernon Inman. And when they arrived in Rome, the bishops discovered that actually present at the Council (at least as observers) were representatives of the Orthodox and some of the Protestant churches.

Edward Cassidy, who as a Cardinal was President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity from 1989 to 2001, points out that John XXIII chose as the occasion to announce the calling of the Council, the vespers closing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (25 January 1959). Cassidy claims that the ecumenical theme was a pre-occupation of the Pope in calling the Council and that at one stage he intended the non-Catholics to be on an equal footing with Catholic bishops. In the end they were present only as observers; but though they could not speak directly *in aula* they could mix with the bishops, enjoyed a seat of honour, and could (and did) influence what the bishops finally said.³³⁴

Thus, even before the Council produced any documents, it was sending out an ecumenical message by inviting about 100 observers from 30 Christian denominations. This is described by Girault as "an exemplary gesture" and he points out that throughout the documents of Vatican II, the 'triumphalist' language of the recent Church is missing and replaced by the language of the Church as 'poor and servant'.³³⁵

Larry Kaufmann, a South African priest and fellow-traveller with Kearney, quotes Karl Rahner as saying that Vatican II was the 'first official self-actualisation as a world Church' because present were not just Roman Catholics but also Eastern Rite Catholics, observers from other churches, and also people from different continents.³³⁶

It is often claimed, if unproven, that John XXIII in calling the Council said he was: "opening the windows of the Church so that we can look out and others can look in". The ecumenical orientation

³³³ Girault, René. "The Reception of Ecumenism". *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 137

³³⁴ Cassidy, Edward. *Rediscovering Vatican II – Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2005) 10

³³⁵ Girault, "The Reception of Ecumenism", 138

³³⁶ Kaufmann, Larry. 'Ecumenical and Inter-faith Co-operation in Ministry'. *Serving Humanity – a Sabbath Reflection*. Stuart Bate ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1996) 211

of the Council was one of the most obvious ways in which windows, which had recently seemed not just shut but locked and sealed, had now been opened.

In support of this image, Marie-Henry Keane, a religious sister and an academic who worked closely with both +Hurley and Kearney, quotes Gerrit Berkouwer, a Dutch theologian of the Reformed Church who was an observer at Vatican II:

The phrase that most interests us is 'open Catholicism'. The phrase is meant to indicate that Catholicism is no longer preoccupied with itself, that it has thrown open the window of its concern to the whole world.³³⁷

An indication of how much Vatican II changed the Catholic Church's relationship with other Christians is seen in two quotations that Girault gives from the famous Swiss Lutheran pastor and theologian, Karl Barth. In 1948, clearly frustrated by the Catholic refusal to engage with the WCC, Barth commented: "The only attitude we can adopt toward Catholicism is one of mission and evangelisation, not of union." But then in 1963, having followed the Council (though ill-health prevented him from being present as an observer) he wrote: "It could very well be possible that we others might find more to learn from the Roman Church than the Roman Church for its part would have to learn from us."³³⁸

When John XXIII summoned Vatican II he called it an 'Ecumenical Council', by which he meant a Council of the Church throughout the world. But because this use of the word was not common among English speakers, some people thought that it meant that the Council was going to be all about ecumenism. One English bishop who attended suggests that this view was not entirely wrong. As one of the first members of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, +Holland points out that it was the only Vatican II body that was created before the Council and outlived the Council, and that some of the most enduring impact of Vatican II has been the radical shift in the Roman Catholic view of ecumenism.³³⁹ He is supported in this by Outler, an American Methodist and one of the 100 or so non-Catholic observers who attended Vatican II:

It is still worth remembering this sense of unbridgeable distance between Catholics and non-Catholics, if only to underscore Vatican II's chief achievement: to alter the ecumenical climate in the Christian world, from mutual indifference to mutual recognition, from forced toleration to cordial co-existence, from wariness to love and trust.³⁴⁰

Key Points of *Unitatis Redintegratio*

The most explicit statement of Vatican II on ecumenism is a decree that was promulgated in November 1964. Its timing is noteworthy. This was the second wave of documents (after two appeared in December 1963) and was issued alongside the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) and the decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*). The

³³⁷ Keane, Marie-Henry. "Vatican Council II: Keeping the Dream Alive." *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 257

³³⁸ Girault, "The Reception of Ecumenism", 137

³³⁹ Holland, Thomas. "The Council comes of Age". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 49

³⁴⁰ Outler, Albert. "Strangers within the Gates". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 172

relationship of the Roman Catholic Church with other Christians is presented as an intrinsic part of the definition of the Church.

+Hurley made more interventions in the Council than any other bishop from the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC).³⁴¹ Sadly, none of them were in the debates about ecumenism and in his own memoirs +Hurley credits Bishop Van Velsen of emphasising an ecumenical aspect in the drafting of *Lumen Gentium* (which paves the way for *Unitatis Redintegratio*): ‘an appreciation of divine elements in non-Catholic Christian communities’.³⁴² Philippe Denis does point out that, in September 1962, two months before the opening of the Council, +Hurley was on the list of 16 bishops whom Congar and fellow Dominican theologian, Marie-Dominique Chenu, saw as allies in the fight for a truly ecumenical event.³⁴³

Part of what makes *Unitatis Redintegratio* possible is the way in which the term ‘Church’ is now understood. *Lumen Gentium* 8 reaffirms the existence of “the one Church of Christ which in the creed is professed as one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic”. As explained earlier, the schoolboy Kearney would have been taught that this ‘one Church’ was identified with the Catholic Church. But now – in a very subtle but important change of words – we are told: “This Church constituted and organised in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church”. Ruggieri attributes this subtlety to the impact of a dynamic understanding of the relationship between faith and history which is evident in *Lumen Gentium*.

Subsists is a word chosen precisely because it does not mean the same as ‘is identical to’. What is more: “many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure.”³⁴⁴ Outler recalls the choice of ‘subsists in’ as being highly significant.³⁴⁵ But Stacpoole, commenting on this ecumenical language, makes the point that everything is ‘at risk of being minimalised or maximalised’. Thus *subsistit in* can be viewed either inclusively or exclusively and he mentions how Boff was criticised by the Brazilian bishops for too inclusive a reading of *subsistit in* which risks ‘ecclesiological pluralism’.³⁴⁶ Schelkens’ historical analysis of the choice of *subsistit in* adds further nuance to the meaning(s) of this term.³⁴⁷

The document on ecumenism is radical in its approach in both senses: radical because it is such a break with recent practice; and radical because it is a return to the roots (*radices*) of the Church. One good example of this two-fold radicalism is the way in which the document refers early on to the pope. The Bishop of Rome is regarded as the direct successor of St Peter and so enjoying the same primacy that Peter enjoyed over the other Apostles. The foundational text for this – emblazoned by Michelangelo in mosaic around the inside of the dome of St Peter’s Basilica, directly above the heads of the assembled Council – is Mt 16:18 with Peter being linked to images of cornerstones, keys and shepherds. But the Council Fathers, after referencing Mt 16:18, assert that it is “Christ Jesus Himself [who] was forever to remain the chief cornerstone and shepherd of our

³⁴¹ Denis, Philippe. “The Historical Significance of Denis Hurley’s Contribution to the Second Vatican Council.” *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 207

³⁴² Hurley, Denis. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 43

³⁴³ Denis, “Facing the Crisis”, 155

³⁴⁴ Ruggieri, Giuseppe. “Faith & History”. *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 100

³⁴⁵ Outler, “Strangers within the Gates”, 176

³⁴⁶ Outler, “Strangers within the Gates”, 170

³⁴⁷ Schelkens, Karl. “*Lumen Gentium*’s *Subsistit in* Revisited: the Catholic Church and Christian Unity After Vatican II” *Theological Studies* (2008, 6:4)

souls.”³⁴⁸ The text is radical because it shifts away from the pope as the focus of unity; and back to Christ who is the source of unity.

Having set this tone, the document can then be much more open in how it talks of other Christians. First of all, they are actually Christians: “For those who believe in Christ and have been truly baptised are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect.”³⁴⁹ They are no longer schismatics and heretics but ‘separated brethren’³⁵⁰; people whom Catholics must treat with ‘truth and fairness’, praying for them and engaging in dialogue with them.³⁵¹ What is even more dramatic is the recognition – and this came to greatly influence +Denis Hurley and Kearney – that unity is to be achieved not by Catholics waiting around for the separated to return (no matter how wide the door might have been opened) but instead that Catholics have to do a lot of the work as well.

The starting point of this is the almost throwaway comment in UR 3 that ‘men’³⁵² of both sides were to blame’ for the separations of the past. Because of this, ‘the Catholic faithful [should] take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism’ and ‘make a careful and honest appraisal of whatever needs to be done or renewed in the Catholic household itself’³⁵³ and be willing to engage in ‘continual reformation’.³⁵⁴

There are still issues to be addressed in terms of praying together and working together, which I shall look at in due course, but these underlying principles set the tone for the rest of the document. They also set the tone for the work of Kearney – especially in the Diakonia organisation – over the next 50 years.

Background to Kearney ‘the staunch Catholic’

How open was Kearney to this new self-view of the Church? As mentioned above, his upbringing was ‘staunchly Catholic’. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that, like +Hurley himself, Kearney’s was ‘a strong *Irish* Catholic background’³⁵⁵; though both Kearney’s parents were born in South Africa, two of his four grandparents were born in Ireland. Henry VIII had broken from Rome in 1534 and within the same decade (1541) had himself declared as King of Ireland (the first Englishman to claim this title). Thus, when Kearney was born in 1942, he had behind him four centuries in which the assertion by the Irish over the English for rule of their own land was intimately bound up with the assertion of a Catholic identity over a Protestant one.³⁵⁶

Typical of his social and cultural background, the young Kearney would have operated in a Catholic ghetto: praying exclusively in a Catholic church (St Mary’s in Pietermaritzburg), attending a Catholic

³⁴⁸ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 2

³⁴⁹ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 3

³⁵⁰ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 1

³⁵¹ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4

³⁵² Whereas usually I would amend texts to make them gender inclusive, I am assuming in this case that the blame historically does fall squarely with ‘men’ and not with ‘men and women’.

³⁵³ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4

³⁵⁴ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 6

³⁵⁵ Frederikse, Julie. “Research interview with Paddy Kearney conducted in Durban, 1985”. *South African History Archive* <https://www.saha.org.za/collections/AL2460/a11021.htm> (accessed 19 January 2022)

³⁵⁶ For more on this see Appendix A: “Kearney’s racial identity”

school (St Charles also in Pietermaritzburg³⁵⁷), probably socialising in Catholic youth clubs, confirmed (by +Hurley in 1957) into the Catholic faith, and sharing family rituals that were decidedly Catholic. Aged almost 70, while studying in Durham, his personal diary recalls across six decades fond memories of grandfather Kearney's daily reciting of the Rosary.³⁵⁸

Sr Marie-Henry Keane OP, a Catholic religious sister who knew Kearney's parents described them as 'traditional, conservative, dyed-in-the-wool Catholics'³⁵⁹; Di Oliver, an Anglican who later worked with Kearney at Diakonia called it 'a strict Catholic home'.³⁶⁰

It is therefore not surprising that Kearney's first glimpse of a world outside of South Africa – a month-long trip to Europe in 1958 – was through a completely Catholic lens. Organised as it was by the Oblate priests of his parish, and travelling with the same Irish grandfather, Kearney's experience of Europe is not that of the average 16-year-old. In Italy, he visited Rome and Loreto (not Florence or Venice); in Paris, his main preoccupations were *Sacré Coeur* and *Notre Dame* (and not the *Louvre* and *Pigalle*); and in London, it is the 100-year-old Catholic Westminster Cathedral that drew his attention, not the 900-year-old Anglican Westminster Abbey.

We know all this because a set of hand-written letters home from the teenage Kearney were kept lovingly by his parents and then, after their deaths, were preserved by him in his personal archive. And among those letters is an account of his visit to Canterbury, an unusually non-Catholic part of the itinerary. Is this where we will see the first glimpse of the later renowned ecumenical champion? He described in awe the grandeur of the building, the beauty of the mediaeval stained-glass, the transcendence of the stone vaults. And then commented to his parents: "My blood boils with anger when I remember that *they* stole this building from *us*!"³⁶¹

I quote this comment not to mock the untransformed teenage zealot, but rather to draw attention to the level of conscientisation Kearney would later undergo. He can only have felt sympathy with other Catholics embarking on a similar journey.

The start of that journey would have to wait for another 10 years since Kearney spent the decade after leaving school as a member of the same Catholic religious order that at the time ran St Charles College, the Marist Brothers. Reviewing the documents that would have been key to Kearney's formation as a Marist, there is no recognition at all that there was a Christian life beyond the bounds of the Church of Rome.^{362 363} His time with the Marists (1960-69) straddles the period of the Council (1962-65) but there is little indication from interviews with Kearney's contemporaries that Marist training or practice adapted to the changes of the Council (other than liturgically).

What is more, as a congregation whose full name was 'The Little Brothers of Mary' and who saw the Mother of Jesus as their inspiration of service, its spirituality would have drawn on themes that were unlikely to build common ground with Protestants. For example, whereas priests (and trainee

³⁵⁷ It is a charming coincidence that, 30 years earlier, Denis Hurley had finished his own schooling at St Charles; and 15 years after Kearney was there it was attended by Stephen Tully who later as Priest-in-charge of Emmanuel Cathedral was Kearney's co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre.

³⁵⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 "Morning Pages: April-June 2006" (14 June 2006, Durham)

³⁵⁹ Keane OP, Sr Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

³⁶⁰ Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 2 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

³⁶¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/C/1 "Kearney's letters to his parents, May 1958 to June 1958" (3 June 1958)

³⁶² Furet, Jean-Baptiste. *Life of Blessed Marcellin Joseph Benedict Champagnat* (Rome: Marist General House, 1989). (Note this is a more recent edition but I am told by Colussi it is simply a reprint of the one that he and Kearney would have used.)

³⁶³ Voegtle, Louis. *Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions of Marcellin Champagnat* (Paris: Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary, 1927)

priests) would recite the Daily Office of the Church (which is focused on the Psalms), Mario Colussi a co-novice of Kearney confirms that the Marists had what was called 'The Little Office of Mary'.³⁶⁴ Peter Taylor, who joined the Marist Brothers two years after Kearney, gives a sense of how deeply Catholic their formation experience was:

The Marist Spirituality is, obviously, very Marian....but that – in my opinion as a Christian and someone who is no longer a Catholic! – took over too much from the importance of Jesus, a relationship with Jesus, the importance of salvation and what that means.³⁶⁵

Taylor goes on to provide a description of his own time as a Marist schoolboy (St Henry's, 1956-1958) that would have been true of Kearney as a schoolboy (St Charles, 1950-59) and probably still true when Kearney was a teacher at St David's (1967-69):

One of the regular things was for all the Catholics to walk the few blocks ...each First Friday of the month to attend Mass, while the “non-Catholics” or “Protestants” had Bible Study. That gave me to believe, at that time, that the Bible was for non-Catholics, not for Catholics. We had the Catechism – that was enough. And as for salvation, relationship with Jesus, I had no idea what that meant then and it was decades later that I discovered it was for all Christians/ believers. A sad comment on the Catholic school system at the time.³⁶⁶

Nevertheless, even when he was a Marist, we begin to see a few chinks in Kearney's Catholic armour. Between 1963 and 1965, Kearney attended the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg to study for a B.A. Although he was studying as a Marist, dressed as a Marist, and living with other Marists, he would nevertheless have had some contact, both socially and academically, with other students at UN including many non-Catholics, as Colussi confirms.³⁶⁷ Furthermore, in his teaching experiences, in Port Elizabeth in 1962 and then again in Johannesburg (1966-69), he would have dealt with a few schoolboys (and parents) who were not Catholic. With a Catholic proportion in the South African population of under 10%, and a need to fill paying places, Catholic schools in South Africa (unlike in other countries) have rarely had an exclusive Catholic roll.

In Johannesburg, at St David's, a very respectable and conservative school, the young teacher Kearney began to take ecumenical initiatives that surprised his fellow Marists: I might argue that this is evidence of the start of his conversion. Reference has already been made (Chapter 2) to the series of Lenten lectures that Kearney arranged in 1967 with speakers from the Methodist, Dutch Reformed, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches. (The specific visit by Ds. Beyers Naudé was mentioned at the opening of this chapter).³⁶⁸ Kearney also organised a Bible service in the school open to Catholics and non-Catholics, at a time when the only religious services were strictly Catholic ones, something which Colussi describes as being evidence of Kearney's 'Protestant connections'.

The first decisive indication of Kearney's 'Protestant connections' came when in 1971, having left the Marist Brothers and spent a year studying in Pietermaritzburg, he continued as a teacher but at Inanda Seminary School. St David's had been at a place called Inanda in Johannesburg, but this Inanda school outside Durban could not have been more different: it was for girls, it was for black students, and it was run by the Congregational Church!

³⁶⁴ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

³⁶⁵ Taylor, Peter. Personal interview by author, 1 February 2021 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

³⁶⁶ Taylor, Peter. Personal interview by author, 1 February 2021 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

³⁶⁷ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

³⁶⁸ Marist Archives, Johannesburg: *St David's College Review* (December 1967, Page 9)

This choice of new school might give a clue to the source of Kearney's exposure to ecumenical influences. Already teaching at Inanda Seminary School at that time was an American woman called Mary Emma Kuhn who was a member of 'The Grail'.³⁶⁹ Chapter 2 already mentioned some of the ways in which the Grail was challenging traditional models of religious life and influencing Kearney. One further way was by being ecumenical so that, even if the original women were all Catholic, by 1967 the Johannesburg Grail community had their first Anglican member. Goemans also commented that it was likely that the ecumenical speakers that Kearney invited to St David's in 1967 were via contacts that he made at the Grail.³⁷⁰

Emerging Ecumenism in South Africa

If Kearney's 'staunchly Catholic' life was beginning to open up to ecumenical possibility, what was happening in the wider Church in South Africa?

A reflection by +Hurley himself in his memoirs, quoted by Kearney, gives an idea of how much the situation changed:

In these ecumenical days, subsequent to the Second Vatican Council, it is extremely difficult to recapture the attitude in which we Catholics had grown up and the total non-acceptance of other Christians that characterised our ..religious outlook.... [In] the 1930s and 1940s we were thoroughly un-ecumenical.³⁷¹

Even if other Christian groups were beginning to talk to each other (as mentioned above the Christian Council was established in 1936), the Catholics were still not part of this. Dominican Philippe Denis comments:

Compared to other countries in the world, the South African Church of the early twenty-first century exhibits a fairly high degree of ecumenical cooperation....Half a century ago South African Catholicism...was characterised on the contrary by its aloofness, its stern refusal to engage with other Christian denominations and the unshakeable belief that only the Catholic faith could offer the certainty of salvation.³⁷²

John de Gruchy makes the point that, while 1948 saw the establishment of the World Council of Churches, it was also the year that the National Party came to power in South Africa.³⁷³ Denis remarks that opposition to Apartheid became a major motivation for ecumenical activity and he sees this as a comparable factor, alongside Vatican II and also the growth in the Pentecostal churches 'which makes differences between mainline churches appear increasingly unimportant'.³⁷⁴

There is nothing better for the development of friendship and mutual respect than a common enemy.³⁷⁵

³⁶⁹ Moore, Ann. Personal interview by author, 17 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

³⁷⁰ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

³⁷¹ Kearney, G Paddy ed. *Memories. The memoirs of Archbishop Denis E. Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: OMI, 2006) 65

³⁷² Denis, Philippe. "Reunion of Christendom or ecumenism: Catholics and Protestants in South Africa before Vatican II". *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* (2011, 106) 546

³⁷³ De Gruchy, John. "Christianity in 20th century South Africa". *Living Faiths in South Africa*. Martin Prozesky & John de Gruchy eds. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1995) 92

³⁷⁴ Denis, "Reunion of Christendom or Ecumenism", 547

³⁷⁵ Denis, Philippe. "Vatican II in Southern Africa". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 1

The Catholic response to ecumenism was beginning to warm up, albeit slowly. It has already been mentioned that the Catholic Church was beginning to engage with the World Council of Churches (even without becoming a full member). Whilst there is evidence of the ecumenical movement being kept at arm's length, the arm is beginning to bend. Thus, there is some progress from 1928 (Pope Pius XI's encyclical *Mortalium Animos* which forbade Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement), to 1948 (the Holy Office stressing that any participation could only be with the Holy See's permission), to 1950 when the Holy Office in *Ecclesia Catholica* now encouraged Catholics to participate in 'the magnificent enterprise of reunion' and allowed local bishops to grant permission for the same.³⁷⁶

In the same way, in South Africa, the Catholic bishops were involved in the national equivalent, the SACC, but still resisted full participation. The body adopted this name in 1968 (in an echo of the title of the 'World Council of Churches') taking over the role of the Christian Council of South Africa which had been founded in 1936. While individual Catholics, like Fr Albert Nolan (the Dominican theologian) and indeed Archbishop Denis Hurley worked with the SACC and had close personal ties to its leading members, it was only in January 1995 that +Hurley finally persuaded the required two-thirds of the Catholic bishops (the SACBC) to vote for full membership of the SACC. (It is notable that the headline of this from *The Southern Cross* was retained by Kearney in his personal archive).³⁷⁷

As in the rest of the world, churches in South Africa outside the Catholic Church were pressing ahead with various forms of collaboration. But even this was not always as fast as some would have wished. In 1956, Anglican priest (and later Archbishop) Trevor Huddleston lamented in relation to attempts to force segregated education on the Church schools:

The tragic mistake lay in the failure of the churches to act together. I am convinced that if, say, the Methodists, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians and Anglicans united for once on this single issue; had they approached the Minister and stated in conscience they could not co-operate in the implementation of the Act, at least some concessions would have been won.³⁷⁸

In 1960, in response to the Sharpeville Massacre, theologians from 10 member churches of the WCC did come together in a suburb of Johannesburg to form a response that is known as the Cottesloe Consultation.³⁷⁹ Whilst Cottesloe failed to reach a shared statement, it did catalyse further ecumenical developments.

One of the NGK Dominees involved, Beyers Naudé, created a close connection in preparing for Cottesloe with ministers from the Anglican and Methodist churches; they and others would soon form the core of the Christian Institute. When this was founded in 1963, it had 150 individual members from a range of denominations and increased to 1000 (drawn from 28 different churches and missionary societies) by the end of 1964. Because it involved individual rather than institutional membership, Catholics were included among the number. In fact, it was the inclusion of Roman Catholics within its membership, seen to be betraying the Protestant confession, that prompted the National Synod of the NGK in 1966 to support a resolution condemning the Christian Institute as 'an

³⁷⁶ Denis, "Reunion of Christendom or Ecumenism", 549

³⁷⁷ Paddy Kearney Personal Archive, Press Cuttings Volume 3: *The Southern Cross*, photocopied extract, insert date

³⁷⁸ Huddleston, Trevor. *Naught for your comfort* (London: Collins, 1956) 171

³⁷⁹ Paton, Alan. *Towards the Mountain* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1980) 215 (Alan Paton poignantly recalls Mandela visiting the Cottesloe Consultation in Sept 1960 during the time of the Treason Trial.)

extra-ecclesial organisation'.³⁸⁰ So it was not only the Catholic Church that was reluctant to embrace ecumenism.³⁸¹

One of the reasons for the NGK's suspicion of the ecumenical movement was its close connection with the Struggle. In fact, linking the two was one of the ways of depicting the Struggle as anti-South African. For example, in 1975 the Schlebusch Commission claimed that both the idea of radical change and of ecumenism are "not of South African origin but ... a concept or ideology introduced from overseas ... primarily by the WCC".³⁸²

The Apartheid Government itself was unintentionally responsible for one significant ecumenical move, the creation of FedSem, a training college for ministers from different denominations. The Group Areas Act forced the closure in 1963 of theological colleges for black students that were situated in 'white' areas and they were replaced by FedSem. This meant that for 30 years, ministers (albeit black ones) from Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist denominations trained side-by-side. At the 1981 FedSem graduation, +Hurley's proposed a vision of bringing FedSem together with the University of Natal and St Joseph's Theological Institute Cedara to form "a programme of Christian vision, Christian common sense and Christian praxis that would constitute the kind of pastoral theology of social change that was needed for South Africa."³⁸³ Sadly, this was only realised in part and many years later.

Nowadays, the Liberation Struggle is closely associated with ecumenism. The late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and seen by the international community as a key player in the Struggle, stressed the role of religious leaders and the list of those he singles out (in at least one book) is suitably ecumenical: Hurley (Catholic), Boesak (the 'coloured' wing of the Dutch Reformed Church), Storey (Methodist), Chikane (Pentecostal) and Naudé (the 'white' wing of the Dutch Reformed Church) without mentioning himself who was, of course, Anglican.³⁸⁴

It is noticeable that +Hurley gets the Catholic mention in this list. He was among the most advanced in the SACBC in fighting the Struggle and also in embracing ecumenism, as Abraham lays out in his book (though he only looks at the Catholic Church and Apartheid up to 1957).³⁸⁵

Abraham quotes from a 1957 SACBC report which shows that the bishops were still ambivalent about ecumenism. "With regard to the question of co-operation with non-Catholic bodies, a number of bishops held that this contact might result in greater friendship and understanding; others stressed that there were disadvantages."³⁸⁶

He mentions various failures of ecumenical collaboration (all from 1949) on the part of the Catholic bishops, which would have been quite typical of the time: not partnering with the Anglican and Methodist Churches in opposing the Mixed Marriages Act; not attending a meeting with the Native Affairs Minister with the Christian Council; not attending the Rosettenville Conference.³⁸⁷ The

³⁸⁰ Naudé, Beyers. "Leadership, Vision, Humanity". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 65

³⁸¹ Ryan, Colleen. *Beyers Naudé – Pilgrimage of Faith* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990) 55, 115

³⁸² Regehr, Ernie. *Perceptions of Apartheid – the churches and political change in South Africa* (Scottsdale PA: Herald Press, 1979) 79, 211

³⁸³ Denis, Philippe & Duncan, Graham. *The Native School that Caused all the Trouble – a History of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2011) 158

³⁸⁴ Tutu, Desmond. *No Future Without Forgiveness* (Cape Town: Penguin, 2009) 44

³⁸⁵ For more on this see Appendix D: "+Hurley the political priest"

³⁸⁶ Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, 115

³⁸⁷ Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, 42-43

report from this conference is reflected in part in the SACBC's 1952 statement condemning Apartheid, but it is interesting that the Catholic bishops make no mention of ecumenical activity.³⁸⁸

But Abraham does point out two later examples where Catholics came together with members of other churches to protest at legislation which directly affected churches. It is noticeable that both examples involve +Hurley. The 1957 Bantu Laws Amendment Bill would have prevented black people attending church in white areas. In KZN a meeting of a range of 2,000 Christians at Durban City Hall and a meeting of 1,000 at Pietermaritzburg City Hall helped defeat the proposal. Abraham also cites Hurley in 1961 expressing his desire to work with all religious leaders and in May 1962 playing an active role in ecumenical protest against new legislation.³⁸⁹

However, it was actually not +Hurley but Bishop Van Velsen of Kroonstad (a Dominican) who was the most outspoken among South African bishops with regard to ecumenism around the time of the Council. In a history of the Dominicans in Southern Africa, Denis explains:

Few people were influenced by the Second Vatican Council as much as Bishop van Velsen. In 1960 he was appointed to the Secretariat for Christian Unity, an institution created by Pope John XXIII to develop an ecumenical spirit in the soon-to-be-opened Council.... +Van Velsen belonged to the group of bishops and theologians who refused to reduce ecumenism to a search for conversion. Ecumenism, according to them, was an exercise of the Church's catholicity. They were adamant that elements of salvific value could be found outside the Catholic Church. They disagreed with the members of the Theological Commission for whom conversion was the goal of ecumenical activity.³⁹⁰

The fact that Bishop Van Velsen was a prominent ecumenist has an unexpected impact on the subject of this thesis. Kroonstad is a long way from Durban/ Pietermaritzburg and not that close to Johannesburg, where Kearney was teaching as a Marist in the late 1960s, immediately after the Council. But, for reasons that remain unclear, soon after he left the Marists (as explained in Chapter 2) Kearney ended up spending an intense period with +Van Velsen whom Colussi called "one of those progressive Dominicans".

We do not know if Kearney left St David's already planning to exit the Marists or if that was only decided later; we do not know how much time he spent with +Van Velsen or what they discussed; we do not know if Kearney was looking for some personal formation or just a quiet place to think. But we do know that +Van Velsen had a reputation for being a safe haven. Denis comments: "...he was very sympathetic to priests in trouble, and took several requests for dispensation to Rome, even though the priests were from other dioceses."³⁹¹ Kearney was not a priest but, having taken final vows, would need approval from Rome to leave the order so perhaps he fitted into this category as well.

We can only imagine what the impact was on the 27-year-old Kearney, who had been looking for something in the Marists and had not found it, and who was now able to discuss questions of the Church with someone as progressive and learned as +Van Velsen. Kearney's move, one year later, to work in a Congregationalist school, and four years later to start an ecumenical agency surely were influenced by his time in Kroonstad.

³⁸⁸ Rosettenville Conference. *The Christian Citizen in a Multi-Racial Society* (Cape Town: Christian Council of South Africa, 1949)

³⁸⁹ Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, 109-111, 126

³⁹⁰ Denis, Philippe. *The Dominican Friars in Southern Africa (1577-1990). A Social History* (Leiden: Brill, 1998) 198

³⁹¹ Denis, *The Dominican Friars in Southern Africa*, 207

It is assumed that it was +Hurley who was the greatest influence on Kearney's ecumenism. But in fact, in his comprehensive biography of +Hurley, Kearney struggles to mention any significant ecumenical activity in the life of the Archbishop *before* the Council. Only in 1968 does Kearney note a change in Hurley with ecumenical collaboration being part of his response to the Limehill displacements.³⁹² (Interestingly, the book about this incident, Fr Cosmas Desmond's *The Discarded People* was published by the ecumenical Christian Institute in 1971.) It seems that it is once the reconciliation of separated Christians and the reconciliation of segregated South Africans become two parts of the same movement, that +Hurley's influence becomes more marked.

In fact, as the Catholic Church became more forthright in speaking out against Apartheid, so it became more comfortable in its ecumenical role. Thus, although the Catholic bishops were not signatories to the 1968 document 'Message to the People of South Africa' (since they were not members of the SACC who published it), it was later endorsed by the SACBC and used as the basis for establishing an ecumenical research unit in Pretoria in 1970.³⁹³ Speaking in a long interview marking 50 years as a bishop, +Hurley comments: "the ecumenical movement flourished in the face of the joint enemy – Apartheid."³⁹⁴ For more on this see Appendix D: "+Hurley the political priest".

Steadily, the perception that the Catholic Church and other Christians had of each other, and the perception that the Catholic Church had of itself, started to change towards one which allowed greater open-ness.

A shift gradually took place. The *aggiornamento* brought about in the Catholic Church by the Second Vatican Council also affected South Africa. In the 1960s, the proud aloofness which had characterised South African Catholicism since the establishment of the Church in the nineteenth century gradually gave way to a genuine willingness to co-operate with the other Christian churches in the field of ministry, education and political activism. On the Protestant side perceptions changed as well. Traditionally regarded as the *Roomse gevaar*, the Catholic Church came to be seen as a partner in the ecumenical dialogue. The Second Vatican Council attracted attention in the whole theological community.³⁹⁵

While of course captive to its own particular history and demographics, the increased ecumenical open-ness that South Africa was experiencing was also happening in other parts of the Continent. For example, when in 1968 Trevor Huddleston resigned as Anglican Bishop of Masasi (in Tanzania) both Anglican and Catholic clergy recommended that his successor be jointly consecrated by the two bishops (which of course did not happen)!³⁹⁶ Interestingly, not only could the Catholic Church not honour an Anglican bishop, they could not even honour Anglican martyrs. Ugandans were very proud that during his visit in 1969, Pope Paul VI canonised a group of young men who had been killed for their faith – but the locals were baffled that the Anglicans who were martyred at the same time, in the same place and in the same way, were completely ignored by the Pope.

Founding of Diakonia

It was the founding of Diakonia in Durban which became the key reason why both +Hurley and Kearney are remembered as exemplary ecumenists and which also ensured that their lives were

³⁹² Kearney, G Paddy. *Guardian of the Light* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2009) 52-91, 151

³⁹³ Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, 129

³⁹⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002). "Hurley's Golden Jubilee" (*The Sunday Times*, 23 March 1997)

³⁹⁵ Denis, *The Dominican Friars in Southern Africa*, 197

³⁹⁶ Hastings, Adrian. "The Council came to Africa". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 321

forever intertwined. Writing in appreciation of +Hurley in 2001, the American Jesuit and politician, Robert Drinan quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson: ‘a great institution is but the shadow of a great man’.³⁹⁷ If the ‘great institution’ is Diakonia, then it was a shadow of two great men: +Hurley and Kearney.

As a Catholic in the Archdiocese of Durban, +Hurley had been Kearney’s bishop since he was 4½ years’ old. Goemans believes that Kearney would certainly would have been an altar server when the bishop came to St Mary’s or St Charles.³⁹⁸ As someone joining religious life, even if not as a priest, Kearney would have been more clearly on +Hurley’s radar; and, also through St Mary’s, Kearney enjoyed friendships with priests who were members of +Hurley’s own congregation, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Later, now a lay man, Kearney joined in 1972 +Hurley’s new Justice & Peace Commission in the Archdiocese of Durban.³⁹⁹

Kearney’s own recollection is as follows: “Archbishop Hurley wrote to me [in 1973 while I was in the US on a Fulbright scholarship] and said he had the idea of setting up an ecumenical organisation and then when I got back would I help him set it up?” In the same interview, Kearney says that he felt he was not suited to the role, but he did not specify if this was because he did not see himself as a leader, or did not feel he had the ecumenical credentials, or some other reason.⁴⁰⁰

That same year, as reported in the *Daily News*, +Hurley was speaking to mark Church Unity Week: “We are realising that somewhere in our history, we lost or failed to acquire any influence over the morality of Christian society in the very important matters of politics and economics.”⁴⁰¹ Is this a hint of him seeing an ecumenical approach as a way of gaining influence?

In Kearney’s own archive he has kept an interesting sequence of the initial presentations of the Diakonia project between January and May 1974: first to the (Catholic) Council of Priests, then the (inter-denominational) Natal Council of Churches, then the (Catholic) Diocesan Pastoral Council and lastly the Archdiocese of Durban Synod. +Hurley also stressed that the idea came from a symposium organised by the Archdiocese of Durban Social Welfare Commission in June 1973. In my opinion this looks like an attempt to safely situate the ecumenical nature of the venture in a Catholic context; and also to ensure that clergy (Catholic and other) have bought into the project before presenting the idea to lay people. But throughout, it is clear that the ecumenical nature of the project was being presented alongside its other key characteristics: a focus on the service of the needy, liberation (in a very specific sense), and a limited geographic focus.⁴⁰²

+Hurley also seemed to be stressing the fact that this was a Catholic-led initiative (unlike many of the other ecumenical projects of the time). For example, fearful that it might take two or three years to get other churches on board, +Hurley suggested that the Catholic Church start funding and identify a suitable director: “I do not think the other churches would be averse to us starting Diakonia and I am sure that, if they think it worthwhile, they will participate in due course.”^{403 404}

³⁹⁷ Drinan, Robert. “A hero and a legend in the USA”. *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 127

³⁹⁸ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

³⁹⁹ Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (chair of the Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace Commission)

⁴⁰⁰ Frederikse, “Research interview with Paddy Kearney”

⁴⁰¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980) “Church Unity Week” (*Daily News*, 14 June 1973)

⁴⁰² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/1 “Various speeches about Diakonia by Denis Hurley” (January-May 1974)

⁴⁰³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/1 “Speech to Archdiocese of Durban Synod by Denis Hurley” (23 May 1974)

⁴⁰⁴ This contrasts to a position expressed by +Hurley many years later in relation to a South African Teilhardist Association (to honour the Jesuit palaeontologist whom the Archbishop so admired) +Hurley specifically declined the invitation to lead

The first press mention of the new agency was in May 1974 and curiously did not say that the organisation will be ecumenical: "The agency will be called Diakonia and will give direction and drive to the Church's duty to respond to human need (including material need) according to the conditions and circumstances of the time."⁴⁰⁵

Both of these descriptions could be resonant of that old model of Church unity which is achieved by Catholics taking the lead and others joining in on Catholic terms.

The Ecumenical Model of Diakonia

But, in fact, the nature of the project and the way in which it was then developed by Kearney are, to me, a clear working out of the ecumenical challenge as laid down by Vatican II. UR 4 lists the sequence in which it believes ecumenism should develop: first mutual respect, then 'dialogue' and then "the way is prepared for cooperation between [Churches] in the duties for the common good of humanity which are demanded by every Christian conscience". Significantly, practical co-operation is listed before prayer in common and only the latter is couched with the proviso 'wherever this is allowed'.⁴⁰⁶

Throughout the document there is hesitation about common prayer and a strong argument against common Eucharist.⁴⁰⁷ But there is no hesitation about the commitment to shared social action and this is worth quoting in full:

In these days when cooperation in social matters is so widespread, all people without exception are called to work together, with much greater reason all those who believe in God, but most of all, all Christians in that they bear the name of Christ. Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses the relationship which in fact already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant.

This cooperation, which has already begun in many countries, should be developed more and more, particularly in regions where a social and technical evolution is taking place be it in a just evaluation of the dignity of the human person, the establishment of the blessings of peace, the application of Gospel principles to social life, the advancement of the arts and sciences in a truly Christian spirit, or also in the use of various remedies to relieve the afflictions of our times such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, housing shortage and the unequal distribution of wealth.⁴⁰⁸

This whole list (with the possible exception of 'the advancement of the ...sciences') could have been an agenda for the newly created Diakonia.

While the Fathers of the Council – even +Hurley – were not at that point envisaging a specific agency like Diakonia, what they did have in mind was that the implementation of ecumenism needed to happen (and was in fact already happening) at the local level: "in many parts of the world, under the

this for fear that it would be seen as purely Catholic. (Tobias, Phillip. "Evolution and Theology: Teilhard de Chardin and Archbishop Denis Hurley". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 97)

⁴⁰⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980) "Launch of new Church agency" (*Daily News*, 24 May 1974)

⁴⁰⁶ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4

⁴⁰⁷ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 8

⁴⁰⁸ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 12

inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit, many efforts are being made in prayer, word and action to attain that fullness of unity which Jesus Christ desires.”⁴⁰⁹

Cardinal Cassidy, in his 40th anniversary review of *Unitatis Redintegratio*, reinforces this: “Agreements at the international level bring great joy to those involved but may remain just beautiful documents unless they become part of the life of the local communities.”⁴¹⁰

Sadly, in his résumé of local implementation, all of Cassidy’s examples are from North America, Europe and Australia. He in fact does not even acknowledge the existence of ecumenical life in Africa (or elsewhere) let alone hold it up as an example. This is ironic given that many of his examples of ecumenical best practice – praying together, Good Friday witness, social action, social justice – were being applied in South Africa by Diakonia (and others).

How did Diakonia live out its Ecumenical Vision?

It is interesting that when +Hurley presented the Diakonia project to his Council of Priests in 1974, he used the language of *Unitatis Redintegratio* in recognising two equal but distinct parts of the Church’s life – prayer and service:

As it is the duty of the Church the community of believers, to meet spiritual needs by prayer and preaching, so it is also its responsibility to help meet other human needs by Christian service.⁴¹¹

The unstated implication was that, while we might not be able to meet spiritual needs as a united Church, that did not mean that we could not meet other human needs as a single community of believers.

In this way, Diakonia was responding to the specific challenge of SPRO-CAS that the Churches must overcome disunity since otherwise any stand on unity between races is ‘gravely weakened in principle and in practice’. SPRO-CAS was itself evidence of a way of responding to this challenge through the composition of its own panel and through the fact that it had been established in 1969 by two ecumenical organisations: the SACC and the Christian Institute.

Two years before the founding of Diakonia, SPRO-CAS was recommending ecumenical action in social change and welfare organisations (alongside education, congregations, youth fellowship, Bible study, publications). It mentioned a principle that has become a watchword of the ecumenical movement: “that churches should commit to doing together all those things which conscience does not oblige Christians to do apart”. In other words, the question is not ‘why should we work together?’ but rather ‘why should we not work together?’.⁴¹²

In 1981 a few years after its founding, in a long speech to a Catholic audience, +Hurley used Diakonia as an example of how the combined churches could serve marginalised communities. He saw ecumenical action not just as the most effective response but also the unique opportunity for the churches to work together ‘since there were no problems of Church doctrine or discipline to prevent

⁴⁰⁹ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4

⁴¹⁰ Cassidy, *Rediscovering Vatican II*, 97

⁴¹¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/1 “Speech to Archdiocese of Durban Council of Priests by Denis Hurley” (January 1974)

⁴¹² Randall, *SPRO-CAS Vol 8: Apartheid and the Church*, 72

such cooperation'. "Social problems offer the greatest opportunity to Christians to give witness to their faith." ⁴¹³

In this speech, +Hurley reviewed a century of Catholic Social Teaching with the usual discussion of *Rerum Novarum* (1891), *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), *Mater et Magistra* (1961) (as well as *Pacem in Terris*), *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), *Populorum Progressio* (1967), *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971) and now John Paul's 90th anniversary encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (in 1981). But he went further than most Catholic bishops might, by pointing out that the growth in social concerns in the Catholic Church was paralleled in other Christian traditions as seen by the work of the WCC.⁴¹⁴

When people were concerned about the political dimension, +Hurley argued:

There is a difference between political concern, which a religion must have if it wishes to be relevant to political morality, and political activism which tends to identify a religion with a political faction. When people say that the Church should not be involved in politics our reply should be: in action? – I could not agree more; in political concern? – I could not agree less.⁴¹⁵

It is beyond the reach of this thesis to present a history of Diakonia⁴¹⁶. But it is worth highlighting some aspects of its development as evidence of the way in which Kearney was able to use this as a vehicle for putting ecumenism into action.

The notion of such an organisation was first floated in 1973, and then publicly explored (with Kearney working as +Hurley's consultant) in 1974-75; it was only in 1976 that the organisation began to act formally. One of the first events was reported in the *Daily News* as follows:⁴¹⁷

Diakonia, a new ecumenical group centred in Durban, knows that people are deeply disturbed by his death [of Joseph Mdluli], and by the amount of people detained and invites the public to attend a service to be held at Emmanuel Cathedral on 5 April 1976.

It went on to describe the purpose of Diakonia as being "to activate the concern of its member churches in the social field and focus this on problem situations and on welfare development and liberation projects."

I see this as Kearney's response – consciously or unconsciously – to the lengthy call quoted above of *Unitatis Redintegratio* 12. The choice of Emmanuel Cathedral as the venue may have been because it was the largest church in central Durban but also allows Diakonia to show clearly that it enjoys the support and patronage of the Catholics who – unusually for that time – are joining in prayer with non-Catholics. The range of Christian traditions involved also shows that the ecumenical intent is serious: mainline churches such as the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, United Congregational and Evangelical Lutheran are joined by the predominately black African Methodist Evangelical (AME).

⁴¹³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/1 "Speech to the South African Council of Catholic Social Services by Denis Hurley" (16 October 1981)

⁴¹⁴ For more on this see Appendix D: "+Hurley the political priest"

⁴¹⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/1 "Speech to the South African Council of Catholic Social Services by Denis Hurley" (16 October 1981)

⁴¹⁶ In fact, it is curious that for such a significant organisation in the life of the Church and of the Struggle, there is very little written on the story of Diakonia. The only history book published by them is a photographic commemoration of 23 years (sic) of the Good Friday service: Diakonia Council of Churches. *Pilgrimage of Hope* (Durban: Diakonia, 2009)

⁴¹⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980) (*Daily News*, 26 March 1976)

Kearney himself explains that these were the seven founding members. The choice of +Hurley as Chair (at this stage for just four years though, in the end, for much longer), and that the main funder was the German Catholic organisation Misereor, might depict the organisation as having a Catholic bias. But the original premises were in the Saint Andrews Centre of the Durban Central United Church. Over time, the membership of Diakonia expanded so that by December 1994 there were six additional churches: Coptic Orthodox Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church (Natal-Transvaal), Natal Baptist Convention, Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Uniting Reformed Church.⁴¹⁸

Notably missing from this group (apart from the earlier reference to AME) are African Independent Churches (AIC). The failure to draw them into Diakonia is true of the wider ecumenical movement and, for example, AICs are not even referenced in the Kairos document.⁴¹⁹

Kearney was conscious of this especially since, as he commented in 1994, it was the case that few of the clergy of the member churches were operating in the informal settlements where half the four million people of Durban are living: “We will intensify our efforts to encourage our member churches to make these areas a high priority in their pastoral work and encourage them to do so in close collaboration with the indigenous churches.”⁴²⁰

The other historic gap had, for obvious reasons been the Dutch Reformed Church (the NGK). In fact, they finally applied for membership in 1994 (the year of the first democratic elections). Deon Snyman (an NGK minister who joined the Diakonia staff in 2003) comments on how happy Kearney was when the NGK joined Diakonia: he speculates that this could have been for theological reasons, institutional reasons or political reasons – or all three. Snyman adds that Kearney was always interested to hear about the Dutch Reformed Church for example, when their 1994 synod made a public apology to both President Mandela and Ds. Naudé.⁴²¹ But for some members of his team, Kearney was perhaps too quick to forgive past sins: his secretary Vanessa Franks recalls that Diakonia staff were surprised that the NGK was invited to join so soon after the elections.⁴²²

Faced with the criticism, Kearney might have used words similar to those who criticised the speed of change in the Church in the years after the Council. Orsy comments:

The history of the post-conciliar years offers quasi-empirical evidence that the Holy Spirit is indeed in charge and active. ...Attitudes of extreme rigidity that pervaded generations of people and communities have literally melted away – if not everywhere, certainly far and wide – and have given way to a disposition of openness and flexibility.⁴²³

Financial Reasons to be Ecumenical

One of the key reasons to be ecumenical was to be able to access a wider set of resources. In this, Diakonia is achieving a specific goal mentioned by SPRO-CAS: “Churches should be ecumenical and

⁴¹⁸ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 196-198

⁴¹⁹ Petersen, Robin M. “The AICs and the TRC: resistance redefined”. *Facing the Truth*. James Cochrane et al eds. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999) 115

⁴²⁰ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 194

⁴²¹ Snyman, Deon. Personal interview by author, 3 January 2021 in Goedgedacht (staff member at Diakonia)

⁴²² Franks, Vanessa. Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Durban (secretary at Diakonia)

⁴²³ Orsy, Ladislav. *Receiving the Council* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2009) 49

multi-functional to make more money available for community development.”⁴²⁴ Whether the word ‘churches’ in this refers to buildings or institutions, the same point is true.

There are many examples of this in the history of Diakonia. One of the best is the Clermont Community Resource Centre which went on to become a model for 14 Community Resource Centres (CRCs) set up around Durban. On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of Clermont CRC, Kearney paid tribute to the fact that it had an ecumenical nature even at the local level. He explains that the CRC came out of a Catholic desire for a social justice group; that it was originally based in a Lutheran church, and then a Catholic building and that it had received financial support from the Methodist Hudson Trust.⁴²⁵

At the same time that Diakonia was being created, and involving some of the same Catholic lay people, the Archdiocese of Durban was developing its Justice & Peace Commission. Doug Irvine, soon to be the Chair of this, commented that +Hurley’s idea to make Diakonia ecumenical was both a financial and a theological decision and that he was keen to initiate discussions with the other churches to find a model. He points out that there had been no other ecumenical activity in Durban before Diakonia and that the resources for (Catholic) Justice & Peace work were increasingly the ecumenical resources from Diakonia.⁴²⁶

Michael Nuttall – who as Anglican bishop of Natal was one of the Church leaders to be brought on side – also feels that +Hurley’s first desire was to create an agency for social action and that the decision to make it ecumenical was because it would be more effective.⁴²⁷

It should be stressed that for its first two decades, during the Struggle against Apartheid, the ecumenical advantage locally was not so much funds, as access to buildings and people. But at the same time, the ecumenical profile of Diakonia made it a much more appealing destination for funds from overseas donors (ecclesial and secular) who were generally reluctant to support individual denominations (even their own) for fear of accusations of favouritism.

That changed after 1994. Kearney was commenting in a piece he was writing about Diakonia, that it was not sustainable that 90% of their R3 million annual budget came from overseas and that this would be harder to source in future. It is interesting that his recommendation was that there needed to be a focus ‘on local sources and better collaboration between denominations’.⁴²⁸ Ecumenical continues to be an important key to unlocking resources.

Theological Reasons to be Ecumenical

But as +Hurley is quoted as saying above, the ecumenical motivation was not just financial but theological.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁴ Randall, *SPRO-CAS Vol 8: Apartheid and the Church*, 74

⁴²⁵ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 102-104 (“Thirty Years On: celebrating community service and benefits”, undated but probably around 2005)

⁴²⁶ Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Chair of the Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace Commission)

⁴²⁷ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

⁴²⁸ Kearney, G Paddy. “Diakonia”. *Serving Humanity – a Sabbath Reflection*. Stuart Bate ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1996) 195

⁴²⁹ For more on this see Appendix C: “Interpreting *Gaudium et Spes*”

Again, the reflections of SPRO-CAS a few years before Diakonia was founded, provide a useful way of exploring this. While there were no Catholics involved in writing this document, it is hard to imagine that it was not read by both +Hurley and Kearney as they were developing the idea of Diakonia. In the report *Apartheid and the Church*, we read: "True reconciliation must involve encouraging the frank, honest, open and often painful articulation of resentments and criticisms in mutual dialogue between the groups concerned."⁴³⁰

It goes on to add that this will be necessary for groups divided by race and culture; but no less necessary for groups divided by denomination within the Christian family. Thus, there is a parallel here with Vatican II which said something similar, albeit from a negative starting point:

Every effort to avoid expressions, judgments and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations with them more difficult.⁴³¹

Again there is a parallel between what UR 7 refers to as the 'change of heart' which is necessary for true ecumenism and the need that SPRO-CAS identifies for the Church to break free from 'internal ideological captivity' which prevents it playing its role in South African society because of fear, prejudice, despair, conformism, legalism, authoritarianism, wordiness.⁴³²

The words which UR 7 quotes from Scripture when discussing the sins against unity in the Church could equally apply to disunity in South Africa: "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."⁴³³

Looking back on this period with the hindsight of 40-50 years, it seems to me that, as Christians were thinking more and more deeply about how to overcome divisions in the country, the divisions within Christ's Church would have been more and more embarrassing. In other words, the Church could not hope to show the nation a new way of being a nation, unless it could also show that there was a new way of being Church. Cardinal Cassidy points out that the same idea is presented in 1995 in John Paul II's encyclical on ecumenism, *Ut Unum Sint*, where he stresses that Christians cannot preach reconciliation when they are not reconciled among themselves.⁴³⁴

Nolan had a significant influence on both +Hurley and Kearney (in fact Nolan commented in his interview that he knew that Kearney read and appreciated his books).⁴³⁵ Connections, through the Christian Institute, the Institute for Contextual Theology and the Kairos document, meant that Nolan was a key bridge to the wider Christian resistance (especially beyond Durban). Nolan recalls, for example, that he helped to set up a meeting between +Hurley and Beyers Naudé in Johannesburg; (Kearney also met Naudé in Johannesburg through his link with the Grail community).⁴³⁶ Both +Hurley and Kearney would have known Nolan's *God in South Africa*: in fact this author has in his possession the copy of this ground-breaking book that Nolan personally inscribed to +Hurley in 1988.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁰ Randall, *SPRO-CAS Vol 8: Apartheid and the Church*, 43

⁴³¹ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4

⁴³² Randall, *SPRO-CAS Vol 8: Apartheid and the Church*, 18

⁴³³ 1 Jn 1:10

⁴³⁴ Cassidy, *Rediscovering Vatican II*, 42

⁴³⁵ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 18 Oct 2020 in Boksburg GP (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

⁴³⁶ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 18 Oct 2020 in Boksburg GP (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

⁴³⁷ Update October 2022", *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 26 November 2022)

In this book, Nolan offers a description of this emerging new Church and some of the experiments in 'new ways of being' that were being tried in practice. Although operating at the other side of the country, Nolan knew what was happening at Diakonia and, though he does not name it, his words could be applied to this Durban agency:

God's saving power, somewhat like sin, is objectified or embodied in new structures: church communities but also political organisations. Structures of true power that embody the right use of power: the power of service, the power of sharing, the power of solidarity and love, the power of faith and commitment, the power of hope.⁴³⁸

While one part of the Church, or one denomination, could try to exemplify this, it is clearly more effective if it is the action of different parts of the Church working together.

Kjell Nordstokke, who was for many years the representative of a Norwegian funder of Diakonia, wrote a retrospective appreciation of the role that the organisation had had in showing what might be possible:

..this indignation implies a vision that the situation can be altered: something can be done about the distress and pain.... Diakonia may be described as a practical effort to change the situation of people in distress. It is an action deeply rooted in the vision of the creative force of action, a principle which is founded in Jesus.....who puts everything right.⁴³⁹

Even someone from outside the Church structures – albeit a man who uses religious imagery as the title of his book⁴⁴⁰ – sees the importance that religion plays in not just calling for, but actually attempting to exemplify, the new society that is sought. In *The Eye of the Needle* Rick Turner writes:

Religion challenges the common-sense tendency to be committed to the present, to see the world as we experience it now as the only possible form of reality. ... The transcendent ethic demands that we question our taken-for-granted ways of behaving that we continually question them.⁴⁴¹

It would be appealing if we could see some culturally *African*, as opposed to specifically *South African*, theological justification for ecumenism. Kiernan asserts that this vision of a united Church is especially appealing to African Christians because he argues: "though divided by denomination these are not divisions of their choosing and that often they are more ready to join in ecumenical undertakings."⁴⁴² But he does not provide clear evidence to support this and the proliferation of African-initiated denominations would suggest there is as much cultural momentum towards fission as fusion.

Two people who worked closely with Kearney at Diakonia elaborate on the theological and philosophical advantages of ecumenism over the purely practical ones. Mike Vorster, a Methodist minister and later the area bishop, worked at Diakonia on and off from 1984 to 2002. He says:

⁴³⁸ Nolan, Albert. *God in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 115

⁴³⁹ Nordstokke, Kjell. *Through the Mud – reflections on Diakonia* (Durban: Diakonia Council of Churches/ Oslo: Diakonhjemet Hospital & College, 2000) 43

⁴⁴⁰ Mt 19:23: I have tried and failed to find an explanation for why an avowed atheist chose to draw on a famous Gospel passage for the name of this book. See for example: Egan, Anthony: "Remembering to think critically: Rick Turner 40 years on". *Spotlight Africa*. <https://spotlight.africa/2018/01/08/thinking-rick-turner/> (accessed 24 March 2022)

⁴⁴¹ Turner, Rick. *Eye of the Needle* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1980) 17 (Note that this was first published as part of SPRO-CAS in 1972.)

⁴⁴² Kiernan, James. "African and Christian: from Opposition to Mutual Accommodation". *Christianity in South Africa*. Martin Prozesky ed. (Bergville: Southern, 1990) 24

“Paddy really believed in the ecumenical movement as a force for change; for him it was more than just using a united Church as a means to achieve certain ends.”⁴⁴³

Anne McKay is a Catholic lay woman who worked as communications officer of Diakonia from 1987 commented: “Though Paddy was always 100% Catholic, his ecumenism was hugely inspirational. He worked hard to bring in all faith groups because of the cross-pollination of ideas which was made possible by the Ecumenical Centre.”⁴⁴⁴

Combining the theological and the practical was one of Kearney’s great skills, especially if it could be done in a bold gesture that others could understand. One example of this (recalled by another former Methodist Bishop, Norman Hudson, and his wife Estelle) was the request by Kearney to construct an *mjondolo* (a South African shack) in the vestibule of the Central Methodist Church to house the Holy Family during a Christmas service. The presence of this inside a church, and the requirement that congregants had to walk through this on the way to receiving communion, was something that Kearney would have known a Methodist minister might accommodate but a Catholic priest probably would not.⁴⁴⁵

How did Kearney achieve a Model of Ecumenism at Diakonia?

Vatican II’s document states: “This Sacred Council is gratified to note that the participation by the Catholic faithful in ecumenical work is growing daily. It commends this work to the bishops everywhere in the world to be vigorously stimulated by them and guided with prudence.”⁴⁴⁶

Kearney was foremost among members of the Catholic faithful in South Africa participating in ecumenical work and he was certainly stimulated and guided by his bishop, +Hurley.

He was also not afraid to walk the delicate line that is summarised in the closing paragraph of the document: “Their [the faithful’s] ecumenical action must be fully and sincerely Catholic, that is to say, faithful to the truth which we have received from the apostles and Fathers of the Church, in harmony with the faith which the Catholic Church has always professed, *and at the same time* directed toward that fullness to which Our Lord wills His Body to grow in the course of time..”

How did he achieve this? Catholics who worked with Kearney at Diakonia noticed the way in which he carried his ecumenical mandate.

Fred Cason was on the Board of the Ecumenical Centre in the 1980s while his wife Marylyn worked as a volunteer in the same period. She recalls: “Paddy was so respectful of everyone which is what made him wonderful ecumenically. Anything done at Diakonia was done incorporating different denominations, even to the point of inviting an NGK minister to the building in the 1980s.”⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴³ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (Methodist Bishop and co-worker at Diakonia)

⁴⁴⁴ McKay, Anne. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia from 1987)

⁴⁴⁵ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Methodist Bishop and wife)

⁴⁴⁶ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 5

⁴⁴⁷ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (Supporters of Diakonia and friends)

Eric Apelgren first encountered Kearney as a young and zealous Catholic youth worker. He says that Kearney showed him it was not a matter of choosing between being Catholic and being ecumenical: “At Diakonia I learnt a lot about being ecumenical – while still being loyal to my Catholic faith.”⁴⁴⁸

A similar ecumenical ease was noticed by non-Catholics. Paul Graham, as the Methodist youth coordinator in Durban in the 1970s, was working with Diakonia. He points out that because Kearney was a lay person (i.e. not a priest or bishop) he did not come with ‘the trappings of Catholicism’. “As a result, the Methodists never saw Diakonia as a Catholic space.”⁴⁴⁹

Another Methodist, Norman Hudson, in fact at one time the local bishop and chair of Diakonia, commented: “Paddy was never conscious of his Catholic status; we just felt we were journeying together as Christians.”⁴⁵⁰

One Anglican priest, Andrew Warmback, who was a staff member of Diakonia from 2000 but had been involved as a volunteer since the 1980s, pointed out that Kearney created a very attractive organisation which exuded a warm sense of belonging. “Diakonia was a community, a movement, a theology; it was a place of learning, a place of mobilisation, of welcome, of acceptance. We were able to draw in people because they all felt welcome.” Warmback points out that while Kearney was obviously Catholic because of his reputation, he was never sectarian. “He never quoted a Pope; if anything he deferred more to other denominational writings. He never spoke of Church union or reunification; he always focused on common issues.”⁴⁵¹

By acting in this way, Kearney was responding to the words of Vatican II: “Whatever is truly Christian is never contrary to what genuinely belongs to the faith; indeed, it can always bring a deeper realisation of the mystery of Christ and the Church.”⁴⁵²

I believe that Kearney was able to act ecumenically with such ease because he felt in doing so he was moving towards the deeper truth of the faith and not weakening his sense of Catholic identity. In this regard, he had the support of both the letter and the spirit of the Council. In the opening address to the Council, John XXIII stresses (as is customary) the importance of continuity with the past; he wishes “to transmit pure and complete, without attenuations or deformations, the doctrine that for twenty centuries, in spite of difficulties and of struggles, it has become the common heritage of men”.⁴⁵³

But he also offers some room for manoeuvre with a previously unvoiced distinction that could open up opportunities for further discussion. After stressing at length the need for the Council (like all councils) to show ‘fidelity to authentic doctrine’, the Pope then also recognised a distinction between ‘the substance of the old doctrine, the *depositum fidei*’ and ‘the way to formulate its expression’. This difference, if you like, between form and content meant that in the ecumenical field (my example) there could be a recognition of the doctrinal importance of governance in the Church while allowing that its expression in terms of forms of episcopacy could vary between churches.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁴⁸ Apelgren, Eric. Personal interview by author, 6 October 2020 in Durban (volunteer at Diakonia)

⁴⁴⁹ Graham, Paul. Personal interview by author, 13 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Methodist youth worker)

⁴⁵⁰ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Methodist Bishop and wife)

⁴⁵¹ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest and co-worker at Diakonia)

⁴⁵² *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4

⁴⁵³ *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* 6

⁴⁵⁴ *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* 6

Perhaps John XXIII's words inspired +Hurley, as early as October 1962, to argue *in aula* that in the Message to the World (that will be presented as the first document from the Council), 'the reference to papal primacy be dropped to take into account the sensitivities of the non-believers and of the 'separated brethren'.⁴⁵⁵ Vatican I had been almost solely focused on papal primacy; 100 years later +Hurley has the courage to suggest that it should not be highlighted in a key message from Vatican II.

A similar idea then appears in the Council document on ecumenism:

When comparing doctrines with one another, they should remember that in Catholic doctrine there exists a 'hierarchy' of truths, since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith. Thus the way will be opened by which, through fraternal rivalry, all will be stirred to a deeper understanding and a clearer presentation of the unfathomable riches of Christ.⁴⁵⁶

Faggioli comments that the 'hierarchy of truths' is something which 'played remarkably well with ecumenical observers'.⁴⁵⁷ Although, over 400 years earlier, Erasmus (who never left the Catholic Church) had been using this terminology, Cassidy goes as far as to claim that the adoption of the phrase was something that was a direct result of the influence of the non-Catholic observers on the Council Fathers.⁴⁵⁸ As with the distinction between a fundamental doctrine and its outward expression, this recognition that not all truths are equal provided much rich ground for ecumenical dialogue.

It also, of course, creates scope for confusion and disappointment. Some Catholics (and Paul Nadal hinted at this in his interview⁴⁵⁹) might have felt that Kearney was "not being Catholic enough" in his engagement with non-Catholics. They could have invoked on their side the call of the Council: "At the same time, the Catholic faith must be explained more profoundly and precisely, in such a way and in such terms as our separated brethren can also really understand."⁴⁶⁰

Kearney might have pointed out that document calls on Catholics to help the separated brethren to understand – not necessarily to convert!

Another way of looking at how Kearney lived his ecumenism is in the pattern of who made up the staff base of Diakonia. As Warmback pointed out, Paddy was 'obviously' a Catholic; but the then Anglican bishop, Michael Nuttall, sees Kearney's appointment as director not as a bid by +Hurley to secure the job for a Catholic but rather as 'a prophetic move'.⁴⁶¹

The second employee of Diakonia was also a Catholic (and black and a woman which will be discussed in Chapter 4). But Liz Mkame points out that she was unusual for a Catholic woman of that period in having had some experience of ecumenism from working in the YWCA and with the Youth Department of the Methodist Church. (Indeed she attended a Methodist Synod at which she was invited to share in the sacraments: she explained that she initially felt uncomfortable about this, but then prayed over the matter and received. Later, in 1992, Mkame served a 7-year term on the

⁴⁵⁵ Denis, Philippe. "Archbishop Hurley's contribution to the Second Vatican Council". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 9

⁴⁵⁶ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 11

⁴⁵⁷ Faggioli, *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning*, 40

⁴⁵⁸ Cassidy, *Rediscovering Vatican II*, 10

⁴⁵⁹ Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban (Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee at Denis Hurley Centre)

⁴⁶⁰ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 11

⁴⁶¹ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

World Council of Churches.) It was Liz's initiative to start a local Social Action Committee (which became the foundation of the Community Resource Centres) and these were formed by drawing together local people from a range of churches.⁴⁶²

Daphne Goad who joined Diakonia in 1986, points out that she was only the 3rd Catholic (after Kearney and Liz Mkame) and that Kearney was keen to keep the balance of faiths so that there were by then 15 staff members from other Christian traditions.⁴⁶³

One of those non-Catholics was Hester Joseph, a woman who had been brought up in the Pentecostal 'Assemblies of God'. When she joined in 1978 (as Ecumenical Centre Administrator) she was the first staff member from a non-mainline church person and she felt that Kearney was especially keen to welcome her because of that.⁴⁶⁴ Jane Argall, an employee from 1990, was an Anglican but one who had had ecumenical experience having been librarian at FedSem before she went to be work as librarian at the Ecumenical Centre.⁴⁶⁵

This mix of staff would have been true of other ecumenical organisations; though perhaps Kearney felt that as Director and with a fellow Catholic, +Hurley, as Chair it was even more important to demonstrate diversity in the recruitment process. The friendships which developed as a result meant that by spending time together some of the fears and prejudices that might have existed between different Christians could be overcome. Again as Philippe Denis put it:

There is nothing better for the development of friendship and mutual respect than a common enemy.⁴⁶⁶

Something similar, though not as intense, happened at Vatican II when the Council Fathers interacted with non-Catholic observers. At a special service to thank them in the final days of the Council (at St Paul Outside the Walls on 4 December 1965), Paul VI commented:

We have gotten to know you a little better...We have recognised certain failings...Our Ecumenical Council has taken steps in your direction in many ways...we have begun to love each other once again. ...Keep in mind that the truth rules over all of us and sets us free, and also that truth is close, very close, to love.⁴⁶⁷

These are words that could easily have been spoken to Diakonia staff by +Hurley or by Kearney.

Fred Cason points out that this was a time when everyone working for an organisation like Diakonia faced real threats to their lives and safety.⁴⁶⁸ Thus, these words from Vatican II as a principle of ecumenical solidarity were coming true: "It is right and salutary to recognise the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ, sometimes even to the shedding of their blood."⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶² Mkame, Liz. Personal interview by author, 17 December 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁴⁶³ Goad, Daphne. Personal interview by author, 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁴⁶⁴ Joseph, Hester. Personal interview by author, 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Ecumenical Centre and Trustee at Denis Hurley Centre). In fact, in 2005, Joseph did become a Catholic.

⁴⁶⁵ Argall, Jane. Personal interview by author, 8 October 2020 in Durban (librarian at Diakonia, co-editor of Hurley's letters)

⁴⁶⁶ Denis, "Vatican II in Southern Africa", 2

⁴⁶⁷ Girault, "The Reception of Ecumenism", 140

⁴⁶⁸ Cason, Fred. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (Trustee of Ecumenical Centre)

⁴⁶⁹ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4

Such mixing (not just between denominations but also between ‘races’) was something that Diakonia in turn promoted in the wider world. The famous exposure immersions, whereby clergy and congregation members would go and spend a week living with a different family, not only crossed the grotesquely named ‘colour bar’ but also the equally hard (if less visible) lines of denomination.⁴⁷⁰ One can only wonder at the sense of shock and, one hopes pleasant surprise, after an Indian Methodist spent a week living with a white Catholic priest, or a coloured Anglican vicar stayed with a black Pentecostal, as Daphne Goad recalls.⁴⁷¹

This not only happened in South Africa but even overseas. Jacques Briard, who worked for the Belgian Catholic agency *Entraide et Fraternité* who were donors to Diakonia over many years, recalls vividly, 30 years after the event, the experience of Diakonia sending an Anglican woman priest Sue Britton to stay with them for several weeks to see democracy in action. “She was an Anglican but one of the good sort!”⁴⁷²

Another reason for the success of ecumenism at Diakonia was the ability of Kearney to live with the humility and open-mindedness that is the spirit of *Unitatis Redintegratio*. The man who went on to lead the KZN Christian Council recalls his first experience of working with Kearney in 1996. Dziva had been appointed to do some research on ecumenical movements including Diakonia, PACSA (see below) and the KZN 1994 Churches election programme. He expected Kearney to be very welcoming, and open-minded to ecumenism and he more than matched his reputation. But he also assumed that Kearney would not want to be part of a new ecumenical initiative because Diakonia had so much experience. Whereas Dziva felt that some of the Diakonia staff were ‘a bit snooty’ about this new venture, he was struck at how humble Kearney was and how open to new possibilities.⁴⁷³

Loek Goemans, a Catholic with a keen personal commitment to ecumenism as a member of the Grail, comments that Kearney went out of his way to find other than Catholic ways to do things and how overjoyed he was whenever Diakonia membership expanded, especially beyond the mainline churches.⁴⁷⁴

Accepting the need both to take initiative and to be open to the initiatives of others, is what placed Kearney in a good position to promote ecumenism. It is a far cry from the drawbridge mentality of the Catholic Church established in the Counter-Reformation and so it is worth quoting (as Cardinal Cassidy does) the conciliatory words of Paul VI when marking the 4th centenary of the Council of Trent in a speech in St Peter’s in March 1964:

Ecumenism – not constituting a frontier, but opening a door; not closing a dialogue, but keeping it open; not blaming for errors, but seeking virtue; not waiting for those who have not come for four centuries, but going to look for them in a brotherly way.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁰ For more on the Exposure Visits see Chapter 4.

⁴⁷¹ Goad, Daphne. Personal interview by author, 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁴⁷² Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author, 17 January 2022 via Zoom (manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

⁴⁷³ Dziva, Doug. Personal interview by author, 15 March 2021 in Pietermaritzburg (Director of KZNCC)

⁴⁷⁴ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

⁴⁷⁵ Cassidy, *Rediscovering Vatican II*, 121

Links with the wider Ecumenical Movement

Let us then consider the place of Kearney and of Diakonia in the wider inter-church movement in South Africa.

Frank Chikane (a minister from the Pentecostal tradition) was Secretary-General of the SACC from 1987 to 1994. Even though during the period Diakonia was not formally a part of SACC, Chikane saw at first-hand how people participated at Diakonia without thinking about denomination. He calls it 'one of the most ecumenical organisations'. "Kearney symbolised that and the principle that, though you might belong to different denominations, you are working for the people."⁴⁷⁶

At one level, there is a pleasing coincidence of names. Diakonia was by 1978 based in a building renamed the Ecumenical Centre in Durban. Meanwhile, the SACC headquarters in Braamfontein, Johannesburg was called 'Diakonia House' and the Christian Institute had a branch office in the 'Ecumenical Centre' in Mowbray Cape Town.⁴⁷⁷

Nolan says that what stands out about Kearney is that he did not belong to any of the other ecumenical institutions until Diakonia came along. Unlike others involved in the movement, Kearney had not been part of the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT, founded in Johannesburg in 1981), the Christian Institute (in place since 1963) or even the Young Christian Workers (YCW) or Young Christian Students (YCS).⁴⁷⁸ Nolan is surprised that Kearney, who would have been aware of all of these, had not joined them.⁴⁷⁹ However, Irvine points out that Kearney was involved in the work of the Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace Commission's investigation following the 1973 Durban Dock Strikes and that YCW were also part of that.⁴⁸⁰

By 1977, the Schlebusch Commission had outlawed the Christian Institute and placed a banning order on many of its leaders including Beyers Naudé. It is tempting to see Diakonia as a way of continuing the work of Christian Institute in Durban. But Nolan feels that that is not really the case even though there was some similarity in the work and the ethos.⁴⁸¹

A more obvious successor to the Christian Institute in KZN was PACSA (originally called the 'Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness' and many years later becoming the 'Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action'). Mary Gardner, the widow of Professor Colin Gardner (the last Chair of the Christian Institute) draws the link, pointing out also that the secretary of the CI in Pietermaritzburg had been Joan Kerchhoff and it was her husband Peter who went on to found PACSA.⁴⁸² This is also expressed in a book (and exhibition) on the history of PACSA, on the occasion of its 30th anniversary in 2007.⁴⁸³

+Nuttall confirms this, stating that PACSA was formed in the wake of the Soweto uprising of 1976 and the banning of the Christian Institute in 1977. From its beginning he says that there were close

⁴⁷⁶ Chikane, Frank. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2021 via Zoom (Secretary General of SACC 1987-94)

⁴⁷⁷ Ryan, *Beyers Naudé*, 163, 187

⁴⁷⁸ Both of these movements were inspired by Joseph Cardijn who had in fact visited South Africa in the 1950s. Some credit him with having played an important role on the Commission that drafted the document on the laity. However, he only became a conciliar *peritus* in 1963 and he was, in 1965, several times absent from Rome. See: Worlock, Derek J H. "Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986). 241

⁴⁷⁹ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 19 October 2020 in Boksburg (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

⁴⁸⁰ Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Chair of the Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace Commission)

⁴⁸¹ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 19 October 2020 in Boksburg (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

⁴⁸² Gardner, Mary. Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of Colin Gardner)

⁴⁸³ Inglis, John. *Journeying for Justice* (Pietermaritzburg: PACSA, 2007)

links between PACSA and +Hurley and to 'the Durban-based ecumenical organisation Diakonia led by Paddy Kearney'.⁴⁸⁴ Tim Nuttall (not the bishop) comments: "Peter Kerchhoff [of PACSA] and Paddy Kearney of Diakonia became close friends and the two organisations collaborated on a number of joint initiatives during these years."⁴⁸⁵

This contribution is in a *Festschrift* celebrating Peter Kerchhoff after his untimely death in a road accident in 1999. Writing in the same book, Kearney calls them 'similar sister organisations' and explains that he and Kerchhoff first met in the early 70s during an ecumenical campaign for domestic workers and were then involved together in the annual Vow Day reconciliation events.⁴⁸⁶

The two went on to be joint secretaries of the Natal Church Leaders Group (CLG) in the 1980s.⁴⁸⁷ But there were some important differences, not least in terms of personality as explained by Joan Kerchhoff, Peter's widow.⁴⁸⁸ Kerchhoff was an Anglican, and later took Holy Orders as a Deacon; Kearney even when a religious was not seeking Orders (see Chapter 2). PACSA was an organisation of like-minded individuals that was directly engaged in social action itself; Diakonia was an organisation of denominations that was generally not directly engaged itself but instead supporting its member churches to take action.

As the Struggle continued, more and more of the energy of the churches in Natal and nationally was directed through ecumenical organisations. Thus, in 1985 when John Paul II invited a South African delegation to the Vatican to brief him especially on the controversy over sanctions, George Daniel recalls that the small group of Catholic bishops was joined by the Anglican +Tutu and the Methodist Khoza Mgojo.⁴⁸⁹

But though Archbishop Daniel (himself a former Anglican) was personally very committed to ecumenism (as evidenced by the title of his cited autobiography), he himself admits that the emergence of ecumenical meetings in Pretoria came only as late as 1989.⁴⁹⁰ Meanwhile in Cape Town, ecumenical activity, according to Sydney Duval, was mostly under the SACC.⁴⁹¹ For example, it is striking to note that a major NGO in Cape Town that was founded in 1970 and covered some of the same areas of concern as Diakonia was specifically not ecumenical which is highlighted by its name, 'Catholic Welfare and Development'.⁴⁹²

To understand why some Catholic bishops were less inclined to prioritise ecumenical activity, the words of +Van Velsen's successor as Bishop of Kroonstad are insightful (as quoted by a politician reminiscing about him): "It is important that Catholicism should not be a crown we wear on our head as a decoration, but rather a very active grappling with the problems that confront the people and

⁴⁸⁴ Note that while their respective dioceses had different geographies, both embraced the two major cities and, though +Nuttall was based in Pietermaritzburg and +Hurley in Durban, the distance between the two is only 75km.

⁴⁸⁵ Nuttall, Tim. "From Pressure Group to Liberation Organisation, 1979-90". *Hope Beyond Apartheid*. Lou Levine ed. (Pietermaritzburg: PACSA, 2002) 11, 20

⁴⁸⁶ Kearney, G Paddy. "Champion of the 'Little People'". *Hope Beyond Apartheid*. Lou Levine ed. (Pietermaritzburg: PACSA, 2002) 218-220

⁴⁸⁷ Mbona, Michael. "The Church as a peace broker: the case of the Natal Church Leaders' Group and political violence in KwaZulu-Natal (1990-1994)", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* (2011, 37.2) 245-269

⁴⁸⁸ Kerchhoff, Joan. Personal interview by author, 6 April 2022 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of Peter Kerchhoff)

⁴⁸⁹ Daniel, George. *That they may be One* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2015) 114

⁴⁹⁰ Daniel, *That they may be One*, 118

⁴⁹¹ Duval, Sydney. Personal interview by author, 2 January 2021 in Cape Town (friend over many decades)

⁴⁹² Du Plessis, Tracy. "The Activities of Catholic Welfare and Development". *Serving Humanity – a Sabbath Reflection*. Stuart Bate ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1996)

trying in all ways possible to make life better for others.”⁴⁹³ Bishop Brenninkmeijer’s words imply that many bishops and lay Catholics are too content to just wear the crown.

Perhaps because of +Hurley, Natal (now KZN) was ahead of the other Provinces in its ecumenical developments. In a front page of *The Southern Cross* from 1983 there is a call by +Hurley for a large scale national Christian conference ‘to promote political attitudes conducive to peace’.⁴⁹⁴ He is clearly looking for a national expansion of the work of places like Diakonia and PACSA. The importance of these two can be seen in a list by Bate who places Diakonia and PACSA alongside national institutions like SACC, TEEC (a distance-learning theological college) and the ICT. Part of his explanation for the paucity of ecumenical activity is that, at the grass roots level, denominationalism persisted leading to wasted duplication of services.⁴⁹⁵

The national conference that +Hurley envisaged never took place, but in 1985 there was a national ecumenical initiative that caught people’s notice. The ICT, a theological think-tank, produced the famous Kairos Statement. Nolan, who was a member of ICT and hugely influential in the Kairos document, compares ICT to Diakonia as a place “where Catholics were at the heart of the ecumenical conversation in a way that they were not at the SACC”.⁴⁹⁶

The initiators of the first version of the Kairos statement were highly diverse according to Philippe Denis who has done extensive analysis of the process of its writing: Frank Chikane (Apostolic Faith Mission), Albert Nolan (Catholic), Bonganjalo Goba (UCC), Allan Boesak (Dutch Reformed), Itumeleng Mosala (Methodist), Smangalis Mkhathshwa (Catholic). They in turn brought together a collective of over 50 people from across the Christian spectrum to collaborate as authors. And, when issued, Kairos had 155 signatories from a wide range of denominations: Anglican Church (30), Methodist Church (24), Roman Catholic Church (22), United Church of Southern Africa (13), Reformed (25), Lutheran (16), Presbyterian (11), African independent (9) Pentecostal (4) and Baptist (1). [Denis does point that the diversity was less evident in terms of gender (89% male), status (91% clerics) and culture (67% European-sounding names).]⁴⁹⁷

Noticeably missing from that list of signatories were +Denis Hurley and Kearney.⁴⁹⁸ Sadly, Kearney is silent on whether they declined the invitation to sign or if they were never invited. It is worth noting though that the majority of signatories were in the area now known as Gauteng and that – with the only means of remote communication being the phone and post both of which were easily intercepted, caution alone would have argued against spreading the net too wide. However, on a visit to London in 2005 to research the +Hurley biography, he interviewed Maggie Peterson (whom he described as a communist) and in his personal diary notes he comments: “She stressed her and Frank Chikane’s disappointment that the Archbishop declined to be a signatory of the Kairos

⁴⁹³ Lekota, Mosiuoa. “A Shepherd of the People”. *The Bridge Builder - a tribute to Bishop Hans Brenninkmeijer*. Philippe Denis & Kees Keijsper eds. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) Though referenced by his real first name, Mosiuoa, this anti-Apartheid activist is better known by the name, ‘Terror’ Lekota, a reference to his fierceness not in politics but on the football field. It is interesting to note that his middle names were Gerard Patrick, almost the same as the forenames of Kearney. Despite the difference in age and ‘race’, they were linked by the use of traditional Catholic names of their generation!

⁴⁹⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Southern Cross*, 10 July 1983)

⁴⁹⁵ Bate, Stuart. “Signs of the Spirit in the New (Southern) Time”. *Serving Humanity – a Sabbath Reflection*. Stuart Bate ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1996) 24

⁴⁹⁶ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 19 October 2020 in Boksburg (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

⁴⁹⁷ Denis, Philippe. “The Authorship and Composition Circumstances of the Kairos Document”. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (2017: 158) 12, 15

⁴⁹⁸ For more on this see Appendix D: “+Hurley the political priest”

documents and the Road to Damascus.”⁴⁹⁹ Kearney does, however, point out that +Hurley used the document a year later as a way of trying to galvanize response from the SACBC.⁵⁰⁰

Later, in reviewing the Struggle period, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is very clear about the role of the churches. They were victims of oppression and they were also among the agents of oppression (through acts of commission, of legitimisation and of omission). And they were also opponents of oppression (on ‘a Continuum of opposition’). The TRC held three days of submissions from 28 faith representatives on 17-19 November 1997 in East London. In addition, there were 70 written submissions from faith groups. It is regrettable that while the ICT, and much smaller organisations like Hatfield Christian Church or Rosebank Union Church made submissions, Diakonia did not (and nor, as individuals, did either +Hurley or Kearney).⁵⁰¹

When Kearney finally retired from Diakonia in 2004 he might have had an opportunity to extend his ecumenical enthusiasm nationally. Snyman believes that he applied to be Deputy Secretary General of the SACC.⁵⁰² But Kearney was at least able to broaden the ecumenical movement within Natal.

First there was the merger in 1994 of Diakonia with the Durban & District Council of Churches (D&DCC) to form what then becomes ‘Diakonia Council of Churches’. They covered the same geographic area, had the same member churches, had similar constitutions and were engaged in similar work. But, Mike Vorster (who was later Methodist Bishop) points out, since D&DCC was part of the SACC, there had been no Catholic involvement and so this merger was a necessary step towards fuller integration.⁵⁰³ Kearney himself compares the merger with other amalgamations that were happening in South Africa at the time such as between the Provinces and Homelands.⁵⁰⁴

This having been done, Kearney now had the first piece in a jigsaw of creating of what Dziva calls ‘the most vibrant ecumenical framework in the country’: a provincial Christian Council (KZNCC) plus the CLG (mentioned above) and regional organisations covering different parts of the Province (TAMCC, KRCC, SKZNCC and MCC) to join Diakonia Council of Churches (with its focus on Durban). Kearney’s role was not just institutional but also personal, mentoring the leaders and the chairs of the organisations (including new Anglican bishops like +Rubin Philip and +Dino Gabriel). He was able to do this because of his openness and his humility. Dziva draws a contrast with post-Kearney dealings with Diakonia when their Chair and Director were belittling of the KZNCC. He describes Kearney as ‘the shining torch in terms of human relations and ecumenical development and the growth of churches’.⁵⁰⁵

In Kearney’s own 2016 paper about the regional structure, he stresses the importance of ‘subsidiarity’ and calls for decision-making to be devolved to the level that is as close as possible to the communities and people who are served by the structure in question.

In the case of the regional Christian structures in KZN, this would mean that programmes and projects could really respond to the priority concerns of the communities they served. This would give the local church full ownership and full responsibility for this organisation

⁴⁹⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 “Morning Pages: May-July 2005” (30 May 2005, London)

⁵⁰⁰ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 239

⁵⁰¹ Cochrane, James et al eds. *Facing the Truth* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999) 50, 15-80

⁵⁰² Snyman, Deon. Personal interview by author, 3 January 2021 in Goedgedacht (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁵⁰³ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia, later Methodist Bishop Natal Coastal and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

⁵⁰⁴ Kearney, “Diakonia”, 192

⁵⁰⁵ Dziva, Doug. Personal interview by author, 15 March 2021 in Pietermaritzburg (Director of KZNCC)

and give it their full support. Independence is ultimately a question of deepening democracy which requires decentralised decision making.⁵⁰⁶

As with the creation of Diakonia 20 years earlier, Kearney is creating Church organisations that can provide what he sees as a model for wider South African society: inclusive, diverse, democratic, community-based, decentralised.

The fear of centralisation is something that Kearney sees as an obstacle to growth and something which +Hurley himself highlights. In an interview with the *Sunday Times* +Hurley is asked if the ordination of women (by the Anglican Church in South Africa from 1992) is an obstacle to the ecumenical movement. He replies: “the true obstacle to organic unity between the Catholic and Anglican churches is the centralisation of authority in Rome in recent years.”⁵⁰⁷

Managing difference within Diakonia

In a centralised system – such as the Catholic Church of which +Hurley and Kearney were a part – difference is managed by the dominant voice excluding others. In the decentralised model of Diakonia a different approach was needed.

Dziva and other interviewees stressed Kearney’s remarkable ability to chair a meeting at which different opinions were being voiced. He would not dominate the meeting but instead listen attentively and give each person time to speak their opinion. At the end, he would then sum up and communicate clearly a conclusion that all could buy in to.⁵⁰⁸

In situations where this was unlikely to be the case, he would manage to side-step the area of controversy. Mike Vorster recalls a Presbyterian leader wanting Diakonia to make an anti-abortion stand but Kearney avoiding it fearing that it would cause disunity within Diakonia. Kearney’s position of silence on abortion enabled him to stay friends with all the Church leaders. Another example Vorster gives is how on the issue of condoms and AIDS, Diakonia staff came back from research in East Africa endorsing the ABC response.⁵⁰⁹ But at the same time Diakonia did not promote or distribute condoms knowing that this would alienate Catholic (and some other) supporters.⁵¹⁰

Dina Cormick, who designed artwork for Diakonia over many years, sums this up by saying: “Paddy didn’t want Diakonia to be too radical, to offend people.”⁵¹¹

Praying Together

But one hard-to-avoid area of controversy for any ecumenical organisation was the contentious question of praying together. As was pointed out earlier, Vatican II had already highlighted that this

⁵⁰⁶ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 34 (“The KZNCC Independence Process”, 2016)

⁵⁰⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002). (*Sunday Times*, 7 March 1993)

⁵⁰⁸ Dziva, Doug. Personal interview by author, 15 March 2021 in Pietermaritzburg (Director of KZNCC)

⁵⁰⁹ ‘Abstain, Be faithful, use a Condom’

⁵¹⁰ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia, later Methodist Bishop Natal Coastal and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

⁵¹¹ Cormick, Dina. Personal interview by author, 21 December 2020 in Durban (freelance designer for Diakonia)

was (at least for Catholics) something where there would be limits: ‘and, wherever this is allowed, there is prayer in common’.⁵¹²

The decree devotes many words to trying to define a narrow space between those who think nothing is possible and those who think everything should be:

Yet worship in common (*communicatio in sacris*) is not to be considered as a means to be used indiscriminately for the restoration of Christian unity. There are two main principles governing the practice of such common worship: first, the bearing witness to the unity of the Church, and second, the sharing in the means of grace. Witness to the unity of the Church very generally forbids common worship to Christians, but the grace to be had from it sometimes commends this practice. The course to be adopted, with due regard to all the circumstances of time, place, and persons, is to be decided by local episcopal authority, unless otherwise provided for by the Bishops' Conference according to its statutes, or by the Holy See.⁵¹³

Kearney had the advantage of a local episcopal authority (+Hurley) who was more open-minded than most bishops. He also had the advantage that during the years of Diakonia and beyond there were further developments in the practice of shared prayer and new guidelines issued (such as between Catholics and Anglicans that came from the various statements of the joint Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). It was a great joy to Kearney that when ARCIC met in 2014 it was in Durban and he was able to give them a tour of the Denis Hurley Centre construction site – and pray together!

The most public form of ecumenical prayer was the Diakonia Good Friday Service instituted in 1985 and this is treated in detail in Chapter 5. Suffice to say that Kearney showed his skill at drawing on the various Christian traditions to produce a service in which all felt they had a place.

But it was not just at big events like this that there was *communicatio in sacris*. Diakonia's second employee after Kearney, Liz Mkame, recalls that every week at the Ecumenical Centre there was a prayer service in the hall with different ministers to pray with Diakonia staff.⁵¹⁴ However, Hester Joseph (a staff member from a non-Catholic background) in recalling these says that the worship sessions were always very Catholic.⁵¹⁵ Loek Goemans (a Catholic) remembers someone remarking to Kearney that the prayers were too Catholic and him replying: “This is what I know; this is where I am from. But I am always open to others.” She points out that he regularly asked other members of staff to lead the prayers but that “because Kearney was such a strong character perhaps people might have felt reluctant.”⁵¹⁶

Andrew Warmback is one of those staff members who felt that Kearney had an almost deliberate intention to incorporate others and that his devotions were always very inclusive. “It was a generous gesture towards others and showed that Kearney was prepared to learn Protestant ways of doing things.”⁵¹⁷

⁵¹² *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4

⁵¹³ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4

⁵¹⁴ Mkame, Liz. Personal interview by author, 17 December 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁵¹⁵ Joseph, Hester. Personal interview by author, 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Ecumenical Centre and Trustee at Denis Hurley Centre)

⁵¹⁶ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

⁵¹⁷ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest, co-worker at Diakonia)

This has an interesting echo of +Hurley's own life. In an address to the South African History Association in Durban in 2006, Kearney retold the story of the young Denis being stuck in a cave with two school friends and praying to be rescued. Kearney said that we cannot be certain that this was the origin of +Hurley's vocation but: "What we do know for certain is that he was very impressed with the spontaneous prayers of the other boys with him—both Protestants. As a Catholic he didn't feel he was nearly as good as they were at such prayers."⁵¹⁸

The Council Fathers do not go so far as to say that Catholics can learn about prayer from other Christians. But they do recognise that ecumenical progress can contribute to the renewal in the life of the Church, and that this is already taking place.

The Biblical and liturgical movements, the preaching of the word of God and catechetics, the apostolate of the laity, new forms of religious life and the spirituality of married life, and the Church's social teaching and activity – all these should be considered as pledges and signs of the future progress of ecumenism.⁵¹⁹

Kearney and Receptive Ecumenism

This is hinting at the concept of receptive ecumenism, something that Kearney seems to have instinctively embraced and which he encountered formally later in life when visiting the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS) at Durham University. (Kearney was invited to stay as a visiting researcher at Durham from April to June 2006; the first 'Receptive Ecumenism' conference had been held there in January 2006 and many of the protagonists were on the resident staff at Durham). The CCS Director, Paul Murray, describes it as an attempt to go beyond the traditional view that ecumenism should be leading to programmed structural unity.

The solution is Receptive Ecumenism i.e. being open to receive gifts from other traditions (and hoping, though not requiring, that they are open to receive from us) and a Call to Catholic Learning i.e. the role of the Catholics is not to lead or to teach but to learn.⁵²⁰

30 years earlier, Diakonia was practising what Murray later articulated formally i.e. accepting each other where we are:

Is reconciled diversity without structural unity simply the most that can be hoped for and worked towards in this context? Is just getting on with the business of living, working and worshipping together in as creative a way as possible across traditional structural divisions all that really matters?⁵²¹

This approach is in contrast to more traditional ecumenical endeavours whose aim was to identify and then resolve the causes of division. This helps to explain how Kearney dealt with the contentious issue of shared Eucharist. *Unitatis Redintegratio* makes it clear that, while this is a goal of ecumenism, it is one which has not been achieved and implies that it is a long way from being achieved. Until that point, the official Vatican view remains that Catholics may not receive

⁵¹⁸ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 155 ("The young Denis Hurley: schoolboy, student and priest", 2006)

⁵¹⁹ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 6

⁵²⁰ Murray, "Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning", 11

⁵²¹ Murray, "Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning", 11

communion at non-Catholic services (with very few exceptions) and that non-Catholics may not receive communion at Catholic services.

Writing in 2001, +Michael Nuttall challenges the argument against intercommunion:

The teaching is, as I understand it, essentially that the sacrament of unity cannot be shared among us while the Church itself is divided. The alternative view is that the very willingness to share the sacrament is itself an expression of Christian unity and therefore a contribution towards it.⁵²²

Tim Nuttall (not the Anglican bishop) recalls that at PACSA the meetings often involved an *agape*, a sharing of bread and wine which had many of the same features of a communion service even if it was not called that. For him this emerged during that period as an ecumenical form of communion, strongly associated with social justice; but also that it created an awkward question for Catholics as to whether or not they could participate.⁵²³

In telling the story of PACSA, Inglis devotes a whole section to the *agape* as the centre of the spiritual life of the organisation. He notes the use of symbols that, for a Catholic certainly, would look very much like a Mass: candles, bread being broken and passed around, one cup that all present shared. But he then offers this proviso:

PACSA was not a church – the *agapes* were not a Eucharist but a fellowship meal shared in love.⁵²⁴

By contrast, an *agape* meal was not a common feature of liturgies at Diakonia – perhaps because Kearney was conscious of the possible confusion with Eucharist.

As far as inter-communion was concerned, +Hurley does seem to have made exceptions on at least some occasions. Norman Hudson, a Methodist bishop recalls that he took communion from +Hurley who did not object.⁵²⁵ Michael Nuttall, an Anglican bishop recalls that, while +Hurley did not give him communion directly, +Hurley did arrange for him to receive at the funerals of both of Kearney's parents (his mother at St Mary's in 2000 and his father at Emmanuel Cathedral in 2002). (In addition, +Nuttall was given other permissions on these occasions normally reserved to Catholic clergy: to read the *Kontakion* prayer for the departed; to be robed in clerical vestments; and to sit in the sanctuary).⁵²⁶

Larry Kaufmann, a Catholic priest who had been involved in the ICT, recalls +Hurley using his discretion about 'fraternal communion' at ecumenical events. Kaufmann was aggrieved that +Hurley's successor, Cardinal Napier, did not give permission for +Nuttall to receive communion at Kearney's own funeral in 2018.⁵²⁷

The question of communion for many Catholics is something deeply tribal, in the sense of being a cause of strong loyalty but also division. James Sweeney, one of the theologians of Receptive Ecumenism points out that this is not necessarily bad: "The tribe has its place. Too easy a move

⁵²² Nuttall, Michael. "Living through Heady Times". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 148

⁵²³ Nuttall, "From Pressure Group to Liberation Organisation, 1979-90", 17

⁵²⁴ Inglis, *Journeying for Justice*, 22-25

⁵²⁵ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Methodist Bishop and wife)

⁵²⁶ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

⁵²⁷ Kaufmann, Larry. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Redemptorist priest)

beyond the tribal frontier spells danger. Boundaries must first be marked before they can be transgressed; borders are breached only if previously guarded.”⁵²⁸

Even if +Hurley, as the principal guard for the Catholic tribe in Durban, felt that he could occasionally breach the borders, there is no evidence that Kearney felt he could. Andrew Warmback is certain that at Diakonia they never had a Eucharist together.⁵²⁹

Perhaps one of the reasons why the absence of shared Eucharist did not seem to be a pre-occupation for Kearney is that he had fully internalised the work of the Council in upgrading the importance of the Word of God. This is initiated by two documents of the Council: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Dei Verbum* but it has significant implications for ecumenism.

It was commented earlier how in Kearney’s traditional Catholic schooling (both as pupil and teacher), the Eucharist was reserved for Catholics (on the assumption that they *all* believed, and *only they* believed, in transubstantiation); that meant that the Word (the Bible) was seen as the consolation prize for Protestants. But Vatican II upgrades the Word of God, and sees it as being worthy of veneration in the same way as the Eucharist – both of them showing the presence of Christ in the liturgy. This develops into the notion of the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharist – each of them sources of the Bread of Life. Though this parallel is not presented in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, it does appear in *Ad Gentes* 6 and *Presbyterum Ordinis* 18.⁵³⁰ It is defended as being based on Scripture (for example, Jn 6: 25-59) and also traditional devotions (such as the *Imitation of Christ*). One theologian sums it up as follows:

The Church fully embodies its essence and achieves its epiphany in the liturgy, in which scripture and bread reveal their mystery and are transformed into the word and the body of the risen Christ.⁵³¹

This understanding of liturgy, and the complementary roles of Word and Eucharist, would have provided Kearney with a solution to the challenge of shared communion while remaining both faithfully Catholic and faithfully ecumenical.

Another of the theologians of Receptive Ecumenism, Margaret O’Gara, provides the useful image of gift-giving. She argues that ecumenical dialogue allows churches to receive the gifts they need, though they have to be ready to receive them. Thus, ecumenical gift exchange is a form of reception. Looking across the ecumenical movement there are different ways of exchanging gifts. Sometimes (as in the joint Roman Catholic-Lutheran declaration on Justification) the two parties have worked together to prepare the same gift; sometimes (as in the Eucharist) the parties can be seen as preparing complementary gifts; sometimes (as in the very different approaches to just war theory of Roman Catholics and Mennonites) the two parties are preparing different gifts.⁵³²

Again, we can retrospectively apply this lens to the ecumenical space that Kearney created at Diakonia. In their social action work, the Durban churches were working together to prepare the same gift; in their initiatives for public prayer they were preparing complementary gifts; in their

⁵²⁸ Sweeney, James. “Receptive Ecumenism, Ecclesial Learning and the Tribe”. *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning – exploring a way for Contemporary Ecumenism*. Paul Murray ed. (Oxford: OUP, 2008) 335

⁵²⁹ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest, co-worker at Diakonia)

⁵³⁰ For example: “The Church which, as the body of the Word Incarnate, is nourished and lives by the word of God and by the Eucharistic bread.” (*Ad Gentes* 6)

⁵³¹ Bianchi, Enzo. “The Centrality of the Word of God”. *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 121

⁵³² O’Gara, Margaret. “Receiving Gifts in Ecumenical Dialogue”. *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning – exploring a way for Contemporary Ecumenism*. Paul Murray ed. (Oxford: OUP, 2008) 26-38

work to form and influence clergy they were using similar approaches but to prepare different gifts. The range of forms of common worship, depending on circumstance and depending on which parties were involved, shows the full range of different ways of exchanging gifts.

In gift exchange what matters is the attitude of the receiver as well as the giver. Thus, the lack of shared communion can be seen as evidence that, even when the gift is offered, the other party is not (yet) ready to receive it. O’Gara applies this principle to the question of the ordination of women: and so instead of seeing it as an obstacle to sharing gifts, it is instead a gift that some churches are not yet ready to receive. One can imagine +Hurley using this answer in the interview mentioned above from 1993.

Receptive Ecumenism also provides a much easier space in which Christians can disagree (even publicly) and yet still respect each other. This is not always a view taken by Church leaders, especially if they feel their own authority is being undermined. An interesting example of this appears in Kearney’s own diary notes (the ‘Morning Papers’ that he wrote during his visit to London in mid 2005) when a controversial issue comes up:

24 June “A disturbing message from Colin Gardner. Tutu accepts to give the +Hurley lecture but he [Colin?] feels we should withdraw the invitation because the Cardinal will be offended. [The Cardinal] has already publicly [?] berated Tutu (for the condom statement and the Benedict election statement) and will surely not be pleased to host him in the diocese. My suggestion was we should take up the matter with Nadal [former Vicar General] and [Barry] Woods (sic) [current Vicar General] to try to work out the way forwards. Tough times ahead, I fear, on the ecumenical front.”⁵³³

Receptive Ecumenism is not uncomfortable with a position of ‘agreeing to disagree’. It seems that in this case there was considerable discomfort: +Tutu did not in the end deliver the +Hurley lecture though in 2008 he did send a letter of support for the Denis Hurley Centre: “Archbishop Hurley was an outstanding Christian leader and the centre will be a gift to future generations.”⁵³⁴

The exposure to Receptive Ecumenism comes from Kearney’s visit to Durham in 2006, as part of the process of writing the +Hurley biography and his archive contains a number of papers related to this. These suggest that he used the visit as an opportunity to reflect on his own ecumenical practice.⁵³⁵ An indication of how much impact this visit had on him is that Dr Paul Murray (editor of the cited work on the subject) is the only UK person who sends a message of support at the launch of the fundraising for the Denis Hurley Centre three years later.⁵³⁶

During this visit, it is very clear how comfortable Kearney is with an Anglican setting, albeit the very Catholic form of Anglicanism that centred around Durham Castle and Cathedral. Throughout his “Morning Papers”, he enthuses about his attendance at Evensong in the Cathedral and in the College Chapel: for example, on 19 May 2006: “The Psalms are joyful and celebratory at Evensong and never dull – I fell in love with Evensong all over again.”

He also regularly seems to attend Anglican Eucharist in the Cathedral but he never mentions receiving (or not receiving) Anglican communion. On one Sunday at least (5 June – Pentecost

⁵³³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 “Morning Pages: May-July 2005” (24 June 2005, London)

⁵³⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/8 “Patrons”. Although this letter is in the part of Kearney’s Archive that deals with Patrons of the Denis Hurley Centre, there is no suggestion that +Tutu was invited to be a Patron.

⁵³⁵ Paddy Kearney Personal Archive, Box PK01: Paddy Kearney, “Morning Pages during visit to Durham”, April-June 2006

⁵³⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/1 “2009” (Notes on the Fundraising Launch event, 15 February 2009)

Sunday) he notes that he attended ‘a low Mass at St Cuthbert’s [Catholic] church, followed by a very high solemn sung Eucharist in the Cathedral with the Bishop, Chapter, Choir and ensemble’ (and indeed Evensong later in the day). The admiration with which he describes the Anglican liturgies shows him as not only ready to receive but highly appreciative of this ecumenical gift. He does not seem to be too impressed by the liturgical gifts that the Catholics are offering in return: “10 June – a disappointing Mass in the pro-cathedral [Dublin] when compared to the liturgy from Durham: a garbled Rosary before Mass with everyone saying the prayers at different speeds, and a garbled Mass by an incoherent priest all over in 25 minutes!”⁵³⁷

Betty Govinden, an old friend, recalls that in his final days Kearney was listening to Anglican Evensong Services in England and sums him up as being always ‘ecumenical in his outlook’. “He was quite Catholic in the two and more senses of the word. He was rooted and grounded in his Roman Catholicism, with its sense of tradition and theology and liturgy. And he was able to see it in its expansiveness, and this is what made him so ecumenical to the rest of the Church and to other faith traditions, and beyond.”⁵³⁸

One Possible Example of a Limit to Kearney’s Ecumenism

An interesting test of this is the way he lived out his ecumenical outlook after he left Diakonia in 2004 and so was no longer held by its ecumenical structures (which he had helped to form). The creation of the Denis Hurley Centre is a good test of this. It is significantly not just ecumenical but inter-faith in its outlook (and this will be explored in the Chapter 6). But in reality how deep was the ecumenical aspect of the Denis Hurley Centre under Kearney? We need to distinguish between those matters that were his prerogative, as founder and Chair of Trustees, and the operational issues of the Director (who is also this author) and his team.

When the Denis Hurley Centre was announced in March 2010 much was made of its wide range of Patrons who were all effectively invited by Kearney.⁵³⁹ Looking at the initial set of Patrons and those who were added in the first few years, 7 of the 23 (or 30%) were not Christian, a clear statement of interfaith intent. But of the 70% who were Christian, 2/3 are Catholic with only 1/3 from other Christian traditions.⁵⁴⁰ This, to me, seems to set an unfortunate skew that the organisation is first of all Catholic, secondly inter-faith and only thirdly ecumenical.

Perhaps one of the reasons for this is location. The Denis Hurley Centre emerged from the Cathedral Parish (which is of course Catholic). Then it is next door to major Moslem and Hindu institutions. But it does not have physical proximity to other Christian institutions and, for example, the links with main central Durban Anglican parish of St Paul’s develop much later. The link with the Cathedral Parish meant that 90% of those involved in the initial exploration of the concept are linked to that parish (and so Catholic).⁵⁴¹

This skew was then concretised in the appointment of Trustees. The Deed of Trust (drawn up principally by Kearney) did not specify any religious restrictions on who can be appointed as a Trustee. Three of the Trustees are automatically Catholic because their position on the Trust is linked to other (Catholic) roles. That might have prompted Kearney to seek out non-Catholics to be

⁵³⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 “Morning Pages: April-June 2006” (various dates as indicated, Durham)

⁵³⁸ Govinden, Betty. *Tribute to Paddy Kearney* (unpublished but made available to the author, 2018)

⁵³⁹ BIO - 11/W/3/Press/1 (*The Mercury*, 19 March 2010)

⁵⁴⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/8 “Patrons”

⁵⁴¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/1 “Development Task Team”

Trustees alongside. But, in addition to Kearney himself, all seven of the other Trustees appointed in the early years (2010-12) are also Catholic. An Anglican is finally appointed in 2014 and three more Anglicans in 2018 (shortly before Kearney's death). (Note that the first non-Christian Trustees were only appointed in 2022).⁵⁴² From personal conversations that I had with Kearney there was no specific resistance to non-Catholic Trustees, but there seemed to be an unstated preference in favour of Catholics. Did this in some way reflect frustrations that Kearney had carried forwards from his time at Diakonia?

It is also interesting from examining his papers on fundraising that Kearney's focus on sourcing funds was very Catholic (the Archdiocese of Durban, Durban Catholic parishes, Durban Catholic schools, Misereor, Missio, Pontifical Mission Aid Society, religious orders, Catholic bishops in Italy, USA, UK; governments in Catholic-majority countries, etc). Beyond the Catholic world, the next targets are either Government (KZN Province, Lotto) or corporates. He does not seem to have sought out funding from other Christian sources even though this would have been a significant part of his experience when at Diakonia. Was this an assumption on his part that the project (because of its name) had a more exclusively Catholic appeal? Or a desire to situate the project more firmly in the Catholic imagination. Again the author has no evidence of resistance on the part of Kearney towards non-Catholic funders, but it does seem that they were not treated as a priority.⁵⁴³

Conclusion

So what can conclusions can we draw from Kearney's ecumenism?

Cochrane warns us: "If there is one lesson from observing faith communities in South African history (as many of them admitted) it is that words are easy and accomplish little when not backed up with action."⁵⁴⁴

Kearney certainly learnt from +Hurley the importance of using the right language, of open-ness and acceptance, in ecumenical circles. For example, Amooore says that +Hurley's commitment to ecumenism was not just through Diakonia but also his great respect for other Christian leaders: he described Beyers Naudé as 'a sign of the cross of Christ and the hope of Resurrection'; he said to a Methodist minister: "We failed to seek the truth in love and truth sought us in anger."⁵⁴⁵

But Kearney also learnt that words needed to be backed by action. We see that in specific activities: in the creation of Diakonia as an ecumenical agency which he led for almost 30 years, in the projects and programmes of Diakonia usually built from grass roots ecumenical collaboration, and the ways of operating that he built into Diakonia so that it could be a model of partnership that would set a standard for a denominationally divided church and a racially divided country. He also showed this in his creation and fostering of regional ecumenical structures for KZN and then further, even if with some limitations, with the setting up of the Denis Hurley Centre.

He is always pleased when there is an ecumenical dimension. For example, in May 2010 Kearney wins the annual award for the best theology book published in South Africa in English. In his

⁵⁴² Update October 2022", *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 26 November 2022)

⁵⁴³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/2 "2011"

⁵⁴⁴ Cochrane, *Facing the Truth*, 72

⁵⁴⁵ Amooore, Frederick. 'Denis Hurley: his witness to love of neighbour'. *Facing the Crisis – selected texts of Archbishop D E Hurley*. Philippe Denis ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1997) 223

acceptance speech, he makes a point that the ‘Murray-Tutu’ award being given for a book about a Catholic Archbishop shows the strength of ecumenism: Andrew Murray was a Dutch Reformed Church Dominee and Desmond Tutu, of course, an Anglican archbishop.⁵⁴⁶

It seems to me that, for Kearney, ecumenism was not just a useful means for working towards liberation, nor even just the theological inspiration for liberation, but that it actually provided an on-going source of sustenance on the difficult journey *towards* liberation. The very fact that both were (and continue to be) unpredictable journeys, with some victories but also setbacks along the way, mean that the experience of one can continuously inform the experience of the other. Thus, these words from Orsy, a passionate supporter of the Council but also one who has seen its reception ride like a roller-coaster, could provide comfort equally to those frustrated about progress in ecumenism and those sceptical about progress towards liberation:

We have reached a point where the assessment of the ecumenical movement in function of faith, hope and love reveals its internal cohesiveness and essential soundness. Faith brings an intelligence that no human insight could give. Hope opens the door to enter and blend into the dynamics of a divine plan. Love leads to action that no human strength could sustain.⁵⁴⁷

But Kearney’s ecumenism should not be limited to what he did but also how he treated others. Andrew Warmback, an Anglican priest, said that at Diakonia it never felt like the non-Catholics were secondary or were catching up.⁵⁴⁸ Norman Hudson, a Methodist bishop, goes further and says that Kearney was never conscious of his Catholic status and that instead he felt that we were all just ‘journeying together as Christians’.⁵⁴⁹

But a story from one of Kearney’s nieces, Sarah Kearney, contradicts Hudson. She says that she was always conscious of Kearney being Catholic, that he was always giving her Catholic books to read or saying the Rosary with his mother (Sarah’s grandmother). She recalls how she was going through confirmation classes (aged in her early teens so probably in the early 80s) and that she had said that it was ridiculous to believe in transubstantiation⁵⁵⁰. When she asked Kearney, her uncle replied: “Well then, if you do not believe in that, you are not a Catholic.”⁵⁵¹

Di Oliver who worked closely with Kearney without being a member of staff, supports this view; quoting Kearney’s wife Carmel Rickard, she says: ‘Paddy is a Catholic before he is anything else’.⁵⁵² But Oliver goes on to stress that Kearney never made anyone who is not Catholic feel they were any less. She credits this to the idea that he was so stable in his own beliefs that that enabled him to engage with others.⁵⁵³ This is consonant with an image from *Receptive Ecumenism*: not a melting pot but a mosaic in which the individuality is retained and incorporated into the bigger picture.⁵⁵⁴

It also echoes the words of the Council: “Most valuable for this purpose are meetings of the two sides – especially for discussion of theological problems – where each can treat with the other on an equal footing”; even if it does then add the condition: “provided that those who take part in them

⁵⁴⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/5 “Murray/ Tutu Book Award” (May 2010)

⁵⁴⁷ Orsy, *Receiving the Council*, 50

⁵⁴⁸ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest, co-worker at Diakonia)

⁵⁴⁹ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Methodist Bishop and wife)

⁵⁵⁰ The belief that in the communion service the ritual bread and wine change their substance and actually become the body and blood of Christ and a distinct point of difference in doctrine between Catholics and most other Christians.

⁵⁵¹ Kearney, Sarah. Personal interview by author, 17 September 2020 in Durban (Kearney’s niece)

⁵⁵² Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 2 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁵⁵³ Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 2 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁵⁵⁴ O’Gara, “Receiving Gifts in Ecumenical Dialogue”, 30

are truly competent and have the approval of the bishops.”⁵⁵⁵ Kearney had the benefit of knowing that he definitely had ‘the approval of his bishop’ who presumably thought him ‘truly competent’.

Warmback stresses that Kearney was ‘Catholic in a positive sense’.⁵⁵⁶ I would understand this as meaning that Kearney regarded the universality of the Catholic claim not as a crown to be worn but rather as a challenge to be lived up to, in reflecting a universal and inclusive Church, in creating an inclusive organisation and in contributing to an inclusive country. Ecumenism was not a means to an end but an end in itself.

The comments of +Hurley’s successor as Archbishop of Durban, Wilfrid Cardinal Napier are interesting. Some have criticised +Napier as having been less committed to ecumenical matters than +Hurley, although +Napier points out that the main reason he let +Hurley continue as head of Diakonia after his retirement as Archbishop in 1992 was that +Napier was at the time also SACBC President and Administrator of a neighbouring diocese and would not have been able to apply the time. +Napier was happy to admit that, in terms of ecumenism, Kearney was more open than he was but does not present this as a criticism. In fact, he stresses that one of the main reasons for commemorating Kearney is because of his open ecumenical approach.⁵⁵⁷

I was fortunate to interview, only a few months before his death, Mgr. Paul Nadal, who had been Vicar-General (effectively ‘assistant to the bishop’) under +Hurley and the early days of +Napier. Nadal said he felt conflicted about the ecumenical position of Kearney (though he stressed that he greatly admired him). Nadal recalled the Archbishop coming back from the Second Vatican Council fired up by the great breakthroughs in ecumenism – now actually allowed to go into the non-Catholic churches that he had, in fact, already been visiting. Nadal was then critical of the way in which ecumenism got stuck in endless talking, 10 years after Vatican II: “the ecumenical movement became a movement of the bowels!” But he feels that ultimately, the ecumenical vision of Diakonia was Kearney’s endorsed by +Hurley rather than the other way round.⁵⁵⁸ This is not the only time when interviewees who knew both Kearney and +Hurley have wondered if +Hurley started as Kearney’s teacher but then later it was Kearney who was +Hurley’s teacher. This relationship will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Paul Nadal wondered to what extent for Kearney (and other Catholics who became ecumenists), it might have made them less Catholic. He recognised the conflict for someone who believes that the Catholic Church is the one true Church of Christ, that they have to then insist that all roads lead to Rome when instead all roads should lead to God.

Was there something unique in being a Catholic or, for Paddy, was it simply important to be a religious man and it did not matter which? Perhaps he was right. Light shines brightest in the centre but it still shines more widely.⁵⁵⁹

In this, Nadal was inadvertently echoing the Decree on Ecumenism which refers to the Catholic Church as a source of light and truth but then admits: “yet its members fail to live ..with all the

⁵⁵⁵ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 9

⁵⁵⁶ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest, co-worker at Diakonia)

⁵⁵⁷ Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

⁵⁵⁸ Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban (Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee at Denis Hurley Centre)

⁵⁵⁹ Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban (Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee at Denis Hurley Centre)

fervour that they should, so that the radiance of the Church's image is less clear in the eyes of our separated brethren.”⁵⁶⁰

If Nadal saw Kearney as leading +Hurley on ecumenism, Frank Chikane argues the opposite: “the ecumenical dimension reflected who +Hurley was; Paddy followed in those shoes.”⁵⁶¹

An overseas Catholic donor sees a relationship of mutual influence: “Diakonia’s approach was really Catholic but influenced by the ecumenical approach of Hurley. Paddy was more traditional at the beginning than +Hurley; Paddy was challenged by him but Paddy accepted the challenge and exceeded it.”⁵⁶²

This tension – between being truly Catholic and being truly ecumenical – is reflected in Kearney, in +Hurley, and in the relationship between them. It is also something inherent in the Vatican II document itself (as indicated in *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4 quoted above).

Dulles, in reflecting on the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops convened in 1985 to reflect on 20 years since the Council, embraces the tensions that are brought up by the teachings of Vatican II and warns against trying to resolve them by taking one position instead of another. He sets out (from the Synod) six principles for interpreting Vatican II and three of them speak directly to this tension:

1. Although the Council is seen as ‘Pastoral’ this should never be separated from or held in opposition to the ‘Doctrinal’
2. No opposition should be seen as existing between ‘the spirit’ and ‘the letter’ of the Council
3. While there are apparently new insights from the Council these are always to be seen in continuity with the great tradition of the Church including all earlier councils⁵⁶³

If this sounds like a Catholic balancing act on ecumenism, is it one that Kearney seemed to have mastered. I think it is fair to apply to him these words of Faggioli:

For Catholics, Vatican II is not a foil in the self-identification of the ways of being Catholic but a real reference and a given condition of existence.⁵⁶⁴

This creative tension is well understood by an Anglican bishop who knew them both well (and who was not from the Anglo-Catholic wing of his denomination). Michael Nuttall said that Kearney remained a disciplined and devout Catholic and yet also showed great open-ness to ecumenical and interfaith moves because of his unshakeable devotion as a worshipping Catholic.⁵⁶⁵

Paddy’s relationship with the Catholic Church was unshakeable and deep, grounded initially in the belief and practice of his family and, in later life, embraced as a personal conviction of faith and life. From this he never wavered, but change came in his positive acceptance of

⁵⁶⁰ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4

⁵⁶¹ Chikane, Frank. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2021 via Zoom (Secretary General of SACC 1987-94)

⁵⁶² Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author via Zoom, 17 January 2022 (manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

⁵⁶³ Dulles, Avery. “The Reception of Vatican II at the Extraordinary Synod of 1985”. *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 350

⁵⁶⁴ Faggioli, *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning*, 141

⁵⁶⁵ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

other Christians with their particular convictions and, indeed, people of other faiths as well. Paddy became an ecumenist in every sense of the word.

Jane Argall, another Anglican who was aware of his 'Catholic dogged life-long devotion' offers an amusing line from Kearney. She once asked him if he had had a bit of holiday to which he replied: "Yes I went to an Anglican church so that was a bit of a holiday!"⁵⁶⁶

The challenge of how far and fast reconciliation can move is a challenge faced by the ecumenical movement and, in parallel, by post-Apartheid South Africa. It is no surprise that the national process of reconciliation (the TRC) involved a significant number of church leaders and religious language. A theologian reflecting on the Council poses a question which can also be applied to the nation.

It makes a difference if the ecumenical movement consists in working for the reconciliation of separated bodies, or if it is a healing process within one sacramental but internally wounded body. In the former case, negotiations take primary importance. In the latter case, the real work consists in removing external impediments and giving full scope to the internal forces present in the entire body.⁵⁶⁷

It might be said that the failure of South Africa to fully move from negotiation to healing explains why at this point the ending of ecclesial separation has gone further than the ending of racial segregation.

One final image sums up what Murray describes as "Catholic learning because it will make one more Catholic – more deeply, more richly, more fully through a process of imaginatively explored and critically discerned receptive learning from other's particular gifts."⁵⁶⁸

It is the picture (again on the front page of *The Southern Cross* and preserved in Kearney's personal archive) of +Hurley's 1991 re-commissioning service for Diakonia. It shows a Catholic Archbishop in an Anglican church (Saint Faith's) kneeling to receive a blessing from Norman Hudson, a Methodist bishop.⁵⁶⁹ Although Kearney is not visible in the picture, we can be sure that he was present and smiling from the side-lines. We started with an image from 1967 of Kearney front and centre at St David's encouraging ecumenical encounter when it was highly unusual; we end with an image from 1991 of Kearney in the background enabling ecumenical encounter in an environment where it had become the norm.

⁵⁶⁶ Argall, Jane. Personal interview by author, 8 October 2020 in Durban (librarian at Diakonia, co-editor of +Hurley's letters)

⁵⁶⁷ Orsy, *Receiving the Council*, 49

⁵⁶⁸ Murray, "Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning", 13

⁵⁶⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002). (*The Southern Cross*, 16 June 1991)

Chapter 4: Kearney the Activist

Whoever claims to love God, yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.
(1 Jn 4:20)

Introduction

Philippe Denis describes +Hurley as being ‘by far the most visible’ South African Bishop during the Council. In total, he gave 10 speeches *in aula* plus four written interventions.⁵⁷⁰ His first speech was on 19 November 1962 and concerned what he described as ‘an absolutely fundamental issue, the purpose of the entire Council’. Whilst thanking God that all the bishops agreed that the purpose of the Council was ‘pastoral’, he pointed out that there was a ‘but’:

...and it is a very big ‘but’ – there is extreme disagreement about the interpretation of this word ‘pastoral’.⁵⁷¹

It would only be three years later with the promulgation of *Gaudium et Spes* that this question was conclusively answered. The document was unique in the history of 21 Ecumenical Councils and was called a ‘Pastoral Constitution’ to show that it was intended to be a twin to the Dogmatic Constitution of *Lumen Gentium*.⁵⁷² (According to +Hurley and others this was the idea of Suenens).⁵⁷³ It sets out to describe the role of the Church, not in relation to itself or even in relation to God, but in relation to the world: the Church *in the Modern World*. It thus becomes, for +Hurley, for Kearney and for many others, the blueprint that justifies and motivates how they work, for the rest of their lives, in engaging with the modern world.⁵⁷⁴

This document is the culmination of the Vatican II project of looking outwards at the world and not just inward at the Church. In an intervention that +Hurley makes at the Council on 5 October 1965 (with the signatures of 70 other bishops attached), he declares:

In the past we have perhaps insisted too much on the rights of the Church... Please God in the future we will be concerned with at least as much as zeal for human rights. Defending the freedom of the Church regarding human rights we will hardly be able to avoid conflict with civil authority. The difficulty will be to conduct ourselves in such conflicts as witnesses to the love of Christ.⁵⁷⁵

+Hurley himself describes *Gaudium et Spes* thus:

⁵⁷⁰ Denis, Philippe. “The Historical Significance of Denis Hurley’s Contribution to the Second Vatican Council.” *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 207. By comparison, McCann (who was President of the Bishops Conference) can claim four speeches and five written interventions; Van Velsen one speech and one intervention; three other SACBC bishops only one each.

⁵⁷¹ Hurley, Denis. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 162

⁵⁷² Lavin, Margaret. *Vatican II – Fifty Years of Evolution and Revolution in the Catholic Church* (Toronto: Novalis, 2012) 32

⁵⁷³ Page, John. “Denis Hurley interviewed about the Council.” *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 181

⁵⁷⁴ Appendix C explores at more length, and with reference to various commentators, some of the key relevant themes in the interpretation of *Gaudium et Spes*.

⁵⁷⁵ Hurley, *Vatican II*, 174

The greatest revolution in the thinking that the Catholic Church has ever experienced, a conversion (in the fullest sense of the term) in the attitude of the Church to the world: from being an environment to be feared as a danger to salvation the world has become something to be loved, saved and sanctified.⁵⁷⁶

His successor as Archbishop, +Napier, says that it forced +Hurley's detractors to 'grudgingly admit that in fact what he had been doing was consistent with the Church's teaching'.⁵⁷⁷ Kearney himself comments that it was the strong backing of Vatican II and especially *Gaudium et Spes* which meant that the Archbishop was now moving in an increasingly activist direction.⁵⁷⁸

And where +Hurley led, Kearney followed. One early example from their shared journey indicates this. In March 1975, +Hurley was presenting to a Catholic audience some of the outcomes of the 'Diakonia Consultation' that he had engaged Kearney to conduct. What is interesting is the model of this paper. +Hurley did not start with a quotation from Scripture or even from Vatican II. Instead he started by talking about three local events that involved disadvantaged communities and their lack of power or lack of access to resources. In doing so, even if he does not use the phrase, +Hurley is drawing on the 'signs of the times': a phrase originally from Scripture (Mt 16:4) but adopted by John XXIII when he convened the Council and which he repeated in other encyclicals (e.g. *Pacem in Terris*).

We renew our confidence in our Saviour who has not left the world he redeemed. Instead we make our own the recommendation that one should know how to distinguish the signs of the times ...⁵⁷⁹

Ruggieri argues that, even though the Council documents only explicitly use the phrase four times, they implicitly reference it throughout.⁵⁸⁰

In this same 1975 speech, +Hurley goes on to quote Mt 25 (the sheep and the goats) and imagines that the response of most individuals is to say "I cannot do enough". He points out that the individuals that make up the Church, however, can do something and, moreover, that they must if "the word and worship of the Church are not to remain empty formulas, they must overflow into Christian living, Christian action, Christian love".⁵⁸¹ These are words spoken by +Hurley but almost certainly in part written by Kearney. The challenge to transform 'empty formulas' into 'Christian action' is what we see Kearney doing throughout his life, working with +Hurley and then continuing after +Hurley's death.

As with other chapters, I want to start with an image of Kearney (following the idea presented by McClendon).⁵⁸² There are, in fact, so many photographs from which to choose of him (with or without +Hurley) engaging in 'Christian action'. The one I choose to open this chapter is curiously simple. It shows a group of people standing around in a meeting room, holding sheets of paper,

⁵⁷⁶ Denis, *Facing the Crisis*, 150 (Hurley, Denis. 'Beyers Naudé - Calvinist and Catholic', *Not Without Honour*. Peter Randall (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1982)

⁵⁷⁷ Napier, Wilfred. "The Stature of the Man". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) xv

⁵⁷⁸ Kearney, Paddy. "Courageous and Consistent Witness". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 7

⁵⁷⁹ *Humanae Salutis*, 3 (Bull of John XXIII convening the Council, 25 Dec 1961)

⁵⁸⁰ Ruggieri, Giuseppe. "Faith & History". *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 95

⁵⁸¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/1 "Speech at Assumption Parish, Durban by +Hurley" (19 March 1975)

⁵⁸² McClendon, James W. *Biography as Theology: how life stories can remake today's theology* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1974) 193

possibly singing a hymn or reciting some statement. There are four men and seven women and, if one did not know the context, the image could be taken for a church group (one of the men is in a clerical collar) or a school staff room. But once it is clear that this photograph is from South Africa in the late 1970s the image becomes shocking: because the people have different skin colours. A multi-racial group socialising together, working together, singing together was anything but simple back in those days. To use (though not endorse) the racial classifications of the day, three of them seem white, two coloured, one Indian and five black. The picture is of an ordinary staff meeting at Diakonia; but what seemed ordinary at Diakonia was deeply shocking to the South African authorities of the time. And the seeming tranquillity of the photograph gives no hint of the threats of intimidation, harassment and arrest that these people were facing because of their work.

It is perhaps a mark of Kearney's effectiveness as an activist that he manages to make something so revolutionary appear so ordinary, by taking ordinary people and inspiring them to start a revolution. Not one that involved violence – though such revolutions were also taking place in South Africa at the time; but rather a turning around (a *metanoia*) in the hearts and minds of Christian leaders and ordinary Christian people of the time.

As Marie-Henry Keane puts it – a Dominican sister who worked closely with both +Hurley and Kearney:

The Church's *aggiornamento* would consist not in solemn proclamations but in a spirited and imaginative application of the Council's teaching. The Church was calling not so much for the changing of some laws but for a full renewal of minds and hearts.⁵⁸³

Growing interest in Social Justice

Given the new outward perspective of the Church, endorsed by *Gaudium et Spes*, but also the all too apparent challenges of South Africa, one would expect any Catholic leader to be keenly interested in social justice. Not all of them were, and certainly not with the same level of zeal. But +Hurley came back from Rome committed to ensuring the Reception of the Council: he was inspired by this new vision of the Church and wanted to share it with others. To do this he needed lieutenants like Mgr. Paul Nadal and later Kearney who could join him in the promotion of Reception.

Kearney's own archive includes press reports on events that he himself did not attend but which shaped their later collaboration.⁵⁸⁴ For example as early as 1968, +Hurley organised the first synod for the Archdiocese of Durban, the first in Africa; Kearney's archive also includes a report from the second session held at St Anthony's church hall Greyville in 1970. This was attended by 250 priests, lay men and women (though probably not Kearney). This was shocking enough – but even more so that it contained people of all races with the proceedings held in English and Zulu. A pertinent quote from the Archbishop:

⁵⁸³ Keane, Marie-Henry. "Vatican Council II: Keeping the Dream Alive." *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 261

⁵⁸⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980)

The function of the Church today was not to draw man away from his worldly interests but to encourage him to immerse himself in them as vigorously as possible in the light of the Gospel.⁵⁸⁵

The same folder contains a report of +Hurley addressing a Rotary Luncheon and saying that 'talk is not enough and that problems needs to be tackled practically'.⁵⁸⁶ There is also an article he wrote for the Sunday paper in which he draws comparisons with Thomas Becket and Thomas More and says that conflict between Church and State is traditional and valuable:

The starving, thirsty, sick and naked Christ is the black man, hurt and humiliated by 500 years of white exploitation. Not to be concerned about such people is not to love God. This is the Christianity of our age. The committed Christian knows in the marrow of his bones that the survival of the Faith depends on the witness that he gives to fraternal love in situations that really count....Gone are the days when the good Christian kept his hands clean and saved his soul.⁵⁸⁷

Language like this is in marked contrast to what Alan Paton described as the general approach of white Church members in the 1950s and 1960s where, he feels, people were looking for magic not for the truth.

I mean a magic solution where you don't have to give up anything, you don't have to yield anything, you don't have to suffer anything, yet everyone would be happy.⁵⁸⁸

Part of what +Hurley is trying to challenge is not just complacency but the excuse that the individual Christian does not have to address structural problems because he or she is not personally culpable. This concept of structural sin was a theme of Liberation theology in Latin America and is something that, by the 1980s, Nolan and others are bringing to the fore in South Africa. He warns against an approach whereby social sin is somehow degraded because it does not involve individual guilt.

The Bible does not make a distinction between two kinds of sin, personal sin and social sin. ... The personal and the social are two dimensions that are present in every sin. All sin is personal [because] only individuals can be guilty. However, all sins also have a social dimension because sins have social consequences....⁵⁸⁹

It is into this growing recognition of social justice that Kearney emerges from his life as a Marist and re-enters the life of the Archdiocese of Durban under the leadership of +Hurley. This has a huge impact on his dedication to helping the Church to engage with the modern world. He was fortunate that it was +Hurley who was there to guide him.

⁵⁸⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980) (*The Southern Cross*, 5 May 1970). There is an irony, seen from the vantage point of our more 'enlightened' age, that progressives in the Church like +Hurley were happily using gendered language while in the very act of calling on people to challenge some of the injustices around them. One of the best (or worst) examples of this is a book written by a very forward-thinking Jesuit just after the Council – and almost certainly known to +Hurley and later to Kearney – which asserts the importance to the Catholic Church of solidarity in the social, economic, political and international communities. And yet, his chosen title twice excludes 51% of the world's population: Drummond, William. *Every Man a Brother* (Cleveland WA: Corpus Books, 1968)

⁵⁸⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980) (*Daily News*, 16 September 1970)

⁵⁸⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980) (*Sunday Tribune*, 4 October 1970)

⁵⁸⁸ Paton, Alan. *Journey Continued* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 58 (Writing in 1984, Paton is reflecting on a speech he made in 1952).

⁵⁸⁹ Nolan, Albert. *God in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 43

The influence of +Hurley on Kearney's activism cannot be underestimated: it was one of the earliest ways in which the young Kearney was exposed to social issues; it was a benediction of his emerging exploration when many others would have deterred him; it enabled Kearney to engage with social issues within the context of his faith tradition rather than outside; it was a direct source of influence when Kearney worked for +Hurley at Diakonia; it was a form of mutual support when they were facing difficult situations together (such as their respective encounters with the Apartheid legal system in 1985); it provided further validation as Kearney researched more about +Hurley's life; and after the Archbishop's death it gave Kearney an on-going motivation to continue the legacy.

It is thus a nice coincidence that the young Fr Hurley, as junior curate at the Cathedral, in the very year of Kearney's birth, gives this sermon which Kearney later quotes in a short biography:

We have met together and discussed it and deplored with great eloquence and feeling, but we have done very little about it. Others have seen too, but they have been wiser than us, they have been quicker to act; and when they have acted, we have sat back to criticise. They move from the realm of principle to the realm of application, whereas we appear not to."⁵⁹⁰

Kearney goes on to explain that the sermon ended with a call to professionals, students, teachers, members of the business community, every Catholic with 'enthusiasm to get things done' to meet in committees drawn from different racial groups to understand each other, to try to solve each other's problems, to join forces to find solutions. Had Fr Hurley been speaking the words over the cradle of the infant, they could not have been more prescient for how Kearney would dedicate his life.

Early experience of raised awareness

Before I return to Diakonia and the way in which +Hurley and Kearney used this as a way of putting *Gaudium et Spes* into effect, we might start by asking where Kearney's awareness of the needs of the marginalised came from. At his funeral, his brother Jack (who after all had had the same upbringing but did not follow the same path) recalled how, even as a child, Kearney had shown greater sensitivity to boys at school who were on the fringes and wondered if that had been prompted by Kearney's own experience of being bed-ridden with rheumatic fever when young.⁵⁹¹

There were plenty of white middle-class South Africans, like Kearney, who could completely isolate themselves from the reality of Apartheid and so not feel a need to respond in any way. That could also have been the fate of +Hurley but – as Kearney himself describes in his biography – the Archbishop's early exposure to Fascism in Rome (even while 'protected' within Vatican institutions) set the seeds for his own consciousness being raised.⁵⁹² We even have +Hurley's own contemporaneous comments on Fascism in letters from 1993 and 1934.⁵⁹³

Similarly, +Hurley's exact contemporary but from the Dutch Reformed Church tradition, Beyers Naudé, describes in an interview how it was early exposure to the reality of black people's lives that awakened him. He talks about it as his 'conversion': through exposure to students at Pretoria, seeing what was happening in other parts of Africa, a self-study on the biblical justification of Apartheid; then later a tour outside South Africa and confrontation with black clergy. We actually

⁵⁹⁰ Kearney, "Courageous and Consistent Witness", 6

⁵⁹¹ "Paddy Kearney", Denis Hurley Centre website <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/paddykearney> (accessed 27 September 2022)

⁵⁹² Kearney, G Paddy. *Guardian of the Light* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2009) 33

⁵⁹³ Denis, Kearney, *Argall A Life in Letters*, 48, 85

have Kearney's own copy of this book where he has under-lined this section and added in the margin 'exposure'.⁵⁹⁴

Naudé comments:

When eventually I got the opportunity, I went out of my way to visit the parishes, the areas concerned. I discovered for the first time in my life what was happening and I was shattered! To discover what Apartheid was doing to human beings created in me a tremendous moral crisis....

The problem in my country is that the Church in the past has made a very serious mistake by presenting the Christian faith as primarily a rational belief ...not realising that faith is meaningless unless it becomes contextualised. ...

If you talk about hunger, go and see where hunger is. If you talk about injustice, go and view what kind of injustice. If you talk about human dignity, go and see where human dignity is being violated. If you talk about racial prejudice, go and meet with the people who know themselves and experience themselves to be the victims of that prejudice. ...

Unless you are willing to do that, you can never discover the full truth of the gospel. That was the example of Jesus himself. But it's much easier to sit in your study and preach about it. Or to be in your theological school and theologise about it...

Dare yourself to be challenged by a faith that is real. ...But it's painful, because once you've set foot on that new road, it is a continuous process of conversion. What makes that faith so threatening to many people is that you never know where God is going to lead you next, what new challenges lie ahead, what new sacrifice, what new problems may arise.⁵⁹⁵

Awareness for Kearney would have been triggered by a few small moments: perhaps a conversation as a child with the black domestic staff in his parents' house; perhaps noticing the absence of non-white faces in the school he attended; perhaps becoming aware of the marginal place of black people in the church he went to.⁵⁹⁶ He himself recalls in an interview:

This was a very ordinary South African upbringing, you know, with very little contact with black people other than the domestic workers but totally white schooling. Church was 99.9% white, one was aware of other races, aware of things happening.

One of the things that made a big impact on me was the 1949 so called, you know, African-Indian riots and I don't really... In Pietermaritzburg and there were things happening there. I can just remember people running in the streets and it was all rather scary you know, for a seven-year-old boy, ja. I didn't know what was happening but I could see there was some problem and it was my first experience of well, this is not very a happy country you know, there are big issues here.

And then from Archbishop Hurley, you know, there were pastoral letters that were read in the church which made it clear that he was very opposed to Apartheid ...this is a policy of the government but our Church has got another policy. And then I think another influence

⁵⁹⁴ Wallis, Jim and Hollyday, Joyce. *Crucible of Fire: the Church confronts Apartheid* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1989) 104-05

⁵⁹⁵ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 106-107

⁵⁹⁶ For more on this see Appendix A: "Kearney's racial identity"

for me was when my eldest brother [Jack] went to university in Pietermaritzburg. He then began to come home with quite a lot of information that they were receiving at the university about the effects of Apartheid and about resistance to Apartheid.⁵⁹⁷

A near contemporary, Tim Dunne has a similar recollection of pastoral letters:

I doubt whether I understood the contents, but their impact was to give me a fervent sense that everyday goodness in human relations, and ordinary people's witness against Apartheid, truly mattered.⁵⁹⁸

Since he went straight from school to the Marists, Kearney would not have experienced the consciousness-raising at university of his brother Jack or of a later friend, Colin Gardner. Gardner recalls the Catholic chaplain Fr Diego Connery 'electrifying' the Catholic student movement in the mid-1950s with the views of Congar and de Lubac: "Vatican II more than 10 years before the event".⁵⁹⁹

But even while with the Marists, Kearney's level of awareness started to increase. Colussi recalls that the experience of being a novice in Australia was eye-opening. For the first time they, as white men, were doing manual labour (having been brought up to believe that this was only by done by black people); they were exposed (albeit infrequently) to uncensored news about South Africa; and, most dramatically of all, they lived with non-white people (the Australian Marist Province included the Pacific Ocean and so in each cohort there were a few Pacific Islanders who were fellow novices).⁶⁰⁰

Colussi also specifically recalled Beyers Naudé as an influence and the talk that he gave at St David's in 1967 in which he mentioned that he had been converted by his visit to a mine on the Rand and seeing the quarters for the men who were not allowed to have their spouses with them.

In Chapter 2, Ines Ceruti from the Grail has recollected how she and Kearney had smuggled their way into Soweto in the late 1960s to teach young black children: "We just decided it was crazy that they did not have the opportunities that other people had." She recalls that the teenagers would give Kearney a lot of inside information about what was going on and how poor the people were.⁶⁰¹

Colussi adds that, in fact, there were a number of occasions when there were links with Soweto, in part because the Mercy sisters (who ran the sister school to St David's in Rosebank) had a primary school there. For example, he recalls taking a Junior Sodality from St David's to Soweto to play football and mixing up the teams (so that the softer white boys 'would not be walloped'). On another occasion, the Matric class was taken to Soweto to raise money to support students there as part of a *Rand Daily Mail* campaign) and that 'the boys were very silent on the way back in the bus'. He confirms that it was the Principal, Br Anthony McDocherty, who would have encouraged such

⁵⁹⁷ Houston, Gregory. "Interview with Paddy Kearney". *Unsung Heroes and Heroines of the Liberation Struggle* (Cape Town: Human Science Research Council, 2013) 2-3

⁵⁹⁸ Dunne, Tim. "Who shall dwell on your Holy Mountain?" *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 177

⁵⁹⁹ Gardner, Colin. "A Profoundly Integrated Being". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 163

⁶⁰⁰ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney). (There is an interesting parallel here since an old friend of +Hurley recalls that for him living and studying with Oblates from Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) was an eye-opener in Rome in the 1930s. See Flanagan, Bridgid. "A 60-year Friendship". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 26)

⁶⁰¹ Ceruti, Ines. Personal interview by author, 8 April 2019 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

links and especially Kearney's 'progressive tendencies': "When [Br Tony] volunteered to come from Scotland, he thought that he would be teaching poor black kids."⁶⁰²

So Kearney was increasingly aware of the wider situation; but awareness is only a starting point; then as now there is a danger that it fails to move beyond a response of mere sympathy. In a self-deprecating moment, Alan Paton (admired by both +Hurley and Kearney), having bumped into Ruth First on a plane and reflecting on his own failings, describes himself thus: "I was, like so many other liberals, useless but decent."⁶⁰³ So how was Kearney motivated to be more than just decent?

Another section of the Naudé interview, partially underlined by Kearney, is his answer to this question: "how did you go from a liberal to a radical?" Naudé's reply is:

I don't know what happens to other people; I can only describe what happens in my own life. First of all, I felt that I wanted to commit myself to the truth, and therefore to an expression of the real love of Christ towards all human beings, I had to make myself open to others' feelings, concerns, pains, suffering and joy. In order to do that I had to set aside time, in order to make myself available to them, to move into where they are.⁶⁰⁴

That is exactly what Kearney did after he left the Marists when he chose to teach in 1971 at an all-black school, possibly influenced by a Grail member, Mary Emma Kuhn, who was already teaching there.⁶⁰⁵

Inanda Seminary here in Durban, was a real education for me. I don't know how much I taught the girls but it was an education for me because you couldn't help being aware of how they were reacting to what was happening in South Africa. For example, every week, once a week, teachers would take turns to summarise the news, you know you have to read up from all the newspapers and kind of give a 15-minute summary of the main stories and so interesting to hear the reaction, very audible reaction when you told people about what was happening.

Reverend Bheki Dlodla of the Congregational Church, he was like the chaplain of the school and he would come there very often and speak at the morning worship and I had never met a black person like that before. Now this man is highly educated, he had been in America for a long time. Very impressive physically you know, a big man and very articulate and eloquent. So that was another big influence, I mean when you only meet domestic workers, you're not really seeing all the abilities that there are.⁶⁰⁶

We have Kearney's recollections of this experience fifty years after the event; but we also have his considered reflections at the time since he chose to make Inanda Seminary the focus of his B.Ed. dissertation which he completed while he was teaching there in 1971. (The indented quotations within the citation are from alumnae of the school):

The staff at Inanda Seminary has almost since the inception of the school been multiracial, and visitors of all races are constantly welcomed. This aspect of the school's life exists

⁶⁰² Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

⁶⁰³ Paton, *Journey Continued*, 106

⁶⁰⁴ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 107

⁶⁰⁵ Moore, Ann. Personal interview by author, 17 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

⁶⁰⁶ Houston, "Interview with Paddy Kearney", 4

largely unselfconsciously and it is probably not strange that so few commented on it. To those who did comment, it appears to have been of some importance:

‘The school taught me to have self-confidence in what I do, so much that I easily mix with different people, regardless of colour, race and creed.’

‘Before I came to the school, I was scared of talking to a white person. Thereafter I got used to them.’

One paid high tribute in few and simple words when she spoke of ‘the beautiful and Christian atmosphere as regards race relations.’⁶⁰⁷

One of the girls specifically quoted in his research is Hixonia Nyasulu who later went on to become the Chair of SASOL and a generous supporter of the Denis Hurley Centre. She recalled him being a kind teacher but regretted that she did not have any specific memories of him.⁶⁰⁸ At Inanda, Kearney was mixing not only with the girls but also with their parents. On the one hand, he was surprised to meet so many middle-class black families (71% of the girls’ fathers were in ‘white collar’ jobs compared to 3% in the urban African male population as a whole). On the other, he was impressed by the success of the 11% of girls who came from families who were labourers: “considering the adverse conditions under which African education operates in South Africa, it is quite an achievement for a child to reach Std VI.”⁶⁰⁹

The conclusions that Kearney draws from his research offer some interesting indicators of the work that he will later pursue at Diakonia and beyond:

- “tremendous dedication to secondary education on the part of an African elite”
- “a sophisticated, elitist group, very much committed to tertiary studies, particularly in nursing and the university; and aiming for careers of high professional status, though having to make use of careers of lower status in their progress toward these aspirations”
- a gender bias (in the attitudes of the girls and of the school) with almost none aspiring to professions that were open to them (law, science, commerce) “these careers were probably still regarded as careers ‘for men’.”
- Practical understanding of economic reality
- Value of better counselling services in broadening the aspirations of the girls (not just teachers and nurses)
- All would have studied more given the chance
- While teaching was seen as ‘helping the nation’, it suffered because of low salaries and hard working conditions
- Social work: ‘high professional status and also the considerable scope it offered for individual initiative’
- Looking back on their school life, students valued independent study, character formation, religious and social life, problem-solving, high academic standards
- “Only a very small number commented that Inanda Seminary had trained them in leadership which was surprising in view of the fact that the school had set this as one of its most important aims.”

⁶⁰⁷ Kearney, G Paddy. “A Study of School Leavers from a High School for African Girls”, B.Ed. dissertation (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1972) 91-92

⁶⁰⁸ Email to the author from Hixonia Nyasulu, 14 April 2022

⁶⁰⁹ Kearney, “A Study of School Leavers from a High School for African Girls,” 94-98

Kearney's B.Ed. research was clearly thoughtful and reflective. But was there also a 'road to Damascus moment'? In fact, in South African history this might be better termed the 'rail to Johannesburg moment' after the famous incident from Gandhi's life when in 1893 the smartly suited young barrister was thrown off a train in Pietermaritzburg because he refused to move to an 'Indian carriage'.⁶¹⁰ Kearney's moment happened when teaching at Inanda in 1971, as he later recalls:

I was teaching *Macbeth* to my Std VIII class and the play was being performed at the Alhambra Theatre (now Durban Christian Centre) which featured artists from abroad. My students were not allowed to attend the performance because it was not opened out to black students. So I wrote a letter to the *Daily News* regarding this incident. After reading the article, the actors from the play became very upset. They were unaware that Apartheid was being applied to the play. The cast of the play contacted me and said that they would come out to the school and perform the play and I could also invite other black schools in the Durban area to attend. Thousands of children came and sat on the lawns of the school and enjoyed the wonderful production. In a way, I also felt discriminated against when I was not allowed to take my students to watch the play.⁶¹¹

Thus in 1971 Kearney's awareness of the world is being increased by his involvement at Inanda Seminary and the need to understand the reality of students' lives. He had similar experiences when in 1973 he was working in the United States while pursuing his Masters studies. He recalls:

In Ohio I worked on multi-cultural projects for inner city schools which prepared teachers to respond sensitively to the needs of Afro-American and Hispanic students.⁶¹²

Kearney's social conscience was growing and also his sensitivity about how to respond to the problems of which he was increasingly aware. This was the informed zeal that he now brought to his work at Diakonia. But he would have been aware that he was not the first keen young white liberal who believed he could make a difference.

Tony Morphet had described the Liberal Party (which Paton led until it was effectively banned in 1968) as pursuing 'the politics of innocence'.⁶¹³ He wrote the Foreword to Rick Turner's *Eye of the Needle* (recall that Kearney was working alongside Turner at the University of Natal in the mid 1970s); he quotes from a memo written in 1976 by Turner about the changing attitudes of the average white critic of racialism. Though this does not describe Kearney, one can imagine him reading this and fearing that it could be him:

His school and home background fills him with racialism. He starts with certain ideas about the mental and social inferiority of blacks, certain emotional reactions to blacks, reactions which go beyond his intellect into his reflexes, and certain habitual ways of behaving towards blacks.

One day he discovers, perhaps at university, that it is factually incorrect to believe in the biological inferiority of blacks. He begins to think that, after all, 'they' are at least potentially educated, civilized and intelligent, like 'us'; that 'they' are not irreducibly different but can become like 'us'.

⁶¹⁰ In fact, Mahatma Gandhi had a great influence on +Hurley and Kearney as is explored in Appendix E.

⁶¹¹ Pillay, Indhrannie. "Paddy Kearney – Icon of Peace and Nonviolence". Satyagraha – in Pursuit of Truth. <https://www.satyagraha.org.za/word/paddy-kearney-icon-of-peace-and-nonviolence/> (accessed 3 May 2022)

⁶¹² Pillay, "Paddy Kearney – Icon of Peace and Nonviolence" (accessed 3 May 2022)

⁶¹³ Paton, *Journey Continued*, 117

This is, of course, great progress in comparison with his old position but it is only relative progress. He still assumes that everybody essentially wants to be like him. He still sees history through 'white' eyes, as whites civilizing the rest. Very often, when he has made the first step, he thinks he has gone the whole way. He is still very confused about race but thinks that he is not.

He therefore behaves with a mixture of arrogant paternalism – deriving from his view of history – and of over-polite timidity – deriving from his emotional confusion – towards the blacks he meets. This is the situation of many liberal white students.⁶¹⁴

Turner was writing as part of the SPRO-CAS project to which Michael Whisson also contributed a section in which he was disparaging about the liberals because their numbers were small and so was their influence. Again this could be both a criticism of Kearney (and +Hurley) but also a call to action:

They think they are more significant because they are concentrated in small groups and also because the security forces take such an interest in them. But they do have a role in the promotion of change: ideological (presenting alternative policies), human contacts and informational.⁶¹⁵

Liberals will have to learn to listen rather than to lead, to develop the same sympathy with the aspirations and fears of the non-voters as they have developed with the aspirations and fears of the whites, to recognise that they have little more in common with the goals of Black power than they have with the reality of White power, and that agreeing with people in a patronising attempt to ingratiate oneself is seen swiftly for what it really is.⁶¹⁶

The willingness to be open to learn, with humility, 'to listen rather than to lead' is what marks out Kearney's time at Diakonia. He summarises it thus:

I mean those 30 years was a very rich experience for me. I mean I was just, it was just all learning. You know, white boy who knows just about nothing and I mean you know within the first two or three weeks I was invited to go on a tour of the informal settlement in Durban. I had no idea of how many people were living in shacks without... it's this tour, I mean it was a whole day, just seeing the vast areas of Durban where people living in shacks without water, electricity, sewerage, schools, shops, any facilities. I mean it was really shocking actually and this was, it seemed like half the population of Durban was living in shacks.

So we held a big service in the cathedral [in March 1976] and it was called 'An Evening of Reflection' on the death of Joseph Mdluli.⁶¹⁷ I got that idea from Theo [Kneifel] a German priest who said they were doing this kind of thing in German churches, an Evening of Reflection on some social issue and there were about a thousand people there and that put us on the map. Put us on the map with the black community, you know, creating expectations that possibly, this was going to be a more radical group than we thought we

⁶¹⁴ Morphet, Anthony. 'Foreword'. *Eye of the Needle*. Rick Turner (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1980) xii

⁶¹⁵ Whisson, Michael. 'Social Organisations and Change'. SPRO-CAS. Vol 6: Towards Social Change. Peter Randall ed. (Johannesburg: Christian Institute, 1971) 104

⁶¹⁶ Whisson, 'Social Organisations and Change', 105

⁶¹⁷ An ANC activist in Natal, Mdluli was detained by the Special Branch and died in custody one day later on 19 March 1976. The nature of the injuries from which he died triggered multiple accusations that there was a conspiracy to cover up the cause of his death. See: 'Joseph Masobila Mdluli', *South African History Online* <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/joseph-masobila-mdluli> (accessed 24 Oct 2022)

were or than we were and also with the cops. Ja, I mean they began to do, you know the usual kind of things, opening letters and following people around and bugging phones and so on.

I remember there was a kind of meeting at the Beatrice Street Congregational Church ... and Fatima Meer was chairing this meeting and she was saying over the phone, I mean I couldn't believe this, she said, she was talking to Manas Buthelezi in Soweto, Lutheran pastor, "Manas, you've got to spread this down here, you've got to bring what's happening in Soweto, bring it to Natal" and she organised a big protest meeting and that was banned and then she was banned, so ja and I was beginning to see quite what I was getting into.⁶¹⁸

Kearney is moving quickly from analysis to involvement. Wallis and Hollyday quote Jan de Waal:

The difference between liberals and radicals is more than just analysis. It's the difference of involvement. Whites involved in the Struggle live as foreigners in their white areas, with almost all their social contact in the black community.⁶¹⁹

While it could not be said of Kearney that 'all his social contact was in the black community', he was certainly becoming increasingly a foreigner in the white area where he was living.⁶²⁰ People close to him recall how he was changed by these experiences. One niece recollects:

I was proud of what Uncle Paddy was doing; I was conscious of what he was doing. But he never talked to me about political stuff. Brian [her father] and Jack [her other uncle] were anti-Apartheid but they were not involved. They were involved in their academics. They wanted to keep their heads down.⁶²¹

His other niece recalls that there was a streak of resistance in the family: for example, she and her parents staying seated at a school prize-giving during the singing of *de Stem* [the old South African anthem]. But Kearney went further:

Paddy gave me my first doll – it was a black doll from Swaziland. When I was five years old he told me about Apartheid and that the maid should sit at the dining room table with us. He was able to bring together the political work and family time so he used to talk to me about all kinds of things: the Biafran war [1967-70], the Holocaust, the famine in Ethiopia [1973].

He wanted us to be aware of other people's suffering and pain. He said that only a few of us knew the truth – and it was up to us to do something. We knew so we had no excuse – but he told me in a such gentle, soft way. I remember he quoted Victor Frankl to me: 'I saw and I did nothing'. He would say to me: 'Do you realise that black people are suffering?'. I was called k*ff*r-lover by my school friends – they would scribble it on my diary. I was certainly radicalised by Paddy. But then my brothers went in the completely opposite direction.⁶²²

Mary de Haas was an academic anthropologist and fellow activist with a renowned focus on violence monitoring; she was also a friend of the Kearney family and indeed her son married Kearney's niece, Ursula. Her recollection was that the Kearneys were not a radical family but rather liberals. She

⁶¹⁸ Houston, "Interview with Paddy Kearney", 6-7

⁶¹⁹ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 15

⁶²⁰ The theme of Kearney's own racial identity is explored in more detail in Appendix A.

⁶²¹ de Haas, Ursula. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (niece of Kearney)

⁶²² Kearney, Sarah. Personal interview by author, 17 September 2020 (niece of Kearney)

recalls that Kearney's brother Brian (an architect who was regularly a consultant for the Archdiocese of Durban) had been building rural churches and so was exposed to poor black communities. "I don't know if Paddy was more radical."⁶²³

Raising awareness in others

As Kearney's own level of awareness grew, he started to take on the task of raising awareness in others. In this, he was driven by +Hurley; for example, this 1974 address to the Archdiocese of Durban synod which takes on a more interventionist tone:

This is one of the tragedies of human social situations, the blindness of the 'haves' to what they are inflicting on the 'have-nots', just by being what they are and doing what they think they have every right in the world to do. They must be made aware of the injustices and privations for which they are responsible.

In the opulent world of the West, the call to self-sacrifice and service could be just what is required to rouse Christian people from the paralysis of overindulgence. Amid the poverty and privation of the Third World, the challenge of a Christianity that inspires human development could be a great hope for the future.⁶²⁴

It is from this Synod that the idea of Diakonia first emerges and is presented (as explained in Chapter 3) as an initiative by +Hurley which aims to combine ecumenism and social justice.

Kearney's archive retains a copy of a long article reporting on the 1982 Archdiocese of Durban synod making the point that it is the only diocese in South Africa to hold a synod, and among the few in the world to do so, and stressing the interracial mix of the group. The Synod voted a motion of support for the SACC 'for its prophetic work', calling on the SACBC to sign up, and also condemned detention without trial and the Mixed Marriages Act. It also says that it must not only make statements to send to government ministers but also resolved to set up education programs to raise awareness about these issues.⁶²⁵

+Hurley speaking at the University of Cape Town in 1988 voiced something which was of great concern for Kearney: getting awareness of justice issues into the mainstream of religious life.

The day-by-day, week-by-week life of the Church goes on without a ripple of the kind of social concern I am speaking of here.⁶²⁶

+Hurley's intent to expose the churches to reality was one of the drivers behind Diakonia and, in turn, also improved +Hurley's own ability to talk with authority. Yeats comments:

⁶²³ de Haas, Mary. Personal interview by author, 30 September 2020 in Durban (fellow activist and mother-in-law to Kearney's niece)

⁶²⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/1 "Address to the Archdiocese of Durban Synod on 'Service and Sharing'" (23 May 1974)

⁶²⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Daily News*, 27 May 1982)

⁶²⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*Cape Times*, 28 July 1988)

Diakonia helped cut out the waffle forcing the churches in Durban to engage with the complex realities of Apartheid. With Diakonia as his prophetic word, so to speak, it could never be said of Denis Hurley that he was 'generally speaking'.⁶²⁷

Yeats stresses the importance of this because he worries that while the Church may claim to be 'an expert on humanity', the reality often belies the claim. By contrast, in Yeats' opinion, +Hurley does demonstrate that he is an expert by challenging Apartheid's defective understanding of humanity *and also* challenging the Church in her understanding of what it means to be human.⁶²⁸

The Diakonia archives provide countless examples of the talks and pamphlets that Kearney and his team developed to try and raise awareness among ordinary white church-goers. One example will suffice. Fred and Marylyn Cason were part of a reflection group at their Catholic parish and Kearney came to speak to the group about prejudice.

He encouraged us to look at the needs of the parish. And then Paddy showed a movie about [the nearby] St Wendolin's [a black residential area that was being reclassified as industrial]. He got us involved in the 'Save St Wendolin's' campaign. We asked 'What do we do now?' and we were selected to be trained to promote the campaign. In his quiet way, Paddy could get you fired up. He could instil you with a vision but you knew he was always there to support you. He was completely steeped in Gospel values and then shared that motivation with others. He clearly understood what was right and what was wrong.⁶²⁹

Getting people fired up, but 'in a quiet way', was the paradox for those who wanted to harness the potential of the churches to bring about change. With students – a group that Kearney knew well – the danger was in going to the other extreme. Cabra Dominican, Sr Margaret Kelly, when reflecting on +Hurley, makes a comment about J&P which might not have applied to Kearney but perhaps to those who followed after him:

Many of those involved in Justice and Peace groups were young adult Catholics who were not always clear where, and if, there was a line between being a political activist against Apartheid and a Christian believer championing liberation theology. They needed the theological and spiritual wisdom and experience of +Hurley to provide guidance."⁶³⁰

Whisson comments that the churches needed to find programmes for change without arousing fear. He contrasts the Reform churches (principally NGK) where the leaders might recognise the need for change but dare not challenge their members; and the English-speaking churches whose leaders are overwhelmingly progressive or liberal in outlook, and who do challenge their members, but do not necessarily convince them.

As vehicles for the conversion of voters, the English churches are obviously of great importance, but in hauling their congregations up the gradient of self-denial, there is always

⁶²⁷ Yeats, Charles. "He Stayed on to Support Me". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 121

⁶²⁸ Yeats, "He Stayed on to Support Me", 119. (The phrase 'expert on humanity' was coined by Paul VI when addressing the United Nations in 1965.)

⁶²⁹ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

⁶³⁰ Kelly, Margaret. "Gravitas and Conviction". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 159

the possibility that the lead engines will become detached from the trucks, or that the cargo of voters will have leaked away before significant change can be achieved.⁶³¹

Whisson knew that this was a weakness that could be exploited by those who were against change, quoting one National Party candidate during the 1970 elections:

They [Church members] talk Progressive, vote UP, and thank God for the Nats!⁶³²

Nolan was also aware of the problem of people not being aware of their need to change and compares the Biblical image of blindness to the modern concept of false consciousness and therefore the need to be cured of blindness.⁶³³ In a section called 'the blind leading the blind', Nolan talks about how the white community is deceived by separation, propaganda and education.⁶³⁴

Whites (and all those who are co-opted onto their side) are blinded, numbed, isolated and cut off from reality. In the end they are alienated not only from black workers but from themselves. As Boesak has pointed out: "Apartheid does not only prevent Whites from understanding Blacks, it also prevents them from understanding themselves."⁶³⁵

Nolan – having been a student chaplain – is also aware of how early in the process whites could be prevented from seeing properly:

Education in our country has become a way of preventing children from ever thinking for themselves and conditioning them from an early age to accept what they are told.⁶³⁶

This resonates with the work of Illich (quoted by Kearney) who, in condemning institutions like schools, says:

Schooling prepares for the alienating institutionalisation of life by teaching the need to be taught. Once this lesson is learnt, people lose their incentive to grow in independence.⁶³⁷

Illich's solution – to de-school society – is a radical one. In his thesis, Kearney argues that there are many flaws in his approach.⁶³⁸ Nevertheless, this does help Kearney to see that simply working with existing institutions without changing them – and churches are no less institutionalised than schools – will not bring about fundamental changes in the outcomes.

Morphet, again in the foreword to Turner's book, warns against change which appears to be making a difference but actually is not:

This English milieu, which is still largely intact, produced and continues to produce a double influence upon its members. At one, relatively superficial level, it generates an attitude which is critical of existing social relations; but at a deeper and more powerful level it serves

⁶³¹ Whisson, 'Social Organisations and Change', 85

⁶³² Whisson, 'Social Organisations and Change', 103

⁶³³ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 39

⁶³⁴ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 77

⁶³⁵ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 81 (Rev. Allan Boesak was a Dutch Reformed minister from the 'coloured' branch of the Church).

⁶³⁶ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 79

⁶³⁷ Kearney, G Paddy. "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", M.Ed. dissertation (University of Toledo, 1973) 38

⁶³⁸ Kearney, "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", 126-129

to insulate its constituents from knowledge and a critical understanding of the fundamental power relations between the groups in the country.⁶³⁹

Exposure Visits

So Kearney's aim is not just to raise awareness but also to foster 'a critical understanding of fundamental power relations'. He does not underestimate how much anxiety and ignorance needs to be overcome. He would have been aware, as Randall mentions, of how the lack of social mixing between blacks and whites has made them strangers to each other and that this reinforces fear.

The factor of fear is intertwined in the patterns in our society and contributes to their rigidity and resistance to change.⁶⁴⁰

Kearney's chosen tool is an 'exposure visit' – initially a short visit by a group from one church to another church. Thus, there is an article from 1981 describing how Diakonia, 'in its campaign to educate whites about the plight of the blacks', was organising a bus tour of KwaMashu, Inanda and Phoenix.⁶⁴¹ But such an approach runs the risk of being a kind of cultural, or worse still racial, safari. It is not enough to just see how other people live: you need to get some deeper understanding.

Loek Goemans recalls the Justice & Peace group running a weekend Marriage Encounter course which brought together Catholic couples from different parts of the Archdiocese of Durban and thus from different racial groups. Kearney was invited to help raise the consciousness of the attendees. He played a game with them called 'Star Power' in which some are given more money than others and so they are gaming the experience of being rich or poor. Goemans explains that this was an early attempt at imagining oneself in the shoes of another. But over time, she and Kearney became bolder in facing people's concerns about actually spending time in the townships (where there were legal restrictions as well as potential problems of language and culture).⁶⁴² The fact that these might be difficult was, in a way, a proof of their effectiveness, and Christians were in a unique position to make these happen. As Buthelezi wrote:

It is very often said that points of race contact are points of friction. What is unique about the Gospel is that it changes points of contact into points of fellowship. ...Any deliberate elimination of points of human contact is a calculated sabotage of the essence of Christian fellowship.⁶⁴³

Thus the exposure visits eventually became an opportunity for people from one church to go and live with people from another church for two weeks and then reciprocate the visit. There are four key issues being addressed by these:

- First, that people from one cultural group (or 'race') are spending extended time with people from a different one
- Secondly, that this goes in both directions: it is not just that white people get to see non-white people but vice versa (to avoid the cultural safari)

⁶³⁹ Morphet, "Foreword", ix

⁶⁴⁰ Randall, *SPRO-CAS 6: Towards Social Change*, 22

⁶⁴¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Leader*, 20 March 1981)

⁶⁴² Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

⁶⁴³ Buthelezi, Manas. "Black Christians must liberate Whites". *Reality: a journal of liberal and radical opinion* (1973, 5:3) 4

- Thirdly, that this reaches the intimacy of actually hosting: one might wonder which was harder for a white family? To live with a black family; or to host them in their own home?
- And fourthly that this was not only crossing a racial divide but also a denominational with, for example, the priest from one parish staying with the minister from another

The reason why the exposure went in both directions is that Diakonia explicitly had a programme to raise black consciousness and white consciousness. Lawrence Schlemmer writing for SPRO-CAS in 1971 had specifically listed strategies for within each community.⁶⁴⁴ For the white community, he mentions: change attitudes, mass media, work within existing structures (Church rather than political), work within the cultural differences between whites (in this case ecumenical), leverage external influence, protest.⁶⁴⁵ Meanwhile, within the black community he lists: increased literacy, experience of working together, sense of pride, community leadership, not aiming always for acceptance by whites, solidarity within the community across class divisions, positions of responsibility.⁶⁴⁶ It is interesting that many of these become part of Diakonia's two programmes.

Liz Mkame, who was programme director for black churches, recalls:

We were keen to make people uncomfortable about the life that others are leading. Otherwise they cannot participate in what God is expecting of them. It was great because people responded practically – now that they were conscious of what they could do. I remember one old lady having seen how hard it was to access water saying: 'I am going to get a plumber to install more taps!'.⁶⁴⁷

Andrew Warmback's initial work was organising exposure visits working with white communities:

We were nourished by the spirit of Diakonia. The exposure methodology was effectively an educational philosophy. The word conscientisation was not used but that is what it was. I remember Paddy saying: 'When you go to a township, those people are your professors'.⁶⁴⁸

Writing much later, Bishop Kevin Dowling – who has a personal reputation for engaging with the most marginalised – says something very similar:

Only as the people of God receive the stranger, the sinner, and the immigrant – those who don't play our game our way – so we discover not only the hidden, feared and hated parts of our own souls, but the fullness of Jesus himself. We need them for our own conversion.⁶⁴⁹

Daphne Goad, who is Catholic and 'coloured', recalls her exposure immersion of going to stay with the 'Indian' Anglican vicar Rodgers Govender at St Mary's in Greyville for 2 weeks.⁶⁵⁰ The Casons, recall the exposure visits as an experience of being 'open and apostolic, looking at the life of the Church and asking questions you hadn't thought about'.⁶⁵¹ Marilyn Aitken recalls the power of

⁶⁴⁴ Schlemmer, Lawrence. "Strategies for Change". *SPRO-CAS Vol 6: Towards Social Change*. Randall, Peter ed. (Johannesburg: Christian Institute, 1971) Chapter 6

⁶⁴⁵ Schlemmer, "Strategies for Change", 168-179

⁶⁴⁶ Schlemmer, "Strategies for Change", 182-183

⁶⁴⁷ Mkame, Liz. Personal interview by author, 17 December 2020 in Pinetown (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁶⁴⁸ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 Oct 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest and co-worker at Diakonia)

⁶⁴⁹ Dowling, Kevin. "Bishops as Theologians: Listening, Discerning and Dialogue". *The Church we want – African Catholics look to Vatican III*. Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016) 3

⁶⁵⁰ Goad, Daphne. Personal interview by author, 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁶⁵¹ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

increasing intimacy: “When you meet people who are oppressed, the closer you get, the more you become aware of the injustices.”⁶⁵²

Kearney’s successor as Director of Diakonia, Nomabelu Mvambo-Dandala, recalls that the exposure visits made an impact but that working with the Church was not always easy. Those who were active were always just a small group and they realised that they needed to devise strategies of how to reach people better. She was sure that one of the things that really mobilised Kearney was his own exposure, being confronted with the poverty of Inanda having lived in town. He was unusual in having seen both worlds. “Most people were not aware of the harsh reality of how people were living.”⁶⁵³

As well as the exposure visits, there were more and more opportunities for people to meet each other and to learn together, as Kearney describes:

In ‘Facing the Future with Hope’ courses, small numbers of delegates, both black and white, have come together for weekends, sharing their hopes, fears and hurts, and have begun to realise their common humanity and how other people experience life in South Africa.⁶⁵⁴

By having different ways of engaging people, Kearney recognised that different people’s tolerance for having their consciousness raised varied. Turner attempts an analysis of the white population of South Africa. He concludes that, among the English, 30% are *verlig* (enlightened); 50% pragmatic and 20% *verklampt* (rigid and conservative) whereas among the Afrikaners 20% *verlig*, 25% pragmatic and 55% *verklampt*.⁶⁵⁵ The Diakonia exposure activities in their various forms would certainly attract the enlightened and might also attract some of the pragmatic.

Turner argues that such a shift in consciousness only occurs when people are involved in action. He describes what he sees as needed for democracy in South Africa (and is also perhaps prescient about what has failed):

There is an intimate relationship between change in consciousness and organisation. To be effective, organisation must be related to the way in which people see the world and help them to see the world in a new way. I must come to see the world as able to be changed. I must come to see myself as having the capacity to play a part in changing it. And I must see that my capacity to do this can be realised only in cooperation with other people. ⁶⁵⁶

He has most hope in the Church because of its international position (which means that it is sensitive to pressure from the international community) and because of the number of blacks who are present (and could be in positions of leadership). But, even then, the hierarchy tends to be liberal but the white congregations are not.

[The leaders] think it is more important to ensure that their white congregations continue to come to church than to ensure that they begin to behave in a Christian fashion.

⁶⁵² Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

⁶⁵³ Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu. Personal interview by author, 26 May 2022 in Durban (Kearney’s successor as Director of Diakonia and sometime Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

⁶⁵⁴ Kearney, G Paddy. *Faith in Action* (Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal Christian Council, 2017) 7 (Address to Kloof Methodist Youth, 16 February 1986)

⁶⁵⁵ Turner, Rick. *Eye of the Needle* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1980) 134

⁶⁵⁶ Turner, *Eye of the Needle*, 85

Turner's conclusion is less than optimistic about all three liberal institutions (media, universities and Church):

White liberals remain Whites first and liberals second. They are offended by the barbarities of South African society but not sufficiently outraged to be willing to risk sacrificing their own privileged positions. This is not merely a question of cowardice it also represents a lack of imagination and ignorance.⁶⁵⁷

The challenge of how to truly be an agent for change is one which I think always stands hauntingly in the background for people like Turner, +Hurley and Kearney. This is clearly true of Methodist minister, Peter Storey:

To most whites, I was a dangerous radical; but to the most ideologically driven activists, I was at the best an irrelevant liberal. They saw their role as pushing leaders like me into more aggressive positions, or writing us off.⁶⁵⁸

Schlemmer levels this accusation at those who feel that protest will achieve something:

They might convert a few individuals in the white groups but it is to be doubted if the number is significant. Protest might hearten some blacks, but there is a considered opinion freely expressed, that many younger blacks either despise or feel pity for conscience-stricken whites who persist in fruitless activity of this nature. The accusation is often levelled that this is a way in which some whites can salve their over-burdened consciences and little else.⁶⁵⁹

Nolan fears that one of the reasons for the lack of real change is that Christians are still using 'guilt' as the measure of how serious a sin is.

Guilt always has to be present for a sin but it is hard to measure. Because of self-deception and blindness, people may not be aware of the suffering that results, but that can be measured. Moreover, guilt is not a productive feeling. Whites who get involved in the Struggle for liberation out of a sense of guilt tend to be more of a hindrance than a help.⁶⁶⁰

Reflecting on the experience of Gandhi, and in turn his influence on +Hurley, as explored in Appendix E, Kearney was aware of the need for change of heart followed by action:

All too often the pious, even the saintly person, pursues a path of spiritual perfection that brings results merely in the field of personal holiness, albeit a personal holiness that is deeply marked by the love and service of others.[Gandhi's] was the sort of mind that saw with startling clarity that if you wanted to be true to yourself, and true to the people you loved, you had to put that love into practice to change political, economic and cultural factors hurting people, stifling their freedom, and impeding their growth and progress.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁵⁷ Turner, *Eye of the Needle*, 138

⁶⁵⁸ Storey, Peter. *I Beg to Differ – ministry amid the teargas* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2018) 338

⁶⁵⁹ Schlemmer, "Strategies for Change", 179

⁶⁶⁰ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 96

⁶⁶¹ Kearney, G Paddy. "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop". *Gandhi Marg – Quarterly of the Gandhi Peace Foundation* (2010, 31:4) 606. For more on Gandhi's influence on Kearney, see Appendix E.

Resistance against Apartheid

So how did Kearney, through Diakonia, put that 'love into practice to change political, economic and cultural factors'? The list is very long and it is outside the scope of this work to provide a comprehensive history of the activities of Diakonia. I intend instead, over the next few sections, to focus on a few examples that for me give a flavour of the approach and some of the challenges they faced.

The reason why the whole Church – and so that means all the various denominations of Christianity – should stand up against Apartheid might seem obvious now in retrospect. Writing about Diakonia's sister organisation PACSA, Inglis comments:

Everything about the Christian religion screamed against what was happening in South Africa...The contradiction was just overwhelming. One felt there needed to be action."⁶⁶²

But it was not always so clear at the time. Even +Hurley, who is lauded as a 'Struggle hero' feels that "we did too little too late."⁶⁶³

In fact, in various speeches +Hurley is not complimentary about the role of the Church in resisting Apartheid:

Generally speaking, South Africa is a church-going country... But neither Christianity as a faith nor the churches as faith communities broke down Apartheid. At the most, a number of dedicated Christians accompanied the process which was essentially and effectively political.⁶⁶⁴

The irony for +Hurley and for other Christian leaders who did stand up against Apartheid is that there was a simple theological argument that could be deployed: the equality of all human beings as children of God. For example, this is presented repeatedly by +Desmond Tutu, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town. Kearney in reviewing a book which recounts the role of the Anglican Church in the Struggle, says this about the Nobel Peace Prize laureate:

Tutu in his youth was profoundly influenced by Huddleston. He echoed these words some years later. 'I have tried to show that Apartheid is intrinsically and irremediably evil. For my part, its most vicious, indeed its most blasphemous aspect, is not the great suffering it causes its victims, but that it can make a child of God doubt that he is a child of God. For that alone it deserves to be condemned as a heresy.'⁶⁶⁵

Again, the interviews that Wallis and Hollyday conducted with Christian leaders in the Struggle in the mid 1980s provides useful insight. In the Foreword, Allan Boesak states:

The struggle for freedom in South Africa has dimensions beyond mere politics. There is a spiritual force at work in this struggle. And because the fields have been moistened with the blood of so many martyrs, a gathering cloud of communing saints energises our efforts.

⁶⁶² Inglis, John. *Journeying for Justice* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2009) 17

⁶⁶³ Denis, "The Historical Significance of Denis Hurley's Contribution to the Second Vatican Council", 197

⁶⁶⁴ Denis, *Facing the Crisis*, 188 (Hurley, Denis. 'From Acceptance of Segregation to Rejection of Apartheid: Fifty years of Christian Evolution in South Africa', a lecture delivered in Bologna in 1993)

⁶⁶⁵ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 244 ("Review of *Anglicans against Apartheid 1936-96*, by Bob Clarke", *The Southern Cross*, 16-22 December 2009)

The leaders of Apartheid accuse us of being unfaithful because we are political. What they fail to see is that we are political because we are faithful. If we were not faithful, we could turn our backs on the suffering and oppression and accept Apartheid as it is today.⁶⁶⁶

1988 saw the banning of 17 organisations and the bombing of two church headquarters (of the SACC and the SACBC). Wallis and Hollyday conclude:

At this moment in history, the Church in South Africa remains one of the few institutions with any means of working for peaceful change. And the Church leaders have accepted the challenge. In the political vacuum created by the silencing of the other groups, the churches have moved to the front lines of the freedom struggle, calling for a campaign of non-violent direct action aimed at the system of Apartheid. They are armed only with the moral force and promises of the gospel – and the deeply embedded hope that South Africa will one day be free.

There is now the real possibility of a martyred Church in South Africa. That reality places a new responsibility on the rest of the Church worldwide. A suffering Church has a moral claim on the rest of the Body of Christ.⁶⁶⁷

It is the willingness to face sacrifice and risk safety in the face of Apartheid that gives the Church its moral right to challenge. Beyers Naudé comments on white involvement:

You must be willing to risk your income, your security and your very life. You have to be prepared to be ostracised by your own people and walk by faith with God. Until they come to that point, whites will be unwilling.⁶⁶⁸

And this is contrasted with the unwillingness of most whites to face any sacrifice:

Few whites have taken responsibility – or have given up their privilege. One youth in Mamelodi told us: “The whites don’t believe in our ‘one man, one vote’. They believe in ‘one man, one pool’ – and they use their vote to keep their pool.”⁶⁶⁹

For Christians, the Struggle is to provide liberation to everyone, black and white. In his copy of this book, Kearney has under-lined one section and added the word ‘human’ in the margin:

Freedom is coming even for you Mr PW Botha [National Party President at the time]. We want you to be free. We want you to be here with us. We want you to put away the casspirs [armoured vehicles used against civilians]. Those chaps ought to be with their wives and children this afternoon.⁶⁷⁰

One of the approaches used by Diakonia was to identify a particular event and challenge those who were uncomfortable with Apartheid – even if not fully opposed – to join others in showing resistance. This was an especially important tactic when successive waves of ‘States of Emergency’ put restrictions on what was permitted as political protest. Thus, for example, on 1 June 1981, the Nationalist Government was planning big celebrations (among the white community) for the 20th

⁶⁶⁶ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, xii

⁶⁶⁷ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, xv-xix

⁶⁶⁸ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 15

⁶⁶⁹ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 16

⁶⁷⁰ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 39

anniversary of the declaration of a Republic. +Hurley guided by Kearney – or Kearney guided by +Hurley – decided to use this as a platform for protest.

In March, +Hurley urged all Catholics to boycott the Republic Festival that was being planned (and he was openly opposed in public by some of the Durban priests such as Fr Rodney Moss).⁶⁷¹ In early May, the wider SACBC and the Anglican Province both backed the campaign against the Republic anniversary festival.⁶⁷² Later in May, 2,000 anti-Republic Day pamphlets were seized from the Diakonia office and Kearney admitted that 13,000 had already been given out.⁶⁷³ In another newspaper, Kearney defended the pamphlets:

It was a very factual analysis of the inequalities in our society and was in no way emotive. The aim of the leaflet was to help black and white people understand why the majority of people in this country don't want to celebrate.

He was supported in this action by Anglican and Methodist leaders.⁶⁷⁴ Finally, there was a proposal by Diakonia that people be invited to gather for prayer in churches on Monday June 1 when the military parade was being held in Durban.⁶⁷⁵

This is a perfect example of Kearney's creativity in action. I see a number of key elements here which he will use in other situations and which I believe demonstrate his underlying theology:

1. He chooses a platform which is significant and visible (and bound to draw attention).
2. It is not actually a direct confrontation (like a protest march) and so harder to attack.
3. It is presented as a prophetic act (one which aims to change how something is viewed) and not afraid to court opposition.
4. It quickly enables other religious leaders to show their support.
5. It provides an opportunity for every person to respond if they wish (without asking too much of them: to boycott is to effectively ask people *not* to do something).
6. It is backed by a factual presentation of a case and thus is educational.
7. It can be a platform shared by all racial and religious groups if they wish.
8. It is based on a principle of non-violence (and in stark opposition to the implicit violence of a military parade).
9. An alternative is offered which is presented as a dissenting act of loyalty but immersed in religious faithfulness: instead of cheering for the military, people are invited to gather in churches and pray for the country.

In Chapter 5, we will see many of the same elements at work in the Good Friday Service.

+Nuttall recalls another example of Kearney's creativity with the founding (in 1983) of the United Democratic Front (UDF) as a network of civil society organisations. Most opposition political parties having been banned, exiled or silenced, the UDF was attempting to provide a way for those who opposed Apartheid to come together and make their voice heard, particularly to oppose the planned Tri-Cameral Parliament. +Hurley (and Diakonia) was taking a strong stance against the weak political reforms being offered and initially Diakonia decided to join the UDF as a formal member. While +Hurley did not see a problem, his Anglican counterpart did because he was concerned about conflict between the UDF and Inkatha. His fear was that Inkatha (and in particular Mangosuthu

⁶⁷¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Citizen*, 12 March 1981)

⁶⁷² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Sunday Tribune*, 10 May 1981)

⁶⁷³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Citizen*, 28 May 1981)

⁶⁷⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Natal Mercury*, 28 May 1981)

⁶⁷⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Daily News*, 29 May 1981)

Buthelezi who was an Anglican) would see the UDF as a front for the ANC and that this would make it hard for Diakonia to act as independent mediators with Inkatha.

In a later article in 1988, Kearney reflects on how the Church can hold the middle ground:

The problem is how the Church can reveal the truth about a conflict and at the same time promote dialogue between the conflicting parties. As soon as revealing the truth means making known the atrocities committed by one or other of the parties, the 'accused' party will see the Church as biased and will therefore refuse the good faith of the Church – a fundamental requisite for successfully promoting talks.⁶⁷⁶

Kearney's solution to the UDF question was the alternative of Diakonia joining as an 'associate member', finding a third way which kept both +Hurley and +Nuttall happy (though, in the end, not Buthelezi).⁶⁷⁷ But Philippe Denis, a Dominican theologian who was involved in Natal activism at the time, recalls that 'a third way' was controversial.⁶⁷⁸

I remember Diakonia being criticised at FedSem and elsewhere for not taking a clear stance in the late 1990s. Ironically Diakonia's mediation plan did not work. One had to choose between two and not three options. Buthelezi identified the churches with the ANC/UDF anyway. ... When we were working on Hurley's correspondence, Paddy was still afraid of Buthelezi's reaction. I had to tell him to calm down. In the end Buthelezi never said anything (in public at least) about our book.⁶⁷⁹

Alternative to Apartheid

Part of Kearney's approach at Diakonia was to provide an alternative to what was being offered by the Nationalist Government: for example, a prayer service rather than a military parade. The approach is always one that stresses conversion and transformation rather than opposition and defeat. Kearney explains this in the Diakonia newsletter in 1979:

We have tried to help white people see the radical change that is needed in this society not as total loss, but as providing them with the possibility of more secure and happy lives, and greater community with their black fellow South Africans. This has been stressed in programmes held in parishes and youth groups. A Self-Tax fund has been established in which wealthier people are challenged to tax themselves as a form of restitution of money that has become theirs through an unjust economic system. Grants are made from this fund for the establishment of self-help projects.⁶⁸⁰

This is adopting an approach which is based on *metanoia* (conversion) as a way of opening up, rather than acceptance or refusal, and is in accord with the Council and with the Gospel. It is hardly coincidental that this is very similar to the approach taken by Kearney at Diakonia in terms of

⁶⁷⁶ Mbona, Michael. "On embassy to Ulundi: the Natal Church Leaders Group's mediation attempts in war-torn Natal 1987-1990", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* (2010, 36.1) 150 (Quoting Kearney)

⁶⁷⁷ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

⁶⁷⁸ Balcomb, Anthony. *Third Way Theology: Reconciliation, Revolution, and Reform in the South African Church During the 1980s* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1993)

⁶⁷⁹ Email to the author from Philippe Denis, 24 October 2022

⁶⁸⁰ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 9 ("Were you there when they crucified my Lord?", *Diakonia News*, December 1979)

ecumenism. In fact, Girault uses language in describing ecumenism which could also be applied for anti-Apartheid initiatives and so then could also give these a religious perspective:

The interior conversion called for...required not only the conversion of individuals but also the transformation of the community and, if need be, the renewal of structures.⁶⁸¹

We used to live under the 'sign of separation'; we are trying now to live in a new fellowship and under the 'sign of communion' wherever possible.⁶⁸²

A good early example of this 'sign of communion' is in a 1969 Pastoral letter sent by +Hurley to all parishes in Durban:

We must know clearly, and be brave enough to admit openly, that the most important thing about a human being is not their race. The most important things are the common nature each shares with the other and the own unique gifts and abilities given to each person by God's grace. If we say that a person's race is more important than their own Human Nature, more important than their uniqueness as an individual, we reject our own humanity and the humanity of others.⁶⁸³

+Hurley was not afraid to follow through on his principles and showed Kearney early on that opposition to Apartheid would even have an impact on Catholic traditions. One important Durban tradition was the *Passion Play*, performed by the Durban Catholic Players Guild every five years. This was especially dear to +Hurley since he had secured permission for the script in 1951 from the Mayor of Oberammergau but only on the strict condition that audiences would not be segregated. But by the late 1960s, laws on 'mixed use' of recreational spaces had become stricter so by the time of the 1973 production, only segregated performances were permitted.⁶⁸⁴ In April 1973, the Archbishop resigned as Patron of the Guild, and he and other clergy boycotted the opening night. In the local newspaper, +Hurley comments wittily: "Jesus died on a Friday but Indians can only see him on a Wednesday and Africans on a Tuesday!"⁶⁸⁵

Hurley, supported by Kearney, can also show pleasure at those Catholic organisations who are resisting Apartheid. For example, in 1984 when he received a certificate of affiliation to the Marist Brothers, he said that he had always been proud as an old boy to be a member of the Marist family and never more so than in recent years when they had opened their schools to all races.⁶⁸⁶ Kearney as a fellow Marist alumnus, and indeed a former Marist, will have shared this pride.⁶⁸⁷

So the approach of Diakonia is to be a source of hope in challenging times and work to establish genuine community with people of other races. In a talk in 1988, Kearney explains:

⁶⁸¹ Girault, René. "The Reception of Ecumenism". *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 162

⁶⁸² Girault, "The Reception of Ecumenism", 165

⁶⁸³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980) "Pastoral letter from +Hurley to all parishes of Archdiocese of Durban" (*The Southern Cross*, November 1969) (gendered language altered)

⁶⁸⁴ Extract from a history of the Durban Passion Play due to be published in 2023 by Dawn Haynes (Email to the author, 25 October 2022)

⁶⁸⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980) (*Natal Mercury*, April 1973)

⁶⁸⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Southern Cross*, 22 January 1984)

⁶⁸⁷ It is, however, interesting to note that, according to Kearney's fellow Marist Jude Pieterse, the orders of brothers were generally more timid about de-segregating their schools than the congregations of sisters. See: Pieterse, Jude. *The Open Schools Era (1976-1986)* (Johannesburg: Marist Brothers, 2020) 18

It is in such a context of hopelessness and fear of the future that 'the Lord calls us as Christians, as members of the Church to be a community'. This means that God wants us to be a living demonstration that people of different races can live as a community in peace and justice. God wants us to be a sign of the sort of community He wants for all His people. 'Seeing is believing', we like to say.

Often this is rather superficial with the white parish appearing to be like Father Christmas or Lady Bountiful, bringing gifts, making us feel that we have done something. But we don't stay to listen to what the other group really needs from us and what they want to give us. Remember that Ezekiel spent seven days with exiles at the River Chibar before he even opened his mouth and said anything to them.⁶⁸⁸

Reminiscences from people who were aware of the work of Diakonia at this time, reinforce Kearney's focus on providing spaces where people could come together and listen to each other.

Doug Irvine was leading Justice & Peace in the Archdiocese of Durban; he recalls that, even if the parishes were not usually multi-racial spaces (because of geography), the Church itself was and, because of its priests, even had multi-racial officers.

J&P had to demonstrate that the Church can be a multiracial model for our society. We had to promote a vision and practice of multi-racialism. So we would use church occasions to bring people together such as having a joint Corpus Christi procession involving different parishes. It helped that the Cathedral parish was always multi-racial.⁶⁸⁹

Kearney actually references a Corpus Christi event in a television interview with him that was screened about a year before he died.⁶⁹⁰ He recalls that there were 24,000 people in King's Park stadium from all the parishes of the Archdiocese of Durban and so it was a completely multi-racial gathering and that +Hurley said to them:

Look around you. These are all your brothers and sisters. How can you discriminate against them?⁶⁹¹

Doug Irvine also remembers events each year for 16 December which was marked until 1994 as the 'Day of the Vow' and was an important Afrikaner holiday which began with services in Dutch Reformed churches.

Instead of that, Diakonia used to hold an annual 'service for reconciliation'. It was J&P who coined the idea that 16 December should be the 'Day of Reconciliation' which was a term picked up by the Natal papers.⁶⁹²

⁶⁸⁸ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 39 ("The Lord calls us to be a community within our neighbourhood", address to St Thomas' Church Musgrave, 4 September 1988)

⁶⁸⁹ Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (personal friend and Chair of Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace)

⁶⁹⁰ "Update December 2017", *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 26 September 2022)

⁶⁹¹ "The Light with Paddy Kearney", *SABC2*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J58-oBGtvqM> (accessed 28 September 2022) 24 min from start

⁶⁹² Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (personal friend and Chair of Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace); this significant memory is confirmed by another contemporary: Dunne, "Who shall dwell on your Holy Mountain?", 180

Mary de Haas has a different memory of 16 December as playing host to an explicitly multi-racial Mass at the Cathedral (though it is possible that both events happened, perhaps in different years).

One of my memories is that Diakonia became a place for ordinary decent interaction between race groups. The sandwich bar was driven by Patti Gertz from Black Sash to encourage people [of different races] to eat together.⁶⁹³

Similarly, the Casons recall that Marriage Encounter retreats were racially mixed. “Suddenly we were meeting people across the divide.”⁶⁹⁴

Paul Graham, a Methodist youth worker who was involved with Diakonia, remembers a more political way in which Diakonia presented an alternative to Apartheid. The old policy of Bantustans meant that some black residential areas very close to the city of Durban (such as KwaMashu and Umlazi) were actually outside the city’s jurisdiction and part of KwaZulu. In effect, Durban was interpenetrated by the homelands. Diakonia took the radical decision to make the political statement of thinking of all Durban residents as part of the same place. They coined the phrase ‘Greater Durban Functional Area’ and repeatedly used it in their Annual Reports. By doing this, they were following Anderson’s idea of the “Imagined Community” which is based less on borders or mutual knowledge and more on the shared commitment to an ideal:

...the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.⁶⁹⁵

The impact of this is demonstrated in that, post-1994, the new Metropolitan Municipality of eThekweni more or less matches Diakonia’s ‘Greater Durban Functional Area’: their imagined community became a reality. Incidentally, Graham points out that this problem actually still persists in some cases with Church territories: thus the Catholic dioceses in the area do tend to skew towards historic race groups (with the Diocese of Mariannhill incorporating mostly black areas and twisting right past white areas that were retained for the Archdiocese of Durban).⁶⁹⁶

In the various ways listed above, Diakonia was trying to use its imagination, and spark the imagination of others, to anticipate the Kingdom. Dulles, in reflecting on Faith and Justice, captures this well:

We will never, of course, fully insert the Kingdom of God into historical time. But the Biblical concept of the Kingdom stimulates our creative imagination so that we find ever-new ways of provisionally realising, within history, signs and anticipations of the promised Kingdom.⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹³ de Haas, Mary. Personal interview by author, 30 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow activist and mother-in-law to Kearney’s niece)

⁶⁹⁴ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

⁶⁹⁵ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006) 6

⁶⁹⁶ Graham, Paul. Personal interview by author, 13 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Methodist youth worker)

⁶⁹⁷ Dulles, Avery. “The Meaning of Faith considered in relation to Justice”. *The Faith that does Justice - examining the Christian Sources for Social Change*. John C Haughey ed. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 37 (For more on Dulles’ view see Appendix C).

According to Abrahams, +Hurley's concern was that faith and social action were too often seen as different and even opposites. That attitude contradicted the Conciliar teaching that the human person is one entity and that salvation occurs within history.⁶⁹⁸

One commentator who is in a good position to reflect on how effective Diakonia was is Professor Bonke Dumisa. Post-1994 he became a business leader and well-known economist but had been an activist in the Soweto uprising of 1976. In an article in 2008, he uses Diakonia as an example of presenting a vision of a truly non-racial South Africa where one can ask the question: 'Who is my neighbour?':

I yearn for a future South Africa where the rainbow nation will comprise people of different colours who will mix to form a true non-racial South Africa. That will be the day I will be happy to say that every South African citizen is my neighbour.⁶⁹⁹

Workers' Rights

Chapter 5 will look in detail at the most visible aspect of Diakonia's work which was the annual Good Friday service and explore this in the context of a theology of suffering.

But there were other focuses for Diakonia and one of them was workers' rights. Even after Vatican II, the Catholic Church's position on some justice issues was sometimes still unclear or only recently formed or phrased in very general terms. But the very origins of what is termed 'Catholic Social Teaching' (CST) goes back to Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* which was specifically about working conditions. Of course, the 85 years from then until the founding of Diakonia, or indeed the further 45 years that have elapsed since then, do not mean that Catholic individuals (or even Catholic organisations) are more likely to be just and fair employers than anyone else. But there is at least a firm body of Catholic teaching at the highest level that argues that they should be.

Despite that, +Hurley was one of the few South African bishops to take this issue seriously and so he is quoted in 1983 as saying that the Church has been 'painfully slow in highlighting the ethical and moral issues involved in the labour field'.⁷⁰⁰ Perhaps he felt that, while the general principles had been made clear by the Church, their application to the specific situation was lacking.

Thus, when *Gaudium et Spes* talks about the dignity of work and of workers' rights (even to the point of recognising that women working outside the home may need special protection), it is drawing on a long tradition. It is noticeable that early on in *Gaudium et Spes* the list of infamies, alongside the expected 'murder, genocide, abortion, slavery and prostitution', includes:

...disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons.⁷⁰¹

Later on *Gaudium et Spes* makes a statement which could have been a direct description of the South African economy then (and would not be much different now):

⁶⁹⁸ Abrahams, Mervyn. "Denis Hurley and the Reception of Vatican II" *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 246

⁶⁹⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/ 1 (*The Mercury*, 10 August 2008)

⁷⁰⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Natal Mercury*, 18 October 1983)

⁷⁰¹ *Gaudium et Spes* 27

Extravagance and wretchedness exist side by side. While a few enjoy very great power of choice, the majority are deprived of almost all possibility of acting on their own initiative and responsibility, and often subsist in living and working conditions unworthy of the human person.⁷⁰²

It is the link between work and human dignity that is the recurrent theme of Catholic Social Teaching on this subject. That means that to understand work, one needs to understand the human individual and this is clear in the approach that Kearney takes to workers' rights. There is evidence of this from his awareness from a young age of the real person whom others would just see as a domestic worker. He later realised that in every white middle-class home at the time, domestic workers provided an opportunity both to become aware of the true effects of Apartheid but also to make some small gestures towards justice.

It seems that Kearney was already getting publicly involved in this issue when he was living in Pietermaritzburg, even before Diakonia. Joan Kerchhoff showed me a newspaper interview (from the *Natal Witness*, 30 Oct 1975) about her and the founding of the 'Domestic Work Action Committee' with which Kearney was involved.⁷⁰³ Perhaps it is not surprising that it is the women in Kearney's life who raise his awareness of these issues. Colleen Irvine recalls how the emerging Durban Justice & Peace Commission started interviewing a lot of black women who were in the church congregations to find out about their working hours and pay.

For example, we had Bella who worked for us and I realised I really did not know very much at all about her living conditions. It was a way of us wanting to change things that we could change.⁷⁰⁴

Outside the domestic environment, Kearney began to get an insight into labour issues from the 1973 Durban Dockers Strikes with which the Young Christian Workers were very involved. Doug Irvine (Colleen's husband) recalls that Justice & Peace organised the first meetings between Durban business people and black trade unionists and also became patrons of the Urban Training Project. Since Justice & Peace was initially conceived of as playing an internal role to teach Catholics about CST, this was a logical extension. They set up a Wages Commission to investigate conditions of employment. Doug commented:

Church structures were able to provide a channel for transformation in the absence of political structures. But the Church also gave a rationale, a philosophy, a social teaching, a genuine freedom.⁷⁰⁵

At various times throughout the 1980s, Diakonia played a role in voicing the concerns about workers, promoting a focus on the conditions of domestic workers and raising awareness of specific abuses of workers' rights. And just as Diakonia was celebrating 16 December and the annual Day of Reconciliation long before it became part of the official national calendar, so they were celebrating 1 May as Workers' Day and promoting Workers' Sunday through their churches.

But, +Nuttall points out, whilst it was important to establish meetings with workers and show concerns about workers' rights, it was also important to consider the question of the managers,

⁷⁰² *Gaudium et Spes* 64

⁷⁰³ Kerchhoff, Joan. Personal interview by author, 6 April 2022 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of head of PACSA)

⁷⁰⁴ Irvine, Colleen. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (personal friend and involved in Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace)

⁷⁰⁵ Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (personal friend and Chair of Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace)

especially since many of them – all male and all white – were members of those same churches. +Nuttall recalls that Kearney supported this approach, despite the risk of being misconstrued, because he could see that there was a role for honest mediation. They set up monthly breakfasts in the bishop's home which were later also attended also by Nomabelu Mvambo-Dandala, whose initial focus at Diakonia was on employment and economics.⁷⁰⁶

In 1987, in trying to get endorsement from the Anglican Durban Central Regional Council for a Workers' Rights Statement, Kearney explains the reasoning behind Diakonia's commitment to promoting the rights of workers. He starts with a dramatic scenario:

What would you do if you came across a man beating up another man? ... What would be a Christian response to this situation? Would it be to move away and say there's nothing one can do? Would it be to ask the two people to sit around a table and discuss the issue? Or would it be to intervene on the side of the person under attack and to stop the attacker? The Workers' Rights Statement is based on the third of these options.

Diakonia believes that the issue of workers' rights, just wages, just working conditions has everything to do with our faith. We all believe that Jesus is Lord, Lord of all life, Lord of all situations. His lordship must extend to the question of wages and conditions of service. The values of the Gospel must penetrate every aspect of life. In fact, God's concern about justice in the workplace is perfectly clear from the Bible.

The whole idea of human rights and workers' rights stems from the creation of the human person 'in the image and likeness of God'. An infinite dignity stems from that creation. And though that image has been sullied by sin it has been wonderfully restored and enhanced by Jesus' incarnation, death, and resurrection.⁷⁰⁷

Kearney talks about the extensive consultation, through an initial workshop of 100 people, interviews by a trade unionist with 40 clergy, and a drafting process involving all the member churches; he sets out what is happening in the worker or trade union scene, what workers are asking from the Church, Church relations with trade unions, what the Church can gain from the unions and how the Church will have to change if it is to be supportive of workers.⁷⁰⁸

One comment he makes offers opportunities for the Church not just in this area but many other areas of the 'temporal order':

The group [of people who] compartmentalises Church and the rest of life is a very interesting group because, although they are not expecting much from the Church, they are open to surprises! They give the Church many opportunities for involvement, identification and solidarity, but it is sad to see how these opportunities are ignored by a Church that is either not interested or actively hostile.⁷⁰⁹

Because of his role in the background, surprisingly few photos include Kearney alongside +Hurley but there is one from 1988 which shows them with Mary Mkhwanazi (of the SA Domestic Workers

⁷⁰⁶ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

⁷⁰⁷ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 12 ("Diakonia's Worker Rights Statement", Addington, 17 October 1987)

⁷⁰⁸ Given that he was speaking on behalf of Diakonia, and addressing an Anglican gathering, the reference to 'Church' in Kearney's speech is presumably the broad definition.

⁷⁰⁹ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 12 ("Diakonia's Worker Rights Statement", Addington, 17 October 1987)

Union) speaking at a conference to celebrate Workers Day.⁷¹⁰ The article explains that leaflets about the rights of workers, especially the right to decent housing, had been distributed in over 50 parishes and in some churches workers had been invited to preach. A link is made between the value of family life and the impact on families of migrant work and workers' housing. A contrast is drawn between the way the domestic workers live and the style of the houses in which they serve. For Durban, they quote a number of 1.7 million people living in shanty towns plus 390,000 made homeless by recently flooding.⁷¹¹

This is just one example among hundreds in the Diakonia archive which show Kearney's approach: identify an issue which people will understand (almost every white middle-class parishioner would have had a black domestic worker); present facts that draw attention to the scale of the problem; provide a personal dimension (such as the stories of specific domestic workers) in order to humanise the problem; and place it into a religious context both to connect it theologically but also to provide a 'safe place' in which to show solidarity.

Kearney's personal archive, and comments from some of his friends, indicate clearly that his commitment to helping workers, especially domestic workers, was one that he took very personally. For example, there is a random file of requests which shows people approaching him because they want jobs or they need help with money especially school fees. Though many of these date back many years, it is noteworthy that he kept them on file, perhaps as way of granting dignity to the request even if he could not always grant the request.⁷¹²

It seems that Kearney took steps which, compared to others at the time, would have seemed generous (perhaps too generous) in helping people who worked for him personally, providing financial assistance and advice. A member of Special Branch visiting Diakonia once said to Kearney: 'You are a communist who actually lives like a communist'; it seems that he was also a Christian activist who actually lived like a Christian.

Of course, while not a communist, it was inevitable that being involved in worker's rights and indeed celebrating 1 May, would have brought Kearney into close collaboration with communists. His niece, Sarah Kearney, recalls that when her uncle was detained (she would have been 15) her classmates mocked her saying: "Your uncle is a terrorist, a communist". Even the nuns at schools, she explained, were afraid of talking about such things: "they all swallowed the line that the ANC wants communism."⁷¹³ The Casons also recall being called communists by their parish council chairman because of their involvement with Diakonia.⁷¹⁴

One avowed communist (and atheist) was the trade union leader Alec Erwin.⁷¹⁵ He has nothing but positive memories for the role that Kearney played:

We met in the context of the Diakonia building because we used church facilities for trade union meetings, also the Institute of Industrial Education. Paddy was so supportive of the union movement. To be honest, I had not expected that to be the case. Paddy played a key

⁷¹⁰ In her tribute to +Hurley on his Golden Jubilee, she draws attention to another issue of human rights: the ordination of women. See: Mkhwanazi, Velisiwe Mary. "A Dancing Archbishop". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 110-112

⁷¹¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*The Southern Cross*, 8 May 1988)

⁷¹² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/2 Kearney/Personal/2 "Random file of Requests"

⁷¹³ Kearney, Sarah. Personal interview by author, 17 September 2020 (niece of Kearney)

⁷¹⁴ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

⁷¹⁵ Later, in an act of 'poacher turned gamekeeper', Erwin went on to become Minister of Trade in Mandela's Cabinet.

part. He was a dam good organiser – we drew on him more than most. He could get things done.⁷¹⁶

When asked about co-operation between a Christian and a communist, he was very amused:

Our working relationship was exceptional. Paddy was always sympathetic, we never clashed on religious matters. He said to me once, or perhaps it was +Hurley: ‘I know you are not a Christian but you act like one’.

In the same way, we all instinctively accepted that Paddy was a comrade though he did not see himself as such. I know he would not have been favourably disposed towards communism because of the anti-religious associations. But +Hurley and Paddy could talk to everyone. +Hurley had a good grasp of Marxist theory but neither he nor Paddy were particularly radical – they were always profoundly sensible and non-dogmatic.⁷¹⁷

Under John Paul II, any association between Catholic liberationists and communists (whether in South Africa or in Latin America) was looked at askance, hardly surprising given that for John Paul the communists were the enemy not the ally.⁷¹⁸ But Pope Paul VI was not so blind-sided. Curran points out that Pope Paul went out of his way to find a positive interpretation of Marxism because he was keen to open up and work with communist regimes: that was the reality of *Ostpolitik*.⁷¹⁹ And of course, in workers’ rights and other fields, there were common causes between the Catholic Church and communism.

Kearney would certainly have been familiar with a famous Catholic poster of the time distributed by CAFOD (who were major UK-based funders of Diakonia) that featured the Brazilian Archbishop Hélder Câmara. It is also quoted for example by Johnson⁷²⁰ (and misattributed by De Gruchy to +Oscar Romero)⁷²¹:

When I feed the poor they call me a saint; when I ask why are the poor hungry they call me a Communist.⁷²²

One final insight into Kearney’s sympathy with workers comes from his visit to the USA in 2005 and the notes he makes in his journal about seeing an exhibition of hand-made quilts from Alabama at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.⁷²³ He was clearly deeply moved by the exhibition and by the stories of the workers that lay behind them:

⁷¹⁶ Erwin, Alec. Personal interview by author, 19 August 2022 via Zoom (trade unionist and later Cabinet Minister)

⁷¹⁷ Erwin, Alec. Personal interview by author, 19 August 2022 via Zoom (trade unionist and later Cabinet Minister)

⁷¹⁸ For more on this see Appendix D: “+Hurley the political priest”

⁷¹⁹ Curran, Charles. *Catholic social teaching 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis* (Washington DC: Georgetown, 2002) 202

⁷²⁰ Johnson Elizabeth A. *Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology* (New York: Crossroad, 1990) 88

⁷²¹ Haddad, Beverley. *Keeping Body and Soul Together: Reflections by Steve de Gruchy on Theology and Development* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2015) 150

⁷²² There is actually no original reference for this very famous quote. This author was told by Julian Filochowski, then head of CAFOD, about the trouble they had confirming the citation when preparing the poster in the 1980s. Filochowski explains that eventually he phoned +Câmara to ask him where the line originated. The Archbishop went silent on the other end of the phone and, somewhat panicked, Filochowski asked him: “Monsignor, you did say those words, didn’t you?” In a thick Brazilian accent he replied: “When I feed the poor they call me a saint; when I ask why are the poor hungry they call me a Communist. There, now I have said it!”. As the Italians would say: “*Se non é vero, é ben trovato!*”

⁷²³ “The Quilts of Gee’s Bend”, *MFA Boston website*. <https://www.mfa.org/exhibitions/quilts-gees-bend> (accessed 29 September 2022)

[They were] sacraments of real poverty, quilts made from whatever cloth was available including from workers denims. The sight of these slightly dirty, very worn, slightly stained quilts brought tears to my eyes as I thought about all the poverty and depression they represented and yet transformed into beautiful objects with many notes of joy and transformation of pain and suffering. And how these quilts had kept people warm and covered, those who made them, generating new life even in such bleak circumstances – new life from love-making but also just after the weariness of each day’s work. New life that made the next day possible.

Some wonderful quotes accompanied the quilts about the process of making them and, one that I found most moving, about the effect of hearing Martin Luther King as being like being in a darkened room and someone coming and putting the lights on: ‘MLK put the light on for me.’ There was a video to help one see some of the people who had made these quilts and hear them speaking and hear them singing.⁷²⁴

Other Areas of Focus

In closing the account of how Kearney worked through Diakonia to demonstrate a Church that was engaged with the modern world, I want to mention one other area of focus (among many others). This shows that Kearney was not afraid to challenge – sometimes Government leaders, sometimes Church leaders, sometimes both – and also the seemingly inexhaustibly broad passion he had for issues of justice. This was applauded by a man who had been fighting with Kearney against the old regime and then became a Government leader under the new one. Pravin Gordhan delivered the 2022 Paddy Kearney Memorial lecture at the Denis Hurley Centre and he captured the breadth of Kearney’s interests by using the description that Robert Bolt gave to Thomas More (‘The Man for All Seasons’) and called Kearney ‘An Activist for All Seasons’.

Paddy’s democratic activism transitioned through so many different periods of our history. The repressive climate of the 70s and late 80s, the mass struggles and open campaigns of the late 70s/early 80s, the transition to democracy of the early 90s, and the past two decades of consolidating democracy and combatting the capture of the state and entrenching corruption.⁷²⁵

One example of Kearney’s breadth actually involved Gordhan who was a member of the Durban Housing Action Committee in the early 1980s. There was great anxiety about the impact on the poor of proposed rent increases by the Durban City Council. Diakonia organised a meeting with the Mayor, Sybil Hotz, and the residents’ committee. Kearney urged the leaders of churches to use Sunday sermons to pray for a change of heart by the city council over its decision to increase rents.⁷²⁶

Kearney was able to speak out at the highest level and marshal church forces to back him up. But he was always conscious of the need to work with the people on the ground as well. As part of the same incident, there is a press report about +Hurley speaking at a community meeting in Newlands East in response to a crisis about a housing scheme and the rent increases. He used words that

⁷²⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 “Morning Pages: May-July 2005” (26 June 2005, Boston)

⁷²⁵ Gordhan, Pravin. “Paddy Kearney Memorial Lecture 2022”, *Denis Hurley Centre website*, <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/memorial-lectures> (accessed 29 September 2022)

⁷²⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Leader*, 20 March 1981)

sound very much like Kearney's to talk about how Diakonia had failed to educate people to be their own saviours and campaigners for justice.

We have been examining our conscience and found that we have failed you in your hour of need by not giving you the kind of direction in your fight against higher rents.⁷²⁷

Being close to people in their struggles – especially in terms of their living conditions – is a recurrent concern of Kearney. In the local paper, he gives a first-hand account of staying for one week in 1991 at KwaMakhutha (a black township near Amanzimtoti). He makes the comment that the place is well-known but only because of the violence that had taken place there in 1987. But Kearney's focus is not on the big news of political violence but rather the everyday problems the community faces. His list of complaints – about roads, erratic electricity, the community hall being unavailable because it was full of refugees, people being attacked at school and so poor attendance, no phones, no post office – is from 30 years ago but could almost be from now!

As is typical of Kearney he takes trouble to get to know the community and shows great empathy for them:

The residents have fled and are too scared to return or simply don't have the cash or the basic repairs to make their homes habitable again.

You might wonder whether KwaMakhutha's residents have done anything about these problems? They have no faith in the community council system, which they saw was imposed on them, and simply doesn't have the power of resources to do anything about the problems. The council no longer functions and all the power is in the hands of a township superintendent who seems to feel no need to consult the residents. They feel he goes about his duties blissfully unaware or un-interested in what the residents are thinking or feeling.

They must be fully involved in local government or the process of changes will be repeatedly set back by outbursts of frustration of it may even be totally derailed.⁷²⁸

Not only is he engaged in a personal exposure visit but he is also encouraging others to find out for themselves what is happening. In an article in November 1990 he talks about the impact of the local violence which he lists as over 4,000 dead, 6,000 houses destroyed, 60,000 people displaced.

Diakonia is encouraging its member churches to organise exposure tours to see the level of destruction in the areas affected by the violence.⁷²⁹

I do not plan to detail all the various activities of Diakonia up to Liberation. Under Kearney's leadership the organisation was involved in developing Community Resource Centres that provided neighbourhood advice and assistance to people who were unlikely to get help from Government officials;⁷³⁰ they supported the bishops in their tricky negotiations with Chief Buthelezi;⁷³¹ they acted as mediators (directly, and indirectly by supporting Church leaders) in some of the violent conflicts

⁷²⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Natal Mercury*, 13 March 1981)

⁷²⁸ South African History Archive: AL 3119 E5.34 "Kearney nomination for Truth & Reconciliation Commission" (*Natal Mercury*, 21 Mar 1991)

⁷²⁹ South African History Archive: AL 3119 E5.34 "Kearney nomination for Truth & Reconciliation Commission" (*Natal Mercury*, 16 Nov 1990)

⁷³⁰ Mkame, Liz. Personal interview by author, 17 December 2020 in Pinetown (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁷³¹ Temkin, Ben. *Buthelezi – a biography* (London: Frank Cass, 2003) 259

between Inkatha and those who did not support Inkatha;⁷³² they educated people about the 1994 elections;⁷³³ and they were involved in the peace-monitoring programme during the elections.⁷³⁴

Kearney gives his own summary of the whole of his period at Diakonia when he later retired in 2004.⁷³⁵ He lists various activities in what he calls 'a kaleidoscope of memories': detainees defended; worker rights proclaimed; victories against forced removals; conscientious objectors supported; various ways of protesting, informing, challenging; buildings bought and refurbished; briefings; hospitality and exposure visits; theological students challenged; striking workers; helicopters thundering overhead; security police, Saracens in the street and guns pointed at the Centre; the amalgamation with Durban District Council of Churches; people trained in trauma healing, technical skills, advocacy, reconciliation; Social Justice Seasons in parishes; admin staff; evaluations to help develop fresh vision;

and, of course, I think of the Good Friday Service—a symbol or icon of all we stand for, something like a massive Annual General Meeting of our member churches.⁷³⁶

Mention has already been made of the book celebrating 24 years of the Good Friday Service; it is presented with un-named authors but we know that Kearney wrote the introduction.⁷³⁷ Kearney also in 2016 wrote a reflection on the 30 years of occupation of what had been the Ecumenical Centre and then became the Diakonia Centre.⁷³⁸ All of that and more needs to be the focus of a history of Diakonia itself which is certainly a story worth telling.

After Liberation

But once Liberation came, with the election of Nelson Mandela as the first President of a democratic South Africa, what would Kearney do? This question is interesting for two reasons.

First of all, that a good number of religious leaders who had been involved in the Struggle soon became part of the new regime. Rev Frank Chikane stepped down in 1994 as head of the SACC and in 1997 became a high-ranking member of the ANC and then a Cabinet minister in 1999. Rev Allan Boesak also became a high-ranking member of the ANC and then an Ambassador. Ela Gandhi became a member of the first post-Apartheid parliament. Fr Smangaliso Mkhathshwa also became an MP in 1994 and then Mayor of Tshwane in 2000. Sr Bernard Ncube also became a 1994 MP and then Mayor of the West Rand in 2002.

There were, of course, many others that Kearney knew who also gained high office – in fact at the time of his death three members of President Ramaphosa's cabinet (Pravin Gordhan, Zweli Mkhize and Thoko Didiza) were people who had worked closely with him. But they were political players. The individuals first listed were all people with strong religious commitments who one might not have expected to be involved in politics. They clearly felt that they could work with the ANC and

⁷³² Denis, Philippe. "The churches' response to political violence in the last years of Apartheid: the case of Mpophomeni in the Natal Midlands" *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* (2013, 39) 13-34; Mbona, Michael. "On embassy to Ulundi: the Natal Church Leaders Group's mediation attempts in war-torn Natal 1987-1990", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* (2010, 36.1) 141-162

⁷³³ Dziva, Doug. Personal interview by author, 15 March 2021 in Pietermaritzburg (Director of KZN Christian Council)

⁷³⁴ Graham, Paul. Personal interview by author, 13 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Methodist youth worker)

⁷³⁵ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 17 ("Farewell to Diakonia", April 2004)

⁷³⁶ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 18 ("Farewell to Diakonia", April 2004)

⁷³⁷ Diakonia, *Pilgrimage of Hope*, 2

⁷³⁸ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 20 ("The Ecumenical Centre – 30 years of service to the people of Durban", 2016)

effect change from within the system. And they also believed sincerely that doing so did not go against their religious principles (though it did not turn out well for some of those listed). For those who were ordained ministers, there might have been good reasons not to enter politics. But Kearney (like Ela Gandhi) was a lay religious leader and there was certainly nothing to stop him following a similar path.

In fact, *Gaudium et Spes* specifically encourages Catholics to become involved in politics (a far cry from Pius IX's condemnation of democracy):

Those who are suited or can become suited should prepare themselves for the difficult, but at the same time, the very noble art of politics, and should seek to practice this art without regard for their own interests or for material advantages. ...They should dedicate themselves to the service of all, with sincerity and fairness, indeed, with the charity and fortitude demanded by political life.⁷³⁹

The other significant trigger for Kearney to do something different might have been the fact that +Hurley, his mentor and patron, had just stepped down as Archbishop of Durban in 1992 (past the usual retirement age for Catholic bishops of 75).

But Kearney was not tempted into politics; nor was he tempted to a life of rest or academic contemplation (he was only aged 52). Instead, he continued as Director of Diakonia (and would do so for another 10 years). But note that +Hurley was also not tempted to a life of rest or academic contemplation (and he was aged 77!). Rather he worked from 1992 to 2002 as Administrator of the Cathedral (similar to a Dean in Anglican structures) and witnessed the area around the Cathedral, and the congregation attending the Cathedral, undergo a massive transformation as the segregation created by Apartheid started to erode. This is bound to have influenced Kearney's decision to stay at Diakonia and to stay involved in the Durban CBD.

It is intriguing to see what people close to Kearney thought was his motivation after 1994. Nolan (who was himself offered a political position) thinks that Kearney probably was offered posts by the new Government:

But Paddy's motivation was always to keep true to his Christian faith. He certainly did not want to be one of the boys, to be recognised as a leftie. By staying out of politics, he kept his freedom to say what he thought of the new Government. He was able to speak his mind.⁷⁴⁰

Kaufmann feels that in a sense nothing changed for Kearney in 1994:

For Paddy it was all about action on behalf of justice which was constitutive of preaching the Gospel. He saw this as his vocation. It did not matter what regime was in power, what system was in place.⁷⁴¹

Priscilla McKay, a fellow activist and a lifelong friend of Kearney, became a member of the KZN Provincial Legislature for the ANC:

⁷³⁹ *Gaudium et Spes* 75

⁷⁴⁰ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 18 Oct 2020 in Boksburg GP (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

⁷⁴¹ Kaufmann, Larry. Personal interview by author, 12 Oct 2020 in Durban (Redemptorist priest and activist)

I recall saying to him: 'Paddy, why not join the party? There are some good people in it.' But he was disillusioned by the party even if he still respected some individuals such as Zweli [Mkhize], Cyril [Ramaphosa], Senzo [Mchunu], Pravin [Gordhan]. He felt that all idealism had vanished. He would have turned down any position he was offered in 1994.⁷⁴²

Erwin – who has close links to all the elements of the Tri-partite Alliance of the ANC, COSATU and the SACP – is not surprised that Kearney remained aloof from politics:

He was never an underground or an open member of the ANC [in contrast to Peter Kerchhoff and Albert Nolan who were]. He saw his work as his contribution to the Struggle. And he was certainly well regarded by the party. It speaks for itself that the ANC's first office in Durban [after the unbanning in 1990] was opened in Diakonia. They respected his position. There was no obligation on him to join the party or show public affiliation....

I would have hoped that he was never approached – the role of Diakonia was too important to try and take him into Government. The mistake post 1994 was ours - not to keep close to organisations like Diakonia. There were many times when we should have asked for help. But the relationship was not as close as it had been before – we were sucked into the formal state structures.⁷⁴³

But there was one formal state structure in which Kearney could have comfortably served and indeed – with an Archbishop as Chair – he would have felt very at home: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In fact, he was considered as a possible Commissioner but not appointed. Stuart Bate, in providing notes on contributors to his 1996 book about the pastoral plan, says that Kearney was 'on the list of original nominees for the TRC'.⁷⁴⁴

It looks as if Diakonia was already anticipating the need for such a programme as early as 1990. A newspaper report describes a workshop organised by them called 'the Church and Negotiations' which draws 70 delegates including visitors from UK, Germany and USA. An ANC delegate reports on the talks with the then President; the SACC under Frank Chikane has drawn up a Code of Conduct to curb violence in Natal. Kearney sums up the workshop as follows: churches should urge their members to pray for all those involved; clergy and congregations should be kept informed; the Church should educate members on the repentance, restitution, forgiveness, tolerance and the promotion of democratic values and lead by example which is more important than words; the Church has a role in healing and reconciling; it should also act as a conscience; and potentially Church leaders may have to intervene as facilitators. In the latter part of this list, there is an adumbration of what was to become the TRC.⁷⁴⁵

In his autobiography, Peter Storey, the Methodist minister, talks about his role on the Truth and Reconciliation Selection Panel in October 1995 to deliver a list of 25 recommended names (out of 299 nominations) so the President can choose 11 to 17. He explains that the bill required commissioners:

⁷⁴² McKay, Priscilla. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow Catholic activist)

⁷⁴³ Erwin, Alec. Personal interview by author, 19 August 2022 via Zoom (trade unionist and later Cabinet Minister)

⁷⁴⁴ Bate, Stuart ed. *Serving Humanity – a Sabbath Reflection* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1996) 304

⁷⁴⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*The Southern Cross*, 27 July 1990)

... to be of moral integrity with a commitment to human rights, reconciliation and the disclosure of truth; not a high-profile member of a political party; be able to make impartial judgements; and should not be an applicant for amnesty.⁷⁴⁶

Kearney would certainly have fulfilled this list of criteria and it has been possible to prove that he was indeed proposed as a candidate. SAHA (the South African History Archive at Wits University) has some copies of extracts from the TRC archive obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. Most of the TRC archive is at the National Archives but Deborah Matthews, SAHA consultant, told me: "It is problematic to access the rest of material."⁷⁴⁷ The extracts that I was able to see confirm that Kearney accepted the nomination (attaching a short CV which interestingly does not mention his time with the Marists, only his role as a teacher). There is also a letter of endorsement (dated 28 Sept 1995 and addressed to Sue Britton) from Bishop Nuttall who had after all been 'number Two to Tutu'.⁷⁴⁸

I am happy to support the nomination of Kearney for membership of the TRC. It would be another very costly assignment for him but I believe he has the inner strength as well as other necessary gifts for this crucial work.⁷⁴⁹

Also in the file is a selection of newspaper clippings that touch on Kearney's recent experience in reconciliation: one is his experience cited earlier of living for a week in a township (KwaMakhutha). Another (*Natal Mercury* of 16 November 1990) describes his Christmas Peace Focus campaign 'to help people understand the link between Christmas and the themes of reconciliation, repatriation, reconstruction and peace in Natal'. The third is from the *Mail & Guardian* (7 April 1994) about Kearney's involvement in the Education for Democracy Forum and his fear that ANC/ Inkatha rivalry is preventing this work. There are also two extracts from Amnesty International reports looking at his own experience as a victim: one about his release from detention and another end-of-year report from 1986 mentioning Kearney, Richard Steele and other members of ECC.⁷⁵⁰

Kearney would seem to have had excellent credentials to be a member of the TRC. At the time, there was not the automatic exclusion of white men from Government panels which is now prevalent – in fact, four of the final 17 commissioners were white men (with an additional two white women). And certainly, coming from a religious background would not have counted against him: four of the final commissioners were ordained ministers (eclipsed only by the lawyers of whom there were six).⁷⁵¹ In that context, a comment by Storey about the difficulty of finding more than one KZN candidate seems surprising and we must assume he did not include Kearney in his scope:

Maybe it was because the region continued to be wracked by violence that people were still unwilling to be transparent but, apart from human rights lawyer Richard Lyster, we had found the candidates interviewed in Durban to be uniformly unimpressive; some were evasive and others downright dishonest. KZN remained a minefield in all sorts of ways.

Storey goes on to explain that Mandela introduced his own name from KZN, Methodist Bishop Khoza Mgojo. Moreover, because of that, the President removed from the list presiding bishop Stanley Mogoba to avoid having too many Methodists (Mandela himself was Methodist and Alex Boraine,

⁷⁴⁶ Storey, *I Beg to Differ*, 426

⁷⁴⁷ Personal conversation with the author, Johannesburg, 28 April 2022

⁷⁴⁸ Nuttall, Michael. *Number Two to Tutu* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2003)

⁷⁴⁹ South African History Archive: AL 3119 E5.34 "Kearney nomination for Truth & Reconciliation Commission"

⁷⁵⁰ These subjects are explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

⁷⁵¹ *Truth & Reconciliation Report* (Vol 1; Chapter 3: Page 44)

<https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/finalreport/Volume%201.pdf> (accessed 29 September 2022)

another Methodist, was to be appointed Deputy Chair). +Mgojo was in fact very well known to Kearney since he was closely involved with Diakonia (Kearney would later invite him to be a Patron of the Denis Hurley Centre). Perhaps the inclusion of +Mgojo prompted Kearney to remove his own candidacy – a typically self-deprecating act – since the spirit of Diakonia would now be part of the TRC. Without access to the National Archives, we will never know. Incidentally, some of the TRC hearings in Durban were held at Diakonia and when the report was published in 1999, Kearney's name was included among the list of 'Victims of Gross Violations of Human Rights'.⁷⁵²

There is another role that Kearney applied for and did not get. After he left Diakonia in 2004 (which we will return to) according to NGK Dominee Deon Snyman (with whom Kearney was close at that time) he applied to be Deputy Secretary General at the SACC.⁷⁵³ The Lutheran Dr Molefe Tsele was Secretary General then and would also later reappear in Kearney's life as someone who organised a major donation for the Denis Hurley Centre. +Phillip recalls having to pass on the news to Kearney: "The SACC have said 'no', not a strong no; but they think you would be of greater value where you are in Durban."⁷⁵⁴ One wonders, had Kearney got the job at the SACC and stayed for 5 years or so, whether by then aged almost 70 he would have started the Denis Hurley Centre project.

Although political liberation was achieved in 1994 – at least in theory – and in 1996 a Bill of Rights which promised rights that had previously been violated, the work of Diakonia in helping churches to uplift communities continued with the same attention to housing, work, and access to services. The themes of the Good Friday Service during the Struggle are explained in Chapter 5. The themes in the years since democracy are a good indication of what continued to preoccupy Kearney (and Diakonia): 1995 – peace-making; 1996 – life; 1997 – the wounded healer; 1998 – life; 1999 – hope; 2000 – poverty; 2001 – violence against women; 2002 – healing wounds; 2003 – children (this was effectively the last one that Kearney supervised).⁷⁵⁵

The repeated references to 'life' and 'healing' indicate a new challenge that South Africa (and so Diakonia) had to face from the 1990s, on top of all the other ones that still had not been solved: the pandemic of HIV and AIDS. Whilst this affected the whole country, KZN was among the worst affected of the Provinces. On the one hand, this was a perfect opportunity for a grassroots organisation like Diakonia – with a network that extended to every community, a reputation for speaking the truth even when uncomfortable, and with access to respected leaders. On the other, the link between HIV infection and sex (inside and outside marriage) as well as drug use meant that even talking about it was something that some church leaders were slow to do.

Kearney outlines in his biography of +Hurley the important role that the Archbishop played in being one of the first KZN religious leaders to speak openly about HIV.⁷⁵⁶ Two books also describe in very positive ways how the Catholic Church responded to AIDS in South Africa.⁷⁵⁷ But while some parts of the Christian community did work to challenge stigma, to provide honest education and to help those affected, the attitude of many parts of the Church towards sex (especially extra-marital sex

⁷⁵² *Truth & Reconciliation Report* (Vol 5; Chapter 2: Page 41)

<https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/finalreport/Volume5.pdf> (accessed 29 September 2022)

⁷⁵³ Snyman, Deon. Personal interview by author, 6 January 2021 in Malmesbury (Dutch Reformed Church Dominee and co-worker at Diakonia)

⁷⁵⁴ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

⁷⁵⁵ Diakonia, *Pilgrimage of Hope*, 5

⁷⁵⁶ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 269-271; there is also relevant correspondence included in Denis, Kearney & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 454 (to Ted Rogers), 478 (to Geoffrey Chapman), 481 and 505 (to Liz Towell), 494 and 498 (to the Editor of *The Southern Cross*, 496 (to Daisy and Wolfgang Losken).

⁷⁵⁷ Bate, Stuart & Munro, Alison eds. *Catholic Responses to AIDS in Southern Africa* (Pretoria: SACBC, 2014); Goemans, Loek & Wilson, Hilary. *In the Service of Healing: a History of Catholic Health Care in Southern Africa* (Johannesburg: CATHCA, 2011)

and same-sex relations), the judgemental language that was often used, plus the specific Catholic refusal to promote the use of condoms as one means of prevention, meant that the Church was at the very least compromised in its response.

Through Diakonia and the wider work of the Archdiocese of Durban – as well as association with +Hurley – Kearney was involved in the response to HIV. But his personal archives (which include a file marked ‘HIV’) is not very revelatory and the fact that it is quite small is itself interesting.

Kearney was part of an international reference group that was overseeing an education process working with the churches for which he attended a meeting in Kenya in September 2003 (uncharacteristically for a man who did not usual care about material things, he kept some flyers from the hotel including a menu). As part of this meeting, he met and kept information about Canon Gideon Byamugisha, a Ugandan Anglican Cathedral Dean who was openly living with HIV (the first religious leader in Africa to do so). He also includes from July 2004 an article in which Mangosuthu Buthelezi talks about losing his own son to HIV. And a leaflet from the Church World Service about the need to tackle stigma related to HIV.⁷⁵⁸ Given his earlier commitment to raising awareness and combatting prejudice (such as the exposure visits) it is not surprising that challenging stigma is one of his main pre-occupations in the field of HIV.

The problem of tackling AIDS in a scientific way while leading a Christian organisation (especially a Catholic one) comes up for Kearney later when setting up the Denis Hurley Centre (which includes a clinic). Having seen the way that the Church treated Teilhard, +Hurley was conscious that scientific rigour was not always allowed to triumph over theological prejudices. Page quotes +Hurley as saying at the Council:

Brothers, let us avoid another trial of Galileo. One is enough for the Church!⁷⁵⁹

Kearney had on file a 2012 letter to the KZN Minister (MEC) for health, Sibongiseni Dhlomo, which talks about a partnership with the Department of Health and how this is linked to possible public-private funding from the Anglo-American Corporation. Kearney is clearly responding to a concern expressed about Catholic Church policy on access to reproductive rights (including condoms) and tries to reassure the MEC.

His response is discrete since he would have been aware at the time of Rome’s strong stance against condoms (promoted in South Africa by Cardinal Napier and others) but also of the dissenting voices of a few bishops (notably +Kevin Dowling, +Hurley’s second cousin), and the more nuanced practice of some Catholic agencies, and the wider non-reception of Vatican teaching on condoms. As a response to the MEC, Kearney gives as an example the positive relationship that already exists between the Department of Health and the last remaining Catholic hospital in KZN, Mariannhill.⁷⁶⁰ This is a curious choice since I know from my own work with the head of the hospital, Dr Doug Ross, at that stage the relationship was anything but positive and one of the (several) points of tension was indeed access to reproductive rights. It is unclear if Kearney was naïve, optimistic or disingenuous.

As Diakonia, post Liberation, moves more and more into the work of community development – with the Church network as the means of delivery – Kearney has to recognise the danger that when delivering what others NGOs are delivering the essential difference of the Christian message might be lost. This is, for example, something that Gifford cautions against and is a problem faced by the

⁷⁵⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/6 “HIV and AIDS”

⁷⁵⁹ Page, “Denis Hurley interviewed about the Council”, 183

⁷⁶⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/2 “2012”

various Catholic development charities (CAFOD, Misereor, *Entraide et Fraternité*) whom Kearney knew because of Diakonia funding. When access to the Catholic Church is really access to Western resources, the result can be the ‘internal secularization of Christianity’:

Thus, Christianity brings not so much redemption as development. It is associated less with grace than with science and technology. It operates with a vocabulary not so much of atonement, sacraments, conversion as one of micro-finance, capacity building and women’s empowerment. The virtues it promotes are accountability, transparency and good governance as much as faith, hope and charity. It operates as much from human rights reports and poverty reduction strategies as from scriptures and creeds. Its sacramentals are as much computer software and SUVs as bread, wine and oil. Its register is not so much theology as social science.⁷⁶¹

Gifford also cautions that, when the Church is dependent on the local political elite, it would tend to praise politicians rather than criticise them: thus ‘buying their silence’. As one specific example, he criticises the SACBC 2013 statement on corruption because it draws attention to petty corruption in which everyone is involved and avoids reference to the mega-corruption of ANC. He concludes that the “evasion must have been deliberate”.⁷⁶² It is worth remarking that the logistics of the Good Friday Service after 1994 relied more and more on funding from the Municipality and that this coincides with a time when the themes become more generic and uncontroversial – for example, corruption is not one of them.⁷⁶³

Gifford is worried that increasingly bishops become involved with development because that is what the donors are willing to fund. He memorably refers to this as ‘the NGO-isation of the African Church’, ‘Oxfam with incense’.⁷⁶⁴

Departure from Diakonia

Kearney’s first involvement with Diakonia – exploring the concept for +Hurley, setting it up, recruiting the first staff – was covered in Chapter 3 on Ecumenism since it was essentially an ecumenical project. I want to cover here the *end* of his relationship with Diakonia. That is because the end of Kearney’s time there was not entirely positive – nor indeed what has happened to Diakonia since then – and it is well looked at through the ‘activism’ lens of this chapter.

Diakonia was set up with the best of intentions as a way of helping the different denominations of the Church in Durban, not just to work with each other, but also to engage with the world. But in that act of engaging, Kearney discovered that issues would come up that were not easily resolved. Paton’s words were cited earlier in a different context but I think that they are worth recalling again here:

⁷⁶¹ Gifford, Paul. *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa* (London: Hurst, 2015) 103

⁷⁶² Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa*, 136-137

⁷⁶³ One of the ways that the ANC has deflected accusations of corruption is to claim that they come from a colonial mentality. Perhaps a reworking of Câmara’s line is called for: “When I ask why are the poor hungry, they call me a colonialist.”

⁷⁶⁴ Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa*, 151

The statements of intent came straight from heaven but they had to be carried out by earthly man.⁷⁶⁵

Chapter 1 provided a short summary of the timeline of Kearney's departure from Diakonia. We have (in his own anthology) the speech that he made on his retirement. It is full of humour, affection, exhortation and nostalgia – as one might expect after almost 30 years.

During the past week I was being thanked by one of Diakonia's innumerable committees. After they had finished saying nice things, one of the members said: 'You know, Paddy, you've been here longer than Robert Mugabe has been president of Zimbabwe.' I had to thank that committee member for this remark, because it convinced me that I was doing the right thing in 'moving on'!...

I suppose I stayed on for 30 years because I couldn't find anything else nearly as interesting to do with my life. What a vision it gave me of the powerful network the Church provides!⁷⁶⁶

He then lists various activities in what he calls 'a kaleidoscope of memories' as listed earlier.

There is another relevant speech, not in his anthology, which he gave in 2006 on receiving the Diakonia Human Rights Award (which he himself had initiated). It is a Gala Dinner with the Deputy State President attending. He says that 30 years ago that would hardly have been imagined, let alone that the Deputy State President would be a black woman (Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka). He points out how far they have come from Diakonia's first meeting, when the only contact with Government was to send a letter to Prime Minister BJ Vorster about the death in detention of Joseph Mdluli.

These are public tributes. On such occasions, the sentiments are usually laudatory. But this was going to be even more true of Kearney who had achieved so much and been so widely liked. There is thus a danger that we get an unbalanced view of Kearney's time at Diakonia, seen through rose-coloured glasses. I was anxious about this and so made sure that I interviewed a good number of his Diakonia colleagues – in fact 17 people, more than from any other part of Kearney's life. But it must be said, that even after probing, they were all very appreciative of Kearney's contribution to the organisation.

In order to balance this, below is quite a long description, with several verbatim quotations, about less positive comments made by Diakonia staff when Kearney retired which were actually in Kearney's own archive, and thus something he knew would be found and read. It is mark of Kearney's humility and his open-ness to criticism that it was he who archived this material and that he clearly had empowered his team to speak candidly about him. So I feel that there is a balance. If the overwhelming tenor of comments about Kearney was positive, it is I suspect because he was a genuinely well-regarded person.

In his personal archive, Kearney kept a notebook in which staff had written comments on his departure. This contains the sentiments of thanks and wishes for a happy retirement one would expect. However, in addition, there is a two-page typed letter (dated 30/4/2004) that has been stapled into the book. It was written up by Zolile Machi the librarian – partly voicing his own thoughts but also claiming to be speaking on behalf of others. According to Hester Joseph, he was

⁷⁶⁵ Paton, *Journey Continued*, 72

⁷⁶⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/1 "Speech on receiving Diakonia Award" (25 March 2006)

seen as a spokesperson for the black staff members since he was the most articulate.⁷⁶⁷ The letter expresses some of the mixed feelings from the staff about Kearney's departure.⁷⁶⁸ There are predictably positive sentiments:

'never be the same without you'

'remain an inspiration to many of us'

'not work but social justice ministry...you put aside personal glory and material gratification in solidarity with the marginalised...you are a Christian in deed.'

'In a world where everything changed, your roots kept you firmly on the ground'

But then there are also very frank expressions of the feelings of staff on the announcement of his departure:

'paralysing emotions'

'you exposed yourself as another human being'

'the internal state of balance was disturbed'

'Some felt a sense of loss, some felt rejected, some saw it as time for a change of scene, others felt pity for you, others felt guilt (what did I do?), some wanted out.'

And finally there is a series of comments which suggest a deep feeling, at least among some staff, of racial resentment in this home of Christian social justice:⁷⁶⁹

'African staff felt that they had a historical duty to step in and rescue the ship but feared they would not get the support of white funders'

'White and coloured staff withdrew, much like others do in this country because they were less wanted, did not want to look as if they were claiming leadership, did not want to rock the boat'

'[For] staff who have been here for longer...the issue was defending the organisation and its legacy'

'Staff who were always referred to as new became more assertive in calling for a shake-up in the organisation...while asking for changes this group struggled to articulate a new vision'

'In your absence the leadership team felt under pressure... also snubbed and undermined by the Chair who was focused on finding a replacement'

⁷⁶⁷ Joseph, Hester. Personal interview by author, 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁷⁶⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 "Farewell to Paddy from Diakonia staff" (30 March 2002)

⁷⁶⁹ See Appendix A for more on Kearney's sense of racial identity.

‘Staff’s negative perceptions of the Leadership team worsened. Staff saw managers as being inaccessible, aloof, rigid, uninterested, incoherent, uncommunicative, unsure of their roles, arrogant and disempowering. Stability, confidence and trust hit rock bottom.’

The author concludes by saying:

I would be exaggerating if I were to say that all of these problems only started during your absence [Kearney had in fact been on sabbatical since September 2003]. All of us must be ready to give up something in order to take this organisation forward. ... I think we must put ourselves in your shoes when this organisation was started....Way back in the heady 70s when Diakonia was born, your team then only had two things available which seem to have disappeared now – that is imagination and faith.’

And he then ends with a sincere expression of gratitude:

Thank God for your selflessness and dedication to this organisation during the last thirty years. The spirit of your vision will ring through these corridors long after you are gone.

The letter is remarkable and all the more so because Kearney kept it. It is a mark of his authenticity that, when he could just have kept all the positive comments and cards and plaudits and allowed this letter to recede into memory, he retained it alongside the rest.

There is an interesting parallel between Kearney’s perhaps awkward relationships with some of his black staff and a similar situation with his hero, Beyers Naudé. In her biography, Ryan talks about his overly generous attitude to black staffers. She says that he defends this because it was difficult for him to say no when he had to come to terms with his guilt as a white person who for so many years had been part and parcel of oppressing blacks. His Dutch colleague Horst Kleinschmidt says of Naudé:

For him the dividing line of keeping a good and honourable relationship with black people was something that he still had to learn about.⁷⁷⁰

These mixed emotions on Kearney’s departure are supported by comments that some of his friends made in interviews. For example, Aitken shared that Kearney felt out of step with more and more of the staff at Diakonia.

He discovered he was not in the same struggle as they were. That their values were not the same. People used to say to him: ‘I didn’t join the struggle to be poor’. And he would reply: ‘Yes, but I hope you didn’t join to leave the poor behind.’ He could not connect with them. I wonder how close Paddy really was to the majority of people in SA?⁷⁷¹

Snyman, who was close to him in his final years at Diakonia, says that Kearney had doubts about whether staff at Diakonia were as sharp or as dedicated as he wanted them to be.

He felt that sometimes there was a low quality of skills but then there was lower financial support so he could not recruit people as good as he needed. He started to realise that the output was not as strong as it should have been. He got fed up with the staff and the mediocrity. I also noticed that, increasingly, it was the black staff who were critical of Paddy.

⁷⁷⁰ Ryan, Colleen. *Beyers Naudé – Pilgrimage of Faith* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990) 160

⁷⁷¹ Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

And in turn Paddy became tired of Diakonia – there were lots of staff who were not connected to Church.⁷⁷²

Kearney's successor was less critical of the team, but was critical of the change in the political situation.

We had high expectations when they moved into Government. Of course, we were aware that things were not going to change overnight. But then we saw that many politicians had forgotten what the Struggle was all about. The Struggle was not over in 1994 – it was multi-faceted. But it was harder than it was before, when there was a clear enemy. There is still a lot of work to be done. Paddy would have been extremely frustrated.⁷⁷³

Kearney must have felt so many conflicting emotions in 2004: a great loyalty to Diakonia but also a recognition that he needed to move on; a great loyalty to his staff but also an increasing dissonance with some of them; a great loyalty to +Hurley who died at the beginning of the year but whose memory Kearney treasured; a great loyalty to the Struggle and to his fellow activists but also a disappointment about how some of them were now behaving. He might have received some comfort from these words of Vatican II which recognise the internal conflict:

The truth is that the imbalances under which the modern world labours are linked with that more basic imbalance which is rooted in the heart of every human. For in people many elements wrestle with one another. Thus, on the one hand, as creatures they experience their limitations in a multitude of ways; on the other they feel themselves to be boundless in their desires and summoned to a higher life. ...

Indeed, as weak and sinful beings, we often do what we would not, and fail to do what we would. (Rom 7:15). Hence each person suffers from internal divisions, and from these flow so many and such great discords in society. ...

Thinking they have found serenity in an interpretation of reality everywhere proposed these days, many look forward to a genuine and total emancipation of humanity wrought solely by human effort; they are convinced that the future rule of humanity over the earth will satisfy every desire of the heart. Nor are there lacking those who despair of any meaning to life and praise the boldness of those who think that human existence is devoid of any inherent significance and strive to confer a total meaning on it by their own ingenuity alone.⁷⁷⁴

Having laid out the paradox, Vatican II offers these words which, one hopes, were a reassurance to Kearney and all who see this dilemma:

The Church firmly believes that Christ, who died and was raised up for all, can through His Spirit offer humans the light and the strength to measure up to their supreme destiny. ...The Church also maintains that beneath all changes there are many realities which do not change and which have their ultimate foundation in Christ, Who is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever. Hence under the light of Christ, the image of the unseen God, the firstborn of every creature, the Council wishes to speak to all people in order to shed light on

⁷⁷² Snyman, Deon. Personal interview by author, 6 January 2021 in Malmesbury (Dutch Reformed Church Dominee and co-worker at Diakonia)

⁷⁷³ Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu. Personal interview by author, 26 May 2022 in Durban (Kearney's successor as Director of Diakonia and sometime Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

⁷⁷⁴ *Gaudium et Spes* 10

the mystery of humanity and to cooperate in finding the solution to the outstanding problems of our time.⁷⁷⁵

My conclusion is that it is hard to pinpoint *why* Kearney left Diakonia at that particular moment. While it was his own decision, it seems that there were also subtle pressures. Although he soon started work on +Hurley's biography, that does not seem to be his main preoccupation at the time. Though he left a few months after +Hurley's death, the signs of his departure pre-date that. Similarly, he was having health problems but they do not stop him from continuing to work intensively in other fields after his departure. He does indeed express some feelings of personal inadequacy, and also a belief that a black person should head Diakonia, but to be fair he had also expressed these when Diakonia was founded 28 years earlier. I suspect that the reality is a mixture of these factors – with his own heart attack in August 2003 and +Hurley's death in Feb 2004 finally triggering a decision in April 2004 which had been brewing for some time.

But Kearney's departure from Diakonia does not mean retirement or a quiet life because he had two major projects left to complete: the biography of +Hurley and the creation of the Denis Hurley Centre.

34 years after he left the Marists, perhaps these words from the Common Rules were still ringing in Kearney's ears"

The Religious life being, by its very nature, a life of penance, mortification and labour, nothing is more opposed to it than idleness, which leads to all vices, combats and destroys all virtues. ... Brother Director must never allow the Brothers, especially the Junior Brothers, to remain idle; but must keep them constantly and usefully occupied, and require an account of their work and employment of their time.⁷⁷⁶

Denis Hurley Centre expressing an Option for the Poor

In closing this chapter, I thus want to describe one other way in which Kearney lived out the Council's commitment to the preferential option for the poor. After he left Diakonia, Kearney's main focus for a few years was the completion and publication of books about +Hurley, as well as work across KZN to establish an effective structure of regional ecumenical organisations alongside the Provincial one. It is often the lot of experienced activists and NGO administrators – unless they retire or become academics – to become consultants assisting other organisation or being deputed to sit on panels of the great and the good. Kearney did that as well, sitting alongside Bishop Phillip and Vasu Gounden (both of them people with whom he worked earlier in his life) on a Social Cohesion Panel created in 2014 by the then Premier of KZN Willies Mchunu in the wake of waves of xenophobic violence.⁷⁷⁷ Both Gounden and Phillip admit that the output and the implementation of this Panel left Kearney frustrated.⁷⁷⁸ Perhaps again he is realising (to re-quote *Gaudium et Spes* 10) that since 'such great discords in society' flow from 'the internal divisions' from which each person

⁷⁷⁵ *Gaudium et Spes* 10

⁷⁷⁶ Marist Brothers of the Schools. *Common Rules of the Institute* (Rome: Little Brothers of Mary, 1947) 80

⁷⁷⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/SRG/1 "Social Cohesion"

⁷⁷⁸ Gounden, Vasu. Personal interview by author, 18 February 2022 in Durban (Executive Director of Accord); Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

suffers, those same divisions and conflicts would be experienced by the Panel members and the politicians who appointed them.

Kearney's desire to engage with the world was not, however, dimmed by retirement or frustrations and I think it is significant that in many ways the final vehicle that he established, the Denis Hurley Centre, enabled him to approach problems on his own terms: in partnership with Government but not in any way dependent on them. That his focus was the poor was of no surprise to Eric Apelgren, another former colleague (who, unlike Kearney, has tied himself to Government structures in the hope of having some impact):

I remember for example when Paddy spoke about the arrogance and insensitivity of Government towards the poor such as Abahlali baseMjondolo (the shack dwellers' movement). He was always looking out for the poorest of the poor; he was always consistent.⁷⁷⁹

Kearney's concern for the poor was informed by a Liberation theology approach which did not see feeding the hungry as a purely external act but one which was integrally connected to all aspects of being a Christian, to quote Gutiérrez:

To give life then means giving bread to the poor, helping a people to organise, defending its rights, being concerned with the health of the most marginalised, preaching the Gospel, forgiving one's brothers and sisters, celebrating the Eucharist, praying, and giving one's own life.⁷⁸⁰

This could easily be a manifesto for the Denis Hurley Centre – for which, knowing how poor his state of health was, it can be argued that Kearney 'gave his own life'.

In Chapter 6, I will talk in more detail about the founding of the Denis Hurley Centre and its strategy of working not just with all Christians but with all faiths. But just as Diakonia combined ecumenism with a commitment to social justice, so the Denis Hurley Centre combined inter-religious dialogue with a commitment to social justice. So in exploring Kearney experience of social justice we can look for precursors for the DHC that sowed a seed in Kearney's mind.

One of the main Christian responses to homelessness in Cape Town 'The Carpenter's Workshop' involved Dee Wills, the wife of Kearney's lifelong friend Tim Dunne (who died in 2016).⁷⁸¹ By coincidence a precursor to this organisation is mentioned by Storey who recalls some of the progressive ministry he was involved in in District Six in Cape Town in 1967 at a Methodist Church which became called 'The Carpenter's House', welcoming people of all backgrounds and races: homeless people and passers-by enjoying a meal together. The words he uses to describe this experience could well be ones that Kearney would use 50 years later about the Denis Hurley Centre.

Church members were shocked out of their belief that faith was about being respectable and began to learn that it was about extravagant compassion and hospitality instead.⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁹ Apelgren, Eric. Personal interview by author, 6 October 2020 in Durban (Volunteer at Diakonia; later local Government official)

⁷⁸⁰ Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "The Church and the Poor: a Latin American perspective". *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 191

⁷⁸¹ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 132 ("Tim Dunne 1948-2016 — memorial tribute", Rondebosch, Cape Town, 22 April 2016)

⁷⁸² Storey, *I Beg to Differ*, 143

Also, when he was interviewing people for the biography about +Hurley, in 2005 Kearney visited Cathy Corcoran in London who had been a key contact when CAFOD was funding Diakonia.⁷⁸³ By this stage, she was running the Cardinal Hume Centre for homeless youth. But though in other places, Kearney writes about how much he is inspired by Cardinal Hume and the parallels he sees with +Hurley, there is no mention in his journal of any influence on him from the Cardinal Hume Centre (or The Passage Homeless Centre which Hume himself set up).⁷⁸⁴ (By coincidence, this author when living in London knew and worked with Cardinal Hume and The Passage).

While he might have sought to learn lessons from other cities, Kearney's theology was always contextual and so he was motivated to create the Denis Hurley Centre by the simple expedience of 'See, Judge, Act'. In a lecture to seminarians in 1993, +Hurley commends this method of Joseph Cardijn and the YCW from the 1920s.⁷⁸⁵ Paul Nadal recalls that Cardijn had a great influence on +Hurley and so on Kearney.⁷⁸⁶ Campbell confirms this.⁷⁸⁷

In his personal archive, Kearney kept a number of documents which highlight the focus on the poor which is the driving force of the Denis Hurley Centre. For example, in 2009 on the fifth anniversary of +Hurley's death, at the first of the 'Hurley weekends' and as a way to launch fundraising for the Denis Hurley Centre, Kearney's choice of readings while flowers are laid at +Hurley's Shrine is from Isaiah 58: 6-10

Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house?⁷⁸⁸

As will be detailed in Chapter 6 there is also an interfaith element with a speech from Fatima Meer about helping the poor by, using quotes from the Qur'an about poverty. Stephen Tully, then Administrator of the Cathedral, appended a letter:

As explained today, it is our hope that the Denis Hurley Centre will be a beacon of hope to the people of Durban. The launch is an important step in our journey of faith towards realising this vision.

An article about the launch appeared in a South African Catholic magazine *Trefoil* and a woman had clearly written in response to that asking if the centre will be 'too grand and expensive for the underprivileged people of the area'. Kearney kept a note of the reply to her:

Fr Stephen mentioned that some people do have difficulty with the concept of expensive installations in disadvantaged areas...His opinion was that the poor should also be entitled to

⁷⁸³ Corcoran, Cathy. Email sent to the author, 24 January 2022 (CAFOD manager with responsibility for South Africa)

⁷⁸⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 "Morning Pages: May-July 2005" (24 May 2005, London)

⁷⁸⁵ Denis, *Facing the Crisis*, 181 (Hurley, Denis. 'The Second Vatican Council', lecture given at St Joseph's Cedara, 1993)

⁷⁸⁶ Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban (Catholic Monsignor, Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

⁷⁸⁷ Campbell, Alex. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 via Zoom (former Oblate priest)

⁷⁸⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/1 "2009" (Launch of Denis Hurley Centre fundraiser, 15 February 2009)

have access to things of beauty, and the furnishings, whilst being durable and sustainable, should be as aesthetically pleasing as possible.

While the homeless are one focus, Kearney recognises that 'See, Judge, Act' requires him to be aware of the needs of all those in the area. Thus, in the FAQ distributed at that 2009 event, the views of local street vendors and taxi drivers were also addressed and it was stressed that they would be accommodated and included in the consultation. In a 2010 'Brief History of the Denis Hurley Centre' Kearney refers to how the previous building had been used in May 2008 "to provide accommodation for almost 500 refugees for a period of about six weeks during an outbreak of xenophobic violence".⁷⁸⁹ Refugees' needs were included in the planning for the Denis Hurley Centre. However, rather counter to this, the 2009 file also contains a letter from the Metro Police Commissioner to Fr Tully confirming that 100 Tanzanian 'vagrants' had been removed as requested.⁷⁹⁰ This seems odd considering the commitment to the homeless and to refugees. Kearney had kept the letter but not commented on it.

As mentioned above, while Kearney did not want to be dependent on Government, he also wanted to give them an opportunity to be involved. Throughout his archive it is clear that he was actively courting Zweli Mkhize who from 2009 to 2013 was Premier of KZN. It is clear that Kearney admired Mkhize and considered him as someone who was fighting for good within the ANC.

Paddy always supported Zweli; he thought he would be President of the country.⁷⁹¹

He was very drawn to people like Zweli (as I was); and there were others in the [ANC] party. They saw Kearney as someone they could go to for advice.⁷⁹²

He was disappointed with Sbu Ndebele [KZN Premier 2004-2009]; he was much more comfortable with Zweli.⁷⁹³

Napier says that, compared to Kearney, he would have been 'much more sceptical, less comfortable' with politicians such as Zweli Mkhize, even though he was Premier at the time.⁷⁹⁴

Kearney retains with pride a copy of Mkhize's 'State of the Province Address' from February 2011 which mentioned this new project:

The Denis Hurley Centre will play a crucial role in the fight against poverty and provide a hub for social economic development for poor and disadvantaged communities to enjoy. The establishment of the centre should be celebrated by all people of this province.⁷⁹⁵

Furthermore, a year later Mkhize announced the plan to honour Liberation Heroes in the year of the centenary of the ANC with statues planned for 12 of them of whom Hurley is the only white person mentioned.⁷⁹⁶ This did not in fact happen – the statue of +Hurley at the Denis Hurley Centre was funded by a Catholic sodality – but the Premier's fine words were later matched by finance when a

⁷⁸⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/1 "2010" (A Brief History of the Denis Hurley Centre)

⁷⁹⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/1 "2009" (Letter to Stephen Tully from Metro Police, October 2009)

⁷⁹¹ Ntamubano, Jean-Marie. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2022 in Durban (manager of Denis Hurley Centre)

⁷⁹² Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

⁷⁹³ Snyman, Deon. Personal interview by author, 6 January 2021 in Malmesbury (Dutch Reformed Church Dominee and co-worker at Diakonia)

⁷⁹⁴ Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

⁷⁹⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/2 "2011" (State of the Province Address, February 2011)

⁷⁹⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/2 "2012" (State of the Province Address, February 2012)

major grant from the Provincial Government (of over R4 million) was approved by Mkhize for the Denis Hurley Centre and implemented by his successor.⁷⁹⁷

One of the reasons for the close link was the mentorship role that +Hurley had played for Mkhize, both as a young activist in the 1980s and then as MEC for Health responding to AIDS in the 1990s. Mkhize spoke about this at two Hurley Weekends when he took the trouble to come back as a Cabinet Minister to be guest of honour at the Denis Hurley Centre.⁷⁹⁸ In addition, his wife May Mashego was initially a Trustee for the Denis Hurley Centre and then, when she moved away from the Durban area, continued as a Patron (until 2021). Such collaboration is again endorsed by Vatican II – in contrast to the Church’s view in the 19th century that Government was encroaching on the work of the Church in providing certain social services:

The Church and the political community in their own fields are autonomous and independent from each other. Yet both, under different titles, are devoted to the personal and social vocation of the same people. The more that both foster sounder cooperation between themselves, with due consideration for the circumstances of time and place, the more effective will their service be exercised for the good of all.⁷⁹⁹

But working with politicians is never without its risks. Kearney did not live to see the downfall of Mkhize who in 2021 was forced to resign as Minister of Health in a corruption scandal (though at time of writing his political career may not yet be over). Kearney was alive to see the downfall of Ben Ngubane, a previous (IFP) Premier of KZN (1997-99) who had also been invited by Kearney to be a Patron of the Denis Hurley Centre (after he had left politics). He had a less than successful career as head of both SABC and Eskom when those organisations were mired in scandal.

Even if Kearney had to work with (flawed) politicians, he remained clear what the goal was of this new centre – to serve the poor, and to be a living legacy to +Hurley. This was, for Kearney, another way of honouring the poor: it is noticeable that in the prayer that Kearney initiated and was approved by Cardinal Napier, three aspects of +Hurley’s ministry are presented as equally being reasons to be inspired by him: ‘his work for justice and peace’, ‘his loving care for the poor and marginalised’ and ‘his vision for a reformed and renewed Church’.⁸⁰⁰

This prayer was established by Cardinal Napier when, to Kearney’s delight, he gave permission for the +Hurley grave at Emmanuel Cathedral to be marked out as a ‘shrine’ and for people to be encouraged to invoke his intercession: a preparatory step towards the opening of his cause for canonisation. It was the auxiliary bishop, +Barry Wood, a fellow Oblate of +Hurley, who preached at the inauguration of the Shrine in March 2017. He used words with strong Vatican II resonance describing +Hurley as ‘a prophet of a new age not afraid to discern the signs of the times and then take action’ but then adding:

That’s wonderful but we are also called to be wonderful, to take our vocation seriously as people not afraid to speak out, as prophets called to do the right thing.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/3 “2014”

⁷⁹⁸ “Update February 2017”, *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 26 September 2022); “Update February 2019”, *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 26 September 2022) (The latter event, of course, was after Kearney’s death).

⁷⁹⁹ *Gaudium et Spes* 76

⁸⁰⁰ “Hurley prayer of intercession”, *Denis Hurley Centre website* <https://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-prayer> (accessed 26 September 2022)

⁸⁰¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/6 “2017” (+Wood at inauguration of the Shrine, March 2017)

+Wood also recalled a woman who had visited the cathedral in 2016 as part of the Holy Year of Mercy and her comment:

All my life I have been reading Matthew 25, about feeding the hungry and welcoming the stranger, but finally at the Denis Hurley Centre I have seen Matthew 25 come to life!

Like Mary of Nazareth before him, Kearney ‘treasured these things in his heart’ (Lk 2:19), and also in his archive. He was conscious that any legacy in +Hurley’s name had to be a living legacy. 10 years before the Denis Hurley Centre opened, a good friend of both +Hurley and Kearney, Sr Marie-Henry Keane set this challenge:

If there is to be any discussion of getting up a memorial in honour of our dear Archbishop let that monument be our passion for holiness and renewal, driving us forward as God’s Pilgrim people.⁸⁰²

Shared Citizenship/ Solidarity

The Denis Hurley Centre was focused on the practical action (‘the corporal works of mercy’) of Mt 25: feeding the hungry, tending the sick, welcoming the stranger etc. But it also had a hidden if strong socio-political dimension. Kearney had spent his time at Diakonia helping develop a sense of solidarity across divisions of denomination and of ‘race’. Kearney now saw it as the role of the Denis Hurley Centre to help people develop a sense of solidarity across divisions of faith (as discussed in Chapter 6) but also of class.

In conversation with the author, who after all was new to South Africa, Kearney would often deplore the way in which post-1994, middle-class people (now black as well as white) lived in a fortress situation. This was partly because, fearful of robbery, they were living behind high walls (and I recount in Chapter 5 examples of Kearney’s seeming fearlessness in the face of danger). But more than that, he deplored the fortress mentality of closing oneself off from others. This is actually something that Paton predicted many years earlier (though he seemed to think it would get better once democracy came, not worse):

In 1952 the Afrikaners were undoubtedly building for themselves a fortress. Today in 1987 some of them are beginning to understand what it means to live a fortress-life. It means that you are, day in and day out, year in and year out, on guard. It means that if you don’t go out in peace, others will come in in war. One thing is certain the day of the fortress is done.⁸⁰³

Solidarity is an underlying principle of many Vatican II documents based on the assertion of shared human dignity that is expressed in the very title of the document on Religious Freedom.⁸⁰⁴ It is, not surprisingly, a recurrent theme of *Gaudium et Spes* – solidarity within the family, solidarity within the political community, solidarity across international borders. Given its themes and the approach that it takes, it is not surprising that +Hurley (and Kearney) seem to have been only positive about the text of *Gaudium et Spes* (though this was not true of all bishops).

⁸⁰² Keane, “Vatican Council II: Keeping the Dream Alive”, 265

⁸⁰³ Paton, *Journey Continued*, 58

⁸⁰⁴ *Dignitatis Humanae*

From the beginning of the document, solidarity is presented as a key goal of the Church and of the Council:

Hence, giving witness and voice to the faith of the whole people of God gathered together by Christ, this Council can provide no more eloquent proof of its solidarity with, as well as its respect and love for, the entire human family with which it is bound up, than by engaging with it in conversation about these various problems.⁸⁰⁵

Hinze comments:

Gaudium et Spes introduced a particular way of framing social effects as an acting social mission that is one of its most important and, especially in the affluent North and West, still un-developed legacies. A scarlet thread running through this Pastoral Constitution is a growing recognition of Solidarity, or as I will call it Incarnational Solidarity, as an essential key for authentically Christian and human living in today's world.⁸⁰⁶

Though nowhere systematically developed, the notion of Solidarity saturates the text; it emerges in the document as a fact, a norm and an embodied vocation.⁸⁰⁷

The Solidarity *Gaudium et Spes* urges cannot remain simply an ideal or an interior attitude. It involves the immersion of bodies, the expenditure of time and energies in the midst of the blood, sweat and tears of the real world, in practices of presence and service. Incarnational Solidarity entails cultivating concrete habitual ways of acknowledging our we-ness by being with the neighbour, especially the suffering and needy neighbour.⁸⁰⁸

This is the very opposite of the fortress isolation that Kearney experienced in South Africa – during and after Apartheid – and also that had been the attitude of much of the Catholic Church for centuries. The Council Fathers are now proud to say:

As God did not create humans for life in isolation, but for the formation of social unity, so also 'it has pleased God to make each human being holy and save them not merely as individuals, without bond or link between them, but by making them into a single people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness.' ...This communitarian character is developed and consummated in the work of Jesus Christ. For the very Word made flesh willed to share in the human fellowship.⁸⁰⁹

Importantly, this 'sharing in human fellowship' is not then explicated by *Gaudium et Spes* with recourse to the abstract existential language of Nicaea, but instead by listing some of the ordinary human things that Jesus of Nazareth did. The Church that Christ founded is also presented as a sign of human solidarity but in a way that still allows for the inclusion of those who are not Christians:

As the firstborn of many brethren and by the giving of His Spirit, He founded after His death and resurrection a new brotherly community composed of all those who receive Him in faith and in love. This He did through His Body, which is the Church. There everyone, as members one of the other, would render mutual service according to the different gifts bestowed on each.⁸¹⁰

⁸⁰⁵ *Gaudium et Spes* 3

⁸⁰⁶ Hinze, Christine. "Straining towards Solidarity in a Suffering World – *Gaudium et Spes* after 40 Years". *Vatican II – 40 years later*. in William Madges ed. (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2006) 168

⁸⁰⁷ Hinze, "Straining towards Solidarity in a Suffering World" 173

⁸⁰⁸ Hinze, "Straining towards Solidarity in a Suffering World" 174

⁸⁰⁹ *Gaudium et Spes* 32 (quoting *Lumen Gentium* 9)

⁸¹⁰ *Gaudium et Spes* 32

Moreover, the action of Christ in creating human solidarity is not something just in the past, but also in the present and in the time still to come:

This solidarity must be constantly increased until that day on which it will be brought to perfection. Then, saved by grace, human beings will offer flawless glory to God as a family beloved of God and of Christ their brother.⁸¹¹

(Note that it is ‘human beings’ – or ‘man’ in the standard translation – who will ‘offer flawless glory to God’, not just Christians – the family referred to is clearly the family of all humankind.)

Such a commitment to the profound equality of all human beings is one that, according to +Tutu, was reinforced for +Hurley by his study of Teilhard; it was for him ‘almost intoxicating to see the cosmic Christ in these dimensions’.

The consequences of this Christology was the realisation of the infinite worth of each single person as being created in the image of God.⁸¹²

Promoting this sense of being in radical solidarity with each other becomes a key theme for Kearney at the Denis Hurley Centre. For example, while raising funds for the project, he distributed a prayer in 2013 (in English and Zulu) which stresses the importance of over-coming divisions:

God of love and compassion, justice and peace, truth and freedom, as we construct the Denis Hurley Centre we pray that you will build in us these core values of your kingdom so strongly promoted by Archbishop Hurley.

Help us to ensure that this centre will bridge all the divisions of our society, that it will serve the poorest and most vulnerable whatever their race or faith, and that in this centre all will find their God-given dignity, honoured and valued.⁸¹³

This does not mean that Kearney was not also sometimes one who inadvertently reinforced divisions. In private notes from a meeting in 2012, there is a surprising reference by him to how ‘vagrants are getting into the old building’ now that it has been left empty for eight months before it was demolished.⁸¹⁴ The use of the term vagrants is one that he would not condone once the Denis Hurley Centre was up and running.

The approach instead has been to describe homeless people as ‘citizens of Durban’, albeit ones who do not have a permanent place to sleep. Sadly, Kearney did not live to see the triumphant way in which this was visibly demonstrated through the Denis Hurley Centre’s partnership with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). For the general election in May 2019, and again municipal elections in November 2021, the Denis Hurley Centre became a place where homeless citizens could

⁸¹¹ *Gaudium et Spes* 32

⁸¹² Tutu, Desmond. “Foreword”. *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) page x. +Hurley had actually named Teilhard in a debate at the Council on 22 October 1964 calling him ‘that loyal son of the Church’. This was radical indeed since the Vatican had forbidden the Jesuit from publishing on theology for the last 11 years of his life though there is evidence that he still did albeit discretely as explained in more detail in Prats, Mercè. *Une parole attendue: la circulation des photocopies de Teilhard de Chardin* (Paris: Salvator, 2022). See also: Hurley, *Vatican II*, 172.

⁸¹³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/2 “2013” (Prayer for the +Hurley centre)

⁸¹⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/9 “Team Co-ordinators 2012”

register as voters, could meet and challenge political candidates, and then could vote alongside the other citizens who lived in the area.⁸¹⁵

But Kearney did witness – and support and sometimes initiate – a number of activities of the Denis Hurley Centre that helped build a sense of solidarity. For example:

- in August 2015, the Sharks (local cup-winning rugby team) invited homeless people to King's Park stadium
- in June 2016, at an event for Father's Day, wealthy children from Kloof parish baked and shared cakes with the homeless men who were fathers
- also in June 2016, an art project was part of the World AIDS Conference in Durban in which street children and learners from private schools worked side by side
- in December 2017, a fundraising campaign (the Social Meal Project) connected tourists in restaurants visiting Durban for the holidays with the homeless people they saw on the streets
- in March 2018, a play produced at the Denis Hurley Centre by Empatheatre connected the experiences of four women (South African and foreign) who moved to Durban.

Summaries of all of these can be found in the relevant monthly newsletter 'Update' of the Denis Hurley Centre.⁸¹⁶

Kearney was also keen to promote the mixing of volunteers so that the act of volunteering itself would be a way of overcoming barriers. Chapter 6 will describe how he ensured that the kitchen was a place where people of different faiths could comfortably work side by side. Kearney was also keen that among the volunteers were homeless people themselves so that, while peeling vegetables, the distinction between who was homeless and who was not would disappear. I recall one older, middle-class white lady confessing to me that when she first started volunteering she was nervous about driving into town because she was intimidated by 'the homeless at the robots'. "But are you," I asked her, "intimidated by Vusi?" (a young man from the streets who had been working alongside her that morning). "Of course not," she immediately replied, perplexed. "I don't see him as homeless, I see him as Vusi." Her simple response expresses the principles behind Chapter 1 of *Gaudium et Spes* (12-22) on the Dignity of the Human Person; and also every Gospel parable in which Jesus affirms the identity of the individual (e.g. Lk 19: 1-10).

One particular event was the 'Dare to Share' Sleep Out in front of City Hall in May 2016 at which homeless and non-homeless citizens slept on the pavement side-by-side. In Kearney's report about this to the Cathedral PPC (May 2016), he highlighted the phrase 'shared citizenship'.⁸¹⁷ Then, in a report to the PPC later in the year (September 2016) he expressed concern about a missed opportunity to show 'shared citizenship'. He was commenting on an event that was held for Heritage Day:

⁸¹⁵ "Update May 2019", *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 26 September 2022); "Update November 2021", *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 26 September 2022)

⁸¹⁶ "Update", *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 26 September 2022)

⁸¹⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/5 "2016" (Report to Cathedral PPC, May 2016)

Despite lots of work put into this event, both by the parish and the centre, the lunch didn't work out as well as we had hoped.⁸¹⁸

This was a diplomatic way of him drawing attention to the lack of success in serving food to parishioners and homeless people side by side. Since lunch would usually be served to the homeless on a Sunday, and the Cathedral wanted to serve food to parishioners to celebrate Heritage Day, it was decided jointly that there would be only one process of distributing food. However, in the event, parishioners pushed homeless people out of the queue telling them that they should go elsewhere. Kearney was clearly pained by this experience but also saw it as an opportunity to learn: he blamed the failure on 'a lack of clear agreement on the goals, lack of oversight by the committee, poor anticipation of numbers' but at least he hoped 'this is a learning experience and that next time we start with a smaller scale project'. At time of writing, the Cathedral parish has still not been persuaded to try to make this event happen in the way envisaged.

However, there is one eating-together event at the Denis Hurley Centre that Kearney helped inaugurate and which is evidence of the solidarity he was so keen to espouse. It also has links back to his days at Diakonia when they anticipated the reimagining of the Day of the Vow as the Day of Reconciliation. The event is explained by this author in a paper which describes the ways in which faith communities 'share the table':

Let me end by describing an annual event, which is a culmination of our vision as an organisation. In South Africa, 16 December is a day that was laden with divisive symbolism; since 1994 it has been promoted as a unifying event: the Day of Reconciliation. Most faiths have at their core a meal as a symbolic act of reconciliation – the Christian Eucharist, the Jewish Passover, the Muslim *iftaar* during Ramadan.

But, by definition, these meals are all reserved for people within each religious tradition. None of them offers the heavenly vision of a meal in which all the righteous join together in one communal gathering. So for the Day of Reconciliation, we have established an annual Meal of Reconciliation. This is not a meal in which the rich serve the poor; this is a meal at which the rich and the poor are served together and share the same meal at the same table.

We are not yet in heaven, so it is far from perfect. The conversation is awkward. Housed people want to run around and help – partly to be useful, but also to avoid talking to others. Homeless people, so used to 'eating and running', need to be encouraged to stay for a dinner party. Differences of faith are usually not a problem but, this being South Africa, differences of colour are, at least to begin with. But, each year the atmosphere is more relaxed, and 'reconciliation' becomes not a big theological act but a small human gesture of a shared conversation or a song or a dance. We are not disguising the differences that exist between people but, we hope, we are providing a context in which those differences do not get in the way and people discover what they have in common.

We are each nourished by our own faith roots – but the tree that we all inhabit has wide branches, big enough to accommodate even those who thought they had no place to call

⁸¹⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/5 "2016" (Report to Cathedral PPC, September 2016)

home. 'The Lord of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain' (Is 25:6).⁸¹⁹

Vatican II, consistent with Catholic tradition, describes 'the Lord [leaving] behind a pledge of this hope and strength for life's journey' in the form of the Eucharist that will 'provide a meal of brotherly solidarity and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet'.⁸²⁰ As was discussed in Chapter 3, Kearney was keenly aware that Christians cannot always share with each other the Eucharist as 'a meal of brotherly solidarity' – and certainly not with people of other faiths. This Meal of Reconciliation was thus an alternative but still sacramental way of providing 'a foretaste of the heavenly banquet'. It was certainly an event at which I saw him take great pleasure every year.

Concluding Image

As in other chapters, I want to end with an image of Kearney: one which, for me, captures how radical his commitment was not just to assist 'those who are poor or in any way afflicted' but also to be in solidarity with them in 'their joys and hopes, their griefs and anxieties'.⁸²¹

Around August 2015, I was waiting for Kearney to join me for a meeting and, uncharacteristically, he was late. I started asking around the building if anyone had seen him. And eventually I found him sitting on a bench outside (in an area which since his death has been officially re-named 'Paddy Kearney Way') chatting to some of the homeless men. It turned out that our new social worker, Khulekile Mdiniso, who had not met Kearney, had seen a dishevelled old man walking towards the building, in his shabby clothes and carrying two old plastic bags. Not realising he was the Chair of the Trust, she assumed he was homeless and invited him to sit down with the others and wait for lunch. When I explained the mistake to Kearney he replied, with a twinkle: "It is an honour to be taken for a homeless person."

I think his reaction – not just to this situation but to many of the bizarre and unjust situations through which he lived – express these words that Morphet uses about Rick Turner but which could equally be about Kearney:

The value of Turner's life lies in its triumphant demonstration of autonomous value-creating thought and action. The demonstration involves a coherent dialectic of action and reflection which has the capacity to transcend all limitations placed upon it by the irrational situation in which the life was lived.⁸²²

⁸¹⁹ Powell, Caroline, Perrier, Raymond and le Roux, De la Harpe. "Sharing the table: Reflections on the engagement of faith-based communities with homelessness in three South African cities". *Facing Homelessness*. Stephan de Beer and Rehana Vally eds. (Durbanville: AOSIS, 2021) 234

⁸²⁰ *Gaudium et Spes* 38

⁸²¹ *Gaudium et Spes* 1

⁸²² Morphet, "Foreword", xxxiii

Chapter 5: Kearney – Confronting Violence and Suffering

Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. (Mt 16:24-25)

Introduction

Of all the 177,000 words of the documents of Vatican II, none have resonated more through the intervening 60 years than the 41 words that open *Gaudium et Spes*:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.⁸²³

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this author first worked with Kearney in 2011 as part of a nationwide project to prepare for the 50th anniversary of the Council. The title of that initiative ‘Hope and Joy’ was intentionally an echo of these famous words. Kearney remarked to me at the time that the title was well chosen because it reminded people of the Church’s desire to be close to all humans; but he also stressed that, in mentioning the ‘joys and hopes’, we must also not forget the challenge to the Church to be alongside people in their ‘griefs and anxieties’ as well.⁸²⁴

This chapter dovetails with Chapter 4 which explored the emergence of Kearney as an activist and one who, through his ministry, lived up to the Church’s preferential option for the poor. But for Kearney this activism came at a cost: a personal cost in terms of suffering, a cost in walking alongside others who were suffering, and a public commitment to helping others engage with a theology of suffering.

In a ritualised way, from a relatively young age, Catholics are reminded that suffering is part of what it means to follow Christ. Tim Dunne, who was only two years younger than Kearney and went to the same Marist high school, recalls his confirmation which is likely to have been very similar for the young Kearney:

It was the custom to confirm young Catholics around the age of 9 or 10. I recall the sense of pride that I felt when the Archbishop ritually struck my cheek, called me by my confirmation name, and asked me to be a soldier of Christ. Evil in the world, and sinfulness in ourselves, were (and are) our enemy.⁸²⁵

I want to explore these themes of suffering in more detail. The iconic Good Friday service that Kearney initiated and then oversaw for the next 19 years is key to understanding how Kearney engaged with suffering, his own, Christ’s and that of others.

Thus, the image I want to propose to open this chapter comes from the very first Good Friday Service that Kearney organised in 1985. It appears with many others in the 2009 book that

⁸²³ *Gaudium et Spes* 1

⁸²⁴ Personal recollection of the author, around Sept 2011, Glenwood Pastoral Centre, Durban.

⁸²⁵ Dunne, Tim. “Who shall dwell on your Holy Mountain?”. *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 177

commemorates the annual event.⁸²⁶ The photo depicts an ecumenical group of Christian leaders showing the Church, on the most solemn day of its year, in public solidarity with those who are suffering. Kearney has brought the group together but then stands, typically, just off to the side avoiding the limelight. Whilst the central gesture of carrying a cross is one that traverses 1,950 years of Christian history, the specific message each year was (as the book details) intentionally a response to an annual reflection on the 'signs of the times'.

Good Friday

Chapter 4 has talked about a number of the initiatives devised by Kearney when at Diakonia. Of all of these, the one which has had the most enduring legacy is the ecumenical Good Friday Service that was first held in 1985. It meets all of the characteristics that were identified in Chapter 4 in relation to the 1981 Anti-Republic Day Festival project.

It is significant and visible; it was hard for the authorities to suppress because it was not a direct confrontation; it could be presented as a prophetic act; it enabled other religious leaders and ordinary members of the public to show their support; it was based on something factual and educational (each year presenting a new theme); it could be shared by all racial groups (and as will be mentioned in Chapter 6 even some other religious groups); and it promoted a principle of non-violence (in stark opposition to the violence of the crucifixion). It is also, of course, immersed in religious faithfulness. And though it was not, at first, presented as an alternative dissenting act of loyalty, it does (implicitly) draw attention to the divisions between Christians inherent in their other acts of Easter worship; and (over the years) stands in opposition to the failure of the Liberation government to deliver for the poor.

Diakonia themselves produced a photographic book (dedicated to Kearney) covering the origins and development of the Good Friday Service for its first 24 years up to 2008.⁸²⁷ There is therefore no need here to recount the 19 services that were organised by Kearney (from 1985 to 2003 when he went on sabbatical and then retired).

It is interesting to note some possible precursors to this event. Ela Gandhi describes how in the 1970s +Hurley was already joining others in a Good Friday fast and prayers for the many who suffered incarceration.⁸²⁸ I mentioned in Chapter 4 both the 'invitation to pray' on Republic Day in 1981, and also the services for reconciliation held on the Day of the Vow (in contrast to the triumphalist service of dedication traditionally held in Dutch Reformed churches). Other examples include inter-denominational services held in Emmanuel Cathedral to show solidarity with detainees.⁸²⁹

It is also worth noting that the first Good Friday Service takes place on Friday 5 April 1985, barely eight weeks after +Hurley nearly faced a major trial in the Durban High Court, accused of publishing

⁸²⁶ Diakonia. *Pilgrimage of Hope* (Durban: Diakonia, 2009) 11

⁸²⁷ Diakonia. *Pilgrimage of Hope* (Durban: Diakonia, 2009). The book mistakenly keeps referring to 23 years though it actually covers 24; it is unclear why they did not wait for the 25th anniversary.

⁸²⁸ Gandhi, Ela. "An Epitome of Kindness". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 116. (She might however have simply mixed up the dates of the start of the Diakonia service).

⁸²⁹ There was mention in Chapter 4 of a service in 1976, right at the beginning of Diakonia, to draw attention to the death in custody of Joseph Mdluli. There was another one in 1982 to commemorate the death of Neil Aggett and to remember other detainees (the names of 47 detainees who died in custody were read out as the bell was tolled). See: SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Southern Cross*, 28 February 1982)

untruths about the police.⁸³⁰ +Hurley and Diakonia are thus already in the national, and indeed international, spotlight as a voice of resistance in Apartheid South Africa. With the deftness of a PR professional, or a prophet, Kearney takes full advantage of this.

I note two interesting ways in which the story of the Good Friday Service has taken on the power of a myth. First of all, the notion of an ecumenical gathering on Good Friday is presented as something which is a brand new idea: but from my own recollection it was commonplace in English towns already by the late 1970s for different denominations to march together in a 'Walk of Witness'.⁸³¹

The other is the claim that visiting prisoners on Good Friday was an ancient prerogative of the bishop and so one that the Nationalist Government could not refuse to +Hurley. Thus, Carmel Rickard's report in the *Natal Witness*: "the solemn procession is a ritual practiced by the Christian church for many centuries that of visiting prisoners on Good Friday". She does not attribute this to anyone but simply presents it as a fact.⁸³²

When I once asked Kearney about this, he smiled mischievously and replied: "It might be an ancient tradition, who knows? Ancient is a long time ago...". In describing the planning for the first event, it is noteworthy that the book describes the desire to honour the 16 detainees *before* it refers to Good Friday.⁸³³ So perhaps the ancient tradition was not so ancient but, once again, as the Italians say: *Se non é vero, é ben trovato*.

From the extensive press coverage both before the first Good Friday Service and reporting on it afterwards ("Hide not your light under a bushel!") this is referred to throughout as a 'religious procession' not a march.⁸³⁴ The thin line of legality is one that the first event (and all Good Friday Services up to 1989) had to tread carefully given the State of Emergency measures that were in place. Stress is placed on the need for the procession to be in silence (a poignant tradition that continued even after Liberation); there is a clear distinction between a 'service' and a 'procession' (so that the service could still be held if permission was not granted for the procession); there is a strict ban on any placards, etc. It should be borne in mind that the very fact that there were detainees at the Durban prison, and what their names were, was supposedly *sub rosa*. It is therefore particularly risky that in the press Hurley talks about 'his 16 friends' and Kearney makes an explicit reference to other famous prisoners (which would have included Mandela):

We proceed in solidarity with the treason trialists who have sought to help change our society to one based on love, justice and truth.⁸³⁵

A good perspective on how Kearney wanted the event to be remembered at the time comes from the Diakonia newsletter of May 1985. As well as referencing the 'ritual practiced by the Christian church for many centuries that of visiting prisoners on Good Friday', it describes the presence of ministers of the eight member churches, 'family of the Treason Trialists' (though this might have simply meant detainees), and 300 members of the churches. In the same copy of *Diakonia News* there is an article contrasting the Good Friday Service with marches led by +Tutu (to John Vorster Police HQ in Johannesburg) and Beyers Naudé (to Parliament in Cape Town), with the address by President PW Botha to two million members of the Shembe Church at Mount Moriah. The article

⁸³⁰ Kearney, G Paddy. *Guardian of the Light* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2009) 221

⁸³¹ I stress *English* towns because it was not a practice in *Scotland*; this author actually initiated the first ever ecumenical Walk of Witness in Glasgow in 2003 while a Jesuit novice, a practice which has continued to this day.

⁸³² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Natal Witness*, 8 April 1985)

⁸³³ Diakonia, *Pilgrimage of Hope*, 9

⁸³⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (Various titles, 4-8 April 1985)

⁸³⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Daily News*, 6 April 1985)

contrasts a fundamentalist reading of Romans 13:1 (obeying government authority) and the progressive understanding that the authority of a government should be judged for its content. It notes the biblical quote ‘obedience to God comes before obedience to humans.’ (Acts 5:29).⁸³⁶

Mike Vorster, who co-ordinated the church leaders for the first Good Friday Service, recalls one internal area of controversy around the event. Whereas in the Catholic and Anglican traditions, Good Friday is a solemn day with all the focus on the dying Christ, for many Reformed Christians the cross is a symbol not of the Passion but of the Resurrection.⁸³⁷ Vorster recognises that there was always a tension that was eventually resolved by the later addition to the service of the ‘flowering of the cross’ (a Methodist custom to symbolise Easter, though rather jarring for Catholics and Anglicans when it happens at 8am on Good Friday!). But music helped win the argument and the spiritual “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” became a standard of the service, thus stressing the theology of suffering and liberation through the cross. Vorster admits that one year he did lose the argument and the organisers succeeded in removing the word ‘Crucified’ from the Good Friday Service liturgy.⁸³⁸

From 1987, a theme was chosen each year for the annual service and the choice of these provides a good indication of what preoccupied Kearney (and Diakonia) in the years up to democracy: 1987 – children in detention; 1988 – detentions and bannings; 1989 – truth; 1990 – peace; 1991 – healing; 1992 – suffering, reconciliation and peace; 1993 – brought together; 1994 – one new people (just four weeks before the first elections).⁸³⁹

Wallis and Hollyday, writing a few years after the start of the Good Friday tradition, make a reference to singing in prison; this would have put Kearney in mind of the detainees in 1985 joining in the hymns being sung outside the prison walls (and also his own time in prison, discussed later):

It’s a great joy for our people to go into jail and start singing. Oppressed people who can sing must be subversive to any oppressive power. And for our people to experience this in worship as well as on the streets, in the Struggle, in political rallies, is a sign of hope that is one of the strongest things that we’ve got.⁸⁴⁰

They also describe the tension between hope and suffering:

Nothing can be more hopeless than Good Friday; but then Sunday happens. You can’t but be a prisoner of hope. And you also meet so many wonderful people, people who have suffered and remain faithful.⁸⁴¹

The 1989 Good Friday Service was significant because it turned out to be the last one held under a State of Emergency and before the release of Mandela and others in February 1990. For that year, Kearney prepared a short booklet called ‘Good Friday and Repression’ in which he presented the Service as “a case study of liturgy and social concern”. He quoted extensively from Nolan’s *God in South Africa*.

Where is God in South Africa today? God can be heard in the crying of the children in detention. It is not their innocence, their holiness, their virtue, their religious perfection that

⁸³⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/E/Diakonia/2 (*Diakonia News*, May 1985)

⁸³⁷ Hence the absence of a *Christus* – the distinction between a Cross and a Crucifix.

⁸³⁸ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia and Methodist Bishop)

⁸³⁹ Diakonia, *Pilgrimage of Hope*, 5

⁸⁴⁰ Wallis, Jim and Hollyday, Joyce. *Crucible of Fire: the Church confronts Apartheid* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1989) 60

⁸⁴¹ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 69

make them look like God. It is their suffering, their oppression, the fact that they have been sinned against. Suffering makes God visible as the one who is sinned against. The suffering of the people of South Africa is one of the great signs of our times. It is the sign of God's presence as the crucified Christ. It is the sign of the cross.⁸⁴²

In talking about the cross as the archetypal Christian symbol of suffering, Nolan also mentions the Mass held in Sebokeng in January 1985 at which instruments of oppression were brought up in the offertory procession: rubber bullets, tear gas canisters, rent bills and chains which, like the cross of repression can be transformed into sacred symbols of liberation.⁸⁴³

Later, as reported in the Durban papers, a gospel magazine from the USA *Family Protection Scoreboard* used a distorted photograph of +Hurley at that Mass to make it look as if he was blessing violent agitators holding rubber bullets (whereas in fact he was blessing the man bringing them up in the Offertory Procession so they could be symbolically destroyed.)⁸⁴⁴ Events like this must have made Kearney all too aware that symbols that were used to tell one story could be mistakenly or maliciously interpreted to tell a different story.

One mark of the Good Friday Service, as captured in the book *Pilgrimage of Hope*, is the continued creativity of Kearney and his team. Dina Cormick, who was often responsible for the graphic design, did comment that she felt that sometimes Kearney was not as radical as she would want him to be.⁸⁴⁵ But this probably reflects Kearney's cautious personality and also his awareness that he needed to keep all the member churches on side.

For Kearney, creativity always had to be rooted in theology. One especially striking example of this was the use in the 1990 procession of a cross 'made from the charred roof beams from a house that had been burnt by a petrol bomb', bringing the local experience of violence into the heart of the Good Friday Service.⁸⁴⁶ This was an interesting echo of the cross made from charred roof beams after Coventry Cathedral in England was all but destroyed during a *Blitzkrieg* in 1940; from that experience emerged the Community of the Cross of Nails which Kearney later encouraged the Denis Hurley Centre to join.⁸⁴⁷

When he visited El Salvador in 1992, Kearney would also have learnt of the tradition there of creating images for the Way of the Cross which depicted actual local experiences of death and suffering. Some years later Julian Filochowski (who while at CAFOD had supported both +Hurley and +Romero) gave Kearney a book of such Stations of the Cross and Kearney records his reaction: "rather ghastly and bloody, but perhaps necessary at a time when many have forgotten these incidents and some apparently deny that they ever happened."⁸⁴⁸ He was writing about El Salvador but must have had South Africa in mind as well. A similar book linking local suffering to the suffering of Christ, was reviewed by Kearney in 2015. Kearney makes a point of quoting Nouwen's words:

⁸⁴² Nolan, Albert. *God in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 67

⁸⁴³ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 59 (Note that this was before the Sebokeng massacre which did not happen until January 1991).

⁸⁴⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Sunday Tribune*, 3 May 1987)

⁸⁴⁵ Cormick Dina. Personal interview by author, 21 December 2020 in Durban (freelance designer for Diakonia)

⁸⁴⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*The Southern Cross*, 29 April 1990)

⁸⁴⁷ "Update August 2016", *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 26 September 2022)

⁸⁴⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 "Morning Pages: May-July 2005" (31 May 2005, Cambridge)

There is immense pain in the wide world around us; there is immense pain in the small world within us. But all pain belongs to Jesus and is transformed by him into glorious wounds that allow us to recognise him as our risen Lord.⁸⁴⁹

Kearney was not to know how immense that pain would turn out to be for him only a few months after the first Good Friday Service.

Kearney's detention

1985 turned out to be a momentous year: in February, +Hurley was arrested and almost tried for defaming the police; in April, they jointly launched a hugely impactful Good Friday Service; and in August, Kearney was detained without trial.

The issue of detainees – and deaths in detention – had been high on Kearney's mind since the beginning of Diakonia. Mary de Haas recalls that one of the early works of Diakonia was to prepare with PACSA fact sheets about detentions.⁸⁵⁰ Mention has already been made of the services that commemorated the deaths of Mdluli (1976) and Aggett (1982) at which Kearney outlined a nationwide detainees support committee, the Durban branch of which was housed at Diakonia; also that the focus of the first Good Friday Service had been the 16 men detained in the Durban prison (including one, Archie Gumede, who was in fact a member of the Diakonia Council). So detention or arrest were threats breathing down the necks of Kearney and others.

In fact, there had already been at least one arrest of someone while working at Diakonia. Charles Yeats was resisting conscription in 1981 and working at Diakonia as a claimed form of civic service. The press article tells a lovely story of how Yeats was celebrating his 25th birthday with tea and cake in Kearney's office when the military police arrived to arrest him. Kearney invited them to join in the gathering and sing a hymn. "The policeman then stood between Mr Yeats and Mr Kearney, held their hands, and joined in a grace."⁸⁵¹

Two years later, in November 1983 on the other side of the country, Fr Smangalis Mkhathshwa the Secretary General of the SACBC was arrested and only released after more than four months in jail including three months in solitary confinement.⁸⁵² Kearney was thus not surprised when the police came for him. In fact, some reports suggest that he knew the exact day they were coming and so was prepared for it, hence the presence of +Hurley and a legal representative.

I want to tell the story initially through press reports of the time, most of which are in Kearney's own archive. Although the story centres around Kearney, it in fact becomes a story about +Hurley and his battle to get Kearney freed. Thus, while Kearney would never normally keep a press file on himself, he has kept a full file about this incident because of what it shows about +Hurley.

On Monday 26 August 1985, Kearney was detained under section 29 of the Internal Security Act which allowed incommunicado indefinite detention. The police arrived shortly after 8am and searched his office, ignoring +Hurley and a legal representative. The staff organised prayers and

⁸⁴⁹ Kearney, G Paddy. *Faith in Action* (Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal Christian Council, 2017) 271 ("Review of *Walk with Jesus: Stations of the Cross* by Henri Nouwen", *The Southern Cross*, 10-16 June 2015)

⁸⁵⁰ de Haas, Mary. Personal interview by author, 30 September 2020 in Durban (fellow activist and mother-in-law to Kearney's niece)

⁸⁵¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Natal Mercury*, February 1981)

⁸⁵² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Southern Cross*, 20 November 1983)

hymns outside the office. They then searched his home though they only removed a tape of BBC radio programmes belonging to his wife Carmel. +Hurley is quoted as saying:

The police behaviour is an attack on a church body trying to do the work of Christ in the Apartheid-ridden unjust society of South Africa. We also express our full confidence in Paddy Kearney who has given splendid leadership to Diakonia and will do so again in the future.⁸⁵³

His wife added that Kearney was deeply religious, a pacifist and dedicated to non-violence and to bringing about justice, peace and reconciliation in South Africa.⁸⁵⁴

Almost a whole page was devoted in the paper the following Sunday to the story of the application for his release. It also mentioned that Rickard had obtained agreement that detainees could see a priest. She was quoted as saying “I don’t believe the claim that Paddy doesn’t want to see a priest; he would never miss communion.”⁸⁵⁵

On Monday 2 September, eight days after the detention, it was reported that +Hurley and Rickard were applying for the release of Kearney. They were arguing that, before any lawful arrest could take place, the officer must have ‘reason to believe’ as the basis on which he was relying and that, without that, he would not have satisfied the Act’s prerequisites. It was also reported that Kearney was visited by a Catholic chaplain.⁸⁵⁶

On Thursday 5 September, there was a report of the application before Justice Ramon Leon. +Hurley called Kearney a committed Christian with deeply held convictions, whom he had known since birth. Rickard was also a character witness.⁸⁵⁷

The Southern Cross ran the story with +Hurley describing the action of the police as ‘high-handed behaviour’. Support was recorded from around the world: the head of the Justice & Peace desk of the US Catholic bishops, Bishop Casey in Galway, Misereor, Oxfam and CIIR. A statement from the Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Durban protested most strongly: “We see such actions as contributing to the overall escalation of violence in our country.”⁸⁵⁸

16 days after he was detained, on Wednesday 11 September the judge ruled in favour of Kearney and called for his immediate release. It was explained that Colonel Coetzee had declined to furnish the basis on which he had ‘reason to believe’ or even to say when, where and to whom information was given. In his judgement, Mr Justice Leon said the case raised matters of great constitutional importance affecting the liberty of the subject and the security of the state. “It is necessary to remind oneself from time to time that the first and most sacred duty of a court when possible is to administer justice to those who seek it – high and low, rich and poor, black and white.”⁸⁵⁹

Tony Matthews, Professor of Law, praised the judgement as very important. “For the first time the court has put significant restraints on the exercise of official power in the Republic”.⁸⁶⁰ In another newspaper, Prof Matthews commented on the use of section 29 saying: “It has always presented by

⁸⁵³ Amooore, Frederick. ‘Denis Hurley: his witness to love of neighbour’. *Facing the Crisis – selected texts of Archbishop D E Hurley*. Philippe Denis ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1997) 213

⁸⁵⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Natal Witness*, 27 August 1985)

⁸⁵⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Sunday Tribune*, 1 September 1985)

⁸⁵⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Natal Mercury*, 2 September 1985)

⁸⁵⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Natal Mercury*, 5 September 1985)

⁸⁵⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Southern Cross*, 8 September 1985)

⁸⁵⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Daily News*, 11 September 1985)

⁸⁶⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Natal Witness*, 12 September 1985)

far the greatest danger of abuse.” There was support for the judgement from the chair of the Bar Council of the Society of Advocates in Natal, Keith McCall, who said: “It was a landmark decision which underlies the independence of the judiciary and the power of the courts to safeguard the liberty of the subject.” Even Kearney’s political foe from the 1983 Tri-Cameral referendum, the leader of Solidarity Pat Poovalingam, applauded the judgement for the independence it showed in the primacy of the courts.⁸⁶¹

The editorial of *The Mercury* was devoted to the case: “It is an important reaffirmation of the courts’ first duty which is to protect the individual’s rights against threats from any quarter.”⁸⁶²

One week later a Mass was offered in the Cathedral with the slogan on the altar “If you want Peace, work for Justice” (from Pope Paul VI’s address of 1 Jan 1972). Kearney was present and the names of 100 people still in detention were written up on a list and attached to pillars in the cathedral.

However, the matter did not end there. The State appealed against the ruling and in March 1986 the Appeal went to the Supreme Court to be heard by five judges. In her article, Rickard added a final line: “it is not a trial of Mr Kearney who has not been charged with any offence.” In the appeal ‘reason to believe’ was challenged as not meaning the same as ‘reasonable grounds to believe’.⁸⁶³

A few days later there was coverage that the judgement had meant that several detainees were freed using ‘the Hurley case’ as a precedent. At the same time there was a story of two trade unionists being arrested while at Diakonia, one being Alec Erwin who was arrested for ‘disturbing the peace’.⁸⁶⁴

Ten weeks after it was heard, the appeal was dismissed, with costs awarded to +Hurley. The Appeal Court panel stated: “It was most unlikely that the legislature could have intended that the belief that was required for an arrest need not be founded on reasonable grounds and the court would not be entitled to enquire whether the officer concerned had reasonable grounds for his belief.”⁸⁶⁵

Kearney did not often speak of himself but, less than a year after the detention (and before the appeal was heard), he did speak quite candidly to a room full of young people:

Perhaps the most powerful and personal experience of God’s presence was when I was detained last year. Detention is an unpleasant experience with solitary confinement, interrogation and every aspect of one’s life being probed—not knowing what the future holds and a guard watching you 24 hours a day. You have no idea what is happening to your family and friends.

In this very trying situation, I read the Bible as I had never read it before. I took the time to stop and reflect and pray and found the psalms especially comforting. Also, I remembered words of hymns sung at the church where I worship, Christ the King in Wentworth, for example: “Be not afraid, I go before you always, come follow me and I will give you rest”. This made me aware that God was going before me even in this painful experience.

Then there were visits by the prison chaplain on two occasions to give me communion and to lead a short service. We invited the security policeman who came with him and the man

⁸⁶¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Daily News*, 12 September 1985)

⁸⁶² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Mercury* Editorial, 12 September 1985)

⁸⁶³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Natal Witness*, 12 March 1986)

⁸⁶⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Weekly Mail*, 14 March 1986)

⁸⁶⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Daily News*, 22 May 1986)

who was guarding me night and day, to say the 'Our Father' together with us. It was reassuring to hear the chaplain say: "Many people are praying for you". Those prayers must have kept me going.

The detention ended quite suddenly when I was set free as a result of a Supreme Court order 17 days (sic) after being detained. After that, I met many people who said that they had been praying for me and I realised the power of prayer and also what a powerful network the Church is.⁸⁶⁶

The knowledge that he was being supported by prayer was clearly of great comfort to Kearney. In his copy of *Crucible of Fire*, Kearney has under-lined the following comment by Charles Villavicencio:

Solidarity is very important. When you are sitting in prison, when you are being convinced by your interrogators that you've been forgotten, and then you come out and know that there have been a whole lot of Christians at home and abroad doing what they can to support your family, that's very important.⁸⁶⁷

Because for Kearney this was as much as story about +Hurley as it was about himself, we have Kearney's own account of the detention in a chapter called 'Reason to Believe'.⁸⁶⁸ With characteristic modesty, he explains that the case is called 'Hurley and Another vs the Minister of Law and Order' (and indeed when taught today at law schools it is referred to as 'the Hurley case'). It is interesting, however, that he only devotes four pages to this and makes no comment on how he felt about being arrested and detained, that two days after he was detained it was his birthday, or about the trial or his release. His focus is on the lawyer's cleverness [Chris Nicholson] in identifying the loophole that 'reason to believe' meant that the court could require the police to present their reasons.⁸⁶⁹ Until they did, the ouster clause (that courts could not intervene in relation to someone detained under Section 29) did not apply since they were not yet legitimately detained. He also focuses on +Hurley standing up in court to provide a character witness for Kearney against which the police provided no counter-evidence. He quotes Nicholson as saying:

[+Hurley] rose to the occasion brilliantly. He was absolutely willing to say, with utmost confidence, that he knew this detainee extremely well, had known him from birth, and was utterly certain that there could be no good reason, as defined in the law, for the detention.⁸⁷⁰

It is odd that Kearney also mentions Carmel Rickard describing her as a 'legal journalist' without referencing that she was his wife! He quotes her as saying:

Archbishop Hurley led a triumphant procession to the security police HQ to demand the release of the first Section 29 detainee ever freed on the say-so of a court.⁸⁷¹

⁸⁶⁶ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 8 (Address to Kloof Methodist Youth, 16 February 1986)

⁸⁶⁷ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 90

⁸⁶⁸ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 252-255

⁸⁶⁹ Rickard has written that this was a loophole that Nicholson had already identified and was looking for a test case to try out when Kearney was detained. See: Rickard, Carmel. "Reason to Believe". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 121

⁸⁷⁰ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 254

⁸⁷¹ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 255

We get some insight into how +Hurley himself saw the events from letters that he wrote about it to his family. The first letter, which is not included among the published letters, is just two days after the detention and he writes poignantly: “Obviously we have had no contact with [Kearney] since. I hope to make application for myself or some other priest to see him. It is his birthday today.”⁸⁷²

The *Letters* book includes a long letter to his brother, and +Hurley’s report on Kearney’s trial and release occupy ten out of 13 paragraphs. Now that the dust has settled (and Kearney has been released unharmed), +Hurley allows himself a bit of levity; I cannot imagine Kearney writing in quite this way. Talking about the focus of their argument (‘if he has reason to believe’), he says: “Those six little words became the focus of keen attention.... These words became so important that we are considering hiring a pop composer to put them to music.”⁸⁷³

After describing Kearney’s release he says: “We wanted to jump up and down in our seats and roar our hurrahs but that is not done in court and we observed due decorum.” It is interesting how much sporting language +Hurley uses (as he did throughout his life): meeting Coetzee at the police station he calls him ‘a decent loser’; describing Carmel leaping out of her chair ‘to give [Paddy] a flying tackle in his midriff in a way that would make Tommy Bedford proud’.⁸⁷⁴

He ends with a paragraph which is, characteristically, both spiritual and spirited.

We all returned ... to Diakonia. There we found a triumphal tunnel of people, Black, White and every other colour, waiting to give Paddy a right royal and tumultuous welcome. We held a prayer service in a meeting hall immediately and it was very touching to hear Paddy describing how, when using the only reading material allowed to him namely the Bible, he had found tremendous strength and inspiration in the Psalms. He maintained that the many of the psalms were written specifically for detainees. Kearney's release lead to many more applications and quite a few other detainees went through the loophole punched by our legal team and Judge Leon.⁸⁷⁵

The following year, +Hurley writes to the same family members to report on the appeal. He explains that, while usually only lawyers attend from each side, he, Kearney and Rickard had attended. He is also impressed that the case is so important that it is being heard by the Judge President himself (even though he had been a law officer who helped draft the Internal Security Act and saw it through parliament). Again he uses sporting metaphors: ‘not getting a hammering’, ‘coming out with both fists’, ‘retreating into his corner’; ‘opening the batting’ and also fencing imagery.⁸⁷⁶

Interviewing people who were close to Kearney at the time of the detention does not reveal much more. Significantly, it reveals very little about Kearney himself, either his state of mind or how he coped (beyond what he shared at the Kloof meeting in 1986 cited above).

+Hurley’s secretary, Julie Matthias, recalls that the Archbishop was devastated when he heard the news and immediately went down to Diakonia to try and intervene.

He had a lot of contacts and the phone was red hot while he tried to see what he could do. He really worked like a demon to get Paddy released. It was also clear that his house and

⁸⁷² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Letters/2 “Hurley Letters 1977-1990” (Letter to Bobbie, Jerry and family, 29 August 1985)

⁸⁷³ Denis, Philippe, Kearney, Paddy & Argall, Jane eds. *A Life in Letters – selected correspondence of Denis Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2018) 353 (Letter to Bobbie and Jerry Hurley, 11 October 1985)

⁸⁷⁴ Denis, Kearney & Argall, eds. *A Life in Letters*, 353 (Letter to Bobbie and Jerry Hurley, 11 October 1985)

⁸⁷⁵ Denis, Kearney & Argall, eds. *A Life in Letters*, 353 (Letter to Bobbie and Jerry Hurley, 11 October 1985)

⁸⁷⁶ Denis, Kearney, & Argall eds. *A Life in Letters*, 364 (Letter to Bobbie and Jerry Hurley, 8 April 1986)

the phones were bugged and so he would discuss the case with the lawyers walking up and down on the lawn outside. This was absolutely +Hurley's prime focus during that period.

I think the detention took its toll on Paddy; he was the most unlikely person to be able to cope with such a situation: gaolers can be quite crude. But afterwards there was no sign of him pulling back.⁸⁷⁷

There are some interesting additional insights from my interview with Chris Nicholson, who was junior counsel on the case to David Gordon, but was the one who identified the legal loophole. Nicholson in fact was often in the Ecumenical Centre/ Diakonia because of the presence there of the Legal Resource Centre. He explained how LRC had originally set up in 1982 in Salmon Grove Chambers and then they had to move when the other white advocates in the Chambers resented the fact that LRC's non-white clients were using the toilets reserved for white people!

Things started heating up from '85. We knew the building was being watched, and the phones were tapped. Perhaps it was because of the UDF – did they have an office there? Paddy and I would both get threatening phone calls at home or at the office, daily or weekly. Why? Because we were white guys helping black guys.

We could tell that the guys were ex-Rhodesians because they spoke such good English! It was funny that we never had any security checks at the building – we didn't think of that. Paddy once showed me a written threat that he had received. It said: 'What happens to a white chicken at Christmas? – it gets killed!'. But Paddy downplayed it; he felt that to get a written threat was small beer compared to what others were suffering. We thought we would not get killed and in fact, in the end, no one involved in our work did actually get killed. Some of the documents that emerged during the Truth & Reconciliation Commission described us as 'People to be acted against'.

On the day, Paddy had received a message somehow that the Special Branch were going to detain him. I went across from my office and said you have no grounds, he is not a subversive, he is doing good Christian work. ... As we were preparing the case, we were checking which judge was on the roster – after all there are good judges and bad judges. We intentionally waited till the Monday when Ray Leon would be on duty. He was not a leftie but he was a good liberal judge. His reputation as the 'hanging judge' only came the following year after the trial of Andrew Zondo in February 1986 (and it was rubbish to call him that)...

The case got maximum publicity because of Carmel.

The precedent we were using (*Liversidge vs Anderson*) was a UK World War II case based on whether there was 'reason to believe' that someone was sympathetic to the Germans. We were relying on the minority decision of Lord Atkins that reasons must be presented even in war time. But our fear was that a South African judge would follow the majority decision...

By the way it was called 'the Hurley case' because Hurley was the client: Paddy was not in a position to sign papers. We could not even visit him.

⁸⁷⁷ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (secretary to +Hurley and secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

When we won, the Archbishop gave me a big bear hug. That was when I uttered the famous line: 'In the hurly-burly you need the burly Hurley!' He was able to say whatever was needed. He could state emphatically that Paddy was not involved in undermining the state. By the way, there were no witnesses in the stand; everything was done on paper in affidavit. And Special Branch refused to provide any evidence to counter +Hurley. The same principle was then used for others who were in detention e.g. Richard Steele.

After we won the case, the Government wanted to keep Paddy detained pending the Supreme Court Appeal [which was six months later!].

Paddy never talked about his experience in detention – but I know that no one laid a finger on him. He was questioned a lot especially about the UDF. They were very selective about who they tortured, but it was mostly black and Indian men. Awful stuff: electrodes on the testicles, increasing your levels of creatine kinase; testicles being swapped over.

When he won the appeal (almost nine months after case) the money he was awarded enabled Paddy to buy a house. They changed the wording of the law from 'reason to believe' to 'is of the opinion': if it is just an opinion it does not need to be explained! But they did not come back for Paddy. By that stage, things had got more serious and, to be honest, Paddy was small fry. They burnt their fingers with him.

But also Afrikaners have a Calvinist respect for the law e.g. if a court orders you to stop torturing, you stopped immediately even if there was no one who could verify it. They are very obedient to the word (unlike some others). The word was so important. This was very clear with the right-wing judges: they were very beholden to the actual word. In the struggle between Justice and Law they were always on the side of Law. For example, if there was no specification that a hearing was required, then they would not give a hearing – even if that was the fair thing to do.⁸⁷⁸

The other interviewees who might shed some light are those who were themselves detained or arrested around that time.

Richard Steele had been a Conscientious Objector.⁸⁷⁹ In October 1985, only a few weeks after Kearney was released, Steele, his wife Anita Kromberg, and Sue Britton were arrested and detained for 12 days.⁸⁸⁰ He recalls that they ended up in the Durban North police station, the one where Kearney had also been detained and where he had written a prayer on the cell door.⁸⁸¹ Steele explained that Kearney never discussed his detention with him.

Larry Kaufmann was a Redemptorist priest and activist detained in Howick in June 1986 for 14 days.

While I was being detained, Carmel would talk with my sister Bonnie who was in Durban and advise her on what she needed to do, such as demanding that I have a Bible. The text that kept me going was Mt 3:17 – 'you are my beloved son'. I met Paddy when I was released and we did compare notes. We were both threatened with indefinite detention if we did not give information. They wanted us to tell them when +Hurley or Albert Nolan were going

⁸⁷⁸ Nicholson, Chris. Personal interview by author, 1 September 2021 in Durban (Lawyer during detention trial)

⁸⁷⁹ Appendix E describes how he was introduced by Kearney to work at the Gandhi Settlement.

⁸⁸⁰ Sue Britton worked for many years with Kearney at Diakonia during which time she also became one of the first women Anglican priests in Natal. Though she is still alive, it has not been possible to interview her since sadly because of her ill-health.

⁸⁸¹ Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

to give a talk. They tried that with all of us. It seemed to me that, in a strange way, Paddy was stronger after his time in detention. He talked about how many people had supported him during his detention and how he could not have done it without them.⁸⁸²

Others in whom Kearney might have confided, like Priscilla McKay (a fellow Catholic activist and family friend) said that Kearney never spoke about his detention. "I think he was protecting himself".⁸⁸³ Brendan Moran (part of the End Conscription Campaign) said the same. "But I often wonder what gave him the mettle to carry on. And I think it was him being arrested, being detained."⁸⁸⁴

Loek Goemans points out that after his detention Kearney kept his glasses on all the time "as if it was a barrier. It was his way of keeping a distance from other people. He was worried about being picked up all the time."⁸⁸⁵

Mike Vorster once asked Kearney about his detention and he said: "They gave us a Bible – I wish I had had a commentary as well."⁸⁸⁶

Though it seems that he did not speak much to his friends about the detention, Kearney did uncharacteristically make some frank admissions about it in the television documentary mentioned earlier.⁸⁸⁷ He confirms the importance to his spiritual well-being of being able to read the psalms (especially Psalm 18) and also to sing hymns from memory. He was amused to see that the Bible he received had 'Security Police Durban' stamped on the inside and wondered if the same would be true of the communion hosts. In this interview, he does confirm that he was not tortured or hit in any way. This supports the comment above from Nicholson – that it was usually non-whites who were tortured. It is also borne out by an article in *The Southern Cross* in 1986 by Fr Smangalis Mkhathshwa talking about the way he was treated:

Shots were fired from behind and just above the back of my head, a creepy instrument was fed into my backside, the interrogation was punctuated by a string of insults too unprintable for here; I was humiliated in various ways by removing my trousers and underpants.⁸⁸⁸

Although the trauma of detention was over for Kearney and others, and a legal precedent was set that could help get others released, the ordeal did not end there. In an article in January 1987, +Hurley claimed that there were 25,000 people in detention and that among that number were 12 priests (including Fr Mkhathshwa), three deacons, four religious sisters, 20 seminarians and seven lay people active in Catholic work.⁸⁸⁹

Facing Security and Insecurity

The account above of Kearney's detention and trial was only the most extreme example of the intimidation that was used by the Nationalist Government against Kearney (and others like him) who

⁸⁸² Kaufmann, Larry. Personal interview by author, 12 Oct 2020 in Durban (Redemptorist priest and activist)

⁸⁸³ McKay, Priscilla. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow Catholic activist)

⁸⁸⁴ Moran, Brendan. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (member of the End Conscription Campaign)

⁸⁸⁵ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

⁸⁸⁶ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia and Methodist Bishop)

⁸⁸⁷ "The Light with Paddy Kearney", *SABC2*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J58-oBGtvqM> (accessed 28 September 2022) 11min from start

⁸⁸⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Southern Cross*, 10 August 1986)

⁸⁸⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Natal Mercury*, 21 January 1987)

spoke out against Apartheid. Comparisons have been made before with Rick Turner who was someone whom Kearney knew and worked close to, and who lived not very far away. Turner was assassinated in his home on 8 January 1978 and yet there is no evidence that his assassination had any impact on the nascent growth of Diakonia. Writing in the Foreword to the 1980 edition of Turner's book, Morphet says something about Turner which could equally be true of Kearney:

Any person in South Africa who shows capacities for mobilising individuals and groups, and who resists the intimidatory and alienatory pressures of the regime, receives attention from the police.⁸⁹⁰

Writing earlier, this had also been Alan Paton's experience and his description of the security police could also be true for Kearney:

After 50 years of a life blameless in the eyes of the law, it was painful suddenly to become the object of the attentions of the security police of my own country.... I am by nature a private rather than a public man and this was painful to me.⁸⁹¹

Kearney would have been warned about the intimidation by +Hurley himself – after all the Archbishop had received many threats and indeed a direct bomb attack on his home in October 1976.⁸⁹² Kearney's secretary at Diakonia recalls how calmly he reacted to all this:

I remember the security police phoning, saying nasty things, telling us that there were police spying on us from the nearby flats. They would threaten, they would come in to the office and throw papers around. I was fearful for myself but even more so for Paddy. But Paddy never showed fear – he was always a picture of calmness and strength. He probably felt it but he did not show it. I don't think I ever saw him afraid. It strikes me that he could have left but he chose not to; he stayed and tried to make a difference.⁸⁹³

Others who worked close to him have similar recollections of the sense of threat and also of Kearney's calm response to it.

We were being followed by the security police; Paddy did a U-turn and the car followed him back. He was regularly accused of harbouring terrorists. I remember when we were at Diakonia and the army surrounded the building.⁸⁹⁴

During the State of emergency in 1986, the whole building was surrounded. And Paddy just said we should allow the Security Branch to search the offices.⁸⁹⁵

There were times when there were Casspirs at the front and back of building. Constant intimidation. But I never saw Kearney angered by the Security Police. Was it because he so used to it? He always seemed to react so calmly. After 1994 there was an incident when he was hijacked in the township going to fetch his gardener. He just barely reacted.⁸⁹⁶

⁸⁹⁰ Morphet, Anthony. "Foreword". *Eye of the Needle*. Rick Turner (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1980) xxvii

⁸⁹¹ Paton, Alan. *Journey Continued* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 279

⁸⁹² Kearney, G Paddy ed. *Memories. The memoirs of Archbishop Denis E. Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: OMI, 2006) 188

⁸⁹³ Franks, Vanessa. Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Durban (secretary of Kearney at Diakonia)

⁸⁹⁴ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia and Methodist Bishop)

⁸⁹⁵ Mkame, Liz. Personal interview by author, 17 December 2020 in Pinetown (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁸⁹⁶ Goad, Daphne. Personal interview by author, 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

Paddy had a complete lack of care about his personal safety. A guy once climbed into his car in Russell Street. Paddy swerved the car and the guy fell out. And he actually felt sorry for the guy and still he does not drive around with his doors locked. Yes, I think he was hijacked a couple of times – was he just absent-minded or did he have such complete trust? Imagine staying calm in the face of threats or a hijack! That takes a lot of bottle!⁸⁹⁷

I was with him once when he was showing a Special Branch officer round the building; the guy asked Paddy how much the sweeper was paid. And he replied: 'He earns as much as I do.' The officer was completely thrown: 'You're a communist who actually practices what he preaches'.⁸⁹⁸

In the 2018 television documentary cited earlier, Kearney mentioned how this had all come as a complete surprise to him when he started Diakonia and that he was aware he was being followed from as early as 1976. He knew that the Security Police were opening his letters because sometimes they did not put them back in the right envelopes. He gives another example of how unhidden it was: he recounts at the beginning of the interview how he was jogging along the beach and could see the cars of the security branch queuing up to follow him.⁸⁹⁹

Despite this intimidation, Kearney's concern seemed to be less for his own security and fears and more for the fears of other South Africans, black and white. In August 1989 and again in August 1990, an American academic visiting from the **University of Massachusetts Boston (who was also a visiting Professor at UWC) conducted interviews with Kearney and others about South Africa's transition to democracy. He asks Kearney what he sees as the major white fears and Kearney replies:**

Loss of power and loss of control and loss of economic privilege. I mean all they see in the future is we are going to lose out, we are going to have less and less control over our own destiny, our children are going to have a much harder time than we have had, the schools are going to deteriorate, the hospitals will deteriorate, all those kinds of things; as things are equalised we are going to lose out.

They, of course, are not seeing that other people's status will be improved and that education for many hundreds of thousands of people will improve in the process, they are not seeing that at all because they have never really been aware of what goes on in black schools or hospitals or so forth and they also don't see that their security could improve. They only see their security worsening. The big discussion point in the white community is robberies. Wherever you go you hear people talking about robberies, their car being stolen, their house being burgled.⁹⁰⁰

It is clear that he is aware of the fears of white people and, while not wishing to diminish them, he does want to help them to put them in context.

⁸⁹⁷ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (secretary to +Hurley and secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

⁸⁹⁸ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney)

⁸⁹⁹ "The Light with Paddy Kearney", *SABC2*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J58-oBGtvqM> (accessed 28 September 2022) 1 min from start

⁹⁰⁰ O'Malley, Padraig. "The Heart of Hope - South Africa's Transition from Apartheid to Democracy". O'Malley Interviews. <https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv00017/04lv00344/05lv00355/06lv00371.htm> (accessed 12 July 2020)

This pattern of intimidation, harassment and detention tried to deter people from resistance to the regime. Paton's words again express eloquently the dilemma faced by those who want to do good:

The statements of intent came straight from heaven but they had to be carried out by earthly man. This is true of course of all human societies and it is nowhere to be seen more clearly than in my own country. Most white South Africans would no doubt like to be good but they want to be safe too.⁹⁰¹

But, to be honest, it also often had the opposite effect. Joan Kerchhoff's late husband Peter was detained about a year after Kearney (and unlike Kearney wrote a set of diaries that were published).⁹⁰² I asked Joan if these incidents made them feel vulnerable:

The funny thing is that we always felt vulnerable. They used dirty tricks all the time even when Peter was in prison. So Peter's detention and his death did not make us feel any more vulnerable.⁹⁰³

The reminiscence of Colussi above indicated a certain admiration that the Security Police had for people like Kearney who were not intimidated by them. Kearney in his television interview speaks with some affection for the police at La Lucia station who were detaining him. A curious final memory comes from his friend, Mary de Haas. The night before Kearney's funeral which was attended by hundreds of people, there was a much smaller vigil of about 20-30 people at Diakonia. And de Haas is sure that one of the people she saw there was a Security Branch policeman who had been involved with following Kearney.⁹⁰⁴ One wonders what drew him to show such respect for Kearney.

Conscientious Objection and the End Conscription Campaign

As part of this chapter I want to also look at one further aspect of Kearney's work at Diakonia in relation to violence and that is military conscription. This covers activities that pre-date and post-date the principal events of 1985 detailed above.

Had Kearney been born a few years later, or had not gone into religious life, he would have faced the prospect of being called up for the military and having to decide how to respond. His commitment to this cause, and his personal commitment to the men he met who were directly affected, points to a strong desire on his part to 'suffer with'. It also touches on a cause that became increasingly important to Kearney, that of non-violence.⁹⁰⁵

Conscription was the requirement of the Apartheid Government that all white South African males (up to a certain age) had to serve in the military. The age at which men were conscripted, the length of term, the deferments that were allowed, the exemptions that were permitted and so on varied across this period, but the principle of conscription was in place effectively until the end of 1993. The brief summary of the subject on the South African History Archive website says that between

⁹⁰¹ Paton, *Journey Continued*, 72

⁹⁰² Walker, David. "Peter Kerchhoff's Prison Diaries". *Hope Beyond Apartheid*. Lou Levine ed. (Pietermaritzburg: PACSA, 2002) 133-144

⁹⁰³ Kerchhoff, Joan. Personal interview by author, 6 April 2022 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of head of PACSA). Peter died in 1999 in a car accident but not in suspicious circumstances.

⁹⁰⁴ de Haas, Mary. Personal interview by author, 30 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow activist and mother-in-law to Kearney's niece)

⁹⁰⁵ This is explored in more detail in Appendix E.

1978 and 1982 there were 12 men who used conscientious objection as a basis for refusing to serve in the military.⁹⁰⁶ But the impact is much greater than that: the experience of being called up was one that affected the majority of white men of that generation; and the shadow of conscription hung over the whole generation, their families and their friends. Much of the literature on this subject centres on the personal testimonies written by those who served and those resisted serving. Research has also been done on the ensuring trauma.⁹⁰⁷ It was clearly an issue that affected the whole country and there were different forms of resistance in different cities.

I want to focus on some specific examples of how Kearney was involved in this issue. It is especially helpful that Kearney himself wrote a paper in 1980 called “Conscientious Objection – a Christian Perspective” which appeared in *Reality*.⁹⁰⁸ This journal appeared six times a year under the guidance of Peter Brown and Alan Paton at the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of Natal. It self-consciously described itself as ‘a journal of liberal and radical opinion’.

Kearney started the article with four quotations to show that there is no clear Christian position with regard to conscientious objection: one (from an African Christian leader) condones the use of violence; another is from then Prime Minister PW Botha who talks about the value of the ‘soldier who has [Christian] faith’. In contrast to these, Kearney at the beginning of his article presented two quotations which strongly supported conscientious objection:

After much prayer, reading and discussion, I have come to the conclusion that, for me at any rate, military service is incompatible with my Christian convictions.

Unless we can claim that a strenuous effort has been made to reach understanding between Blacks and Whites, including liberation movements, conscientious objection seems the only possible Christian stand.⁹⁰⁹

The first of these was from Richard Steele, a Conscientious Objector known to Kearney, whom we will hear from in a moment. The second was from +Hurley; thus, from the outset, Kearney was invoking +Hurley to support a position in favour of conscientious objection. Kearney went on in this article to explain different C.O. positions and to chart the history of the Christian concept of the ‘Just War’.

He then reminded his readers of the 1974 resolution of the South African Council of Churches which, in a very Calvinist way, gave priority to each person’s conscience while also seeking to guide that conscience. The resolution challenged their members to consider whether ‘Christ’s call to take up the cross and follow him in identifying with the oppressed, does not in our situation, involve becoming conscientious objectors.’⁹¹⁰

But then Kearney went further by quoting an interview that +Hurley had given to the *Sunday Times* (undated) which, in a more Roman way, focused more on Church teaching than on individual conscience:

⁹⁰⁶ ‘The Fight Against Conscription’, *South African History Archive*.

https://www.saha.org.za/youth/the_fight_against_conscription.htm (accessed 24 October 2022)

⁹⁰⁷ Edlmann, Theresa. “Negotiating Historical Continuities in Contested Terrain: A narrative-based reflection on the post-Apartheid psychosocial legacies of conscription into the South African Defence Force”. PhD thesis (Rhodes University, 2015)

⁹⁰⁸ Kearney, G Paddy. “Conscientious Objection – a Christian Perspective”. *Reality: a journal of liberal and radical opinion* (1980, 12:5) 9-14

⁹⁰⁹ Kearney, “Conscientious Objection – a Christian Perspective”, 9

⁹¹⁰ Kearney, “Conscientious Objection – a Christian Perspective”, 11

In the South African situation, conscientious objection should be adopted as a principle by the churches. I believe that the churches should adopt this view even at the risk of open confrontation with the government.⁹¹¹

Partly as a result of the 1974 SACC resolution, the Government passed the Defence Amendment Act, and it became a punishable offence (with a penalty of five years in prison and/or a fine of R1,000) to give any form of encouragement to people to become conscientious objectors. Kearney in his article pointed out:

This is a very extraordinary piece of legislation which could make not only a discussion of the Gospel, but proclamation of the very words of Christ, a criminal act!⁹¹²

Kearney felt that, because of the fear that this legislation created, churches had stopped talking about the issue for five years until, in 1979, all the mainline English-speaking churches boldly made statements “in support of their own right to discuss the issue freely, and the right of individuals to be conscientious objectors.”⁹¹³

This had clearly also emboldened Kearney to write this paper for *Reality* (though he himself was at risk of breaking the law by doing so). In the paper, he went on to show that there was a weakness in the Government’s case: they claimed to provide an alternative to military service but in fact it was often uniformed and sometimes even involved the carrying of weapons. But Kearney also argued that the churches’ case was weakened since most of the churches were in various ways publicly allied with the military (e.g. the provision of uniformed chaplains). Kearney used two specific cases to show that the current provisions are inadequate.⁹¹⁴ He argued, provocatively, that the Nationalist Government was not being true to itself:

To those who claim to have a Divine mandate to uphold Christian civilisation against Godless Marxism, [the Conscientious Objectors] say: ‘Yes, by all means uphold Christianity. But be aware that the central tenet of that religion is that each individual is of infinite worth. Therefore, as the churches have made clear, each should be entitled to decide on his/her own conscience whether he/she will be involved in military activities or not. To a basically Calvinist Government, the conscientious objectors point out that the right of individual conscience is especially characteristic of Calvinist Christianity!’⁹¹⁵

In this paper, Kearney did not conclude (contrary to +Hurley) that conscientious objection is ‘the only possible stand’. But he did argue for something that he and +Hurley will try put into place over the next decade: recognition of individual C.O.s who do not come from a pacifist religious tradition, recognition of individual C.O.s who do not come from any religious tradition, and provision of genuinely non-military civic service for C.O.s who are non-militarists (and not just non-combatants).⁹¹⁶

I want to draw on the experiences of four people close to Kearney, all in Durban in the 1980s, to see how this plan developed over the next ten years. To begin with Charles Yeats who was one of the

⁹¹¹ Kearney, “Conscientious Objection – a Christian Perspective”, 11

⁹¹² Kearney, “Conscientious Objection – a Christian Perspective”, 11

⁹¹³ Kearney, “Conscientious Objection – a Christian Perspective”, 12

⁹¹⁴ Peter Moll, a Cape Town-based Baptist who was court martialled in 1979, and Richard Steele who is discussed below.

⁹¹⁵ Kearney, “Conscientious Objection – a Christian Perspective”, 13; interestingly, Kearney does not attempt to define a good conscience but takes it for granted that the use of this term would be self-evident.

⁹¹⁶ Kearney, “Conscientious Objection – a Christian Perspective”, 14

people I interviewed about Kearney and who has also published his autobiography.⁹¹⁷ He recalls that he first became aware of Kearney around 1980 because he was himself thinking of using 'conscientious objection' as a justification for refusing to serve in the military and he had heard Kearney deliver an extensive lecture on the subject in Pietermaritzburg (this is in fact the basis of the paper mentioned above).⁹¹⁸

I remember it being a very impressive setting out of the case for conscientious objection in South Africa. Paddy quoted +Hurley at the start of the lecture....I felt that +Hurley made pronouncements whereas Paddy was the scholar behind the scenes.

In the lecture, Kearney analysed the options open to the white conscript at that point in time. He recognises that there was some confusion about whether or not someone who objected could join but in a non-military role. Dr Mulder in the Department of Philosophy was pushing this line at the time, advocating a middle position. But Paddy took a more radical position – any involvement compromised the person.

Yeats' problem was that there was very little scope for conscientious objection in South African government policy at the time; what there was only allowed for religious conscientious objection and only if your religious tradition was clearly pacifist (e.g. Jehovah's Witnesses). Since Yeats was an Anglican, and so from a tradition that could not claim to be pacifist, he was on shaky ground. Having initially fled South Africa, after a while he returned to face a Court Martial. However, he was not put on trial for 18 months and so during that time +Hurley had the idea of giving Yeats the chance to model a form of civic national service as an alternative to military service. Thus, in early 1980, he found himself working with Kearney at Diakonia, relieving the then Administrator who had gone on maternity leave.⁹¹⁹ However, in the end this approach did not work, Yeats was court-martialled and served 12 months in prison for refusing to serve in the South Africa military.⁹²⁰

In 1980, Richard Steele (mentioned above in Kearney's 1980 paper) had also refused military service; he was convicted at a Court Martial and sent to military prison. He had grown up a Baptist and had learnt about the pacifist tradition of the Anabaptists and the Mennonites. He was involved in the Student Christian Association (which was an evangelical movement) and had reached a clear realisation that Apartheid was wrong for Christian reasons. He was especially influenced to his position by John de Gruchy who was teaching Religious Studies at UCT at the time and who helped provide an intellectual rationale for his pacifism.

My conclusion was: Jesus would not have taken the call up – he would not have killed and would not have killed for white supremacy.⁹²¹

Steele first met Kearney in February 1981, just after he was released. He went abroad for a while but, when he came back, he was drawn to Diakonia because Sue Britton had set up a support group for conscientious objectors in Durban.

Paddy understood my pacifist approach. He did not think the position was ridiculous. After all, Diakonia was trying to educate whites away from the dominant culture. Conscientious objection was a practical way of supporting the resistance. ...

⁹¹⁷ Yeats, Charles. *Prisoner of Conscience* (London: Rider Random House, 2005)

⁹¹⁸ Yeats, Charles. Personal interview by the author, 18 May 2022 via Zoom (Conscientious Objector)

⁹¹⁹ Yeats, *Prisoner of Conscience*, 48

⁹²⁰ Yeats, *Prisoner of Conscience*, 83

⁹²¹ Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

When I came back from the US in 1984, I did not want to teach in a South African school; I wanted to work as an activist. That was when Paddy linked me up to the Gandhi Settlement in Phoenix.⁹²²

Steele also recalls how the Durban part of the national 'End Conscription Campaign' (ECC) emerged in 1984 as a formal organisation, separate from Diakonia (since not all the member churches would necessarily support it) but with Diakonia's support. (The ECC would later be banned in 1988, the first white organisation to have this honour!).⁹²³

+Hurley was the godfather to the organisation; he could play a role that was protective and legitimising. He hosted the first Durban ECC event at the Chancery [which was then part of the Archbishop's House on Innes Road] with 23 people who refused to serve. This gave us institutional legitimacy. The great thing about Paddy is that he looks at what needs to be done and who can do it and makes it happen.⁹²⁴

The third example is Brendan Moran who was involved in the ECC a few years later. When he was first called up in 1986, he planned to refuse to serve. But his father asked him to go overseas, so he went away for three years to avoid threatening the family. However, while in London, he joined the ANC and became involved with the Committee of SA War Resisters. When he came back in 1989, he received call-up papers to join the Navy.

Fr Johnny Johnson told me I must just go and join. He accused me of dividing the church. Someone else suggested that I become a priest – that seemed the best way out of the trouble. I suppose the priests were just protecting their parishioners. ...

Tim McNally [a Catholic lawyer whom his family knew and who was Attorney General of the Free State] tried to use his influence to persuade me to be a religious objector – he even asked me if I had been involved in eastern religions. But I thought that was an easy way out and was not true. To avoid confrontation, Tim tried to persuade me to join the Army Band: 'Just sign here and all will be well'. But I refused. Tim concluded: 'I just wash my hands clean; the law is a box and I operate in that box'. ...

I remember I stayed with the McNally's and they told their teenage daughters to be wary of the communist in the house. Tim made me miss my flight from Bloem to Durban so that I would miss the chance to refuse to serve. So I ended up there the next morning at Natal Command and that is how Monsignor Paul Nadal was with me when I tore up my papers in front of the camera. ...

I was the first in the Church's Alternative National Service Programme which was set up by +Hurley and Loek Goemans. The project meant that I had to be paid the same R221 pm as an army salary. Archie [Gumede] suggested I work with the teenagers in Chesterville and Clermont. Another idea was teaching mechanics but one priest warned me that it was too dangerous – because I would be teaching them how to steal cars! I think it was Fr Michael who got me involved in building a community centre. ...

⁹²² Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector). For more details, see Appendix E.

⁹²³ 'The Fight Against Conscription', *South African History Archive*.

https://www.saha.org.za/youth/the_fight_against_conscription.htm (accessed 24 October 2022)

⁹²⁴ Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

I got closer to Paddy Kearney when he took me to churches to talk about moral quandaries. I was even invited to schools to speak about my experience (though not to St Henry's) [the Marist school in Durban that Moran had attended and which was linked to the school that both Kearney and +Hurley had attended]. Funny, my family would have warned me against men like Kearney. They said I was being used by the communists. ...

The priests were not courageous but the bishops were. And for me Paddy and Carmel Rickard were role models. Paddy and I were both African men with Irish history. It's where our fire came from. Paddy would have stood in a firing squad like the Irish rebels rather than support Apartheid. But he did not see himself as an Irish rebel – he was very calm in his persona; he was not fiery – because he had calm and grace. But he was very persuasive. My courage came from men like +Hurley and Paddy: well-mannered, disciplined, gracious.⁹²⁵

A final example from this period is Andrew Warmback who later worked for Diakonia and is now a senior Anglican priest. In 1986, he succeeded in being classified as a 'Category 3 religious objector' and so did his community service with the Department of Health.

The Student Christian Association (SCA) used to talk about conscientious objection; some of the leaders had taken this line. I am not sure if it was SCA or Diakonia who most influenced me to be a C.O. The Anglican position was complex because they never ruled on whether it was or was not a just war. I remember I did get moral support from Diakonia and also from Bishop Michael [Nuttall]. ...

I heard things about the Church that I would not have been aware of; for example Walter Wink and *Jesus' Third Way*: the idea of turning the other cheek as a way of humiliating the aggressor, of loving, non-violent resistance. There was always critical thinking from the bishops so I did not feel out of place even if the local culture of a parish was still conformist. I just wonder why everyone else can't see it. But I do remember going to speak at St Thomas More [a Catholic school founded by +Hurley's brother] and saying to the students: 'Don't be harsh on your fathers and uncles who served in the army.'⁹²⁶

Through these four personal accounts of resisting conscription, we see a pattern in how Kearney was working. It was clearly a collaboration between him, +Hurley, Sue Britton and others. Although he was pragmatic, his was always a pragmatism that was true to his principles (in contrast perhaps to some of the other religious influencers involved). Kearney is, as always, creative in developing solutions, working in partnership (e.g. the Gandhi Settlement) when appropriate. Noticeably, although he had written in support of conscientious objection at the beginning of this period, his approach is not to win people over to his point of view but rather to enable them to be authentic in doing what they see to be right for them.

Kearney's own strengthening commitment to non-violence is explored in Appendix E. It is also perhaps worth looking at the Catholic Church's own position on peace and non-violence in this period. Toulat (who led the French bishops' Justice & Peace Commission in the 1980s) captures the broad position of the Church in the title for his paper on this subject: *Peace: between the Good News and the Lesser Evil*. Whilst clearly in favour of peace, it never rules out the use of violence (in the form of a 'just war') as the 'lesser evil'.

⁹²⁵ Moran, Brendan. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (member of the End Conscription Campaign)

⁹²⁶ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 Oct 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest and co-worker at Diakonia)

Toulat explains that the main preoccupation of John XXIII's 1963 *Pacem in Terris* and then of *Gaudium et Spes* (especially sections 77-91) is on nuclear war (without naming it) and the arms race.⁹²⁷ The question of non-violence is only touched on in passing though it is applauded. Humane provision for C.O.'s is recommended without either applauding or condemning this position.⁹²⁸

Toulat then identifies three steps in the development of the approach of the Roman Catholic Church:

- April 1963: *Pacem in Terris* recognises Human Rights in the context of peace and so connects justice with peace.
- January 1967: The establishment of the commission called for by *Gaudium et Spes* called 'Justitia et Pax': "The very name chosen was symbolic. In terms of syntax, it expresses a juxtaposition, an inter-relationship, a concomitance of two terms...the one prepares for the other: peace being the fruit of justice, and justice a condition for and an effect of peace."
- April 1967: *Populorum Progressio*: A shift from a negative to a positive definition of peace: "Development is the new name for Peace"⁹²⁹

But as he remarks, out in the field development actually meant conflicts. He quotes from the Medellin 1968 regional meeting of bishops:

If Development is the new name for Peace, Latin American under-development is an unjust situation which promotes tensions that conspire against peace.⁹³⁰

Interestingly, Toulat does not draw attention to the later mantra of Paul VI (in fact his message for the World Day of Peace, 1 January 1972): "If you want Peace, work for Justice." These are certainly words that resonated for +Hurley and Kearney, as mentioned above. Often the argument used by the Nationalist Government to repress opposition was that it was 'breaching the peace'. Kearney in wishing to overturn the injustices in his society was aware that the peace that comes from imposing order was in fact one of those injustices. He would concur with Toulat:

Order has only the outward appearance of peace. Oppression allays suspicion. It makes people think that peace and order are being maintained, but in fact it is a continual incitement to revolts and wars. Force can establish a static peace. Authentic peace, however, supposes a struggle, a capacity for inventiveness, and an on-going conquest of selfishness and injustice, both individual and collective.⁹³¹

Theology of Suffering

One of the Scripture quotations regularly included by Kearney in the Good Friday Services was Mt 16:24: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." He was conscious that it is the act of sharing suffering that places us close to Christ and close to others. In the face of Apartheid, that needed to be an act of sharing the suffering of history. As Ruggieri puts it:

⁹²⁷ Toulat, Pierre. "Peace: between the Good News and the Lesser Evil". *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 196

⁹²⁸ *Gaudium et Spes* 79

⁹²⁹ Toulat, "Peace: between the Good News and the Lesser Evil", 197-8

⁹³⁰ Toulat, "Peace: between the Good News and the Lesser Evil", 199

⁹³¹ Toulat, "Peace: between the Good News and the Lesser Evil", 199

As Christ's attitude to his power is one of humility and self-sacrifice in taking up the Cross, so must the Church's attitude be towards history.⁹³²

Reflecting on +Hurley's commitment to the reception of Vatican II, Abrahams comments thus, giving the specific examples of displaced people and conscientious objection:

The Church cannot fulfil its mission in isolation from suffering humanity but must be inserted in its historical context. Social justice is not an optional extra for the Christian but integral to evangelisation.⁹³³

In a section of the 1988 *God in South Africa* called 'a crucified people', Nolan recognises the limitations of speaking about suffering if one has not experienced it and that one must approach the matter with extreme sensitivity.⁹³⁴ Kearney, reading this passage, might have felt that his experience of detention gave him more credibility with others who have suffered.

Bishop Phillip (who himself suffered banning orders under the old regime) confirms this:

For Paddy it was not just about being involved in the Struggle, more than just the uttering of statements. He was personally involved; he was arrested. He was a person who was genuinely involved in the struggle for a just society. Paddy was badly treated by the police on numerous occasions; they saw him as a thorn in their flesh. It was his solidarity with others that most annoyed the Government.⁹³⁵

Cardinal Napier voiced a similar sentiment:

Paddy was in a way proud of being singled out for punishment. It enabled him to do more. It is a bit like people talking about the war who have not actually seen action themselves.⁹³⁶

Nolan argues that our own experience of suffering helps us to connect with others who are suffering and so to gain a sense of responsibility for the sin that underlies the suffering:

Sin becomes visible in suffering. ...God speaks to us through [the poor and oppressed], through his servants the prophets. And he speaks to us first of all about sin, about our responsibility for the excess of suffering in South Africa today.⁹³⁷

It is interesting to note how frequently across his life Kearney turned to suffering as a lens through which to understand history. This ties in with the recollection I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter when Kearney reminded me that in celebrating the 'Joys and Hopes' of *Gaudium et Spes* we must not forget the 'Griefs and Anxieties'. Let me cite four examples across 30 years, three of which Kearney had specifically selected for his own anthology.

⁹³² Ruggieri, Giuseppe. "Faith & History". *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 106

⁹³³ Abrahams, Mervyn. "Denis Hurley and the Reception of Vatican II" *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 245

⁹³⁴ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 50

⁹³⁵ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

⁹³⁶ Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

⁹³⁷ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 65

In an article in 1979, Kearney explains Diakonia's mission to serve the suffering Christ in society.⁹³⁸ He asks what is meant by saying that Jesus is crucified every day in our society and offers a wide range of examples:

Jesus suffers in those who are jobless...

He suffers too in those who have no homes or very inadequate homes...

He suffers also in those who do not receive adequate wages or whose land is taken from them...

We can see his suffering in the very many people who have lost their freedom and are in prison—some because they were not carrying their passes, or stole when they were hungry; some because they criticised the social system or actively worked to bring about its downfall.

He suffers too in the majority of people who are deprived of any meaningful say in the political system of this country....

His suffering is seen in the loneliness of the migrant labourer....

In a very different way, his suffering can be seen in those who deprive themselves of genuine human community because they are so in love with possessions...

He suffers in those who so fear the future that they catch the next plane out

And he is there too in the suffering of the young white man fighting for his country, and the young black man also fighting for his country, on both sides of the conflict.

It is a powerful litany (and, in the original, Kearney provides specific examples and even statistics for some of the categories of suffering); it is striking in its breadth and its even-handedness.

Secondly, in a sermon in an Anglican church during Lent 1993, Kearney is reflecting on the devotion of the Stations of the Cross and suggests that they are to be found where the poor, hungry, disempowered and disadvantaged are. He talks about his own transition from feeling sorry for personal sins to understanding his complicity in structural sin:

About this time, I began to teach at an African school called Inanda Seminary and to see much more closely the sort of problems most people encounter every day in South Africa. I saw that people were being crucified—by all the inequalities of Apartheid, by all the indignities of racial discrimination.

Begin close to home. Think particularly of our domestic workers—where they live: have we ever been there? Do we know about their families? Then we can move out more widely. For example, Diakonia has a new programme which takes people to see some of the awful conditions under which people are living.

⁹³⁸ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 9 ("Were you there when they crucified my Lord?", *Diakonia News*, December 1979)

Perhaps I could sum up what I have been saying in the words of a Latin American theologian, Jon Sobrino of El Salvador:

‘There was *one* cross, Christ’s, the most significant one for believers. But the cross existed before him and continues after him. Christ identified with all these crosses and therefore we need to reinterpret the cross of Christ in terms of all these other crosses throughout history.’⁹³⁹

Thirdly, in an address to Methodists in 2004, 10 years after Liberation, Kearney explores Freedom as the obverse of suffering. The theme of the Synod is “Set free in Christ. For freedom, Christ has set us free.” (Gal 5: 1).

Yes, Christ has set us free. He has played his part. Now it is our task to apply that gift of freedom to our own situation, at this time and in this place. We have to make that freedom a practical reality in every age and in every place. We will not automatically be free because Christ has set us free. We have to claim that freedom for ourselves. We have been given the potential to be free, but whether we are really free depends on us.⁹⁴⁰

The fourth and most moving testimony comes from 2009, where Kearney is leading the Good Friday Service at St Cyprian’s.⁹⁴¹ The extensive meditations written by Kearney in response to Scripture readings give insight into his own faith, focused around the theme of ‘The Suffering God’.⁹⁴² He is now no longer representing Diakonia and also has had the chance to reflect on 15 years of Liberation in South Africa. This feels like a personal reflection on where Kearney stands in relation to suffering.

He starts with the famous Eli Wiesel story (*Night*) of the young man hanging from the tree in the concentration camp. This was actually used as part of the very first Diakonia Good Friday Service, 24 years earlier, in which the answer to the question ‘Where is God?’ is: ‘There is God – hanging on the gallows’.⁹⁴³ Let me then share a few of the most poignant quotations from different parts of the service; some of these were delivered as stand-alone lines during long periods of silent meditation.

Rabbi Abraham Heschel speaks about the Theology of the pathos of God: our actions have to free God so God can act. ...

Fr Michel Quoist writes: ‘I shall be in agony until the end of time, God says, I shall be crucified until the end of time.’ For me these words link to the start of Diakonia in 1974 and are still relevant today. ...

I am poorly paid, I am unemployed, I live in a slum, I have tuberculosis, I sleep under bridges, I am in prison, I am oppressed, I am patronised. ...⁹⁴⁴

⁹³⁹ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 60 (Sermon at St James, Morningside, Durban, 7 March 1993) (Note that Sobrino is a Jesuit working in El Salvador who had known +Romero and whom Kearney probably met on his own visit there in 1992.)

⁹⁴⁰ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 73 (Address to the Methodist synod, 22 May 2004)

⁹⁴¹ It is interesting that by speaking at this Anglican service on one of the holiest days of the year, Kearney is foregoing the chance to attend the traditional Catholic service that would be taking place around the same time.

⁹⁴² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/5 (Good Friday Service, St Cyprians, 10 April 2009)

⁹⁴³ Diakonia, *Pilgrimage of Hope*, 8

⁹⁴⁴ Interestingly, many of these were emerging at the time as themes of the soon-to-open Denis Hurley Centre.

Too late to be quiet, you have spoken too much, you have opposed the system for too long....I see what happens to Archbishop Tutu or the Dalai Lama when they speak out.⁹⁴⁵

Help me to live your Gospel, To the end, To the folly of the Cross. ...

The more I see evil in the world, the heavier the Cross is on my shoulders. ...

I followed you, setting out with confidence, and now I have fallen. I thought I had given myself irrevocably to you but I was distracted by a flower on a foot-path. ...

Help me to be close to the people and places where you still suffer in our world today. ...⁹⁴⁶

You accepted the enforced help of an indifferent and timid fellow....⁹⁴⁷

I want to act alone, I want to struggle alone, I want to succeed alone. And yet all the while beside me walks a friend, a spouse, a brother or sister, a neighbour, a fellow-worker. You have placed them near me Lord and too often I ignore them....⁹⁴⁸

I manage very well, Lord, to pity your sufferings and the sufferings of the world. But to weep for my own sins, well that's another matter....I've found plenty of people to blame for what is wrong with South Africa: it's the politicians, it's the people of other races, it's the Apartheid of the past, it's the corrupt police, it's alcohol or drugs, it's the moral degeneration we see on TV, it's the lazy teachers, doctors, nurses, it's the greedy workers or the greedy managers....all in all it's just about everyone except me. ...

I don't have the right to choose the cross of my suffering. My cross is ready, it's made to my measure. ...

We, human beings, tread the Way of the Cross in relays. The Resurrection will only be completed when all have reached the end of the way....⁹⁴⁹

Help me to travel along my road faithfully, at my appointed place in the vast procession of humanity.⁹⁵⁰

Help us to free your power to transform the world.⁹⁵¹

I believe that this selection of words is the closest we come to a personal spiritual testimony from Kearney. It is not quite the end of his life – he will live another nine years and have one major new project to complete – but it is at a point in which he has seemingly accomplished much. And yet the underlying theme is of work-still-to-be-done. Moreover, suffering is something that lies in the

⁹⁴⁵ This could have been construed as a thinly veiled criticism of the ANC Government of the day.

⁹⁴⁶ Kearney is reflecting on Mary meeting Christ on the Way of the Cross, in a manner that would have resonated with the Marian spirituality of his time as a Marist Brother.

⁹⁴⁷ Kearney is reflecting on Simon of Cyrene being asked to help carry the cross; does Kearney see himself as the 'indifferent and timid fellow'?

⁹⁴⁸ There is a striking paradox in this reflection between Kearney the great networker and Kearney the loner.

⁹⁴⁹ This is a powerful image of solidarity in opposition to the privatised salvation of many Christians.

⁹⁵⁰ This image is especially interesting given the vast procession of the Good Friday Service from earlier that morning.

⁹⁵¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/5 (Good Friday Service, St Cyprians, 10 April 2009)

present as well as in the past: for someone who endured death threats and detention, that is a remarkable state of mind.

There is an undertone of hope but it is quiet and implied rather than explicit. It is also not a hope that the suffering will end but rather an acceptance that suffering will continue and that hope is realised because the suffering becomes meaningful. There is clear belief that the world can be transformed, that we all have a role to play, and that ultimately it is God's power that will transform but only if we are willing to co-operate.

Concluding Image

The image with which I want to close this chapter is one which captures Kearney's approach to suffering. He is standing with +Hurley (as is so often the case) who is holding out a cross to Kearney. From the artwork, the cross is recognisably one from El Salvador (which Kearney would later visit) and it appears to date from 1976 and the start of Diakonia. One is immediately put in mind of the words cited above: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."⁹⁵²

In the Scripture quotation, the invitation of course comes from Christ. But we can equally imagine, +Hurley saying these words to Kearney at the start of Diakonia. At the time of the photograph, they were not to know that four years later, [St] Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador, would be brutally murdered while standing at the altar. They were also not to know the personal pain and suffering that they would endure – and that they would see others enduring – over the next 18 years until Liberation. But even if they had known, the image might not have been any different: two men united in their love of Christ and of God's people, willing to take up their cross and follow wherever they were to be led.

⁹⁵² Mt 16:24

Chapter 6: Kearney and Interfaith Collaboration

In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. ... I am the way, the truth and the life; no one can come to the Father except through me. (Jn 14:2, 6)

Introduction

Having explored in Chapter 3 Kearney's response to the ecumenical challenge of Vatican II, I further wish to look at his response to the inter-religious opportunities that Vatican II created with particular reference to *Nostra Aetate*.⁹⁵³

I intend to show that for Kearney as for the Council, the attention to inter-religious co-operation was secondary to ecumenical collaboration both in terms of chronology and priority. Nonetheless, there is some early evidence of his (and +Hurley's) work in this field; this then grows over time and culminates in the creation of the Denis Hurley Centre (DHC). In engaging with interfaith issues, Kearney is helped by his own skill at 'humble encounter' and also by the theology of inter-religious dialogue that is articulated by among others Harvey Cox whom Kearney knew personally. Kearney begins to achieve gains in this area in his lifetime. Perhaps more importantly, I believe he sets a vision of inter-religious service that has outlived him and continues to inspire others.

Did Inter-Faith Collaboration matter to Kearney?

I aim to show that by the end of Kearney's life it clearly did – but that this was an evolution for Kearney which partly reflected a growing consciousness on his part, but also a growing open-ness on the part of the wider Church to encounters with other religions.

As before, let me start with an image. In pride of place at the DHC, the last great achievement of Kearney, there is a 2-metre-wide blow-up of a photograph of +Hurley. It shows the late Archbishop not performing some Church duty, or even engaged in a pastoral visit; instead, he is at the 'Freedom March' in Durban in September 1989, on what was then 'Queen Street' and is now named 'Denis Hurley Street', in part because of this event.⁹⁵⁴

It was Kearney himself who was responsible for the selection and placement of the images for this exhibition about +Hurley so the choice gives a significant insight. Certainly, it was important for Kearney to show his hero engaged in an activity which exemplified the sub-title of Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution: this is most certainly "The Church *in* the Modern World"; not attacking it from afar or hiding from it, as had been the pattern of much Catholic activity since the Enlightenment. And it shows +Hurley, in all his majestic height, as a natural leader.⁹⁵⁵

But I think it is significant that this is an image which specifically shows +Hurley alongside other religious leaders. There was possibly one other Catholic priest hidden in the background but

⁹⁵³ 'The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions' promulgated by Pope Paul VI towards the end of the Council in October 1965. At under 2,000 words, it is the shortest of the 16 documents of Vatican II though in many ways one of the most far-reaching.

⁹⁵⁴ Kumalo, Smangaliso. "Monumentalisation and the renaming of street names in the city of Durban (Ethekewini) as a contested terrain between politics and religion" *New Contree* (November 2014: 70) 219-250

⁹⁵⁵ For more on this see Appendix C: "Interpreting *Gaudium et Spes*"

crammed into the photograph, to the left and right of +Hurley, were faith leaders from different Christian traditions and non-Christians. (From their dress, it looks as if the non-Christians are all Muslim: it has not been possible to identify them all but one who is clearly recognisable and was present for the unveiling is Saydoon Sayeed, then a member of the local Islamic Youth Movement.)⁹⁵⁶

+Hurley was marching shoulder-to-shoulder with about eight other religious leaders, defiantly standing up against Apartheid, despite (or perhaps inspired by) the threat of being arrested under the State of Emergency. Whilst there are also many pictures of +Hurley standing on his own being a ‘voice for the voiceless’, in this one he is alongside Christian and Muslim leaders (and, I imagine, leaders of other religions too). When this image was first used by the author in a presentation about the mission of the DHC, Kearney was delighted by the choice of the text from Vatican II that was used to accompany it. Moreover, the text in turn contained an Old Testament reference that would be valued by Jews and Christians and some Muslims too:

The Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and “serve him shoulder-to-shoulder” (Soph. 3:9).⁹⁵⁷

The image of Denis Hurley, and the image of the DHC, that Kearney wished to present to the world was one which showed this vision of all the peoples addressing the Lord in a single voice being realised, and Durban was the place to find it.

A gradual broadening of Religious identity

Nevertheless, it could be pointed out that, while the non-Christian leaders do have a place in the image, it is secondary to that of +Hurley’s fellow Christian leaders. I think this is not insignificant. +Hurley and Kearney had devoted most of the 1970s and 1980s to building strong links of friendship, solidarity and collaboration with other Christian leaders. This was clearly their priority and was the stated focus of Diakonia. Whilst there is some evidence of the start of inter-faith co-operation in that period as well, this did not fully flourish until the 1990s and then more so in the 14 years between +Hurley’s death and Kearney’s.

A previous chapter explored the impact on Kearney of ecumenism and its rise (and some might say fall) since Vatican II. The focus in this chapter on inter-faith co-operation does not intend to criticise it for not having gone as far as ecumenism – it was never likely to – but rather to show how Kearney, influenced by +Hurley and sometimes influencing +Hurley, found ways to make *Nostra Aetate* a reality.

Both of these were issues for Vatican II but there was clearly a relative hierarchy between them: at 7,000 words, the document on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) is more than 4 times longer than the 1,600 words of the document on Other Religions (*Nostra Aetate*); the first is a ‘Decree’, the second only a ‘Declaration’. Vatican II – to repeat a well-used trope – was an invitation to open the windows of the Church ‘so that we can look out and others can look in’. By the end of the Council, the door to non-Catholic Christians was at least half-opened, whereas the door for non-Christians

⁹⁵⁶ “Update February 2017”, *Denis Hurley Centre website*, <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 18 May 2022)

⁹⁵⁷ *Nostra Aetate* 4

was only left ajar. But given that the two doors had been firmly shut and bolted before, both these documents were major achievements.

Something of this hierarchy of concerns can already be seen in *Ecclesiam Suam*, an encyclical produced by Pope Paul VI in 1964. It is curious that this was produced by Paul VI during the course of Vatican II, before the Conciliar documents had been produced though they were in process and so, potentially trying to pre-empt those documents. The argument for the timing was so that it could promote the work of a new 'Secretariat for non-Christians' alongside John XXIII's 1960 'Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity'. Cardinal Cassidy (who between 1989 and 2001 was the President of the latter body, and who had known +Hurley personally when Apostolic Delegate to South Africa from 1979-84) points out that in this encyclical there is an interesting balance of language based on an underlying image of concentric circles: first of all Christians, then out a bit more to the Jews, then out a bit more to Muslims, then out a bit more to followers of the great Afro-Asiatic religions.⁹⁵⁸

If this was a process of opening up – gradually and in steps – what was needed first was a willingness to be open. Egan has reviewed the way in which the South African weekly Catholic newspaper, *The Southern Cross*, reported on the Council during its proceedings. He has looked at editorials by the relatively cautious editor (Fr Louis Stubbs) and the more enthusiastic articles sent from Rome by an anonymous 'Special Correspondent' (later revealed to be +Hurley himself). In relation to the opening of doors (both to non-Catholics and to non-Christians), Egan's summary is useful:

What *did* change dramatically in the SC was the tone and scope of writings by local Catholics from the end of the First Session onwards. The caution and parochialism of what had largely gone before disappeared. Lay Catholics and clergy alike, inspired no doubt by the sense of change and the legitimacy of asking questions, started to address all kinds of questions hitherto not examined.⁹⁵⁹

A change in the self-identity of the Church (and of Catholics) was needed and Egan points out that this is something that the editor himself embraced:

Similarly, [Stubbs] held that Catholic triumphalism, sharply challenged by many in Rome, was a 'quasi-vice' that violated truth: it was good to be proud of the Church but taken to the extreme was 'a dangerous self-deception, a disservice to the Church itself, and to our neighbour.'⁹⁶⁰

The use of the word neighbour is here significant. The impact of Grand Apartheid meant that many South Africans had a narrower and narrower view of who their neighbour was. But any Christian reading that word is immediately reminded of the 'expert in the law' who asked Jesus 'Who is my neighbour?' and is given the Parable of the Good Samaritan as a reply.⁹⁶¹ For the follower of Christ, the test of being a neighbour is not your willingness to reach out to those who are like you but rather to embrace the people who are different from you.

There are many forms of diversity within the human race. The prejudices based on visible differences of skin colour were what +Hurley and Kearney fought against all their lives and at

⁹⁵⁸ Cassidy, Edward. *Rediscovering Vatican II – Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2005) 134

⁹⁵⁹ Egan, Anthony. "How Vatican II renewed South African Catholicism - as perceived by *The Southern Cross* 1962-1968" *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* (2013, 39:2)

⁹⁶⁰ Egan, "How Vatican II renewed South African Catholicism" (quoting Editorial, *The Southern Cross*, 8 January 1964:6)

⁹⁶¹ Lk 10: 25-37

Diakonia they did this from within a Christian framework. Was that not enough? After all, the majority of South Africans subscribed, at least publicly, to some form of Christianity. Was it also important for them to embrace differences between religions as well?

+Hurley and Kearney both believed that religion mattered and that, if it not used as a force for good, it could be manipulated to the opposite effect. Thus, they would have resonated with the words of Malusi Mpumlwana in his foreword to *God in South Africa*:

Religion is a central feature of South African life. Traditionally, it has been used to legitimate the subjugation of the majority of South Africans. There needs to be a different message emanating from theology to expose the lie that identifies organised and violent dehumanisation with God's will for our people.⁹⁶²

Later in the same book, Nolan points out:

The struggle itself is a truly human project that proposes to build a truly human community, but because by far the majority of people involved believe in God, the project will not succeed unless God is brought into the picture, explicitly and by name.⁹⁶³

If God is to be brought into the picture 'explicitly and by name', in a situation where there is religious diversity, that will mean invoking God with a variety of names. Historically, those who use different names for God have not been united around a common cause and indeed their religious differences have been the justification for great violence. So those, like Kearney, who believe that religion matters, have to start by addressing this. Harvey Cox begins his book, subtitled *A Christian Encounter with other Faiths*, with examples of various religious conflicts around the world and then this challenge:

There will never be peace in the world, it is said, until there is peace among religions. I write as a Christian advocating not tolerance, which though a useful virtue is hardly enough today, but something more demanding. We who follow the Prince of Peace should be actively trying to weave networks of trust and reconciliation among the faiths wherever we can. We should be doing this not just to promote some vague broad mindedness but because the One who instructed us to seek first the Reign of God requires it.⁹⁶⁴

Cox is a particularly important author to cite here because Kearney studied a course with him in 1991 at Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge MA (only three years after *Many Mansions* came out). While Kearney clearly discarded many things over the years, significantly the notes from this course and his copy of the book were still retained by him in his personal archive when he died 27 years later.⁹⁶⁵

In fact, if we leap forward some years, we hear echoes of Cox expressed by Kearney in a lecture he gave in honour of Archbishop Desmond Tutu at the Durban ICC in November 2004:

⁹⁶² Nolan, Albert. *God in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) viii

⁹⁶³ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 219

⁹⁶⁴ Cox, Harvey. *Many Mansions: a Christian encounter with other faiths* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), Introduction xx

⁹⁶⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/9 "Religion and the City"

As a country where we have such a mixture of the world's religions, don't we have a great responsibility to vastly increase our efforts to promote tolerance and understanding – so that we can give hope to other places?⁹⁶⁶

Kearney went on to cite Hans Küng's maxim: "No peace in the world without peace between religions."

Justice and peace were significant concerns for Kearney from the 1970s. In fact, Liz Mkame who worked closely with him from the earliest days of Diakonia commented: "Paddy's concern was about justice more than about ecumenism."⁹⁶⁷ His concern for justice led him to embrace ecumenical collaboration in the 1970s and 1980s; this same concern for justice led him to broaden to include interfaith collaboration. This wider embrace was a necessary part of the Struggle against Apartheid. Nelson Mandela is quoted as saying:

The strength of inter-religious solidarity in action against Apartheid, rather than mere harmony or co-existence, was critical in bringing that evil system to an end.⁹⁶⁸

One way of getting an overview of Kearney's interests is to look at what he personally selected, from his hundreds of papers, speeches and articles, to be the 110 that were to be published in an anthology in 2017.⁹⁶⁹ Whereas about 16% are about ecumenism and Diakonia, 8% are on interfaith subjects with an additional 5% about Gandhi.⁹⁷⁰

But, notably, of the nine articles on interfaith subjects, all but two are from the last eight years of his life. One of the exceptions is a 1990 review of the autobiography of the Dalai Lama, reinforcing that Kearney was concerned about injustice and those who stand up against it.⁹⁷¹ The other is a 1991 speech he made for Founder's Day at the Aryan Benevolent Home, one of the largest Hindu charities in Durban. The Hindus make up a large part of the substantial non-Christian minority of the city that Kearney lived in. This is one of the reasons why interfaith concerns became of increasing interest to him: he was expanding, for himself, the answer to the question 'who is my neighbour?'.⁹⁷²

The Durban dimension to Inter-Faith Collaboration

Just as Kearney tried to make *Unitatis Redintegratio* a reality, he also did the same with *Nostra Aetate*. But though this was a big ambition, the canvas on which he was painting was very specific. Kearney's aim really was just to make *Nostra Aetate* a reality in one small spot at the end of Africa.

But that specific location is a significant part of the story; it explains why this issue was important to Durban, and why Durban has made an important contribution to this issue. Across modern South Africa, there are people following traditional African religions, there are Jewish immigrants (few in number though significant because of their roles in business and politics), and there are Muslims in the Cape Town area (who are descendants of Malay slaves brought in by the Dutch). But it would be

⁹⁶⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/5 "Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture"

⁹⁶⁷ Mkame, Liz. Personal interview by author, 17 December 2020 in Pinetown (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁹⁶⁸ Noonan, Patrick. *They're Burning Our Churches* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2003) 113

⁹⁶⁹ Kearney, G Paddy. *Faith in Action* (Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal Christian Council, 2017) 4-7

⁹⁷⁰ For more on this see Appendix E: "+Hurley, Kearney and Gandhi".

⁹⁷¹ Kearney, Faith in Action, 225 ("Review of Freedom in exile: the autobiography of the Dalai Lama of Tibet, by Gare Smith", Natal Witness, 1990)

⁹⁷² Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 64 ("ABH Founder's Day commemoration", 1 May 1991)

fair to say that, were it not for Durban, South Africa could see its main question of religious diversity as being between the different denominations of Christians rather than between different faiths.

Durban, located on the edge of the Indian Ocean and created as a key staging post between the heart of the British Empire and the Jewel in her Crown, experienced waves of migration from India, especially in the period between 1860 and World War I. While a small number of these Indians were Christians, mostly they were not. They were Hindus from Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, Muslims also from Gujarat, and even a few Zoroastrians and Jains. The first arrivals were indentured labourers; later there were merchants and lawyers and doctors. But whatever their class, they arrived bringing their religious customs with them, and the vast majority of them have kept the faiths.

Indians in Durban were significant and they were visible. This sadly resulted in conflict such as the anti-Indian riots in Durban around the Victoria Street bus rank in January 1949.⁹⁷³ We know that Paddy at the age of 7 was indeed aware of these events and may be even of the proposal in 1950 by a Government minister that all the Indians in South Africa be forced to return to India.⁹⁷⁴ Even growing up in a white ghetto in Pietermaritzburg, Kearney would have been aware of the presence of Indians in the cities.

It would be helpful at this point to chart the number of people in Durban by religion and over time. But this is surprisingly difficult to do. While StatsSA, the national organisation that conducts the decennial census, promises access to population demographics by province, by municipality and even by ward, in reality this is not obtainable.⁹⁷⁵ Others have tried the analysis and struggled. To take just one group as an example, Haferburg shows significant differences between his province-by-province estimates of Muslims in 1996 vs Haron's estimates for 1991.⁹⁷⁶ Difficulties arise from the comparison of pre- and post-liberation censuses, comparisons between provinces, and differences in the way people self-identify religiously.

For my purposes, some sense of the scale of religious diversity is enough and this can be extracted from StatsSA's published "General Household Survey" based on 2015 data⁹⁷⁷. This shows 3.3% of the KZN population as Hindu and 2.0% Muslim. Most of these are identified as Indian, and since this is a population group heavily focused on cities and larger towns, we can assume that the percentage presence in the largest city Durban would be much higher. (In fact, eThekweni which includes Durban accounts for 33% of the population of KZN Province but 77% of the Indian population. Assuming that for each 'race' group, distribution between religions is consistent across the Province, this would suggest an overall incidence of 7.6% Hindu and 4.6% Muslim in eThekweni as at 2016.)⁹⁷⁸

Statistics can be helpful. But a glance at the area where Kearney worked all his life – the upper part of Durban CBD in which he located first Diakonia and later the DHC – makes the inter-faith issue very visible. This is home to one of the largest Christian churches in the city (Emmanuel Cathedral with which +Hurley was associated almost his entire adult life) and also to the Jumma Masjid (once the largest mosque in the Southern Hemisphere) and several other mosques as well. At the heart of this

⁹⁷³ Paton, Alan. *Journey Continued* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 14

⁹⁷⁴ Paton, *Journey Continued*, 181

⁹⁷⁵ StatsSA website <https://apps.statssa.gov.za/census01/Census96/HTML/default.htm> (attempted to access 18 May 2022 but most links not operating)

⁹⁷⁶ Haferburg, Christopher. "How many Muslims are there in South Africa?" *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa* (2000, 3) 33-34; and Haron, Mohamed. *Muslims in South Africa* (Cape Town: The South African National Library, 1997)

⁹⁷⁷ Statistics SA. *General Household Survey* (Report No. P0318) (Pretoria: StatsSA, 2016) – this is based on data from a partial census in 2015.

⁹⁷⁸ The more detailed analysis based on the 2001 Population Census Data does not give details by Province. See Hendriks H J. "Religion in South Africa; the 2001 Population Census Data", *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (March 2005: 121) 88-111

area, is the West Street Cemetery with sections marked out for Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Jews and Parsees⁹⁷⁹. In Durban, people of different faiths not only live side-by-side but they are buried side-by-side as well – except of course the Hindus who are cremated.

Muslim neighbour and close associate, Fatima Meer, sums this up very poetically. She is writing about +Hurley but would surely have applied the same words to Kearney:

The minaret and the steeple, casting their intertwined shadows, embracing each other's light, could not but have inspired in him the universalism and versatility of God in engaging humanity in many names and forms. It could not but have liberated his mind and heart of the phobias and prejudices that trammel and trap so many others, so that when a Christian wrote that he could not worship Allah only Christ, +Hurley responded that the two were indivisible and indeed one.⁹⁸⁰

So +Hurley and Kearney, operating in this part of the city, would have had frequent opportunities to engage with people of different faiths. But even more than this, they were both involved in the Struggle against Apartheid; and in that Struggle, Indians (most of whom were Hindus or Muslims), were both victims and fellow-activists. After all, Apartheid did not only marginalise the c. 70% of the population of the greater Durban area who were Black Africans but also the c. 20% who were classified as 'Indians'.

I shall explore later some of the examples of how the anti-Apartheid activities of +Hurley and Kearney – even while operating in a Christian ecumenical framework – drew in an interfaith dimension.

The contribution of Indian activists to South African Liberation is sadly not well documented but one book seeks to remedy this. It is a collection of portraits of 120+ Muslim activists from the Struggle. The majority of them are Indian Muslims from Durban, specifically centred around the Warwick area (known as 'the Casbah') where Kearney and +Hurley were active (and where the DHC is now).⁹⁸¹ Included among them are names that will recur, many of whom were cited by a fellow Christian activist as people who influenced Kearney:⁹⁸² Dr Jerry Coovadia (an activist and doctor), Zac Yacoob (a blind man who post-1994 becomes a Justice of the Constitutional Court), Fatima and Farouk Meer.⁹⁸³

Early Signs of Inter-Religious Co-operation in Durban

The large Indian community in Natal (as it then was) meant that interfaith encounters there were more a part of everyday life than in other parts of South Africa. Thus, for example, in describing the emergence of the women's resistance organisation, the Black Sash, we read this:

⁹⁷⁹ Parsees or Zoroastrians are the oldest recorded monotheistic religion in the world and once dominated the area of modern-day Iran (aka Persia). There are very few left but one of their number, Freni Ginwala from Durban, was the Speaker in South Africa's first democratic Parliament.

⁹⁸⁰ Meer, Fatima. "Man of the Pulpit, Man of the People". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 39

⁹⁸¹ Vahed, Goolam. *Muslim Portraits – the anti-Apartheid Struggle* (Durban: Madiba, 2012)

⁹⁸² Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail).

⁹⁸³ Among the books in Kearney's collection when he died (which are now at the SJTI Archive at Cedara) was Meer's autobiography with a few passages underlined by Kearney: Meer, Fatima. *Memories of Love and Struggle* (Cape Town: Kwela, 2017). Speaking at a memorial for her in 2013, Kearney commends her for "speaking truth to power even to her own comrades". (SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/5 "Prayers for Memorial of Fatima Meer")

It was committed to building bridges across the colour line. In the Natal Midlands, right from the beginning [1955?] social gatherings were arranged with black, coloured and Indian women so that they could get to know one another, and perhaps gain some understanding of each other's backgrounds. ...These gatherings started off as the Saturday Club and were later referred to as tea parties.⁹⁸⁴

Although these are not described as inter-faith encounters, the presence of Indian women makes it very likely that they were.

The first indication of Christian leaders in Natal engaging with other faiths comes in the early 1960s. Abraham has already explained that in the late 1950s many of the Catholic bishops were still ambivalent about ecumenism. But he describes how in 1961 Hurley expressed his desire to work with all religious leaders.⁹⁸⁵

Kearney himself mentions +Hurley being involved in the Natal Convention of April 1961, in which 200 delegates 'of all races and religions' came together after a referendum had agreed to turn South Africa into a republic. Then Kearney goes on to describe how one week later +Hurley addressed 2,000 people (presumably again 'from all races and religions') at Durban City Hall saying the convention showed that all races could come together to form a new vision of South Africa.⁹⁸⁶

It is from the interview with Ela Gandhi, reminiscing about her own family's involvement with +Hurley and Kearney, that we can see the clearest indication of these early interfaith encounters.⁹⁸⁷

Ela recalls how in 1963-64 her mother Sushila (the Mahatma's daughter-in-law) asked +Hurley to join a committee for Gandhi's 100th anniversary celebrations in 1969. Also on that committee were Alan Paton (an Anglican) and Fatima Meer (a Muslim). Later in 1971, Ela's husband Mewa Ramgobin set up a 'Committee for Clemency' to appeal for the release of political prisoners to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the South African Republic.⁹⁸⁸ It was a multi-faith initiative and Ela recalls that at the start of meetings people were invited to say prayers in accordance with their different faiths. Ela also recalls the creation in 1971 or 1972 with +Hurley of a Natal Interfaith Council (NIC – though not to be confused with the Natal Indian Congress). Although this organisation was not banned, most of its leadership were (Ela herself, Mewa Ramgobin and George Sewpersad) and so it folded.⁹⁸⁹

Kearney was not involved in any of these earlier initiatives. But he did first encounter Mewa Ramgobin when he asked him to address his students at Inanda Seminary in 1971.⁹⁹⁰ Ela recalls that she first met him in 1973 just before she was served with a banning order (which meant that her meetings and her movements were highly restricted). Intriguingly, she says that Kearney had been sent to her by +Hurley to talk to her about the creation of Diakonia.

⁹⁸⁴ Kleinenberg, Mary & Merrett, Christopher. *Standing On Street Corners: A history of the Natal Midlands region of the Black Sash* (Pietermaritzburg: Natal Society Foundation, 2015) 31

⁹⁸⁵ Abraham, Garth. *The Catholic Church and Apartheid 1948-1957* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1989) 115

⁹⁸⁶ Kearney, G Paddy. *Guardian of the Light* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2009) 90

⁹⁸⁷ Gandhi, Ela. Personal interview by author, 18 March 2021 in Durban (Fellow founder of Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre).

⁹⁸⁸ "Biography of Mewa Ramgobin" *SA History On-line*. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/mewa-ramgobin> (accessed 20 May 2022)

⁹⁸⁹ For more on this see Appendix E: "+Hurley, Kearney and Gandhi".

⁹⁹⁰ "Gerald Patrick 'Paddy' Kearney", *SA History Online*, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/gerald-patrick-kearney> (accessed 18 May 2022) (Note there are some factual errors in this biography but I have been able to confirm the Ramgobin connection with his widow, Ela).

It was clear that it was planned to be a Christian ecumenical initiative but the Archbishop thought it was important to understand how other faith groups would react. I said that I was always keen to work together with any groups that wanted to do something about the situation in the country.

Later, after her unbanning in 1982, she collaborated with Paddy in starting various organisations which were based at Diakonia such as a Durban branch of the World Conference on Religions and Peace (WCRP), the Joint Rent Action Committee and the Detainee Support Committee. She also chaired the committee that organised the Freedom March in 1989, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

Other Indian activists have memories of meeting Kearney in the early years of Diakonia and how that necessarily meant that this Christian ecumenical organisation was also in contact with people of other faiths. Vasu Gounden recalls that he first met Kearney around 1984/ 1985 when Vasu was a student leader at the ('Indian') University of Durban Westville and Diakonia made facilities available for student meetings. He recalls that there was a highly active Indian community in political activism in the 1970s and 1980s and so Kearney was bound to interact with people of Muslim origin (like Jerry Coovadia, Fatima Meer and Yunus Mohamed) and of Hindu origin (like Pravin Gordhan and Mewa Ramgobin).

I especially recall that Paddy had a very close relationship with my father Swami [Gounden]. They were very similar: both of them highly respected for their humility and integrity.⁹⁹¹

One of the ways in which +Hurley would have come into contact with people of other faiths was the fact that one of the main 'Indian' schools in the centre of Durban was run by a Catholic religious order.⁹⁹² Jerry Coovadia (mentioned above) recalls attending St Anthony's and it being 'a very Catholic school'. He has fond memories of being a Muslim boy in the school and also of the presence of +Hurley who encouraged 'the highest respect'.⁹⁹³

Indians were also often in professional jobs and perhaps more willing to work with a controversial organisation like Diakonia than their white counterparts and so that also meant that Kearney developed working relationships with non-Christians. Jerry Coovadia recalls how he and his wife (also a doctor) were called in by Kearney to help if people had been shot or injured during protests. Similarly, Hester Joseph who was brought in by Kearney to manage the Diakonia building ('the Ecumenical Centre') in 1978 recalls overseeing their first audit and that the accountants used were Indian and presumably not Christian (Mohamedi & Manjee).⁹⁹⁴

Kearney's own archive of press cuttings from that period shows the inclusion of an inter-faith dimension to the work of Diakonia, not surprisingly given the range of people involved in the Struggle.⁹⁹⁵

Thus, there is a cutting from *The Southern Cross* (15 August 1976) about a meeting being organised at Emmanuel Cathedral to protest the banning of the Muslim Fatima Meer and that a multi-racial

⁹⁹¹ Gounden, Vasu. Personal interview by author, 18 February 2022 in Durban (Executive Director of Accord)

⁹⁹² In fact, Hurley was part of the commission that prepared *Gravissimum Educationis*, the Vatican II document that takes for granted (para 7) that Catholic schools welcome non-Catholics and non-Christians. Denis, "The Historical Significance of Denis Hurley's Contribution to the Second Vatican Council", 216-223

⁹⁹³ Coovadia, Jerry and Hamad, Zubie. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 in Durban (Struggle activists and husband and wife doctors)

⁹⁹⁴ Joseph, Hester. Personal interview by author, 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

⁹⁹⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980) (various titles and dates as listed)

(and, one assumes, multi-faith) group had attended and were moved away by the police after the magistrates banned the meeting. Kearney also retained a follow-up letter in *The Southern Cross* (5 September 1976) from someone who is shocked at the use of the cathedral for this event (invoking Jn 2:16 to complain that God's house is being turned into a marketplace).

Kearney's archive furthermore has a cutting from the *Sunday Tribune* (5 June 1977) about an event organised at City Hall with Hurley to show support for the people held in detention and that it started with prayers by Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and Christian leaders.

In a memorial tribute that he gave in 2014 (and included in his personal anthology), Kearney recalls Pandit Nardev Vedalankar as the first Hindu religious leader he ever met.

When Diakonia decided in the late 1970s to try to change the emphasis of the old Day of the Covenant (Dingaan's Day, 16 December) to focus on a new covenant...we decided to have a special service on that day to focus on the reconciliation that was needed if we were to have any future in South Africa, and not to celebrate the victory of one group over another.

Quite quickly we realised that the service shouldn't only be a service of the Christian churches — we needed to be much broader and reach out to people of the other great world religions and to include them also in this desire for reconciliation. I had the task of inviting the leaders of different faiths to take part in the service and to encourage their members to attend.

Diakonia decided to hold a major interfaith service in the City Hall, on 16 December [1978], the first interfaith worship I ever organised. One of the people I needed to get to see was Pandit Nardev. When I phoned him, he invited me to come to his home in Cross Street.⁹⁹⁶

The last comment, while it seems so innocent, should be understood in the context of Apartheid: even if people of different races sometimes worked together, they would rarely visit each other's homes.

The inclusion of non-Christian leaders in protests and representations happened on other occasions, though it is hard to say if they were happening with increased frequency. For example, on 22 February 1982, the *Daily News* reported that Kearney had organised a number of religious leaders to come together to express concern for detainees to the Minister of Justice: and these leaders are listed as Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Congregationalist and also Muslim and Hindu.⁹⁹⁷ (There is a foretaste here perhaps of the interfaith Board of Patrons that Kearney will later establish at the DHC).

Intriguingly what was to become the most iconic Christian public statement of Diakonia — the annual Good Friday Service — had some interfaith roots. The first march in 1985 was justified as a visit to detainees in the prison. In an article in *The Southern Cross* 3 years earlier (14 March 1982) Carmel Rickard mentions for the first time a plan to see Durban detainees (with no mention of a Good Friday connection):

⁹⁹⁶ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 150 ("Memorial tribute to Pandit Nardev Vedalankar", 10 August 2014)

⁹⁹⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Daily News*, 22 February 1982)

We would like to minister to them in accordance with the sacred writings of each of our traditions.⁹⁹⁸

The article went on to say that this was backed by a range of religious leaders and specifically mentioned the orthodox rabbi, Advocate AB Mahomed (of the Muslim community), and the president of the Hindu Maha Sabha. The Good Friday service (as was discussed in Chapter 5) went on to be the major public Christian ecumenical witness in Durban but according to the then Anglican Bishop of Natal:

Hindus and even some Muslims used to attend the Good Friday event – I think because it was a public witness against the social challenges we were all facing; they were definitely there during the march and perhaps also at the [Christian] service that came before.⁹⁹⁹

If Kearney's 'broad church' of activists was getting broader, he hinted at how far this might go. Writing for *Diakonia News* (in September 1982), Kearney reflected on Chief Albert Luthuli's challenge to the churches. Kearney explained that Luthuli felt that if the Church was to survive, it could not stand on the outskirts as a spectator.¹⁰⁰⁰ He then shared this quote from Luthuli's autobiography:

It is utterly idle for Christians to criticise communism and Islam from a deep armchair, when communists and Moslems are concerning themselves with those involved in the conflict.¹⁰⁰¹

It is also worth noting that links with people of other faiths were not always about protest; they could also involve celebration. Loek Goemans from the Grail Community recalls the Diakonia 10th anniversary in 1986 being celebrated with a Paschal meal with Jewish and Christian people present, filling the main hall at Diakonia.¹⁰⁰² Nomabelu Mvambo-Dandala, who had at that point recently joined Diakonia, recalls that 'some member churches who were not comfortable' at having a non-Christian event in the building. Kearney also kept a cutting from *The Southern Cross* (3 July 1988) describing how the World Conference on Religions and Peace was assembling in Durban and was welcomed by +Hurley and Londa Shembe (the head of a major African Independent Church who was tragically murdered a year later).¹⁰⁰³

How did Durban compare to the wider Struggle movement?

The level of inter-religious collaboration in Durban is especially impressive when one looks at other parts of the country. For example, it is interesting that there is little mention of other faiths in the (auto)biographies of Christian activists such as Beyers Naudé¹⁰⁰⁴, Peter Storey¹⁰⁰⁵ and Albert Luthuli¹⁰⁰⁶. Similarly, a comprehensive book from 1980, entitled *Catholics in Apartheid Society* with

⁹⁹⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Southern Cross*, 14 March 1982)

⁹⁹⁹ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁰⁰⁰ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 27 ("Luthuli's challenge to the Church", *Diakonia News*, September 1982)

¹⁰⁰¹ Luthuli, Albert. *Let My People Go* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2006) 124

¹⁰⁰² Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹⁰⁰³ SJTI Archive, Cedara: BIO - 11/W/3/Press/4 (1988-2002). Curiously, the website of the global organisation does not list Durban as hosting a World Assembly in 1988 so perhaps it was a more regional gathering: "Legacy", *Religions for Peace website*. <https://www.rfp.org/what-we-do/legacy/> (accessed 16 September 2022)

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ryan, Colleen. *Beyers Naudé – Pilgrimage of Faith* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990)

¹⁰⁰⁵ Storey, Peter. *I Beg to Differ – Ministry amid the Teargas* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2018)

¹⁰⁰⁶ Couper, Scott. *Albert Luthuli – Bound by Faith* (Durban: UKZN, 2010)

10 contributors including +Hurley and Nolan, manages in 150 pages to make very few references to other Christians and none at all to people of other faiths.¹⁰⁰⁷

The biggest omission, in my opinion, is in the ground-breaking *Kairos Document* of 1985. Given the multi-faith nature not just of South Africa but also of the Struggle, it is disappointing to see that there is almost no acknowledgement of other religious traditions. *Kairos* was, of course prepared by Christian theologians and addressed to a Church audience – but then so were the documents of Vatican II! The first edition (1985) makes no mention at all that there might be people in South Africa who are not Christians, let alone that they might be playing a role in fighting Apartheid. The second edition in 1986 begins to address this oversight by adding six words to the opening sentence (in italics below):

It is the KAIROS or moment of truth not only for Apartheid but also for the Church *and all other faiths and religions*.¹⁰⁰⁸

But after the acknowledgement that there might indeed be other faiths and religions, they are neither named nor referenced in any way in the rest of the revised document. Even in a thorough analysis of *Kairos* 30 years after its appearance, by Nolan one of its principal authors, the lack of mention of non-Christians in the document receives no comment.¹⁰⁰⁹

One explanation is that the vast majority of the signatories of *Kairos* were from the area around Johannesburg and Pretoria (what is now Gauteng). But I do not think that exculpates the drafters. In Johannesburg, there was a long-standing Jewish community as well as a very visible Indian community (mostly Muslims around Fordsburg) which was a *cause célèbre* of Apartheid removals. (In addition, there were also prominent Jewish and Muslim communities in Cape Town.) It should not have needed the presence of Durban signatories to draw attention to the need for a non-Christian perspective in the document.

There was at least some acknowledgement of other faiths in Cape Town; this has a large Muslim minority (albeit of different origins and traditions compared to Durban) plus a much larger Jewish community than Durban. A 1989 book (retained by Kearney in his own collection with notes in the margin) written by two American evangelicals, Wallis and Hollyday, references two incidents involving Archbishop Tutu with an inter-faith dimension. They quote from a sermon +Tutu gave on 13 March 1988 in St George's Cathedral:

We are gathered today to pray for our country facing a deepening crisis, to reflect on what is taking place and our role as believers – as Christians, as Muslims, as Jews, whatever. What would be our role in this crisis?¹⁰¹⁰

They also discuss the Open Letter sent by +Tutu to President PW Botha and to Parliament in 1989 (a section which, in his copy of the book, was specifically highlighted by Kearney):

¹⁰⁰⁷ Prior, Anselm ed. *Catholics in Apartheid Society* (Cape Town: David Philip 1980)

¹⁰⁰⁸ Kairos Authors. "Challenge to the Church – the Kairos Document (Revised Second Edition - 1986)". *The Kairos Documents*. Gary Leonard ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Ujamaa Centre for Biblical and Theological Community Development and Research, 2010) 47

¹⁰⁰⁹ Denis, Philippe. "Thirty Years Later: Albert Nolan on the Kairos Document and its Relevance Today". *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (2015: 151) 6-23

¹⁰¹⁰ Wallis, Jim and Hollyday, Joyce. *Crucible of Fire: the Church confronts Apartheid* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1989) 33

We regard your restrictions not only as an attack on democratic activity in South Africa but as a blow directed at the heart of the Church's mission in South Africa. The activities which have been prohibited are central to the proclamation of the gospel in our country.

Interestingly even though the letter had explicit Christian language ('Church's mission', 'proclamation of the gospel'), it was signed not only by 25 church leaders but also by one maulana (Farid Esack).¹⁰¹¹

I am especially intrigued by the inclusion of these references by Wallis and Hollyday. The purpose of their book (and the tour which preceded it) was to mobilise the powerful resources of the evangelical churches in the United States to challenge Apartheid. The innate conservatism of these Christians meant that they had tended to back the Reaganite approach to the National Party (as an unpleasant yet necessary bulwark against communism). But this same conservatism would also have made them allergic to inter-faith collaboration. Would the image of an Anglican Archbishop invoking the prayers of Muslims, Hindus and Jews really have won them over to the cause?

Despite some activity in Cape Town, I think it is still fair to say that among the religious Struggle movements, the most inter-faith-oriented was still in Durban. This is usually explained on the basis of the specific (Indian) demographic of the city. But, as with the comment made above about Kairos, that is not sufficient explanation since there were non-Christian communities in other cities as well (and indeed in rural towns).

I think rather we need to recognise the influence of +Hurley and, as his right-hand man, of Kearney. For example, whereas the Cape Town march of 13 September 1989 is remembered for being led by Christian leaders (+Tutu, Frank Chikane and Allan Boesak), the equivalent in Durban on 22 September 1989 is remembered for the multi-faith photograph mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. On +Hurley's left in that line-up was the then Anglican Bishop of Natal, Michael Nuttall. In his 2003 memoirs, he recalls that the religious leaders were placed at the front by the organisers 'to give the march respectability'.¹⁰¹² However, when he came to the DHC in February 2017 to unveil the picture he gave a more arresting description:

The faces in the photograph show the mix of hope and fear that was in our hearts that day....If it looks as if our smiles are a bit forced it is because, immediately before the photo was taken, we were told: 'We are putting the religious leaders at the front because you are less likely to be shot at!'.¹⁰¹³

Unity in the face of a common enemy, or in pursuit of a common cause, brought religious leaders together in Durban. Encouraged and corralled by Kearney – rarely in the photograph but always in the background making things happen – the momentum of inter-religious dialogue was not dialogue as an end in itself but as a means to a greater end. Again, we can see Kearney following Cox's line, not because he learnt it from their time together at Harvard in 1991, but because that experience formalised what Kearney already knew and witnessed:

Interfaith dialogue becomes neither an end in itself nor a strictly religious quest but a step in anticipation of God's justice. It becomes praxis. Similarities and differences which once seemed important fade away as the real differences – between those whose sacred stories

¹⁰¹¹ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 141

¹⁰¹² Nuttall, Michael. *Number Two to Tutu* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2003) 38

¹⁰¹³ "Update February 2017", *Denis Hurley Centre*, <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 18 May 2022) and also author's own conversation with +Nuttall, February 2017

are used to perpetuate domination and those whose religion strengthens them for the fight against such domination – emerge more clearly.¹⁰¹⁴

Kearney's reflections on Inter-Faith Dialogue

One of the examples given above of Kearney's work in inter-religious dialogue was the creation of a Durban branch of the World Conference for Religions and Peace (WCRP). Kearney helped found this in 1983 together with three women of different faiths: Ela Gandhi (a Hindu), Paddy Meskin (a Jew) and Saydoon Sayed (a Muslim, referenced earlier in the photograph of +Hurley). Although the level of activity of the organisation went up and down, Kearney remained involved with it until his death. In fact a file retained in his personal archive (seemingly dating from the 1990s) is full of reports and brochures from all kinds of organisations that are an indication of his mix of interests at this time (though sadly he has not written notes on any of these). As well as WCRP, it also includes for example the Indian Women's Cultural Group and the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Trust.¹⁰¹⁵

Sadly, it was not possible for the author to interview Paddy Meskin personally for this research because, though still alive, she is very infirm. But she was mentioned by Kearney when he was reflecting in 2012 about Archbishop Hurley's approach to interfaith relations. In this passage, Kearney gives a good insight into +Hurley's focus on finding what is held in common, in a way that indicates that Kearney also made it his own approach:

One of the key leaders of the interfaith movement in Durban is Paddy Meskin, a convert to the Jewish faith. When I asked her about how the archbishop viewed other faiths, she said that he regarded interfaith relations as extremely important because they are a way of building bridges for world peace. His view was that, although one could always find fault with any religion or faith, it was more important to look at the whole picture and then one would see that we have many things in common, and there is a lot that we can admire and learn. She said that, in [+Hurley's] dealings with people of other faiths, what the archbishop wanted to say, quite simply, was "we are all brothers and sisters because we are all children of God." That approach won him much respect.¹⁰¹⁶

To get a fuller idea of what motivated Kearney's early steps into interfaith dialogue, we can look in more detail at his talk to the Aryan Benevolent Homes (ABH) in 1991.¹⁰¹⁷ He starts, as is characteristic of him, with words of modesty, saying how honoured he feels and how much he admires their work of the past 70 years. He then, without embarrassment, starts using religious language and drawing the strongest of links between this Hindu NGO and his own Christian organisation:

Certainly God has been with you and has blessed you abundantly. The religious inspiration of what you do here is very clear and I would like to salute that also. Your concern for the poorest and most destitute is a wonderful example. ...I bring you greetings from Diakonia, the organisation for which I work. 'To alleviate pain and suffering' is our major concern, and

¹⁰¹⁴ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 178

¹⁰¹⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/1 "Other Interests"

¹⁰¹⁶ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 205 ("The challenge of interfaith relations: 50 years after Vatican II", 16 November 2012)

¹⁰¹⁷ Note that while for Europeans the word 'Aryan' has negative connotations with Fascism, for Indians it is a reference to an original Indian tribe. Tragically, the Nazis stole and abused both the word Aryan and the traditional symbol of Hinduism the *swastika*.

it is a concern that creates a strong bond between us and yourselves....We pray that you may continue the excellent work that you are doing.¹⁰¹⁸

Kearney then mentions – this period being the start of the transition from Apartheid to democracy – Diakonia's three chosen themes of 'heal, reconcile, build' and he connects each of those, not just with ABH but with his understanding of the Hindu faith. To begin with, healing is important because of the deep wounds created by decades of Apartheid and also the more recent violence experienced particularly in the Natal area:

Surely there is a very great need for healing. ...Worship can also be a great source of healing. In the Christian church, we have healing services and I presume people of other faiths also have this practice. Often these healing services are used only for direct physical healing but now we should make use of them also for spiritual and psychological healing for those who have suffered in the violence, for those who are still bitter because of what Apartheid has done to them.¹⁰¹⁹

Secondly, there is a need to reconcile and that means drawing on the religious tradition of forgiveness:

Forgiveness has to be generous and so we all need a source of power to forgive and reconcile that lies right outside our own human ability. Only through the power of God is it possible to forgive, only through God's Holy Spirit, only through prayer and fasting. Prayer and fasting on the part of those who haven't been so affected by the violence may be a way of assisting those who have been badly affected by it—so badly affected by it that they feel unable to forgive. Prayer and fasting are a very great tradition of the Hindu faith.¹⁰²⁰

The third focus is re-building: he acknowledges the practical resources of an organisation like ABH and points out the substantial need for building in specific poorer communities that are adjacent to Indian areas, Chatsworth and Shallcross. However, building is not just about bricks and mortar:

But, in addition to the reconstruction of those damaged homes, there's also the building of community and the building of a new society. Think of how we have all been divided by Apartheid—we hardly know each other. We have been divided by race, by different political viewpoints, even by difference of religion.¹⁰²¹

Without apologising for his stance as a Christian, he admits the way in which religion has been used to divide rather than unite, conscious that in South Africa that has mostly been through the misuse of Christianity. As a very public act of open-ness, he ends with a prayer drawing not from his tradition but from theirs:

May God bless all of you: the officials, the members, staff, volunteers and residents of this great home. My prayer is that you should constantly be influenced by the words of the Bhagavad Gita:

¹⁰¹⁸ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 65 ("ABH Founder's Day commemoration", 1 May 1991)

¹⁰¹⁹ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 65-66 ("ABH Founder's Day commemoration", 1 May 1991)

¹⁰²⁰ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 66 ("ABH Founder's Day commemoration", 1 May 1991)

¹⁰²¹ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 67 ("ABH Founder's Day commemoration", 1 May 1991)

The ignorant work for their own profit; the wise work for the welfare of the world, without thought for themselves.

*Strive constantly to serve the welfare of the world; by devotion to selfless work one attains the supreme goal of life.*¹⁰²²

(Later in the same anthology, Kearney includes a second speech to ABH from October 2016. Again, as we shall see, he will quote from Hindu scripture in his parting blessing).¹⁰²³

In the Struggle against Apartheid, Kearney was initially focused on enabling Christians to treat each other with respect; from the mid-80s, we begin to see him extending his embrace to non-Christian groups in Durban and doing so in a way that is consonant with the theology and tone of Vatican II.

Vatican II's statement on non-Christian Religions

So let us examine in more detail the context for dialogue that was set by the Council. The relevant document on non-Christian religions is *Nostra Aetate*. It is a 'Declaration' (the lowest tier of Vatican II documents), it was promulgated on a day with four other documents (a Conciliar Super-Thursday!), and it is the shortest document from the Council (in fact, half the length of the next shortest one which is on the Communications Media). Nevertheless, in just a few short paragraphs, it radically re-sets the possibility of the relationship that Christianity, and in particular Catholic Christianity, can have with the world's other great religions.

From its very opening words, a positive tone is set. Just as Kearney later showed in his ABH speech, the stress is on commonality and a sense of shared progress:

When day by day humanity is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger... In her task of promoting unity and love among people, indeed among nations, the Church considers above all in this declaration what human beings have in common and what draws them to fellowship.¹⁰²⁴

As with the Decree on Ecumenism promulgated one year earlier, the starting point is what we have in common and the Catholic Church is seeing the creation of unity and love among all people as part of her mission – whether or not those people are Catholic Christians.

That on its own would have been revolution enough. A basis of unity could have been (as I shall explore later) the simple fact of common humanity. But, as Elizabeth Johnson argues in 1990, for Vatican II to consider other religions, it had to face up to some tough questions: a realisation of the sheer numbers of people outside the Church, the genuine vitality of other religions, an appreciation of their spiritual wisdom, and a recognition that they were all mostly engaged in a common cause for the common good.¹⁰²⁵ Catholic Christians in some parts of the world (especially Europe and the Americas until recently) could read Johnson's words without them touching their daily lives. For Kearney working in Durban, each of these factors were already evident for him to see, if he was in the right situations: sheer numbers, genuine vitality, spiritual wisdom, and common cause.

¹⁰²² Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 67 ("ABH Founder's Day commemoration", 1 May 1991)

¹⁰²³ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 98 ("Diwali – The festival of light", 16 October 2016)

¹⁰²⁴ *Nostra Aetate* 1 (as in other situations translations have been altered to avoid irrelevant gender exclusivity).

¹⁰²⁵ Johnson Elizabeth. *Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology* (New York: Crossroad, 1990) 133

Might the Catholic attitude towards other faiths be allowed to go further than a patronising tolerance of error? When some people, despite being given the opportunity, had failed to embrace the one true faith, could Catholics do more than just forgive or overlook this? *Nostra Aetate* does go further and it acknowledges that there might actually be some good in other faith traditions. After listing ways in which “religions ...try to counter the restlessness of the human heart...by proposing ways, comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites”, it then makes the revelatory statement:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all people.¹⁰²⁶

Even without naming what is ‘true and holy in these religions’, the very recognition that that might exist opens the possibility of a dialogue. This is only a starting point, but if there is a starting point then there could be a journey to be shared. Although Kearney seems to have started this journey a bit later than Vatican II, his comments at ABH certainly demonstrate him showing ‘sincere reverence to ways of conduct and of life ...precepts and teachings’.

The starting point – as with ecumenism – is commonality and an attitude of respect. We see this in Kearney’s speech to ABH and it is a recurrent characteristic of his personal encounters with people of other faiths.

How did Kearney Encounter the Religious ‘Other’?

The core of the work of Diakonia was to encourage Christians of one denomination to encounter members of other denominations; and to encourage people of one ‘race’ to encounter members of other ‘races’. But Lubbe presciently saw that a liberated South Africa would also need to be religiously pluralistic. He makes the point that apart from Jews (a small group) and white Muslims and Buddhists (even smaller), all non-Christian adherents in South Africa are black, coloured or Indian. Thus, ‘for white Christians, [inter-religious encounter] is an otherness that comprises both colour and creed’.¹⁰²⁷ In considering how to respond to such otherness he quotes Chidester’s four religio-political strategies: 1) exclusion/ elimination, 2) hegemony, 3) toleration and 4) integration. It is clear that Kearney’s response was integration, defined by Lubbe as ‘a disposition towards otherness that respects the integrity of the other as a matter of principle’ and thus ‘meaningful contact and dialogue across religious boundaries’.¹⁰²⁸

+Phillip, an Anglican bishop and close collaborator at Diakonia saw that Kearney’s further desire to encounter people of other faiths was part of that same focus on ‘meaningful contact’:

I have never known of a time when Paddy did not relate to Muslims even though they are the group that receive the most negative attitude from Christians. He was someone who genuinely sought relationships.¹⁰²⁹

¹⁰²⁶ *Nostra Aetate* 2

¹⁰²⁷ Lubbe, Garrie. “Religious Pluralism and Christianity in South Africa”. *Christianity in South Africa*. Martin Prozesky ed. (Bergville: Southern, 1990) 210

¹⁰²⁸ Lubbe, “Religious Pluralism and Christianity in South Africa”, 211-214

¹⁰²⁹ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

It was not just that he sought relationships but also the way in which he did so. Throughout the interviews with people who knew Kearney – across the decades and in various work contexts – the same words recur as ways to describe him:

Humble, modest; he always enjoyed whatever food he was given and shared....I never knew him to get angry or aggressive. (A Muslim from later years)¹⁰³⁰

He was a unique figure because he did not have the hysterics and prejudices of his own religion. We know so many religious people but no one to equate with him. (A Muslim from earlier years)¹⁰³¹

He has always been gentle, a calm personality...I never heard him say a harsh word to anyone....He always expressed his anger with a smile, never raised his voice...he was never judgemental without reason. (A Hindu)¹⁰³²

These traits were undoubtedly part of Kearney's personality but they stood him in good stead for his encounters with people of other faiths. Cox sets out a way of engaging in inter-religious dialogue which Kearney demonstrated, whether or not he was consciously following this prescription:

What is important is that Christians meet their fellow human beings of the other great religious traditions, not in a detached or aggressive way, but with a willingness to listen together to what the ancient runes say. It is important that this mutual listening take place not in some demarcated religious sphere but in the day-to-day combat and compromise of life. The inner logic of this strictly academic approach to religious pluralism is leading it out of the academy and into the grimy world where liberation theologies are also trying to cope with the same cacophony.¹⁰³³

Through WCRP, Kearney was involved in an organisation specifically focused on inter-religious dialogue. But he also placed himself in many other situations where he would be encountering people of other faiths, whether or not formal inter-religious dialogue was on the table. In this was he was following Cox's prescription 'that this mutual listening take place not in some demarcated religious sphere but in the day-to-day combat and compromise of life'.

It is important to start with respect and a focus on what is held in common. But from this starting point, how far can we go? The dilemma for those engaged in inter-religious dialogue is what then happens to the task of evangelisation. Is it enough to converse, or should the Christian also be aiming to convert?

In his 2012 commemoration of *Nostra Aetate*, Kearney concluded by praising the document but also highlighting the challenge that it created:

There had never been such a positive approach to the great world religions, coming from the supreme teaching authority of the Catholic Church....But right from the time of the Council, there was criticism of the document from within the Church. The critics said that if the Church has such a positive attitude to people of other faiths, what will happen to its

¹⁰³⁰ Mahomed, AV. Personal interview by author, 15 September 2020 in Durban (Chair of Jumma Masjid Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁰³¹ Coovadia, Jerry and Hamad, Zubie. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 in Durban (Struggle activists and husband and wife doctors).

¹⁰³² Gounden, Vasu. Personal interview by author, 18 February 2022 in Durban (Executive Director of Accord)

¹⁰³³ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 170

missionary or evangelistic thrust? What would be the point of trying to convert people of other faiths? That question is still not resolved.¹⁰³⁴

Writing on the 40th anniversary of the Council in 2005, Cardinal Cassidy endorses what people like +Hurley and Kearney had been doing in treating other religions with respect and identifying what they had in common:

We do not wish to turn a blind eye to the spiritual and moral values of the various non-Christian religions, for we desire to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals in the spheres of religious liberty, human brotherhood [sic], education, culture, social welfare and civic order.¹⁰³⁵

But he then adds that the Church could not of course agree with other religions, could not be uncritical, could not behave as if all were on an equal footing. “Honestly compels us to declare openly our conviction that Christianity is the one and only true religion.”¹⁰³⁶

Let us look at that challenge in more depth, and how Kearney sought to respond to it.

Inter-faith Co-operation and Conversion

In the midst of all the positive language about commonality and respect and reflections of light, the Council Fathers felt the need to express some caution:

The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons and daughters that, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognise, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these people.¹⁰³⁷

Enthusiasts are reminded of the virtue of prudence in case they are tempted to act imprudently; and they are further exhorted to do all this ‘in witness to the Christian faith’. What are enthusiasts like +Hurley and Kearney being warned against?

John Paul II’s favourite Jesuit theologian, Avery Cardinal Dulles, articulates this. In commenting on Vatican II and the Extraordinary Synod that the Pope called 20 years later, he points out that while the Synod reiterates the ‘universal call to personal holiness’ (in *Lumen Gentium* 5) it also stresses the importance of missionary witness and evangelisation.

The intent is evidently to counteract the tendency in some quarters to emphasise interfaith dialogue and secular service at the expense of the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, with a view to conversion to Catholic Christianity.¹⁰³⁸

If before the Council the stress was on converting the world to Catholic Christianity, in the period since the Council the pendulum was in danger of swinging the other way, with all the focus on

¹⁰³⁴ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 193 (“The challenge of interfaith relations: 50 years after Vatican II”, 16 November 2012)

¹⁰³⁵ Cassidy, *Rediscovering Vatican II*, 134

¹⁰³⁶ Cassidy, *Rediscovering Vatican II*, 134

¹⁰³⁷ *Nostra Aetate* 2

¹⁰³⁸ Dulles, Avery. “The Reception of Vatican II at the Extraordinary Synod of 1985”. *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 351

dialogue and service, and only a cursory nod towards converting people. No wonder Archbishop Lefebvre, who became the most strident critic of Vatican II, could (according to Faggioli) reject dialogue in these words:

The adulterous union of the Church and the Revolution is cemented by dialogue. Truth and error are incompatible; to dialogue with error is to put God and the devil on the same footing.¹⁰³⁹

While that language might seem dissonant today, in the period between the Councils of Trent and Vatican II the rejection of dialogue was the norm, justified by the principle: ‘error has no rights’.¹⁰⁴⁰ If someone is wrong, they do not have a right to dialogue; indeed, it is the duty of the Catholic Christian to save heretics from their errors. Law professor and human rights activist, Robert Drinan, recalls the resistance to the view of religious freedom that his fellow Jesuit John Courtney Murray had been banned in the 1950s from expounding:

Catholic theologians actually held that ‘error has no rights’. And that in nations where Catholics constituted the majority, the Church also had the right to penalise and even to suppress Protestants churches.¹⁰⁴¹

But ‘error has no rights’ did not survive into the post-Vatican II Church. In fact, John Courtney Murray had a huge influence on the Council’s Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis Humanae* which provides the context for *Nostra Aetate* (and the two were promulgated around the same time).

When the Catholic Church dominated mediaeval Europe, it saw religious freedom as a threat to its hegemony. But with the impact of the Reformation, then the Enlightenment and then communism, religious freedom was increasingly becoming something that the Church not only appreciated but from which it benefited. Thus by 1965, the Council Fathers could assert boldly:

This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom.The Council further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself.¹⁰⁴²

By rooting religious freedom in the God-given dignity of the human person, the Church was able to claim that it was not being influenced by modern secular innovations (such as the ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ which had been signed only 17 years earlier). Instead, the affirmation of religious freedom had come after the Fathers had ‘search[ed] into the sacred tradition and doctrine of the Church – the treasury out of which the Church continually brings forth new things that are in harmony with the things that are old.’¹⁰⁴³ (The need to present the findings of the Council as being continuous even if in fact they were *discontinuous* has already been mentioned in Chapter 1.)

What is interesting in the context of inter-faith dialogue, is that *Dignitatis Humanae* seems to go even further and recognises that when people exercise religious freedom they may well decide not

¹⁰³⁹ Faggioli, Massimo. *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 2012) 35

¹⁰⁴⁰ Grasso, Kenneth & Hunt, Robert. “*Dignitatis Humanae* and the Catholic Human Rights Revolution”. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* (2005: 3:3) 3-10

¹⁰⁴¹ Madges, William & Daley, Michael. *Vatican II - Forty Personal Stories* (Mystic CT: Twenty-Third, 2003) 164

¹⁰⁴² *Dignitatis Humanae* 2

¹⁰⁴³ *Dignitatis Humanae* 1

to become Catholic Christians – and that that is not only acceptable but is rooted in the same principle of God-given dignity. Note, after all, that the Latin words chosen as the opening of the document, knowing that they would become its title, do not talk about ‘religion’ or ‘freedom’ but instead ‘human dignity’. This section further stresses that:

Humans have been made by God to participate in this [divine] law ... Wherefore every human has the duty, and therefore the right, to seek the truth in matters religious in order that they may with prudence form for themselves right and true judgments of conscience, under use of all suitable means.¹⁰⁴⁴

God’s plan, and the human dignity that is part of that plan, has led people to ‘form for themselves right and true judgments’ and that leads to the diversity that we see in the world today, which operates ‘under the gentle disposition of divine Providence’ (even if we do not immediately understand how this works).

People of different cultures and religions are being brought together in closer relationships. ... Consequently, in order that relationships of peace and harmony be established and maintained within the whole of humankind, it is necessary that religious freedom be everywhere provided with an effective constitutional guarantee and that respect be shown for the high duty and right of people freely to lead their religious lives in society.¹⁰⁴⁵

But how is this to be squared with Dulles’ reminder (drawing on *Ad Gentes* and other Vatican II documents) about the importance of Christian evangelisation? Does the post-Conciliar Christian still have an obligation to convert non-Christians – and if not, why not?

This would certainly have been a question that +Hurley and Kearney would have asked themselves. The quote above from Paddy Meskin about +Hurley’s focus on dialogue rather than conversion sounds very appealing until one recalls that +Hurley was after all a Catholic bishop. Isn’t converting people part of the job? The Catholic Church’s engagement with inter-religious dialogue evolves over time, beginning before Vatican II with roots in the experience of World War II, and then continuing long after Vatican II in the decades through which *Nostra Aetate* is received and the contrasting pontifical approaches of John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis. To chart that would require a much longer analysis. For now I would like to focus on two very different authors whom we know were read by Kearney, one a Nigerian Cardinal and the other an American Baptist theologian.

Drawing on the example of +Arinze and Cox

To get some insight into how Kearney felt he could resolve this, we can look at his own reflections on the life and work of Francis Cardinal Arinze (who was appointed by John Paul II as President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue from 1985 to 2002). Kearney was clearly intrigued by the figure of Arinze. He owned a copy of his personal testimony (a series of interviews with the Catholic journalist Gerald O’Collins) and reviewed it for *The Southern Cross* in December 2003.¹⁰⁴⁶

Kearney was drawn to the comparisons with +Hurley – though he was discrete enough not to set them up as the young black bishop and the older white bishop on opposite sides of the chessboard of Africa! +Arinze (who is from Nigeria) was made a bishop aged 32 (and so one year older than

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Dignitatis Humanae* 2

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Dignitatis Humanae* 15

¹⁰⁴⁶ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 237 (“Review of *God’s invisible hand*”, *The Southern Cross*, 3-8 December 2003)

+Hurley had been) and was the youngest known bishop in the world at the time (as +Hurley had been in 1947). Whereas the Archbishop of Durban was an established and important figure in the Council, the co-adjutor bishop of Onitsha was recently appointed when he attended the last session of Vatican II in September 1965 as the youngest and the newest bishop present.¹⁰⁴⁷

Like +Hurley, +Arinze spent his episcopal life putting into effect the teachings of the Council and expresses a balanced view of it:

So while Vatican II has done a lot of good, who knows if we did not have it, would things not be much worse? Nevertheless we cannot forget that there have been problems.¹⁰⁴⁸

In another place, Arinze presents a similarly even-handed view:

Some people feared that an attitude of friendship and dialogue with other religions would discourage missionaries from preaching Jesus Christ and proposing faith and baptism to people. It has to be admitted that that risk exists, but only when the dialogue is not properly understood or where it is conducted on erroneous theology.¹⁰⁴⁹

But he is not reticent about the way in which the Church's approach has changed:

Thanks to Vatican II, the Catholic Church is irrevocably committed to meeting other believers.¹⁰⁵⁰

In his review of the O'Collings interview, Kearney comments on the fact that Arinze's starting point in inter-religious discussions (like +Hurley's), was his extensive personal experience particularly of Muslim-Christian dialogue "not surprising given the cardinal's own family background".¹⁰⁵¹

Kearney highlights in his review events in which Arinze was involved and which would also have resonated for Kearney as he engaged more and more with other religions: the encounters between John Paul II and Muslim leaders in Morocco in 1985 and in Egypt in 2000; and most significantly:

...the famous 1986 Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, a daring multi-faith gathering for which even the Pope got into hot water with some of the more conservative members of his curia.¹⁰⁵²

The Assisi event gave the impression that the religious leaders were able to pray together as if there were no differences between them and this is what provoked criticism. That is hardly surprising since 'indifferentism' (the view that all religions are indifferently the same) had been condemned in Pius IX's 1864 Syllabus of Errors (though this had also condemned religious freedom and freedom of the press which had now become part of the Catholic mainstream).¹⁰⁵³ One of the ways in which

¹⁰⁴⁷ Arinze, Francis. *God's Invisible Hand* (Nairobi: Paulines, 2003) 60

¹⁰⁴⁸ Arinze, *God's Invisible Hand*, 64

¹⁰⁴⁹ Madges & Daley, *Vatican II - Forty Personal Stories*, 175

¹⁰⁵⁰ Madges & Daley, *Vatican II - Forty Personal Stories*, 176

¹⁰⁵¹ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 238 ("Review of *God's Invisible Hand*", *The Southern Cross*, 3-8 December 2003)

¹⁰⁵² Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 238 ("Review of *God's Invisible Hand*", *The Southern Cross*, 3-8 December 2003)

¹⁰⁵³ Madges & Daley, *Vatican II - Forty Personal Stories*, 189

some Catholic commentators tried to explain this, after the event, was to argue that the leaders were not ‘praying together in Assisi’ but they were ‘together in Assisi, praying’.¹⁰⁵⁴

But whatever actually happened, it was the photograph of John Paul II, surrounded by religious leaders in their various colourful garbs, that spoke volumes to the world. Faggioli describes the Assisi meeting as ‘a magisterium of acts’¹⁰⁵⁵ but in fact, given John Paul II’s penchant for the dramatic and his brilliant use of media, I would suggest it is better described as ‘a magisterium of images’. Actually, this image was so compelling that even Pope Benedict XVI (who as Cardinal Ratzinger had famously boycotted 1986) could not resist an attempt to reprise it for the 25th anniversary in 2011.¹⁰⁵⁶

It is noteworthy that Kearney draws attention to the role of +Arinze as being the person who stage-managed these events: even as John Paul II took centre stage, +Arinze was always right behind him. Perhaps he sees here an echo of his own relationship with +Hurley at similar inter-faith events such as the one described at the beginning of this chapter which also, through an iconic image, continues to resonate many decades later. Kearney created something very similar to the Assisi group shot when he first gathered his Interfaith Patrons for the launch of the DHC in 2010 (as will be discussed later).

So successive Popes (and +Arinze and +Hurley) could meet with leaders and members of other religions and not feel obligated to convert them. Critics who feel they were denying their Christian obligation to evangelise might want to remind them of Jn 14:6 when Christ declares “I am the way, the truth and the life; no one can come to the Father except through me.” But those engaged in inter-religious dialogue might well reply by invoking their preferred scripture in which Jesus says: “In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you.” (Jn 14:2).

Cox, by whom Kearney was personally influenced in 1991, points out that the proof texts used by each side are actually only a few verses apart, in the same Farewell Discourse at the Last Supper (and they are quoted at the beginning of this chapter). He suggests that this is significant: “They are very close to each other. They need each other.”¹⁰⁵⁷

Cox goes on to explore why the tension between these two texts, and the tension between these two sides, might actually be necessary and healthy. He describes all world faiths as having elements that are particular (a hard core of beliefs) and elements that are universal (reaching out to all) and uses the image of a wheel to illustrate this: “Each world faith has both its axis and its spokes: its sharply edged focus and its ambient circumference”.

He suggests that while inter-faith dialogue has increased in the last few decades, the problem is that those on the edges engaging in dialogue have become detached from (and either ignored by or excoriated by) those at the hard centre. The people at the edges are only talking to each other.

So we are left with a paradox. Without the universal pole, there would be no dialogue at all. But without the particular, the dialogue dissipates its source of primal energy... The paradox

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ivereigh, Austen. “What Assisi has lost: a report from the meeting of religious leaders.” *America Magazine*. <https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/794/100/what-assisi-has-lost> (accessed 19 May 2022)

¹⁰⁵⁵ Faggioli. *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning*, 119

¹⁰⁵⁶ Arinze recalls that in fact, the Sant’Egidio Community (which Chapter 2 mentions was greatly admired by both +Hurley and Kearney) had since 1987 been holding an annual commemoration of the Assisi celebration, moving from one city to another. See Madges & Daley, *Vatican II - Forty Personal Stories*, 175

¹⁰⁵⁷ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 4

of the great world faiths is that they both create a dream of a single human family and threaten that dream at the same time.¹⁰⁵⁸

I think we can fairly assume that Kearney had read this, given his close relationship with Cox and his interest in inter-religious dialogue. So this passage is both a challenge and a reassurance to Kearney. It might have gone some way to reassuring him why, so many decades after Vatican II, the question of conversion has not been resolved. Because in fact it never can be; and in the meantime, dialogue remains a valuable and necessary way of promoting peace. But the passage also cautions religionists like Kearney that, if they wish to be fruitful partners in dialogue, they cannot become detached from the 'hard centre' of their own religious traditions: the focus on the general (what is held in common) cannot ignore the specifics which are key to the identity of a religious tradition.

The Christological Challenge of Inter-Religious Dialogue

There are two areas of the specific that Kearney would have to deal with if he was to build a basis for dialogue. One, given his location in Durban, was the relation between Jews and Muslims; the other, a challenge for all Christians in inter-religious dialogue, is the specific role of the person of Christ.

For a Christian the person of Christ is central; by definition, Christ is not central and perhaps even irrelevant or rebarbative to a non-Christian. This is the Christological challenge for Christians who engage in inter-religious dialogue. But *Nostra Aetate* already points to ways in which the person of Christ could actually be used to help build stronger bonds with some non-Christians. For example it stresses that Muslims revere Christ as a prophet¹⁰⁵⁹ and that Christians are linked to Jewish heritage through Jesus, Mary and the disciples.¹⁰⁶⁰ We do not have any specific writings from Kearney on this subject but we do know that he was influenced by various theologians and so can look to them for insight on how to address this. Nolan and Cox have already been mentioned and I will turn to them in a moment. But an especially relevant text is Johnson's *Consider Jesus*.

For a number of years in Durban, there has been a pattern of inviting an internationally renowned theologian to come and deliver a 'Winter School'. Just before Kearney's time with Harvey Cox at Harvard in 1991, the theologian was another American, but a woman and a Catholic. The impact of Elizabeth Johnson on Kearney was significant enough that in 2005, when he was travelling in the United States, he went out of his way to go to Fordham and pay her a visit.¹⁰⁶¹ She also has great influence as a feminist theologian but most relevant to the discussion about inter-religious dialogue is her work on Christology and this was the focus of the 1990 Winter School which Kearney attended. These lectures were later turned into a book and it is from there that the references are taken.

Johnson poses the critical question for those who say that converting people is not necessary because 'my Father's house has many rooms':

How can we confess Jesus Christ as the only Saviour and still hold that many who do not confess him are saved?¹⁰⁶²

¹⁰⁵⁸ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 2-4

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Nostra Aetate*, 3

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Nostra Aetate*, 4

¹⁰⁶¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 "Morning Pages: May-July 2005" (8 June 2005)

¹⁰⁶² Johnson, *Consider Jesus*, 134

She recognises three possible positions:

- 1) Jesus is constitutive for salvation in an *exclusive* way and so all who wish to be saved must embrace him, although a few exceptions could be made for people who have never encountered the church such as the proverbial remote Amazonian tribe;
- 2) Christ is constitutive but in an *inclusive* sense, which leads to Karl Rahner's model of the 'anonymous Christian' – that the well-meaning Muslim has been touched by Christ without knowing it and so is still saved;
- 3) Jesus' role is not constitutive but normative and so Buddha and Krishna have a role comparable to Jesus.¹⁰⁶³

While position (1) would have been difficult for Kearney as someone committed to inter-religious dialogue, position (3) would have been difficult for him as a committed Christian. That leaves position (2), sitting as it does between a rock and a hard place. But while (2) could be explained to other Christians, it is awkward to imagine explaining it to the dialogue partners themselves. Johnson agrees with Hans Küng (as do I) who criticised Rahner's position as being "a theory that was imperialistic and conducive of a sense of superiority, with Christians saying to other people we know who you are better than you know yourself."

Johnson goes on to explain that Rahner had said he was happy to drop the term 'anonymous Christian' but still maintained that all are saved in Christ whether they are aware of it or not. While this still sounds patronising, she develops this into an image which might have appealed more to Kearney because it shows due respect to non-Christians. In this, she presents Christians as the historically visible vanguard of salvation.

Christians are the early light on the mountains which signals that night is over and light will come to shine universally on all people.¹⁰⁶⁴

This metaphor has the advantage of connecting with *Nostra Aetate's* image in which other faiths 'reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all people'. But the 'vanguard of salvation' sits very uncomfortably with another famous image from the document which clearly stresses the historic precedence of Judaism over Christianity.

Nor can [the Church] forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles.¹⁰⁶⁵

Nolan, writing in 1988, tried to side-step the question of the role of Christ by focusing on Christ's action in the world:

The practice of the struggle is the practice of faith even when it is not accompanied by an explicit profession of faith in God or in Jesus Christ. God is at work in the struggle.¹⁰⁶⁶

Though Nolan, I imagine, would also be allergic to the phrase 'anonymous Christian', his approach would be consistent with Johnson's position (2). Nolan is regarded by many as a Liberation Theologian and Cox points out that Liberation Theology has not generally had to deal seriously with religious pluralism because of the dominance of Christianity in Latin America where it has its

¹⁰⁶³ Johnson, *Consider Jesus*, 137

¹⁰⁶⁴ Johnson, *Consider Jesus*, 137

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Nostra Aetate* 4

¹⁰⁶⁶ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 178

roots.¹⁰⁶⁷ Cox's view is especially interesting because he divides his own theological time between these two areas. Although he sees them as compatible, he recognises that some think that Liberation Theology – because of its particular focus on Christ as the liberator – actually detracts from interfaith dialogue. Looking outside Latin America for an example, he turns not to Africa but to Asia and the work of Tissa Balasuriya in Sri Lanka (where a Christian minority lives alongside Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam).

Cox's conclusion still keeps a central role for Christ; but he leaves open the opportunity for non-Christians to contribute to that understanding of Christ.

For Liberation Theology, the principal objective of Christological thought is not to ascertain whether a particular image of Christ comports with one of the orthodox confessions. It is to determine how a given formulation actually contributes to the coming of the kingdom and this is a question to which people other than Christians can contribute.¹⁰⁶⁸

Whilst this is theologically appealing, I do wonder how in the heat of the Struggle, a Muslim or Hindu leader in Durban might have replied if asked in what way a particular image of Christ as Liberator contributed to their own drive towards liberation. Asking this question makes clear that such grappling with the person of Christ is not really for the benefit of the inter-religious dialogue partners. Rather it is for the benefit of a Christian (like Kearney) to support their engagement with inter-religious dialogue.

For the Christian, all Christology comes down to answering the basic question: how should we follow Jesus? Kearney undoubtedly faced criticism, explicit and implicit, from those who were anxious that he was betraying his Christian vocation. As mentioned above, even something as innocuous (and Biblical!) as hosting a Paschal meal met with adverse reaction from some Christian leaders. Alberigo, the monumental commentator on Vatican II, provides a similar warning to those who are grappling with the implementation of the Council:

Nothing could be more diametrically opposed to this new quest than the itch for novelty, a mundane optimism, or indifference to tradition.¹⁰⁶⁹

But this comment comes immediately after he describes 'this new quest' in these terms:

The Church must set out anew and seek in freedom the Lord who always goes on before his disciples.

For those like Kearney who see Christ as the sole source of redemption, the journey of inter-religious dialogue is bound to be a challenging and an uncharted one. Those who are anxious about such dialogue have accused people like Kearney who follow this journey of being tempted by novelty, optimism or indifference to tradition. But the first half of his quote is what really sets the scene. If the Lord 'goes out before', then the challenge to the disciples – whether popes, bishops or a lay man like Kearney – is to follow Christ wherever he leads. This includes accepting that Christ might lead

¹⁰⁶⁷ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 162

¹⁰⁶⁸ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 176

¹⁰⁶⁹ Alberigo, Giuseppe. "The Christian Situation after Vatican II". *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 17. The 'monumental' work referred to is the five volume history of Vatican II published by Alberigo and Komonchak between 1996 and 2006 and which Kearney himself draws on in his biography of +Hurley (Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 2009). The details of this history are listed in the bibliography and I am aware of it as the definitive reference source for the Council as source of background material. However, I have tended to draw more on his edited volume on the Reception of the Council cited here.

his disciples in directions they do not expect. I believe that the confidence with which Kearney was open to dialogue, while never undermining his Christian identity, is evidence that he felt that he was following where Christ led him.

Inter-religious Dialogue in relation to Jews and Muslims

The Christological challenge is one that all Christians engaged in inter-religious dialogue must face. Kearney also had the particular challenge of how to foster good relations between Christians and Jews, without that being mis-interpreted by Muslims (and *vice versa*).

Cassidy explains that the only reason that inter-religious dialogue (as opposed to ecumenism) was on the agenda of Vatican II was the need to face up to grim reality of the Holocaust.¹⁰⁷⁰ Thus, initially the need was only seen for the Council to make some comment on relations with the Jews; but from that it broadened to be the multi-religious document that is *Nostra Aetate*.

In fact, Kearney himself wrote about how the scope of the document broadened from that initial desire. He helped organise events in Durban to mark 50 years since the opening of Vatican II which included a panel discussion at which he himself spoke in November 2012. This is the only case where we have Kearney's direct commentary on a Vatican II document since in his anthology of speeches he chose to include his presentation from this event.

The document was originally meant to be just about relationships with members of the Jewish faith. Pope John XXIII, who convened the Council, was determined that the Church should say something about the Jews who had been persecuted by Christians over many centuries. All Jews had been blamed for the death of Jesus, and even in the Catholic liturgy for Good Friday they were referred to as 'perfidious Jews'. Well, Pope John wanted all that to stop and a much more positive relationship to be developed with the Jews. (He personally scratched out those dreadful words '*perfidis Judeis*' with his own pen. What an embarrassment that they were ever included in the liturgy!)

I'd like to quote Pope Benedict on the response to this proposal (that the Vatican II document should be just about the relationship of the Catholic Church to people of the Jewish faith) from bishops from Arab countries. He said: "They were not opposed to such a text, but explained that if there were an intention to speak of Judaism, then there should also be some words on Islam." And then he added: "How right they were, we in the West have only gradually come to understand."

This criticism by bishops from Arab countries was helpful because it led to a broadening of the focus so that the document would not only refer to Jews but also include Muslims—and once they were included it wasn't long before Hindus and Buddhists were included as well. So it ended up as a document about Christian relations with all the other major faiths - a wonderful broadening of focus.¹⁰⁷¹

Kearney went on to provide his own summary of *Nostra Aetate* which I think is an accurate way of capturing what was most important:

¹⁰⁷⁰ Cassidy, *Rediscovering Vatican II*, 125

¹⁰⁷¹ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 203 ("The challenge of interfaith relations: 50 years after Vatican II", 16 November 2012)

The main points that the message finally included were:

- 1) that the Church rejects “nothing that is true and holy” in other faiths;
- 2) that it regards “with sincere reverence” their teachings and practices even if they differ from those of the Catholic Church because they “often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all people”;
- 3) that the Church therefore urges its members to dialogue and collaborate with people of other faiths—and “promote the good things, both spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values” found in these religions;
- 4) specifically with regard to Muslims, the document says: “Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Muslims, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding, and to preserve and promote together for the benefit of all humankind, social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom” (*Nostra Aetate* 3);
- 5) with regard to people of the Jewish faith, the document refers to the special connection between Christianity and Judaism, because the Christian faith developed out of the Jewish faith and Jesus himself was a Jew—and then the document states: “Since [what] Christians and Jews [have in common] is so great [we want] to foster and recommend mutual understanding and respect... ..”. Then the document goes on to reject: “hatred, persecution, displays of anti-semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.” (*Nostra Aetate* 4)¹⁰⁷²

Kearney presented these as the concerns of the bishops at the time of the Council in the 1960s; but the way in which he spoke of them half a century later made it clear that these were his own concerns as well.

Cassidy was intimately involved in point 5 above. In his role as President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (the upgraded successor to John XXIII’s 1960 ‘Secretariat’), Cassidy was also responsible for relations between the Vatican and the Jewish people. Curiously, this was because when the ‘Secretariat for non-Christians’ was created, apparently the Jewish dialogue partners at the time opted to stay with the ‘Secretariat for Christian Unity’ where they had initially been housed.

From this vantage point, Cassidy is able to comment on one of the challenges of inter-faith dialogue: recognising that it will be affected not just by Catholic views of other faiths but also their views of each other. Cassidy makes the point that, even during the drafting of *Nostra Aetate*, there was concern about balancing what was said about Judaism and Islam to avoid showing favouritism in the conflict between Israelis and Arabs – an issue in the mid-1960s and no less an issue to this day.

This is a tension that Kearney himself was aware of from a local point of view: he was keen, for political and historic reasons, to join with liberated South Africa’s support for Palestine; but he was also anxious not to alienate the Jewish community in Durban.¹⁰⁷³ In his personal archive, he kept a copy of a very moving email from February 2017 to Paddy Meskin (mentioned above) and Saydoon Sayeed (who appeared in the photograph referenced at the start of this chapter): they had clearly

¹⁰⁷² Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 203 (“The challenge of interfaith relations: 50 years after Vatican II”, 16 November 2012)

¹⁰⁷³ Conversation between Kearney and the author, August 2016

fallen out over something. Kearney offered to find a skilled mediator acceptable to both of them for a facilitated mediation. He talked about how proud he was that interfaith work in Durban was led by a Muslim and a Jew and wanted to make sure that this was not lost.¹⁰⁷⁴

Kearney then made the same point publicly. Addressing Paddy Meskin at a farewell party held at the DHC in 2017, Kearney reflected on their long and productive friendship.

It was not always easy for you and Saydoon and there have been rocky periods when all the pressures of international conflict made your partnership almost impossible to sustain, and those times of tension caused much pain to both of you. I don't know how you have persevered against all odds, but nothing can take away from what the two of you have achieved together over so many years—so we salute you for that partnership.¹⁰⁷⁵

His own ability to strike this balance was also clear when, in Durban in August 2016, he hosted Rabbi David Rosen, one of the main Jewish leaders engaged with the Vatican. When Rabbi Rosen came to the DHC and the Cathedral, Kearney also arranged for him to visit the Jumma Masjid; at the event mentioned above to celebrate *Nostra Aetate*, Kearney ensured that a number of Muslim leaders attended even though it was held at the Durban Jewish Club.¹⁰⁷⁶

Common Shared Humanity

Whether the challenge comes from the politics of the Middle-East, or differing ways of understanding the role of Christ in salvation, those involved in inter-religious dialogue are able to sustain their commitment by remaining focused on the basis of common shared humanity. Alec Erwin recalls receiving much support from Kearney in the early trade union movement and the creation of the Institute of Industrial Education. Though he was an avowed atheist and communist, Erwin felt that Kearney's commitment to shared humanity provided the basis on which they could work so closely together:

My view of him was that he was a profoundly good human being who did not feel that anyone should be treated the way that Apartheid treated people. We did touch broadly on Liberation Theology – and I appreciated that like Paddy their religion was an expression of their humanity.... What drove him? He wanted to see all the humanity of South Africa reunited after an appalling system of dividing people.¹⁰⁷⁷

Moreover, Kearney was aware not just of a common humanity but a common spirituality. This is poignantly captured in a comment made by AV Mahomed who as Chair of the Jumma Masjid has been a neighbour of Emmanuel Cathedral (and now the DHC) for 20 years. He describes Kearney quite simply as: "A soul concerned about other souls."¹⁰⁷⁸

¹⁰⁷⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/8 "Interfaith" (Print out of email, February 2017)

¹⁰⁷⁵ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 100 ("Partnerships made possible", 29 March 2017)

¹⁰⁷⁶ "Update August 2016", *Denis Hurley Centre*, <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 18 May 2022)

¹⁰⁷⁷ Erwin, Alec. Personal interview by author, 19 August 2022 via Zoom (trades unionist and later Cabinet Minister)

¹⁰⁷⁸ Mahomed, AV. Personal interview by author, 15 September 2020 in Durban (Chair of Jumma Masjid Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

This focus on a shared spiritual quest enabled Kearney to see his commitment to inter-religious dialogue as an extension of his commitment to ecumenism. For example, in a lecture he gave in 2004 he started by reflecting on the role of Diakonia in promoting ecumenism for over 30 years:

It was like looking at a very beautiful scene, a mountain or a lake, through one window: and suddenly being able to look at that beautiful scene through many different windows and from different angles.

But he then expanded on this image by adding the interfaith dimension:

We see a little more of the vast mystery which is God. That kaleidoscope represents the deep religious experiences of countless sisters and brothers over many centuries.¹⁰⁷⁹

Kearney went on to use this lecture as an opportunity to commend 20 years of work of the Durban-branch of WCRP which he describes as: “a great intensification of effort, not only of action for justice, but also of interfaith dialogue to sustain that action”.

I want to look at the texts from the Council that would have reinforced for Kearney the importance of shared humanity and argue that that this means, for him, building bridges between people of different faiths was part of the same vocational call as building bridges between people of different ‘races’.

Nostra Aetate makes clear that it is not enough to just acknowledge shared humanity but that this then demands certain behaviour on the part of the Christian:

We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a fraternal way any person, created as they are in the image of God. A person’s relation to God the Father and their relation to their brothers and sisters are so linked together that Scripture says: “The one who does not love does not know God.” (1 John 4:8).

No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between individuals or between people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned.¹⁰⁸⁰

In a speech from 1961, John XXIII is quoted as saying: “the modern tradition of the Church is dominated by one basic theme: an unshakable affirmation and vigorous defence of the dignity and rights of the human person.”¹⁰⁸¹ The *Nostra Aetate* text quoted above establishes that common human dignity is the basis not only of inter-religious dialogue but of all non-discriminatory behaviour. It then goes on to mention race which provides a specific motivation for inter-religious dialogue for those involved in the struggle against Apartheid.

The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against people or harassment of them because of their race, colour, condition of life, or religion.¹⁰⁸²

¹⁰⁷⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/5 “Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture”

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Nostra Aetate* 5

¹⁰⁸¹ Chu Ilo, Stan. *The Church and Development in Africa: Aid and development from the perspective of Catholic social ethics* (Nairobi: Paulines, 2011) 70

¹⁰⁸² *Nostra Aetate* 5

To argue that people of all races can be united requires religious leaders to show that people of all faiths can be united, just as (discussed in Chapter 3) it requires Church leaders to show that Christians of all denominations can be united.

South Africa *per se* may not have been uppermost in the minds of the Council Fathers. But in the 1960s, racial issues across the world were hitting the headlines: independence campaigns against (often Catholic) European powers in Africa, the Civil Rights movement in the United States, the rise of racial tensions in Europe in response to mass immigration (often of Catholics), as well as the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre and subsequent State of Emergency in South Africa. It is not surprising then that countering racism was one issue (among many) for Vatican II not just in *Nostra Aetate* but in other documents as well, for example:

Christian charity truly extends to all, without distinction of race, creed, or social condition: it looks for neither gain nor gratitude.¹⁰⁸³

As good citizens, [the Christian faithful] should be true and effective patriots, all together avoiding racial prejudice and hypernationalism, and should foster a universal love for humanity.¹⁰⁸⁴

True, all people are not alike from the point of view of varying physical power and the diversity of intellectual and moral resources. Nevertheless, with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent.¹⁰⁸⁵

The duty most consonant with our times, especially for Christians, is that of working diligently for fundamental decisions to be taken ...in conformity with the dignity of the human person without any discrimination of race, sex, nation, religion or social condition.¹⁰⁸⁶

It does them no good to work for peace as long as feelings of hostility, contempt and distrust, as well as racial hatred and unbending ideologies, continue to divide people and place them in opposing camps.¹⁰⁸⁷

(It is interesting to note that when 'race' or 'races' are used on their own in Vatican II documents, it is almost always to condemn racism; on the other hand the main appearance of the word 'race' is in the unifying phrase 'the human race'.)

For *Nostra Aetate*, it is not just that all human beings are united, but all are united in the religious questions that they are asking (as echoed in Kearney's 2004 quotation above):

People expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir the hearts of all: What is a human? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible

¹⁰⁸³ *Ad Gentes* 12

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Ad Gentes* 15

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Gaudium et Spes* 29

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Gaudium et Spes* 60

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Gaudium et Spes* 82

mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?¹⁰⁸⁸

An even firmer basis for inter-religious dialogue is created once it is recognised that all people are asking similar questions, even if they reach different conclusions. This concept of diverse people united in an integrated humanity is something which particularly shapes the post-Vatican II document on development *Populorum Progressio*. That text was heavily influenced by the work of French philosopher Jacques Maritain and Kearney confirms that +Hurley prepared for the Council by reading Maritain's *Humanisme intégral*.¹⁰⁸⁹

This is a far cry from the historic position of superiority that the Catholic Church and individual Catholics might have seen themselves in vis-à-vis other human beings. Johnson reminds her readers of the patristic motto *Extra ecclesia nulla salus* ('Outside the Church there is no salvation') while also pointing out that this was not always taken literally.¹⁰⁹⁰ Ruggieri comments that, because of Vatican II, no separation was now possible between the history of salvation and the history of the world. The Church is no longer an absolute: the particular that is 'freed from' the general or which absorbs all other particulars (other religious experience).

[There is] a renewed catholicity which excludes any desire for, any anticipation of, the disappearance or the absorption of what is different from it.¹⁰⁹¹

That would be important anywhere in the world but it is especially relevant, as Kearney points out in his own words, in South Africa:

South Africa has a tremendous number of people who are involved in one or the other of the world faiths. It is a country of a lot of believers and I think it is necessary that we should draw on the combined strengths of all these faiths to bring about positive change and moral regeneration and promote respect for all. All the major faiths teach us that we should treat our neighbour in the way that we want to be treated.¹⁰⁹²

Moreover, it was even more important because of the Struggle. Chapter 3 highlighted the way in which Christians of all denominations came together to fight against Apartheid. The same was also true of people of all faiths fighting in, and making sacrifices for, the Struggle. To take just one example: of the original 156 Treason Trialists in 1956, there were 21 Indians which included Hindus (such as Monty Naicker) and Muslims (Yusuf Dadoo); there were also Jewish trialists (Leon Levy) and the defence team was led by a Jewish lawyer, Israel Maisels.¹⁰⁹³ (The 14-year-old Kearney is unlikely to have been aware of this, but +Hurley might well have been).

Apartheid showed that shared humanity can lead to shared suffering. Once Apartheid was dismantled there were different experiences of shared suffering which also could be used as ways of reinforcing shared humanity. After the bombings in New York and Washington in 2001 and

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Nostra Aetate* 1

¹⁰⁸⁹ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 101

¹⁰⁹⁰ Johnson, *Consider Jesus*, 131

¹⁰⁹¹ Ruggieri, Giuseppe. "Faith & History". *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 104-5

¹⁰⁹² Kearney is being quoted in an un-dated interview with him that was presumably written in 2009 since it references the +Hurley biography as being 'recently completed' while there is no reference to the Denis Hurley Centre even as an idea. Pillay, Indhrannie. "Paddy Kearney – Icon of Peace and Nonviolence" *Satyagraha – in Pursuit of Truth*.

<https://www.satyagraha.org.za/word/paddy-kearney-icon-of-peace-and-nonviolence/> (accessed 3 May 2022)

¹⁰⁹³ Forman, Lionel and Sachs E S. *South African Treason Trial* (London: Calder, 1957)

Kearney relates, clearly with some pride, two interesting responses to the events of 9/11 by +Hurley:

Just after 9/11, Paddy Meskin saw a wonderful example of this. At an interfaith meeting at the City Hall to discuss the events of that fateful day, it quickly became clear that people of different faiths had vastly different responses to what had happened on 9/11. There was great tension between Christians and Jews and Muslims in that meeting. Then Archbishop Hurley rose to speak. He said: 'Let's look at what has happened. We have lost God's children. It doesn't matter who they are. We have to mourn this great loss of life.' And slowly the tension began to drop.¹⁰⁹⁴

Another example was given to me by a member of the Jumma Masjid, the great mosque which is the next door neighbour of Emmanuel Cathedral. After 9/11 the archbishop, then parish priest of the Cathedral, used to come in the very early morning to the mosque and sit in a corner listening to the chant and praying quietly on his own—a gesture of concern and solidarity that made a profound impression.¹⁰⁹⁵

+Hurley and Kearney continued to see the events of 9/11 not as a set-back for inter-religious co-operation but instead an opportunity to promote a new vision (notwithstanding that by this stage +Hurley was 86 and had been retired as Archbishop for 9 years). *The Mercury* (19 October 2001) reported on a talk given by +Hurley at Durban City Hall in which he encouraged faiths to work together across the globe for peace.

Whatever the means chosen, it is clear that Durban like many other cities in the world must contribute to religious and cultural understanding and the creation of activities conducive to peace.¹⁰⁹⁶

The Southern Cross of the same date had a quotation from Kearney who had been instrumental in organising the event:

Not many initiatives for mutual engagement before between Muslims and Christians in particular had taken place before, the importance of which was brought home by recent world events.¹⁰⁹⁷

Whether in the fights against Apartheid and against terrorism, or equally in the movement towards Christian unity and in inter-religious co-operation, +Hurley and Kearney were keenly aware that it was the experience of encounter with 'the other' that was key to opening up our ability to change the world. When at Diakonia, encouraged by +Hurley, Kearney created immersion experiences so that Christians could meet fellow Christians of other denominations and other 'races'; when at the DHC, Kearney created similar opportunities for people of different faiths to encounter each other.¹⁰⁹⁸

The legacy links with India made the opportunities for encounter in Durban relatively easy. In 1964, when Paul VI went to India, Kearney's own experiences of Indians would have been quite limited but he must have been struck by the decision to make the second Papal pilgrimage outside Europe (after

¹⁰⁹⁴ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 206 ("The challenge of interfaith relations: 50 years after Vatican II", 16 November 2012)

¹⁰⁹⁵ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 206 ("The challenge of interfaith relations: 50 years after Vatican II", 16 November 2012)

¹⁰⁹⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*The Mercury*, 19 October 2001)

¹⁰⁹⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*The Southern Cross*, 19 October 2001)

¹⁰⁹⁸ Some examples of this include; a (Hindu) Diwali event in November 2016, an interfaith (Muslim) *iftaar* in June 2017, and a Tibetan (Buddhist) sand mandala in October 2018. See respective 'Updates', *Denis Hurley Centre website*. <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 8 September 2022)

the Holy Land) to a place where the mass of the population were deeply religious and Christians only a tiny minority. Paul VI's biographer describes it thus:

Here we had Paul the Apostle of the gentiles consciously breaking new ground and entering into dialogue with world religions.¹⁰⁹⁹

So the challenge that Paul VI spoke in another Indian Ocean city (Bombay) in 1964 is one that will have struck Kearney as he committed himself to encountering 'the other':

Man must meet man, nation meet nation, as brothers and sisters, as children of God. In this mutual understanding and friendship, in this sacred communion, we must also begin to work together to build the common future of the human race.¹¹⁰⁰

Kearney's Practical Commitment to Working with Other Faiths

Kearney's open-ness to learning is something that was highlighted in Chapter 3 on Ecumenism. Interestingly, the concept of 'Receptive Ecumenism', which though formalised for Kearney in Durham in 2006 was something he had been living all his life, specifically seeks to learn from inter-religious dialogue. Since in that sphere the notion of structural unity has never been seen as the ultimate goal, the stress has always been on open-ness to receive gifts from other traditions (and that is what Receptive Ecumenism recommends for inter-denominational dialogue as well). Murray calls this 'a Call to Catholic Learning' where the role of the Catholics is not to lead or to teach but to learn.¹¹⁰¹

Kearney's personal appointment diaries list many of the opportunities that he had to learn by attending meetings with people of various faiths.¹¹⁰² However, the diaries just list appointments and so provide little insight. On the other hand, the 'Morning Papers', the daily journal that Kearney wrote when travelling do, include some comment from him on inter-faith encounters. It seems that he sought them out even when they were not necessary for his work. For example, on 11 June 2005 in South Bend Indiana, he is impressed by Imam Rashied Omar, an Islamic theologian at Notre Dame University and he describes him as 'a most pleasant person'.¹¹⁰³ A year later on 27 April 2006, thanks to Paul Murray in Durham he attends a seminar about the relationship between the Catholic Church and Islam and is very impressed by what he heard and the quality of the discussion.¹¹⁰⁴

In 2010, Kearney wrote a very insightful article about MK Gandhi and +Hurley.¹¹⁰⁵ In Appendix E, I argue that in describing the influence that Gandhi had on +Hurley, Kearney is also betraying the influence that Gandhi had on himself (via +Hurley). In particular, Kearney more and more espouses an approach of non-violence and cites Gandhi as his inspiration.¹¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁹⁹ Hebblethwaite, Peter. *Paul VI the First Modern Pope* (New York NY: Paulist Press, 1993) 408

¹¹⁰⁰ Cited in *Populorum Progressio* 46 (gendered language unchanged)

¹¹⁰¹ Murray, Paul. "Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning – establishing the agenda". *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning – exploring a way for Contemporary Ecumenism*. Paul Murray ed. (Oxford: OUP, 2008) 5-24

¹¹⁰² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 "Diaries 1999-2017"

¹¹⁰³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 "Morning Pages: May-July 2005" (11 June 2005, South Bend Indiana)

¹¹⁰⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 "Morning Pages: April-June 2006" (27 April 2006, Durham)

¹¹⁰⁵ Kearney, G Paddy. "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop". *Gandhi Marg – Quarterly of the Gandhi Peace Foundation* (2010, 31:4) 595-609

¹¹⁰⁶ For more on this see Appendix E: "+Hurley, Kearney and Gandhi".

More concretely, Kearney ended up working closely with Ela Gandhi on a number of projects: those already mentioned housed at Diakonia plus the setting up ICON (the International Centre of Non-Violence) at DUT (where Ela was Chancellor 2007-2012) and also the Gandhi Literary Peace Institute (which dissolved).¹¹⁰⁷ Their closest collaboration was the Gandhi Development Trust (GDT) to focus on Gandhian ideals, development work, education and non-violence.

The recollections of another non-Christian who engaged with him gives a deeper sense of how Kearney approached inter-religious encounters. AV Mahomed (quoted above) would later accept Kearney's invitation to be a Patron of the DHC.¹¹⁰⁸ He recalled three different occasions in which they worked together.

The first was when the Cathedral was facing a problem with people parking on the main road (Queen Street now Denis Hurley Street) for the well-attended Good Friday Service. The police did not know the importance of the service and were ticketing vehicles. Kearney was aware that every week the police made an exception for Muslims attending Friday prayers and so sought help from his neighbour, AV.

We went to the police and jointly explained the problem and asked that the special privilege that was allowed for Muslims every Friday should be allowed for Christians on Good Friday. It was taken for granted that we could work together. It was mutual problem solving, sometimes it was about parking, sometimes it was about noise. After that, my relationship with Paddy grew and he was a regular visitor at the mosque. There were also numerous places where Paddy was invited for prayers – and so he would ask me to tag along. We both knew that we had mutual respect for each other's religions. If I had an issue, I knew I could phone Kearney.

The strength of the relationship was further proven when Kearney was organising the official opening of the DHC in November 2015. It was originally going to be outside (in what is now Paddy Kearney Way) but it was then decided to hold it indoors in the Cathedral in case of rain.

He took the trouble to come to me to ask me how I felt about being inside the Cathedral. And how other Muslims would feel about it. It was interesting that no one objected; no one felt uncomfortable. Paddy explained that the concert would be celebrating world religions with the orchestra. He suggested the *adhan* (the call to prayer) be relayed into the Cathedral from the mosque. I explained that the *adhan* had to be isolated from the rest of the concert so it will have to be first. And that was when we had the idea of starting the concert at sunset. Everything he said came direct from his heart – he had no ego; he was not amplifying his religion over another. He did not demand, he did not command, he did not beg. He just asked. But Paddy's word was like God.

In the next section, I shall recount the setting up of the joint feeding programme. But a few years after the DHC was established there was another occasion when Kearney had to ask AV's help again. It was in relation to the Madrasa School property directly opposite the DHC.

Paddy came to me and said he needed space for the female sewing project and that he wanted a place nearby. So I agreed to approach an existing tenant to move out to empty two classrooms. I accepted a reduced rental for those rooms. Paddy Kearney always

¹¹⁰⁷ Gandhi, Ela. Personal interview by author, 18 March 2021 in Durban (co-founder of Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre).

¹¹⁰⁸ Mahomed, AV. Personal interview by author, 15 September 2020 in Durban (Chair of Jumma Masjid Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

projected the sincerity of a man of God. He never had an ulterior motive. He was calculated but never calculating. But he spoke with self-confidence because his motives were always good. He never asked for anything in an over-bearing way. And he was so respectful even being aware of prayer times. 'Let me know when you are available,' he would say. 'We can work around you'.

If these examples seem bizarrely specific and a bit pedestrian, that is in keeping with Cox's advice on inter-religious co-operation.

The example of Jesus own life demonstrates that any dialogue must take place with actual people. A so-called inter-religious dialogue with the Platonic ideals of what this or that religious tradition ought to be in its purest essence leads nowhere.¹¹⁰⁹

He points out that it does not matter that Jesus himself did not engage in inter-faith dialogue since there are lots of things that we try to do as Christians in a way that follows Jesus, knowing that he did not do those himself.¹¹¹⁰

Cox then warns against the ways in which people engaged in dialogue are tempted to reduce the importance of the particular:

- people end up talking in the abstract about 'Christianity' rather than sharing testimony about 'my faith';
- they soft pedal the figure of Jesus even though he is central to what it is to be a Christian;
- they mistakenly do this since they fear that the figure is divisive and so try to start on common ground; but actually people of other faiths most want to know what Christians really think about Jesus.

He suggests that when they take the abstract approach, Christians engaged in dialogue are not actually using Jesus as a model for dialogue even though that is the model they use (or claim to use) in all other parts of their lives.

A focus on Jesus moves the encounter from the theoretical level to the practical one...to follow Jesus means to deal with specifics not generalities.¹¹¹¹

Cox argues that, when we enter into dialogue, we need to expect to encounter God in the other and we cannot assume that that process will be without sacrifice. This is something Kearney had already discovered in ecumenical dialogue and was now discovering in interfaith dialogue.

It invites blessedness and pain. No one who enters – really enters – remains unaffected. Dialogue changes those who risk it. It upsets more than stereotypes and preconceptions about the other. It works an even more subtle transformation on the way I understand and live my own faith.¹¹¹²

The recurrence of the word dialogue – a word (as explained earlier) so despised by Lefebvre – is a key hermeneutical principle for understanding the post-Vatican II church. Rush says that the change of Vatican II is captured in this oft-repeated word. He sees this as true of the Council itself where

¹¹⁰⁹ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 12

¹¹¹⁰ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 5-6

¹¹¹¹ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 11

¹¹¹² Cox, *Many Mansions*, 17

there is collaboration rather than mere consultation and thus links this to the stress of the Council on collegiality.¹¹¹³

In his memoirs of the Council, +Hurley jokes about the importance of dialogue especially for the French bishops (except, presumably, Lefebvre):

Bets were placed as to whether a French bishop can avoid the use of the word *dialogus* in an intervention. *Ubi Gallicus, ibi dialogus* ("Where there is a Frenchman, there there is dialogue"!).¹¹¹⁴

The need to focus on dialogue inside the religious community, as well as outside, would have reminded Kearney (drawing on Cox) that, as someone engaged in inter-religious dialogue, he needs also to keep in touch with the members of his own faith tradition not engaged in inter-religious dialogue.

We may not admit it but we do need each other. They remind us that without the radical particularity of the original revelation we would have no faith to share. We remind them without the universal dream, they falsify the message and diminish the scope of the original vision.¹¹¹⁵

From Inter-religious Dialogue to Inter-religious Co-operation

The inspiring title of the 1987 Pastoral Plan created by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) under +Hurley's Presidency was 'Community Serving Humanity'.¹¹¹⁶ The 'object' of the work of the Catholic community should be wider humanity. But the 'subject' was still clearly the Catholic community. With the increased ecumenical and then inter-religious co-operation, Kearney was seeing that the subject could be broadened too. Could the Catholic Church in fact be just one part of a set of faith-based *communities* serving humanity?

Larry Kaufmann, a Redemptorist priest who knew Kearney well, in writing his contribution to a series of reflections on the Pastoral Plan in 1996 calls his chapter: 'Ecumenical and Inter-faith Co-operation in Ministry'. He certainly sees such co-operation as a natural part of the Pastoral Plan and he compares +Hurley's motto of 'Community Serving Humanity' to a broader one expressed by John Paul II: 'solidarity in the service of humanity'.¹¹¹⁷

Kaufmann shares Kearney's view that it is the actions of faith-based communities that matter more than their words. In an address to St Mary's Catholic Church, Pietermaritzburg in 1987, entitled 'What does the Lord require of us?', Kearney looked at the scriptures and at the examples of (Anglican) Bishop Colenso, (Catholic) Archbishop Romero and (Jewish) Abraham Heschel to explore the meaning of faith-based social action in adversity.

¹¹¹³ Rush, Ormond. *Still Interpreting Vatican II – some Hermeneutical Principles* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2004) 39

¹¹¹⁴ Hurley, Denis. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 80

¹¹¹⁵ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 18

¹¹¹⁶ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 265

¹¹¹⁷ Kaufmann, Larry. 'Ecumenical and Inter-faith Co-operation in Ministry'. *Serving Humanity – a Sabbath Reflection*. Stuart Bate ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1996) 216

It is clear that for these prophets (Amos, Isaiah and Micah) God is actually worshipped and honoured by deeds of justice rather than simply by prayer and worship.¹¹¹⁸

Donahue explains that the test of justice in the Old Testament is being in good relationship with the Covenant. Prophets like Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah need to remind Israel that they have forgotten the covenant when they fail to show concern for the poor and oppressed

The prophet is one who is called not only to speak on behalf of Yahweh but one who speaks on behalf of those who have no voice.¹¹¹⁹

Kearney would often apply to +Hurley words associated with Archbishop Romero: to be 'a voice for the voiceless'. In fact, he specifically chose this phrase as the sub-title of the exhibition panel at the DHC on 'Hurley and Social Justice'. But, while speaking out for the voiceless is important, it was for Kearney never a substitute for acting on the ground. Perhaps he had too often seen faith-based communities fall into this trap in their opposition to Apartheid. The RICSA report to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, reflecting on the role of religious organisations, comments:

If there is one lesson from observing faith communities in South African history (as many of them admitted) it is that words are easy and accomplish little when not backed up with action.¹¹²⁰

Cox also warns against such a well-meaning but ineffectual response by the religious:

Jesus was not a model of vacuous tolerance. He did make judgements about the faith of the people he met. The key to Jesus' approach to any religious perspective was: 'By their fruits shall ye know them.' He seemed singularly uninterested in the doctrinal content or ritual correctness of the different religions he encountered. He was, however, terribly concerned about the practical outcomes of people's faith commitments.¹¹²¹

Kearney too was concerned about the practical outcomes of people's faith commitments: it was the recurrent challenge that Diakonia made to its member churches and in turn to their congregants. But it is not until after 2004 when he leaves Diakonia (which after all was an explicitly Christian organisation) that we really see him engaging with the commitments of other faiths.

For example, Kearney has a file about HIV/AIDS from around 2001 when he was still at Diakonia. He made some notes on the Oikumene 'Consultation on the ecumenical response to the challenge of HIV AIDS in Africa' and wrote:

the essence of the whole document is talking freely about the disease and encouraging churches to do the same.... the ecumenical family envisaging a transformed and life-giving church ... in meeting the challenges presented by the epidemic.¹¹²²

¹¹¹⁸ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 44 ("What does the Lord require of us?", 1987)

¹¹¹⁹ Donahue, John R. "Biblical perspectives on Justice". *The Faith that does Justice - examining the -Christian Sources for Social Change*. John C Haughey ed. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 74

¹¹²⁰ RICSA Report. "Faith Communities and Apartheid". *Facing the Truth*. James Cochrane et al eds. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999) 72

¹¹²¹ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 14

¹¹²² SJTI Cedara: BIO- 496/P/6 "HIV and AIDS"

It is noticeable that, even when thinking of Africa with its massive Muslim community, Kearney in 2001 was still talking in purely Christian terms.

But by 2010, he was talking about service as a way of bringing faiths together. In the *Sunday Tribune*, he wrote in relation to Christmas:

... use this time to feed the hungry, clothe the poor and visit the sick. This will bring us closer to people of other faiths and make our society happier and more harmonious.¹¹²³

This sounds like a firm position on two points: that people of all faiths can find areas of common ground; and that people-of-faith might in some way be different from people of no-faith. I make this point because, outside of South Africa, it is a commonplace among faith-based organisations to show their solidarity not just with people of other faiths but with people who have no faith. The phrase 'people of all faiths and none' is the standard wording used.¹¹²⁴ But this liberal inclusiveness disguises a fundamental difference in outlook: people of different faiths can be united in their belief in a benevolent deity who has a plan for the world; they do not share that with people of no faith.

As far as I know, Kearney always described the DHC as an 'interfaith' organisation and not one that was for 'people of all faiths and none'. He was thus pleased that, before food is served, one of the homeless guests is invited to say a prayer. I cannot imagine him side-stepping the prayer in case it offended those who were 'of no faith'. I was thus surprised to read that, immediately before the comment above about Christmas, he expressed a concern about people affirming their own faith traditions.

A related issue which is highly relevant in our multi-faith society is how to greet people at this time of the year? Christians tend to scorn 'Happy holidays' or 'Season's greetings' which they dismiss as being politically correct. But isn't it insensitive to say 'Merry Christmas' to one and all, particularly people whom we know do not celebrate Christmas? Wouldn't we find it strange to be greeted with 'Happy Diwali', 'Eid Mubarak' or 'Happy Pesach' at the time of those festivals by friends and acquaintances who know that we are Christians?

Was he here in danger of falling into the trap of feeling that the best way to be multi-faith is to express no-faith? This is the temptation that Cox (mentioned earlier) described as 'fleeing from the particular to the general'. But it was not a view that he held on to, as far as I know. When I worked with him (2015-18), I never recall him hesitating to wish someone 'Merry Christmas' nor indeed to wish a Muslim neighbour 'Eid Mubarak' or a Hindu visitor 'Happy Diwali' at the right time.

This does show, however, that Kearney was sensitive to any particular issues there might be in working closely with people of other faiths. AV Mahomed, the Chair of the Jumma Masjid Trust next door to the Cathedral, remembers how pre-DHC, the old Parish Centre was used to house refugees who in 2008 were affected by xenophobic attacks in the CBD. He recalls Kearney being at pains to make sure that halal meals were available for people who needed them.

¹¹²³ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 105-109 ('On putting Christ back into Christmas', *Sunday Tribune*, 22 December 2010)

¹¹²⁴ For example, this from the Catholic development charity in the UK for which the author used to work: 'CAFOD and Catholicism' *CAFOD website* <https://cafod.org.uk/About-us/CAFOD-Catholicism> (accessed 8 September 2022)

A Specific Application of Inter-religious Co-operation

This was the precursor of one of Kearney's most significant and visible ways of turning inter-religious dialogue into inter-religious co-operation. When the DHC opened in 2015, it continued the Cathedral parish's pattern of serving food three days a week. Within a few months, AV approached Kearney, impressed with the dignified way in which homeless people were served meals. "I was surprised" he once commented to the author, "at how well the Christians were treating the homeless."

AV initially asked Kearney for advice on how to set up a similarly dignified way of serving food, rather than handing it out of the back of trucks on the side of the road. To AV's surprise, Kearney suggested that the mosque take their feeding scheme off the streets and incorporate it into the DHC feeding by adding an additional day. Anxious about preserving a halal feeding scheme, AV's original proposal was that this would be a meatless meal. But Kearney went a step further and agreed to make the kitchen halal throughout the week. In return, AV offered to encourage local butchers (most of whom were Muslim) to donate halal meat all through the week. AV arranged for new uncontaminated plates to be bought and also provided advice to the DHC staff on how to preserve a halal kitchen. Kearney and AV were equally proud of being able to say to visitors: "The DHC is the only building that we know of in the world which is named after a Catholic bishop and houses a halal kitchen."¹¹²⁵

In his interview, AV stressed how important this was not only to further enhance the relationship between the Cathedral and the mosque but also to project a positive vision to the wider world.

This is not something you will find in other parts of the world – others would not take this for granted. If someone suggested it, there would be debates for and against; may be even a backlash and so it would not even get off the ground. But here we had a very smooth transition. If anyone in the Muslim community ever asked me the question 'Why are you part of the DHC feeding scheme?', I immediately answer back 'Because Paddy Kearney is my brother.'¹¹²⁶

In appreciating the witness this gives to the wider world, AV and Kearney are echoing a concept that Cox argues:

Any religious hope today must begin with the hope that there will in fact be a human future. Such a hope must be 'religious' because the empirical basis for it is ambiguous at best.¹¹²⁷

Cox goes on to quote Teilhard de Chardin (as it happens, +Hurley's favourite Jesuit) as saying the essential ingredient of religion is 'hope and a vista of a limitless future'.

It was interesting for the author to observe at first-hand, how much effort Kearney put into making the Muslim collaboration a reality. One of his closest confidants, Doug Irvine also recalled the importance to Kearney of this initiative:

In a different context, inter-faith collaboration is so aspirational. It can become such a woolly thing. All heart and no head. And yet, I remember Paddy talking about collaborating

¹¹²⁵ "Update July 2015", *Denis Hurley Centre*, <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 18 May 2022)

¹¹²⁶ Mahomed, AV. Personal interview by author, 15 September 2020 in Durban (Chair of Jumma Masjid Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹¹²⁷ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 211

with the mosque. Aware of the trials and tribulations that you have to go through but he would just get on with it without the illusions (or without many of the illusions) that other people have.¹¹²⁸

In Kearney's 2012 lecture on 'The challenge of Interfaith Relations' he ended by talking about the importance of religions working together to tackle social issues. I shall quote it at length because it is based on one of the Archbishop's last major public addresses, the annual Alan Paton lecture in 2001.¹¹²⁹

Archbishop Hurley was speaking about the need for an intensive drive to end world poverty and suggested this might be a most appropriate issue on which all the major world religions could unite and co-operate. It's estimated that about 80 per cent of the world's population belong to one or other of the five world religions: Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim. If we really worked together, the Archbishop said, we could be a powerful influence for change.

'One thing [all these world religions] have in common', he said, 'is the conviction that one cannot be truly religious without ... trying to love one's neighbour and ... alleviating the distress and the poverty that may be making his or her life practically inhuman. Religious believers could play their part in helping to prevent economic globalisation from making the situation of poverty and distress in the world worse than it is at present and, even, by the grace of God, reversing the process ...'

In the last years of his life, the archbishop was extremely worried about increasing poverty in South Africa and the growing gap between rich and poor. ... There was a sea of increasing poverty all around him at Emmanuel Cathedral where he chose to work for the last nine years of his active ministry. And he also saw clearly that it would not be enough just for Christian churches to unite to end poverty. To really make an impact, this would have to be done by people of all faiths working in unity. So, 50 years after Vatican II, that's one of the major challenges to interfaith relations – perhaps the greatest challenge of all.

I do not think it is an exaggeration to imagine Kearney reflecting on +Hurley's words a few years later, after his death, and explicitly taking on the mission of his mentor. The DHC thus becomes a vehicle for answering this challenge.

Perhaps in this, Kearney was also reflecting on where faith communities have failed during the time of Apartheid and what their response should now be. John de Gruchy writing in 1999 was commenting on the representations made by religious organisations to the TRC and reflecting on the first few years of liberation

Sadly it must be observed that faith communities seem to have gone the way of the business sector in claiming that, now that society has changed, they can go on building up their own institutions. Another reason for having faith communities as part of the TRC process therefore is to remind them that, like the business sector, they have a moral obligation to be involved in the transformation of a society they so profoundly affected.¹¹³⁰

¹¹²⁸ Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Personal friend and involved in Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace).

¹¹²⁹ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 206 ("The challenge of interfaith relations: 50 years after Vatican II", 16 November 2012)

¹¹³⁰ De Gruchy, John "Faith, Struggle and Reconciliation". *Facing the Truth*. James Cochrane et al eds. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999) 17

The DHC became the vehicle by which Kearney sought to encourage a range of faith communities to fulfil the moral obligation to be involved in transformation. In doing so, he gave those religious leaders the chance not just to respond to society but to shape it. As Cox wrote:

We cannot merely speculate on whether rites and myths will one day cease to divide and stupefy people; we must so shape and reconceive them that they unite and enlarge us. We cannot afford to wait and see whether the 'religious dimension' ceases to be a segregated precinct; we must set about making it an integral dimension of all we do.....We must now take the initiative not just to predict the future – including the future of religion – but to shape it.¹¹³¹

Was Interfaith always part of the Vision of the Denis Hurley Centre?

I would like to show that the DHC, Kearney's last great achievement, is evidence that he put Cox's words into action: an attempt to 'unite and enlarge' the religious community of Durban; taking an area that had been a segregated precinct and making it an integral dimension of the lives of people of faith; shaping the future of religion and of wider society in Durban.

The DHC is an expression of a Vatican II Church just as Diakonia had been over 30 years earlier. But it provided a much more broader scope for Kearney. It was he who created the model rather than it being dictated to him by Church leaders; he was fired by the memory of +Hurley and in particular his concerns towards the end of his life; he was operating in a post-Apartheid South Africa in which connections between communities were easier (though far from perfect). The end of Apartheid also meant that the focus of Kearney's energies could move from resisting a negative vision of society towards creating a positive one.

Nicholas King (a Jesuit who was close to +Hurley in the 1990s) points out, in his reflection on the Pastoral Plan, the opportunity but also the complexity that the Church faced after 1994.

As soon as the single issue disappears from the centre of our vision, the complexity of real life breaks harshly in, and we wonder to which of the following centrally important issues we should turn our attention: health, education, housing, transport, corruption, crime and violence, preaching the Gospel, empowering women, employment, co-operation with other Christian denominations, not to mention collaboration with people of other faiths and none, sexual morality, sport and recreation, drugs, abortion and what to do about the arms industry.¹¹³²

While Kearney and the DHC did not attempt to tackle all of these, by the time of Kearney's death in 2018, it had certainly made some impact in health, education, housing, employment, recreation and drugs: all of this through co-operation with other Christian denominations and with people of other faiths, and through these by preaching the Gospel.

It is worth plotting out the timeline of the last 14 years of Kearney's life to see how his focus developed. +Hurley's death in February 2004 pre-dated by a few months Kearney's departure from Diakonia in June. Most of the next five years were devoted to completing the biography of +Hurley (he had started it while the Archbishop was still alive) culminating in the publication of the full

¹¹³¹ Cox, *Many Mansions*, 212

¹¹³² King, Nicholas. 'A Biblical Approach to the new South Africa'. *Serving Humanity – a Sabbath Reflection*. Stuart Bate ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1996) 34

version *Guardian of the Light* in 2009 and the abridged version *Truth to Power* in 2012. An initial brainstorming meeting about the old Parish centre was convened by Kearney and Fr Stephen Tully in August 2008 which led to the launch of a major fund-raising drive in February 2009 and later the formalisation of the DHC Trust (2010). By December 2014, the building was completed and activities begun; in November 2015 it was officially opened and Kearney operated as Chair of Trustees until his death in November 2018.

While his archive shows that he was involved in many other activities (as was discussed in Chapter 4), the main focus of the last 10 years of Kearney's life was the creation and governance of the DHC. The opening words that Kearney wrote for the organisation's website ('We work with people of all faith traditions...') stresses its multi-faith approach.¹¹³³ Was this something that was always part of the vision for the Centre?

+Phillip, who had been intimately involved in Diakonia and was then part of the DHC project from the beginning, commented:

It was not a surprise to me that it was an inter-religious project. Paddy was always drawn closer to people who brought together faith and social consciousness. For him – and for me – that is what it is to be a Catholic.¹¹³⁴

But the evidence of when this emerged is less clear; I want to propose four possible answers to the question:

- 1) Interfaith was always part of the vision of the DHC, shared by all key stakeholders, even if not always stressed to every audience.
- 2) Interfaith was always part of Kearney's vision of the DHC but he took time to draw other key stakeholders into this vision.
- 3) Interfaith was initially a pragmatic part of Kearney's vision of the DHC but it became more fully developed over time.
- 4) Interfaith was not initially part of Kearney's vision of the DHC but it became included over time.

In retrospect (1) seems the obvious answer but in fact there is evidence to support the other positions. Comments from interviews with people Kearney worked with closely on the project are ambivalent. For example, Costas Criticos who worked as volunteer consultant on the construction aspect (and had previously assisted Kearney with the refurbishment of the Diakonia Centre) stated unambiguously: "the interfaith aspect was very clear from the beginning."¹¹³⁵ But in his interview Fr Stephen Tully, who as Administrator (Dean) of the Cathedral until 2015 was effectively co-founder with Kearney, at no point mentions the interfaith dimension.¹¹³⁶

Notes from the meeting at which the project was first discussed (attended by Kearney, Stephen Tully and Costas Criticos) suggest that this was initially being conceived of as a very Catholic project.¹¹³⁷ On 19 August 2008, 40 people from Emmanuel Cathedral parish attended to 'discuss the future of the parish centre' under the title 'Reach for a Dream'. In the notes written up by Kearney, some of the elements of what the DHC later becomes are already apparent: that it should have this new

¹¹³³ "Welcome", *Denis Hurley Centre website*, <http://www.denishurleycentre.org> (accessed 28 May 2022)

¹¹³⁴ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹¹³⁵ Criticos, Costas. Personal interview by author, 4 September 2021 via Zoom (Building consultant to Diakonia and DHC)

¹¹³⁶ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the DHC)

¹¹³⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/1 "2008-09"

name; that it will accommodate various existing social outreach projects; that will also have a roof garden, an internet café and a new +Hurley museum; that it will be available for conferences and events.

There are elements mooted which do not make it through to the final version such as a recording studio and a skywalk to the Madrasa Building opposite. But there are also elements mentioned (but not realised) which would have made the project not just not inter-faith but not even ecumenical: a convent, a Eucharistic chapel (for the Catholic practice of adoration), and a Catholic museum and library. What is also clear, given the group that was invited, is that this was being presented as a project *of* the Cathedral parish *for* the Cathedral parish: and so the emphases in their dreaming are not surprising.

This very Catholic approach to the project was reinforced when the first meetings of a 'Co-ordinators group' started in September 2008. There was one non-Catholic involved (Illa Thompson, a public relations specialist who had worked with Kearney for years).¹¹³⁸ But otherwise, all the members of the team were Catholic and the discussions centred around very Catholic forms of prayer (such as a Holy Hour on a Friday), Catholic means for publicity (through the Cathedral and *The Southern Cross*) and Catholic fundraising (reaching out to all Catholic parishes as well as Catholic schools and the Association of Catholic Tertiary Students.)¹¹³⁹

In his collected writings, Kearney includes a piece entitled 'A short history of Emmanuel Cathedral and the Denis Hurley Centre' which was originally published in 2011.¹¹⁴⁰ Even though by then the inter-religious dimension was more fully established, he did not mention it in describing the early genesis of the project:

The idea of renovating the Parish Centre had been discussed for some years. When the Cathedral and Presbytery were themselves refurbished, it seemed obvious that something would have to be done about the increasingly run down Parish Centre.

In August 2008, Father Stephen Tully invited parishioners to come together to share his dream about the renovation of the Parish Centre as the DHC. About 40 parishioners responded to this invitation with great enthusiasm.

A number of teams were established to take the idea forward. One of the first steps was to survey all the users of the building about their needs. The results were collated and put in the briefing document for the architects.

A great crowd of all races and religions gathered at the Cathedral on Sunday 15 February 2009 for the official launch of a fundraising drive by Cardinal Wilfrid Napier OFM.

While 'all races and religions' gathered for the official launch, that certainly does not mean that it was yet an inter-religious project. Some more insights can be gleaned from Kearney's own notes for that launch event (which was the Sunday closest to the anniversary of +Hurley's death).¹¹⁴¹ There were two very clear interfaith aspects to the launch:

¹¹³⁸ Thompson, Illa. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2022 in Durban (PR consultant to both Diakonia and DHC)

¹¹³⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/9 "Team Co-ordinators 2008"

¹¹⁴⁰ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 215 ("A short history of Emmanuel Cathedral and the Denis Hurley Centre", 14 June 2011)

¹¹⁴¹ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/1 "2009"

- a speech about helping the poor by Fatima Meer (using quotes from the Qur'an about poverty which Kearney had requested from Saydoon Sayed and then edited, read in Arabic as well as English) such as:
 - o "Believers spend on others from the good things you have earned. Do you not select for your spending things which you yourselves would not accept without turning your eyes away in disdain." (2:267)
- the messages of support include one from Paddy Meskin who is Jewish.

But the 12 other messages (either presented in person or read out) were all from Christians and surprisingly there is no message from the Hindu community. Thus, the focus for this event is mostly Christian and indeed very Catholic: there is a prayer of thanksgiving from the Cardinal, the blessing of the building is by the Cardinal, the bells of the Cathedral are rung, Catholic hymns are sung. When flowers are laid at Hurley's shrine in the Cathedral there is a reading from Isaiah (58: 6-10). Though this would also have been meaningful to Jewish and Muslim adherents, there is no indication that this is why it was chosen. An FAQ which was distributed at the event used the language of 'Care, Education and Community' which became recurrent themes of the DHC. But there was no explicit reference to the Interfaith aspect in the FAQ.

There was a stronger hint of an inter-religious dimension around the project later in 2009 in September when Kearney led a group of people in the footsteps of +Hurley on a pilgrimage to Robben Island. This was part of the Cape Town launch of Kearney's biography and he ended the tour by announcing the plan for the DHC. This was an ecumenical event since it had been organised with Dutch Reformed Church Dominee Deon Snyman and in collaboration with the Justice group from St George's Anglican Cathedral.

In Kearney's notes from the talk he gave on the pilgrimage, he seemed to be highlighting inter-religious dimensions of relevance to +Hurley: the presence of the shrine of a Muslim prince who died on the island; quotations from the different versions of the Golden Rule as understood by various faith traditions; and this striking prayer during the liturgy:

We confess that we find it difficult to love our brothers and sisters whose faith tradition differs from ours.

He also quoted an oft-told story about +Hurley perhaps to downplay his Catholic-ness: when at school he was asked: "What is your religion?" the young Denis replied: "Irish."¹¹⁴²

But back in Durban, the DHC was still a very Catholic project. The first building proposal (from Ruben Reddy in December 2009) included not only the residential wing on the top floor (which looks like the convent) but also a very prominent cross on the main face of the building!¹¹⁴³ The notes from the Team Co-ordinators meetings were also still talking about a convent and the fundraising is focused mainly on very Catholic targets (such as the Knights of Da Gama or a second collection across the Archdiocese of Durban).¹¹⁴⁴

But clearly, this exclusively Catholic dimension was under pressure since there was already a tension emerging about the project's identity. In November 2009, "a question was raised whether this is a parish project or a Denis Hurley project and said we need to highlight the Hurley aspect because

¹¹⁴² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/2 "CPT Book Launch Sept-Oct 2009"

¹¹⁴³ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/8 "Building Plans"

¹¹⁴⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/9 "Team Co-ordinators 2009"

people are talking about an ecumenical project which has nothing to do with us. That being said, Ben [Potgieter] said there needs to be a strategy in how we present this.”

Greater Confidence in the Interfaith Vision of the Denis Hurley Centre

This shift might have been in part because of the early success in securing the interest of, and funding from, the Muslim community. Thus in Kearney’s personal archive, there are notes from a meeting (April 2009) between Cardinal Napier and three Muslim organisations to hand over funds: Jumma Masjid, Iqraa Trust, Al-Baraka Bank.¹¹⁴⁵ A copy of a presentation made to the Iqraa Trust (July 2009) saw Kearney stressing the partnership with the Muslim community and the vision of the Centre as a place of ‘unity and community’.¹¹⁴⁶ A summary of fundraising income as at May 2009 showed that after a few initial small donations, the first major ones were from Petal O’Hea (an old friend of +Hurley), the local Anglican diocese (R25,000), the [Lutheran] Norwegian Church Aid (R50,000), four Muslim organisations (R50,000), and a Hindu businessman, Raj Maistry (R10,000).¹¹⁴⁷

Perhaps because Catholics are falling behind in the fundraising, there was a note from the Cardinal (in August 2009) in which the DHC was presented very much as a Catholic project for a Catholic community.

Please know that this approach has my blessing as well as my strong encouragement that you give the team your full support....The cathedral is not just the parish but is the mother church of the Archdiocese and the refurbished parish centre will be a potential hub for a variety of social outreach projects for the city and the whole Archdiocese.¹¹⁴⁸

By 2010, the inter-religious dimension of the project was clearly gathering momentum and becoming more and more visible. The annual ‘Hurley weekend’ was held in March 2010 (though all the subsequent ones are in February, as was the first one in 2009). At this, for the first time, all the DHC patrons were gathered together and a picture of them taken in the Cathedral (with echoes of John Paul II’s Assisi ‘photo op’).¹¹⁴⁹ Although the Patrons do not have any legal role in the DHC they act as its public face, and indeed their names are listed on the letterhead. Thus, the initial set of Patrons (though not all were present for the photo) was clearly designed to be both ecumenical and inter-religious:

- eight Catholic Christians (Wilfrid Cardinal Napier, Archbishop Jabulani Nxumalo^, Bishop Kevin Dowling, Mgr. Paul Nadal*, Canon Christopher Tuckwell*, Elizabeth Mkame* and Dr Ben Ngubane*)
- six non-Catholic Christians (Bishop Rubin Phillip, Judge Leona Theron, Rev Dr Khoza Mgojo*, Nomabelu Mvambo-Dandala^, JB Magwaza^ and Dr May Mashego Mkhize^)
- three Jews (Rabbi Hillel Avidan^, Paddy Meskin, Prof Phillip Tobias*)
- two Muslims (Advocate AB Mahomed^, Prof Fatima Meer*)
- one Hindu (Ela Gandhi)

Over the years some of these have died (marked with*) or retired (marked with ^). In Kearney’s lifetime, there were later additions which included two members of +Hurley’s family (Mikaela York

¹¹⁴⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/1 “2009”

¹¹⁴⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/5 “Iqraa Trust”

¹¹⁴⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/1 “2009”

¹¹⁴⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/1 “2009”

¹¹⁴⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/1 “2010”

and Jeremy Hurley) but also a Methodist bishop (Michael Vorster) and the Chair of the Mosque (AV Mahomed).

The minutes from team co-ordinators' meetings in 2010 show that the 'footprint' of the organisation was increasingly multi-faith even if that was often for practical rather than theological reasons.¹¹⁵⁰ It is clear that Kearney was being judicious in how he used the inter-religious aspect of the project:

One aspect is to understand that the fundraising process is very complex and might need different messages for different target markets (e.g. the photo of the handover of a cheque for R200,000 from the mosque might be good for overseas donors but is not especially motivating to Cathedral parishioners).

At the same time, there were discussions about the temporary accommodation that would be required while the new building was being constructed. Suggestions included the mosque for catechism classes (presumably in the school building), the Gandhi memorial library, temporary offices in containers on the grounds of the Cathedral, St Anthony's Catholic school for some of the projects. The tone suggests that, while the buildings covered a range of different faith communities, it was logistics rather than theology that was uppermost in people's minds. (In the end, the main temporary location was the Surat Hindu building, two blocks away).

Similarly in June 2010, to bolster the application to AMAFA for approval to replace the old parish centre with a new building, letters of support ('consent') were obtained from a range of institutions: Jumma Masjid, the mosque school, Victoria Street market and Gandhi Memorial Trust. They were relevant because they were nearby; the fact that they were from different faith communities though would not have harmed the application. Kearney was also keenly aware of using every event for fundraising such as a demonstration Passover meal.

The inter-religious dimension of the area came up also in the context of the proposed Liberation Heritage Route (starting in 2011). The idea was to draw attention to the number of sites in the area with significance to the Liberation Struggle – their religious diversity was inevitable because of the history of the area but it was clear that for Kearney this was part of what could make the proposal appealing.¹¹⁵¹ The list of sites included Lakhani Chambers, the old YMCA (in Beatrice Street), Naicker Museum, Gandhi Hall, the mosque, the cathedral, the Gandhi library, Curries Fountain, Red Square, the Beatrice Street Congregational Church, the Surat Hindu Association, St Aidan's Hospital. A Memorandum of partnership was discussed between the DHC and the National Heritage Council with DHC "championing the cause of the spiritual and cultural precinct of Warwick Junction and stressing the spiritual dimension of the area".

Furthermore, in a handwritten note from September 2011, Kearney suggested ways of using some of the other buildings for social outreach, for example the Gandhi Memorial in Umgeni Road as an AIDS Centre, the Gandhi Library as an education centre to support varsity students, the Surat building as an FET College.¹¹⁵²

¹¹⁵⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/1 "2010"

¹¹⁵¹ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/2 "2011"

¹¹⁵² This proved to be one of Kearney's greatest disappointments. He invested a large amount of time in working with Thami Nxasana on developing the proposal and getting buy-in from the various stakeholders. Apparently, significant amounts of money were actually allocated for the project. At time of writing, the only 'heritage' is a series of blank red metal wayfinders that were placed near key buildings but still have no content; the only thing that seems to have been liberated are taxpayers' funds....

A much simpler and cheaper version of this project (which did actually get realised) was a leaflet in 2012 created by Kearney in close collaboration with i-Trump (the part of the Municipality responsible for reviving the area). This stressed the interfaith aspect of the precinct (with a photo of the cathedral alongside pictures of Friday Prayers at the mosque and the planned Gandhi memorial). As well as highlighting key religious buildings, the diversity of the patrons of the planned DHC was stressed.¹¹⁵³

As plans for the building itself are finalised and construction work begins, some of the purely Catholic /Christian elements (the convent, Eucharistic chapel, cross on the outside) have disappeared. Instead, for example in July 2013, artworks are being discussed such as different panels or tapestries for the prayer room which by this stage was clearly intended to be interfaith (even if it was sometimes referred to as a 'chapel'). The proposal was for "beaded panels exploiting the qualities of light; the panels would include images that were Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Hindu and also represented Buddhism and African traditional religions."¹¹⁵⁴ (Whilst these panels never happened, something similar was endorsed by Kearney for the +Hurley Centenary Concert in November 2015.)

By September 2014, decisions had been made about the naming of various spaces in the DHC. Two people chosen to be honoured are Catholic (and had a very close link to +Hurley): Paul Nadal (his Vicar-General, after whom the garden terrace was named); and Cardinal Napier (his successor, whose name is on the halls on the 3rd floor). But the most prominent hall on the 1st floor was to be called the 'Gandhi-Luthuli Peace Hall'. While neither of these men had a direct connection with +Hurley, they certainly inspired him (and Kearney) and had a physical link with the area.¹¹⁵⁵ The fact that one was not Christian, and the other was Christian but not Catholic, was certainly something celebrated by Kearney, for example at the official naming of the hall in July 2015.¹¹⁵⁶ In this way, Kearney ensured that the ecumenical and inter-religious aspect is very visible in the very fabric of the building. By comparison, the Glenmore Pastoral Centre (run by the Archdiocese of Durban but used by all faith communities) only has rooms named after local Catholic bishops; the Diakonia Centre only has rooms named after Christian leaders associated with their history.

But it should be noted that even as the ecumenical and inter-religious aspects of the DHC are becoming more prominent and more natural, there are some curious moments when the project ran the risk of returning to a 'ghetto Catholicism'. For example, at a workshop in January 2014, the criteria for the future director of the organisation were discussed. One open question was the entirely legitimate one of linguistic expectations (in a city which is effectively English-Zulu bilingual). But the other was the question of whether or not the director needed to be Catholic.¹¹⁵⁷ (It would almost certainly not be a legally defensible condition of employment and in any case this stipulation did not resurface after this meeting).

Public evidence about the identity of the project remains at times ambivalent. In May 2014, the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) met in Durban and Kearney gave an address about the origins and aims of the planned DHC at the Emmanuel Cathedral. He started off by explaining the difficult nature of the location:

¹¹⁵³ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/2 "2012"

¹¹⁵⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/2 "2013"

¹¹⁵⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/3 "2014"

¹¹⁵⁶ "Update July 2015", *Denis Hurley Centre*, <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 18 May 2022)

¹¹⁵⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/3 "2014"

No wonder some of our visitors say: ‘You have a beautiful Cathedral but what a pity it’s in such a neighbourhood.’

Our response is: ‘No, we think the Cathedral is exactly where it should be, where God would want to be—with the poor and the needy. Its very name ‘Emmanuel’ gives it a great mission—trying to make God’s presence known and felt in this area. This is, in a sense where God has pitched a tent, perhaps a few tents, because the mosque is right next door, and a Hindu centre not far away.’ ¹¹⁵⁸

On the other hand, Kearney was less visible about the inter-religious identity in the monthly email *Updates* that he produced from 2010 (until this author took over responsibility in February 2015). Since these were being sent to supporters, donors and potential donors, they provide a good insight into what Kearney was interested in and what he felt would be important for DHC stakeholders. But it is striking that in the 48 editions between December 2010 and December 2014, there was not one story which specifically referenced an interfaith (or ecumenical) dimension, except tangentially when the list of Patrons is presented. By contrast, there were lots of mentions of Catholic links, some links with universities/ schools and with the Municipality, and of course lots of stories about fundraising. ¹¹⁵⁹

Given the importance of fundraising (and the R32 million that was eventually needed to open the DHC), perhaps one final way of assessing the inter-religious dimension of the project is a review of donors. In 2015, a plaque was designed by Kearney which stands opposite the front door and lists the major donors (R50,000+) for the construction of the building and its first year of operations. There are 72 names mentioned and the spread of them is as follows:

Faith Tradition	# of references	% of total	% of total
Catholic	32	44%	} 51%
Non-Catholic Christian	5	7%	
Jewish	2	3%	}
Hindu	3	4%	
Muslim	2	3%	} 14%
Religious (faith tradition unknown)	3	4%	
Secular (Governmental)	6	8%	}
Secular (non-Governmental)	4	6%	} 35%
Secular (corporate)	15	21%	

(Note that in this analysis every named donor counts equally, regardless of how much they gave). The analysis above includes only the successful grant applications; scanning through the archives it is also possible to identify some of those who were approached for funds but without success. This includes another seven Catholic organisations / individuals, two that are non-Catholic Christian, and

¹¹⁵⁸ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 216 (“The Denis Hurley Centre - address to ARCIC”, 4 November 2015) (Note the date given in the book is incorrect).

¹¹⁵⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/7 “DHC Updates”

two that are secular. Of course, there were almost certainly many more than just these 11 unsuccessful applications but these are the ones that stand out).

The conclusion from this analysis is that the focus of Kearney's fundraising for the DHC was very much in the Catholic world – whether parishes, religious organisations, grant-makers or individuals. The total proportion of non-Christian faith-based donors (14%) is significant but not overwhelming (especially given how important they are in philanthropic circles in Durban). Interestingly, the total proportion of non-Catholic Christian donors (7%) is very small given that Kearney had spent decades raising funds from across the Christian communities for Diakonia (and would have remained known to and respected by those donors). Knowing how astute a fundraiser Kearney was, I am sure that he used all the contacts and connections that he had. But perhaps the original narrow positioning of the project, as being driven by one particular Catholic Christian community, created an initial perception that it was not being created in the ecumenical and inter-religious image of the man after whom it was named.

Interfaith Vision realised in the Denis Hurley Centre

From February 2015, this author started work as the first director of the DHC which included responsibility for fundraising, marketing and public profile. Since part of my reason for wanting to work with the DHC was its interfaith dimension, it would be harder to chart this aspect of the organisation and attribute it to Kearney because from 2015 it is partly a reflection of my own interests as well as his. Thus, for example, in the 12 editions of the *Update* newsletter that appear in 2015, there are at least nine stories with a specific inter-religious dimension (plus another three that are ecumenical).

But from recollection, I am aware of which events in that first year were more driven by Kearney than by me; from those there is evidence of a more confident inter-religious identity being expressed by Kearney. For example, in March 2015, the DHC hosted the annual Chiara Lubich lecture organised by the Focolare movement with Ela Gandhi speaking on 'Religion at the service of peace'. Kearney's choice of a Hindu peace-maker honouring a Catholic one was not accidental. Also in DHC Trust minutes from that month, there is a reference that Kearney is "happy that there is spiritual counselling being offered to the visitors to the DHC but asks about how to ensure inclusion of pastors from other churches and other faiths."¹¹⁶⁰ I have already discussed the start in June 2015 of a partnership with the Muslim community for the feeding programme and cited the comment that this was something that Kearney took very personally and very seriously.

Because of his role on the Cathedral Parish Pastoral Council, Kearney took the lead in preparing a document with the parish called 'Caring for the DHC'. It includes these words:

It is a people's place, a place of loving, sharing, giving hope and care, loving God and our neighbour. This is a place of prayer for all communities, a place to meditate and worship.

The clearest example of the very bold and public statement of the DHC as a multi-faith centre came with its official opening in November 2015 (on the occasion of the centenary of +Hurley's birth). Whilst I worked closely with him in delivering these events, I am content to say that 90% of what

¹¹⁶⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/4 "2015"

happened was designed by Kearney and so does provide an accurate view of how he saw the DHC and how he wanted others to see it.

Of course, there were some specific Catholic elements such as the Cardinal processing around the building splashing holy water on every corner as an act of blessing. And there were elements which highlighted a Catholic link, though these were more to do with who was best placed to provide the content: e.g. speeches by Catholic clerics who had worked closely with +Hurley, the use of choirs from St Augustine's Catholic School or from the Cathedral or indeed Claremont Community Choir (whose roots are Catholic even though it has long ago spread its branches more widely).

But what is striking is how many elements had a strongly inter-religious character:

- The decoration of Cathedral Mall (now Paddy Kearney Way) with Buddhist-style prayer flags
- The garlanding of the statue of +Hurley with marigolds in the Hindu tradition
- The honouring of the Muslim Moosa family who had sold the plot of land to Bishop Jolivet 111 years earlier
- Prayers led by four different religious leaders (all of whom were also Patrons)
- The invitation for ALL religious leaders present to stand together and give a joint blessing on the staff and volunteers
- The choice of the theme for the evening event: 'World Religions in Concert'
- The opening of the concert with the call to prayer (*adhan*) being relayed into the Catholic Cathedral
- The care taken to choose musical works that honoured six different faith traditions and to source a Muslim cantor, Hindu dancers, Buddhist drummers and an African praise singer¹¹⁶¹
- The prominent siting of banners with symbols of the six faith traditions hanging in the Cathedral
- The reference to the fact that the concert was taking place on the anniversary of *Kristallnacht* and the lighting of a Jewish seven-branched candlestick (*menorah*) during Bruch's *Kol Nidrei*¹¹⁶²

There was extensive media coverage of the Centenary Events but the piece which provides the best insight into how Kearney saw the completed DHC was an article that appeared that weekend in a special edition of *The Southern Cross* (4 November 2015).¹¹⁶³ In it, Kearney imagined +Hurley walking around 'his newly opened centre' and commented on what would have pleased +Hurley and which we can imagine would also be the elements that most pleased Kearney! He lists 15 and four of these have an inter-faith element:

- Muslim and Christian volunteers side by side
- A Hall named after Gandhi and Luthuli
- Multi-faith prayer room
- View of the mosque from top floor

¹¹⁶¹ This is, as far as I know, the only way in which Kearney's commitment to inter-religious dialogue extended to include African Traditional Religions. Though this was a significant gap in his approach, he was not alone in focusing only on religions that are more clearly defined.

¹¹⁶² All those present thoroughly enjoyed the events and appreciated in particular their inter-religious character. One person who was not present was, however, outraged at the photographs of some of the non-Christian presence in the Cathedral, and wrote to the author to complain particularly about the use of a Chinese dragon, asking if the Cardinal had given permission. I replied by sending her a photograph of the Cardinal beaming with joy, next to the offending Chinese dragon.

¹¹⁶³ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 217-220 ("Hurley visits 'his' Centre", *The Southern Cross*, 4-10 November 2015)

Kearney included in the article the quotation from Hans Küng (cited earlier), referring to him as +Hurley's friend: "there can be no peace in the world, without peace among religions."

Once the DHC was up and running, its multi-faith identity soon became something which was not only frequently referenced but also clear to all who visited. It was mentioned by many of the people interviewed; one quotation from Jacques Briard, a Belgian funder and long-time collaborator of Kearney, can stand for all:

*...la création du Denis Hurley Centre ...[est] pour moi un signe de l'ouverture de ces deux personnalités de Durban: sa localisation près de la cathédrale et la mosquée ...mais aussi la collaboration à ce centre des communautés juives et indiennes.*¹¹⁶⁴

..[I admire] the creation of the Denis Hurley Centre which for me is a sign of the open-ness of these two Durban personalities (+Hurley and Kearney): and its position near the cathedral and the mosque ...and also the partnership in this centre of the Jewish and Indian (Hindu?) communities. (author's translation).

Drawing on Different Sources of Spiritual Inspiration

As Kearney's exposure to people of other faiths grew, and his confidence about drawing on a wider variety of sources increased, we find him drawing inspiration from stories and texts beyond his own Christian tradition. I mentioned above the care with which he ensured that quotations from the Qur'an were included in the DHC fundraising launch in 2009 and that music from different religions was used in the official opening concert in 2015.

But long before this, we find Kearney open to the possibility of learning culturally from other faith traditions. His onetime secretary at Diakonia, Vanessa Franks recalls how he loved yoga and saw it as part of his integration of mind/body/soul.¹¹⁶⁵ His niece, Ursula de Haas, also recalls the yoga as something about Kearney that surprised her. She further remembered how he often wore African prints and sometimes even a shirt with a Nehru collar.¹¹⁶⁶ For a man who usually did not seem to put much care into what he wore, such a choice is interesting. An earlier friend Dina Cormick remembers seeing that in his 1983 wedding photo Kearney was dressed not in a Western suit-and-tie but in an Indian kurta.¹¹⁶⁷ For more on this see Appendix A: "Kearney's racial identity".

But it is not so much what Kearney wore at his wedding as the decision to get married itself that potentially shows an inter-religious influence. Kearney and Carmel Rickard had been living together for some time before they married in 1983.¹¹⁶⁸ The reason that they had not married earlier was that they regarded the Apartheid marriage laws – which for example prevented 'inter-racial' marriage – as unjust. In solidarity with those who could not get married under the law, they chose not to (even though they could). Eventually (and possibly under pressure from +Hurley)¹¹⁶⁹ they did get married in Church but they did not register their marriage with the state. Drawing on Gandhian

¹¹⁶⁴ Briard, Jacques. Email to the author, 14 October 2021

¹¹⁶⁵ Franks, Vanessa. Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Durban (secretary of Kearney at Diakonia)

¹¹⁶⁶ de Haas, Ursula. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (niece of Kearney)

¹¹⁶⁷ Cormick, Dina. Personal interview by author, 21 December 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹¹⁶⁸ Vinsen, Coral. Personal interview by author, 21 December 2020 in Durban (member of the Black Sash)

¹¹⁶⁹ See P. 55, footnote 200 for comment on this by Cardinal Napier.

ideals, Richard Steele describes this as ‘a public non-violent action to have married in church but not under the law.’^{1170 1171}

In his personal archive, Kearney kept a copy of the Wedding Ceremony booklet from 3 January 1983. It is mostly an entirely conventional Nuptial Mass in terms of the prayers, the readings and the music. But two things stand out. Among the intercessory prayers (which are usually written by the couple themselves) is this:

Lord we pray for all migrant workers in South Africa who are prevented by law and custom from enjoying married life and living with their families. May we all strive to change this system which causes so much hardship and is directly contrary to your will.¹¹⁷²

With this prayer, they are hinting at the unjust laws that had given them reason not to marry in the eyes of the state and only to marry in the eyes of God. And then, just before the end of the service, the Catholic celebrant (who was not, in fact, +Hurley) invites two other people to give a blessing: first of all an Anglican bishop (+Ken Hallows) and then Sushila Gandhi (the daughter-in-law of the Mahatma).¹¹⁷³

Not surprisingly, early references that Kearney draws from outside Christianity tended to come from the Jewish tradition. Thus, in a talk he gave in 1987, he cited (as mentioned above) three religious leaders for inspiration, one of whom was a rabbi called Abraham Heschel who survived the Holocaust and worked with Martin Luther King as well as being involved in anti-Vietnam protests. Kearney recounts the story of a little boy being executed in a Nazi concentration camp for some minor infringement of the regulations the Nazis imposed.

As the little boy was dying a most horrific death, before all the prisoners in the camp who had been assembled to give them an example of what could happen to them if they broke the regulations, an atheist turned to someone whom he knew to be a believer and said “Where is your God, now?” And the believer turned to him and said, pointing to the little boy: ‘There he is.’¹¹⁷⁴

In fact, Kearney has misattributed this story to Heschel and a few years later, when Elizabeth Johnson is giving her lectures in South Africa, she used the same story, correctly crediting it to Elie Wiesel.¹¹⁷⁵ (Kearney corrected himself when he again used the same story in his 2014 +Tutu lecture.)¹¹⁷⁶

One example of the broadening of Kearney’s sources is the presence in his personal library of a book called *The Awakening of Consciousness* by the Senegalese head of the International Sufi School of Peace and Service.¹¹⁷⁷ But this really stands out since almost all the other books (other than ones connected to Gandhi) are Christian or secular in their perspective.

¹¹⁷⁰ Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector). (When, 21 years later, Kearney and Rickard separated, they therefore did not need to get divorced since they had never been legally married.)

¹¹⁷¹ The ways in which Kearney promoted Gandhian principles of non-violence are explored in Appendix E: “+Hurley, Kearney and Gandhi”.

¹¹⁷² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/9 “Wedding Ceremony 3 January 1983”

¹¹⁷³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/9 “Wedding Ceremony 3 January 1983”

¹¹⁷⁴ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 47 (“What does the Lord require of us?”, 1987)

¹¹⁷⁵ Johnson, *Consider Jesus*, 122

¹¹⁷⁶ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 113 (“Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture”, 21 October 2014)

¹¹⁷⁷ N’Daw, Sheikh Aly. *The Awakening of Consciousness* (UK: ISS, 2013)

I do not think that Kearney was closed to other faiths but perhaps he did not have enough time or opportunities to engage with them at a deeper level. After all, he was not an academic but an activist. However, an address to the Aryan Benevolent Home in October 2016, gave Kearney a chance to explore the meaning of the Diwali festival and call for an interfaith encounter to share and learn more about the Hindu faith.¹¹⁷⁸

I'm sure we have all played with kaleidoscopes as children, and perhaps even enjoy them still as adults because they give such amazing and beautiful patterns. You look at them first and admire the intricacies of the colourful pattern that appears. Then you twist the kaleidoscope and see an entirely different pattern made up of the same multi-coloured fragments. You can keep doing that and seeing ever new designs, all of which are extraordinary and beautiful.

When I think of the different faiths that we come into contact with in Durban: Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist and Christian, I'm reminded of the kaleidoscope. Each of these faiths gives a different picture of the divine, and how enriching it is to be able to see and experience these different perspectives on God.

When I read that your focus remains "to build an organisation that provides effective care to the most vulnerable in society, drawing on our ethos of caring, sharing and serving", I realise what a strong bond there should be between the Denis Hurley Centre and your work. I'm sure there is much that we can learn from each other.

People of different faiths are involved in the Denis Hurley Centre and we would welcome a greater involvement of Hindu people. As you may know, during the time of building our new Centre, we were housed for two years in the Surat Hindu Association Building close to Emmanuel Cathedral. All our operations took place there while our new building was going up. It was a wonderful gesture of interfaith collaboration that we were welcomed at the Surat building and we are most grateful to the Surat Hindu Association.

Reading about the Festival of Diwali has given me an idea. As I mentioned earlier, the Denis Hurley Centre likes to work closely with people of other faiths: this is part of Denis Hurley's legacy to us. In the Denis Hurley Centre, we have a Prayer Room where people of all faiths are welcome to pray and meditate. I wonder whether it would be possiblejust before Diwali, to have an event related to Diwali in that Prayer Room.

The event did in fact happen and (at the author's suggestion) became one of four faith-based activities that took place in October and November 2016, the others focusing on Muslim, Jewish and Catholic traditions.¹¹⁷⁹ Kearney ended his speech by reading a Diwali blessing by Swami Saraswathi. *Nostra Aetate* describes different religions as lights that 'reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all people'. Although Kearney does not specifically mention this, his words certainly echo this image:

May the light of love and devotion shine brightly in your hearts
May the light of understanding shine in your minds.
May the light of harmony glow in your homes.
May the light of service shine forth ceaselessly from your hands.

¹¹⁷⁸ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 96 ("Diwali – The festival of light", 16 October 2016)

¹¹⁷⁹ "Update October 2016", "Update November 2016", *Denis Hurley Centre website*, <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 18 May 2022)

Interfaith to the fore in Kearney's last months

For the 1983 wedding ceremony referenced above, Kearney will have worked with Carmel Rickard to plan every detail. When he died in November 2018, it was clear that he had also started planning his own funeral. At the top of his pile of papers on his desk were hand-written notes mentioning some aspects of the service; these were far from complete (no suggestions of readings or hymns for example) and in all likelihood were only the start of a process that would have ended in a fully typed set of instructions, had he lived long enough.

But he had written down his desire to have an interfaith ceremony separate from the Requiem Mass (which is the traditional Catholic funeral service) and that at this he wanted a bowl of rose petals that people could cast into his open coffin: this is a well-established Hindu custom. In fact, a Durban-based Indian Catholic priest, writing in 1996, refers to the use of flowers in Catholic rites as a good example of Indian inculturation thus prefiguring Kearney's request.¹¹⁸⁰ The coffin that Kearney stipulates is a very simple, unadorned pinewood coffin – not quite as stripped down as the Muslim and Jewish tradition of the shroud but perhaps as close as he thinks the Catholic Church will allow.

Kearney had written a tribute in *The Southern Cross* (25 November 2011) honouring Garth 'Msizi' Michelson, an Oblate priest with an excellent reputation for inter-religious dialogue. Kearney mentions with approval the interfaith presence at Michelson's funeral and the tributes from other faiths and these were elements which we were able to include in Kearney's own funeral, confident that he would have requested them given the chance.¹¹⁸¹

One example of this was the decision, with the approval of Kearney's family, to have his coffin carried in by people of different faith traditions. The head of the Jumma Masjid recalled with pride how important this was to him:

As a Muslim, I must thank the family and the Denis Hurley Centre for allowing me to be a pallbearer. It showed that I had a special bond with Paddy. It was a special way of saying thank you – of being united in the divine will of God.¹¹⁸²

One of the other pallbearers, dressed in elegant Chinese silk garments, was Elizabeth Gaywood, a member of the Buddhist community. Her presence there was a reminder of one of the final activities that Kearney masterminded just before his death and which was a deeply moving inter-religious act. For eight days in October 2018, Kearney had arranged for the DHC to host four Tibetan Buddhist monks for the creation of a 'Sand Mandala'.¹¹⁸³

It is clear that Kearney's interest in Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama dated back some years (for example a 1990 book review for the *Natal Witness*).¹¹⁸⁴ In his personal archive there is a file called 'Interfaith' which includes material about Tibet and the Tibetan Solidarity Alliance and the need to

¹¹⁸⁰ Shunmugam, R D: "Indian Culture and the Church". *Serving Humanity – a Sabbath Reflection*. Stuart Bate ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1996) 127

¹¹⁸¹ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 145 ("Tribute to Garth 'Msizi' Michelson OMI, *The Southern Cross*, 25 November 2011)

¹¹⁸² Mahomed, AV. Personal interview by author, 15 September 2020 in Durban (Chair of Jumma Masjid Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹¹⁸³ "Update October 2018", *Denis Hurley Centre*, <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 18 May 2022)

¹¹⁸⁴ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 225 ("Review of *Freedom in exile: the autobiography of the Dalai Lama of Tibet*", *Natal Witness*, 1990).

raise awareness of the Tibetan situation.¹¹⁸⁵ Another contains paperwork from ‘DHC Public events’ and includes the certificate that Kearney received from the Tibetan Association in August 2018 of which he was very proud.¹¹⁸⁶ As is often the case with Kearney, theological and social issues intersect. He is clearly interested in the religious aspects of Tibetan Buddhism (as I saw for myself in his engagement with the monks at the Sand Mandala). And he also empathised with the political struggle of the Tibetan people in the face of the Chinese government (as +Tutu also did, even if the ANC famously did not).

I do recall therefore the pride with which Kearney welcomed the Tibetan monks who took over the whole of the top floor of the DHC for a week. Day by day, they painstakingly chiselled tiny amounts of coloured sand so that very, very slowly an intricate pattern of geometric shapes would emerge, eventually about 3 metres square. While doing so, they chanted softly in a deeply moving act of meditation, pausing from time to time to light candles or incense at their temporary altar.

I quoted earlier from Cox’s prescription of good inter-religious dialogue: that it needs to focus not on the abstract but on the concrete; that the aim is not to find some neutral lowest-common-denominator that offends no one but inspires no one; rather instead to present with clarity and confidence the beliefs and the traditions of one’s own religious experience. This is what was happening with the Sand Mandala.

Vatican II reminds us:

..religions, found everywhere, try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing ‘ways’, comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites.¹¹⁸⁷

Here these sacred rites were being performed, before our very eyes, by expert practitioners, and in a way that enabled others to access them and seek to understand. Part of what Kearney had requested be built in to the experience was a chance for members of the public, parishioners from the Cathedral, school groups from around the city, to come and watch, to ask questions of the monks and to learn about Buddhism. Some of the children even prepared their own coloured mandalas at school and brought them in to decorate the room.

This effort at mutual understanding was an important part of the activity and made sure that it was not just a performance or an art project. Kearney also had the idea of asking AV Mohamed, a Muslim leader, to welcome the visitors, conscious that in Myanmar there had been violent clashes between Buddhists and the Muslim minority. Thus, these words from *Nostra Aetate*, which were originally directed towards Muslim-Christian relations, took on a new dimension:

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.¹¹⁸⁸

After almost 50 hours of work creating the Mandala, it was time for the closing ceremony. The monks’ striking robes were now enhanced by elaborate headgear. Bells were struck and the ceremony began. And just at that moment, with perfect timing, the *adhan* from the next-door mosque began. A crowd of 150 (Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish) was standing in a

¹¹⁸⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO - 496/P/6 “Interfaith”

¹¹⁸⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/7 “DHC Public events”

¹¹⁸⁷ *Nostra Aetate* 2

¹¹⁸⁸ *Nostra Aetate* 3

building named after a Catholic Archbishop, watching a Buddhist ceremony, listening to the Muslim call to prayer! All of us, including Kearney, then watched in awe as the stunning artwork that had been created over the previous seven days was meticulously and deliberately brushed away into a pile of coloured sands. Small packets of sand were given to honoured guests and some (including Kearney) also received white silk scarves. He and others then accompanied the monks to the beachfront and walked down to the end of the pier to watch them cast the sands into the ocean so that their blessings could spread out across the world.¹¹⁸⁹

Nostra Aetate uses words to give us some insight into other religious traditions; thanks to Kearney hundreds of people in Durban (and even more through the use of social media) had had a tangible experience of a religious act that brought these words to life:

Buddhism, in its various forms, realises the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which people, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain, by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination.¹¹⁹⁰

What next for Kearney's Vision of Inter-Religious Dialogue?

Having explored in some depth, Kearney's journey through inter-religious dialogue, I want to conclude this chapter by asking a few questions. What did he leave undone in his own lifetime? And in what direction would he expect inter-religious co-operation to develop beyond his lifetime?

As with ecumenism, one of the main areas of under-performance strangely is with the governance of the DHC itself. It was pointed out in Chapter 3 that Kearney had been slow to identify non-Catholic Christians as Trustees of the DHC. More remarkable, in his own lifetime, no non-Christians were invited to become Trustees. This despite the existence, as explained earlier, of a high-profile ecumenical and inter-religious Board of Patrons. It is also clear that, from the beginning, membership of the Board of Trustees was open to non-Christians and that there was no explicit religious requirement (which had not been the case with Diakonia). Close links to the Cathedral Parish Council and the Archdiocese of Durban meant that automatically three of the Trustees would be Catholic; it therefore seems even stranger that there was apparently no attempt by Kearney to redress that imbalance while he was Chair.¹¹⁹¹

However, it is clear that he was at least aware of it towards the end of his life. In 2018 he had looked at, and extensively annotated, two documents from the Institute of Directors and PriceWaterhouse Coopers about Governing Body Composition and Succession Planning. Kearney underlined the requirement for diversity and adds in the margin 'in denomination and faith'. The discussion which he then led at the Board accepted that there should be Trustees who come from other faiths but they should not sit as representatives of other faiths nor should they be chosen just for their representation.¹¹⁹²

If Kearney was still, in some areas, slow to fully embrace inter-religious co-operation, he was still more engaged with it than much of the rest of the Catholic Church in South Africa which continued

¹¹⁸⁹ "Buddhist Sand Mandala Time-lapse: October 2018", *Denis Hurley Centre You Tube channel*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbIJT4QMRpw&t=3s> (accessed 31 October 2022)

¹¹⁹⁰ *Nostra Aetate* 2

¹¹⁹¹ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/1 "2009"

¹¹⁹² SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/6 "2018"

to regard it as a marginal interest. I mentioned earlier that in Kearney's 2017 anthology of writings, 13% have an inter-religious aspect.¹¹⁹³ By comparison, Bate's 1996 collection of reflections on the Pastoral Plan has half a chapter on inter-religious dialogue (alongside ecumenism);¹¹⁹⁴ but a 1999 history of 'The Catholic Church in Contemporary Southern Africa' includes no focus at all on inter-faith issues.¹¹⁹⁵ Even more surprisingly, a 2013 *Festschrift* in honour of Cardinal Napier as he turned 70 makes almost no mention of his extensive work in this field (though perhaps because all the contributors are either SACBC staff or bishops which is, in itself, significant).¹¹⁹⁶

One way of increasing interest in inter-religious dialogue is to ensure that it is still on the agenda at the top table. In 2004, Kearney was reviewing a book which asked if a Third Vatican Council should now be held.¹¹⁹⁷ I suspect to Kearney's delight, his hero weighs in:

Most daring was Archbishop Hurley, who said that ...amongst the delegates to Vatican III, he would like to see representatives of priests, deacons, men and women religious, and lay women and men.

And then one wonders if Kearney feels that +Hurley has been trumped:

Canadian Bishop Remi de Roo went one step further in urging that "all the sons and daughters of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar", should be represented.¹¹⁹⁸

While such 'high-level' initiatives might have some impact, a South African case study looking at religion and human rights identifies that there are other gaps that need to be overcome. The authors make the point that inter-religious dialogue could happen at four different levels but rarely takes place at the first two (grassroots religious communities, local leaders) and instead is focused on the other two (national/ international leaders and academics).¹¹⁹⁹

Curiously in the case of Durban (with +Hurley and then Kearney) it is actually the second level at which most activity has taken place, and much less at the others. But even then we must reflect on what has really been achieved at the local level. The authors' warning is justified:

It is questionable however whether what is called an inter-religious service is in fact inter-religious rather than just multi-religious, whether it is nourished by inter-religious dialogue or by multi-religious comparison of hymns, texts and concepts, and whether it gets beyond an intriguing exhibition of the exotic.¹²⁰⁰

Even with all the work that Kearney (and now his successors) have done at the DHC, we need to ask ourselves how often we move beyond 'an intriguing exhibition of the exotic'.

As the generation of leaders like +Hurley and Tutu (and informally Kearney) dies away, part of the challenge is to see whether what they achieved by force of personality and the authenticity of their character, has been institutionalised by the religious groups they represent. The difficulties that

¹¹⁹³ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 4-7 (Contents Pages)

¹¹⁹⁴ Bate, Stuart ed. *Serving Humanity – a Sabbath Reflection* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1996)

¹¹⁹⁵ Brain, Joy & Denis, Philippe eds. *The Catholic Church in Contemporary Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1999)

¹¹⁹⁶ Bate, Stuart & Egan, Anthony eds. *A Story Worth Telling: essays in honour of Cardinal Napier* (Pretoria: SACBC, 2013)

¹¹⁹⁷ Prendergast, Michael and Ridge, M.D. *Voices from the Council: an insider's perspective on Vatican II* (Portland OR: Pastoral Press, 2004)

¹¹⁹⁸ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 241 ("Review of *Voices from the Council: an insider's perspective on Vatican II*", *The Southern Cross*, 7 December 2004)

¹¹⁹⁹ Van der Ven, Johannes, Dreyer, Jaco & Pieterse, Hendrik. *Is there a God of Human Rights?* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 509

¹²⁰⁰ Van der Ven, Dreyer & Pieterse. *Is there a God of Human Rights?*, 510

WCRP (and its successor 'Religions for Peace') has in recruiting a new generation of inter-religious activists, and its on-going reliance on people now in their 70s and 80s, suggests that there is a lack of vitality in these discussions. Niehaus' reflection on the role of religion in the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (now more than 25 years ago) is salient:

In the functioning of the TRC, the religious convictions and spiritual strength of Archbishop Tutu plays an important role. But we must distinguish between the personal role played by the Archbishop and, viewed broadly, the role of religion in the effort towards reconciliation in South Africa. It is people like Archbishop Tutu who let one see how important faith is but also how irrelevant the church is in the broad sense.¹²⁰¹

In this context, strengthening what happens at the level of academics and international leaders is important but is not enough. What is also needed are grassroots religious leaders and communities for whom inter-religious co-operation is a live issue.

In a graduation address at St Joseph's Theological Institute in May 2012, Kearney used the example of Archbishop Hurley's dedication to learning and fighting for justice to inspire the men (and some women) who would follow in his footsteps.

What wonderful diversity—a diversity which is also enriched by your membership of the ecumenical Cluster of Theological Colleges. Perhaps it will not be long before we hear of a Cluster of Interfaith Theological Institutions—and maybe a few imams and maulanas, pandits and rabbis studying at St Joseph's!¹²⁰²

Such a dramatic move was clearly not a throwaway thought for Kearney. Only a few months before his death, he wrote a major article in *Worldwide* (the bi-monthly magazine of the Comboni order in Southern Africa) for an edition celebrating 200 years of the Church in South Africa. Entitled 'Looking into the Future' it gives an insight into Kearney's concerns for the Church at this point in his life. One of his key areas of concern is the value of interfaith collaboration and he gives the DHC as an example (choosing it as the picture at the beginning of the article). But, not content to rest on his laurels, he again throws down a challenge to the future Church:

I wonder why, since we have ecumenical models of training priests, we cannot also have interfaith ones.¹²⁰³

This has not happened, and there is little indication that it will. Kearney's first steps into inter-religious co-operation were slow and hesitant, but then gathered momentum until in the DHC project it became for him a key mark of vitality in religious life. One characteristic of Kearney is that, even when he was making progress towards a goal, he remained conscious that those around him might be slow to catch up. His own slow pace initially in this area would probably give him even more reason to look with sympathy on those who do not grasp the importance of prioritising inter-religious collaboration. And if, in the meantime, we can at least work together then some progress is being made.

¹²⁰¹ Niehaus, Carl. "Reconciliation in South Africa - is religion relevant?" *Facing the Truth*. James Cochrane et al eds. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999) 87

¹²⁰² Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 173 ("Denis Hurley OMI: lifelong learner, champion of justice", 4 May 2012)

¹²⁰³ Kearney, G Paddy. "Looking into the Future" *Worldwide* (2018, 28:5)

Concluding Image

This chapter opened with the image of +Hurley side-by-side with other religious leaders, challenging the injustice of Apartheid. I want to close with an image which was one of Kearney's favourite photographs of the work of the DHC. It was one which showed three women of different faiths working side-by-side in the kitchen, challenging the injustice of hunger. When presenting this photo this author used a joke which would make Kearney laugh:

In most parts of the world, if you had a Jew, a Muslim and a Christian and you gave them knives they would start killing each other. But here at the Denis Hurley Centre, we give them knives and they start chopping vegetables because the homeless are waiting for their lunch.

Or we can turn to Niehaus to express the idea less flippantly and in a way which captures Kearney's own approach:

We as Believers should cease to think that we have the answers. Perhaps the most important thing we can do is to struggle sympathetically and humbly together with our fellow human beings with the questions of our existence.¹²⁰⁴

¹²⁰⁴ Niehaus, "Reconciliation in South Africa - is religion relevant?", 90

Chapter 7: Kearney's identity as a Catholic

You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church. ... I will give you the gates of the kingdom: whatever you bind on earth, will be considered bound in heaven. (Mt 16:18-19)

Introduction

There are some who hold to a narrow, triumphalist view of the Church – *extra ecclesiam, nulla salus* – which they validate through the Petrine primacy seemingly promised in the Scripture quotation above. This is a model which sees Catholic authority as flowing from a hierarchical view of the Church. On this approach, Kearney's life could be interpreted as a progressive diluting of his Catholic identity. For example, Chapter 2 explored how Kearney rejected life as a vowed member of a Catholic religious order and instead chose to live most of his life as a lay person. Chapter 4 examined his work fighting injustice, which meant that he was focused on decidedly temporal rather than ecclesial issues (and also often allying himself with activists from outside the Church). I have also looked at how he worked closely with Christians who were not Catholics (Chapter 3), and drew closer and closer to people of faith who were not Christian (Chapter 6). However, I want to argue that these various moves, instead of making him less Catholic, actually made him more Catholic and more in tune with the vision of the Catholic Church laid out by Vatican II.

The Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church says this about the 'Catholic faithful':

The bonds which bind people to the Church in a visible way are profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical government and communion. They are not saved, however, who, though part of the body of the Church, do not persevere in charity. They remain indeed in the bosom of the Church, but, as it were, only in a 'bodily' manner and not 'in his heart'. All the Church's children should remember that their exalted status is to be attributed not to their own merits but to the special grace of Christ.¹²⁰⁵

By this test, Kearney was clearly Catholic, visibly bound to the Church through 'profession of faith, sacraments, ecclesiastical government and communion'. Moreover, his undoubted commitment to charity means that he can certainly be described as being 'in the bosom of the Church' not only bodily but in his heart.

I want to introduce from the start the two images that illustrate this chapter both of which are ones that *seem* to stress Catholic identity. A few months before his death, Kearney received a *Bene Merenti* medal and the press delighted in calling this 'a Papal stamp of approval'. They showed the loyal son of the Church receiving the award from the then Archbishop of Durban who, as the only Cardinal-elect at the time south of Dar-es-Salaam, was effectively the highest ranking Catholic for thousands of miles.¹²⁰⁶ A clear image of Kearney clasped to the bosom of Holy Mother Church.

¹²⁰⁵ *Lumen Gentium* 14

¹²⁰⁶ "Papal 'stamp of approval' a mark of Paddy's life", *Sunday Tribune*, 22 April 2018, <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/sunday-tribune-south-africa/20180422/281891593875669> (accessed 21 September 2022)

I want to place this alongside another image, later that same year from his funeral, which I think shows a much more subtle view of Kearney's relationship with the Church.¹²⁰⁷ It initially looks like the funeral of a high-ranking Catholic cleric, a Requiem Mass in a cathedral presided over by that same Cardinal-Archbishop who processed in with dozens of robed priests. That is already unusual since this was the funeral of a lay man who held no official title in this most hierarchically-stratified of institutions. Looking below the surface one sees that this was attended not just by Catholic colleagues and friends, but by Government leaders, and by dozens of leaders (male and female) of other Christian denominations and other faiths. Present were three Anglican bishops: one of whom (+Nuttall) gave the eulogy and who, a few years later, would also preach at Archbishop Desmond Tutu's funeral. This was certainly not ghetto Catholicism.

In this chapter, I want to explore Kearney's identity as a Catholic, one firmly located in his specific social, political and ecclesial situation. But before exploring his relationship with the institutional Church and its priests and bishops, I would like to look first at his relationship with one bishop in particular, Archbishop Denis Hurley.

It might seem odd to start with the particular rather than the general. But we should remember that for Kearney (and many of his Catholic contemporaries), Denis Hurley was not just part of the face of the Church, he was *the* face of the Church. He dominated the Archdiocese of Durban and the wider SACBC area from his consecration as bishop in March 1947 (when Kearney was 4 years old) until his death in 2004. Some might argue that the Catholic Church in South Africa still operates under his shadow (or his halo) almost 20 years after his death.¹²⁰⁸

+Hurley's attitude toward the laity

To understand the relationship between +Hurley and Kearney, we need to start by considering +Hurley's wider role in the Church and also his relationship with other members of the laity.

South Africa is not a predominately Catholic country; it is at the very tip of a Continent that is often overlooked; and Durban is not even its capital city. Yet, the Archbishop of Durban was a significant player in the world Church. This was true before the Council even started – +Hurley being included by leading theologians Congar and Chenu as one of the key 16 bishops that will ensure that it is 'a truly ecumenical event'.¹²⁰⁹ It remained true afterwards, especially in the English-speaking Church, with +Hurley chairing the International Commission for English in the Liturgy (ICEL) and so bringing together bishops from 26 different conference areas.¹²¹⁰ Osborne argues that bishops from outside of Europe and North America were 'key to the emergence and shape of the Vatican II understanding

¹²⁰⁷ "Church leaders, refugees and homeless honour Paddy Kearney at funeral", *The Post*, 2 December 2018 <https://www.iol.co.za/the-post/news/church-leaders-refugees-and-homeless-honour-paddy-kearney-at-funeral-18351996> (accessed 18 August 2022)

¹²⁰⁸ The author recalls a humorous comment from the late Bishop Barry Wood, who was a fellow Oblate with +Hurley. On the occasion of the Archbishop's birth centenary in 2015, the Denis Hurley Centre gifted to all the Catholic bishops in the SACBC area a stole made from a specially commissioned *shweshwe* fabric that incorporated the face of +Hurley. +Wood joked: "I see that even after his death we still have Hurley hanging round our necks!"

¹²⁰⁹ Denis, Philippe. "Archbishop Hurley's contribution to the Second Vatican Council". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 15

¹²¹⁰ "Conferences of Bishops", *ICEL website* <http://www.icelweb.org/conf.htm> (accessed 21 September 2022)

of the church'.¹²¹¹ Although Osborne does not specifically mention +Hurley, he would certainly qualify for this accolade.

Thus, Kearney's relationship with +Hurley is not just a relationship with his local ordinary (and with his employer) but, through +Hurley, a relationship with the global Church as it seeks to live out Vatican II.

Even before the Council +Hurley is including the laity among his list of priorities. In his Vatican II memoirs, +Hurley lists the five theological points that he proposed as considerations to the Central Preparatory Commission and they included 'the laity and its participation in the priesthood and mission of Christ with special attention to Catholic Action'.¹²¹² It is typical of the time that +Hurley still ties the laity to Catholic Action – and thus lay people participating in the Apostolate of the bishop!. Derek Worlock – whose biography Kearney later reviewed – was a *peritus* for the English bishops at the Council. He confirms that the general view of the apostolate of the laity, stemming from the recognition by Pope Pius XI of Catholic Action was that:

...almost all lay activity worth its salt had to be carried out by direct mandate from the bishop and within rigidly structured diocesan frameworks.....they were recognised as 'auxiliaries of the hierarchy' but that was as far as it went.¹²¹³

So even if still tied to Catholic Action, +Hurley did at least include laity among his 'Top 5'. He was conscious, however, that among the bishops at the Council there were varying levels of comfort with lay people:

Some in the ranks of the bishops feared that their special priesthood was threatened by too much emphasis on the priesthood of the laity. They seem to have visions of the laity invading the sanctuary, possibly crowding in behind the married deacons. Despite these misgivings, the accent throughout the week [discussing the document on the laity] was generally positive and it would have gladdened the hearts of the laity the world over to hear what their bishops thought of them, how highly they were regarded, what trust and faith the bishops felt must be placed in them, what freedom, responsibility and initiative they must be given.¹²¹⁴

In fact, before the Council +Hurley was already appointing lay people to roles traditionally held by priests: he had his first lay secretary, Magdalen Cooney, as early as 1962.¹²¹⁵ Bear in mind that, even today, one of the Catholic archbishops in South Africa still has a priest as his secretary; this reinforces the view that was widespread at least until the 1980s that a bishop could only trust as his secretary a fellow priest (and one bound to him by obedience).

In future years, his commitment to the laity, even within Church structures, becomes even clearer. McCrindle (who like Kearney had also been a Marist) recalls how +Hurley had wanted to appoint Marist Brother Jude Pieterse as Secretary General of the SACBC (a position up to then usually held by a priest) and that he had to get special permission from Rome because Br Jude was canonically a lay

¹²¹¹ Osborne, Kenan. *Ministry – lay ministry in the Catholic Church, its history and theology* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist 1993) 525

¹²¹² Hurley, Denis. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 8

¹²¹³ Worlock, Derek J H. "Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 240

¹²¹⁴ Hurley, *Vatican II*, 48

¹²¹⁵ Denis, Philippe, Kearney, Paddy & Argall, Jane eds. *A Life in Letters – selected correspondence of Denis Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2018) v

man, since he was a vowed brother. (He also feels that Br Jude greatly influenced +Hurley on the issue of defending unsegregated Catholic schools.)¹²¹⁶

Magdalan Cooney and Jude Pieterse are referenced among +Hurley's letters and that same book, as well as containing correspondence with family and members of the clergy, also contains a significant number of letters to lay people whom +Hurley regarded as friends and/or as co-workers. Again, this would be unusual for most bishops. Moreover, the tone of these letters is friendly, open and as one who is addressing a peer not a subject. They bring to mind St Augustine's famous mantra: "With you I am a Christian; for you I am a bishop."¹²¹⁷ A letter from as early as 1961 shows that +Hurley trusts lay people and also sees them as enjoying a flexibility that clergy might not.

Dear Clifford

I was delighted to receive your letter of the 16th May, and to revel in its forthright expression of opinion.

I sympathise with you very much in your desire that much should be done to bring the Catholic Church into closer contact with the separated brethren all around us, and I am glad that, as a lay Catholic, you are looking out for opportunities in this regard.

I suppose you should have my formal permission to attend meetings of the National Christian Council in Durban because the Catholic Church cannot officially associate itself with that body. ... Next year I hope to have someone in the ranks of the clergy in Durban who would be able to play a much more active part in ecumenical contacts.¹²¹⁸

In another letter, he is also not afraid to criticise his fellow clergy to some of his Oblate brothers:

I met an Irish Monsignor yesterday at a reception given by the Irish Ambassador and he happily informed me that he thought 80 or 90 per cent of the Irish, clerical and lay were against the vernacular. ... I just can't understand how much the clergy can be out of touch.¹²¹⁹

In 1967, he writes to his sister about a visit to Sant'Egidio which will influence him (and Kearney and the Archdiocese of Durban) for years to come:

Tomorrow, Sunday, I am going on a motor trip to a place near Florence, where there is a very fine Catholic movement of lay people. It will be interesting to experience its atmosphere and methods. I should be able to pick up some useful tips for our own Christian Renewal movement.¹²²⁰

In another decade and another European country, he writes again to his sister about good examples of lay participation:

¹²¹⁶ McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹²¹⁷ This quote is frequently attributed, even if the original source is hard to pin down. For example, fellow SACBC bishop, José Luis Ponce de Leon quotes it on his diocesan website: <http://www.dioceseofmanzini.org/2021/10/28/not-so-among-you/> (accessed 4 September 2022)

¹²¹⁸ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 142-3 (Letter to Clifford de Gersigny, from Durban, 1 June 1961, typewritten)

¹²¹⁹ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 185 (Letter to Eric Boule and Geoff de Gersigny, from Rome, 21 September 1964, typewritten)

¹²²⁰ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 221 (DH to Eileen Hurley, from Rome, 25 November 1967, handwritten)

The body that invited me here represents the conscience of the Belgian Church in matters of justice and development and collaborates with the Belgian Justice and Peace Commission. I am deeply impressed by the great number of full-time lay people involved in this work. ... The highly educated, motivated and involved laity with whom I have been hob-nobbing is a great sign of hope for the future of the church and of humanity.¹²²¹

The key mechanism that +Hurley uses to bring clergy and laity together in the Archdiocese of Durban is a series of diocesan consultations and synods (reference to the first of which was made by Kearney at the start of his renewed journey as a layman). +Hurley writes to explain what the approach is:

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is part of a more complex system of consultation involving, besides the Pastoral Council itself, the Diocesan Synod and Diocesan Commissions. ... The Synod elects the lay and religious members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the clerical, religious and lay members of the Commissions. ... The machinery of election is somewhat complicated to ensure representatives not only of these three categories, but also of the four racial groups – African, Coloured, European and Indian. ... I would strongly recommend that a National Pastoral Council be established by bringing together representatives of Diocesan Pastoral Councils established in whatever way the Ordinaries judge suitable.¹²²²

In the short biography that Kearney wrote to accompany +Hurley's Vatican II memoirs, he particularly drew attention to the structures of consultation that were introduced:

Back in South Africa after the Council, +Hurley promoted its vision with great enthusiasm in his own archdiocese and throughout the country: fostering a new system of religious education for young people, developing an innovative, experience-based system of seminary formation for priests, making public worship more understandable and participatory, drawing lay people into structures of consultation and decision-making.¹²²³

It is interesting that Kearney mentions alongside the laity, +Hurley's focus on the formation of priests (to which +Hurley made a 'crucial' contribution at Vatican II).¹²²⁴ +Hurley's published papers include an address he gave to religious and trainee priests at Cedara in 1993 about the Council. There are comments about the way in which Vatican II changed perspectives about bishops, priests and religious. Yet there is nothing at all about changes in the understanding of the laity. It is almost as if the role of the laity is only important to lay people but not to clergy.¹²²⁵

This, perhaps, is an uncharacteristic omission. Langefeld shows that in the 1989 Pastoral Plan (heavily influenced by +Hurley) the role of clergy in changing the position of lay people is highlighted:

Clergy and also religious have inherited a system that has placed unnecessary distinctions between them and their sisters and brothers in Christ. The initiative in overcoming these

¹²²¹ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 302-3 (DH to Eileen Hurley and May Cameron, from Namur, Belgium, 29 February 1980, handwritten)

¹²²² Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 228 (Letter to Mark Collier, from Durban, 3 February 1969, typewritten)

¹²²³ Kearney, Paddy. 'Denis Eugene Hurley: 1915-2004'. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) xvii

¹²²⁴ Denis, "Archbishop Hurley's contribution to the Second Vatican Council", 5

¹²²⁵ Denis, *Facing the Crisis*, 187 ('The Second Vatican Council', lecture given by +Hurley at St Joseph's Cedara, 1993)

distinctions must come from the clergy themselves. Unlike secular leaders they must not dominate but serve God's people.¹²²⁶

Ngcobo provides a useful retrospective view on the mechanisms +Hurley put in place:

When it comes to laity involvement, diocesan pastoral councils were established with a view to be represented in the Commission of the Lay Apostolate. The *Lumen Gentium* document played a vital role in this regard. Thus, parishes too were encouraged to have pastoral councils. Some dioceses since have had diocesan synods which interact with the laity and which consider ideas and suggestions that reach them from the dioceses.

For example, in the archdiocese of Durban this kind of synod takes place every five years and during the session the theme that will be central in the next five years is introduced after consultation with the laity. Preparations for the synods are in the hands of both laity and clergy. The synods assist bishops in their various territories when they wish to consult experts among the laity in different diocesan structures.¹²²⁷

+Napier, as the successor Archbishop of Durban, had the task to continue these diocesan structures; he remarked on his predecessor's approach to the laity (without commenting on his own):

+Hurley was a promoter of the role of lay people in the Church – the Renew team was mostly lay people; Diakonia was mostly lay people.¹²²⁸

Another good example of +Hurley treating clergy and lay people as equals comes from this early letter to his fellow Vatican II protagonist, Cardinal Suenens:

Thank you for arranging to have those reprints of your interview sent to me. Actually, we practiced a little piracy here about two months ago. We made copies of the interview for all the priests of the Archdiocese of Durban and for a lay association of graduates, so your views are pretty well known here.¹²²⁹

Similarly, when writing about his stand for conscientious objection, he is pleased to have support from both clergy and laity:

Fifty-seven priests of the Archdiocese of Durban...wrote a splendid letter in defence of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference and myself in particular. ...More recently another fine letter came out signed by quite a few prominent lay people of the Archdiocese.¹²³⁰

In fact, in another letter to the same family members, he goes further and reiterates that it is the lay and not the clergy who have a particular vocation to the transformation of the temporal order:

¹²²⁶ Langefeld, Chris. "The Reception of Vatican II in South Africa". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 44

¹²²⁷ Ngcobo, Nkosinathi. "The Evangelisation of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa: Community Serving Humanity". M.Th. dissertation (Durban: University of KwaZulu Natal, 2016) 4. (In recent years, synods in the Archdiocese of Durban have been more honoured in the breach than in the observance.)

¹²²⁸ Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

¹²²⁹ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 237 (Letter to Cardinal Léon Joseph Suenens, from Durban, 22 July 1969)

¹²³⁰ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 282 (DH to Bobbie and Jerry Hurley, from Durban, 29 April 1977, typewritten)

In the course of his address at the opening of the plenary session he [the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Josef Mees] used these words: 'The Church very wisely forbids active participation of its clergy in politics and leaves this work to lay people who have been formed in the doctrine of the Catholic faith' (sounds as if the clergy have not been formed in that doctrine!).¹²³¹

But we must be careful not to see +Hurley's relationship with the laity through rose-tinted spectacles. If he is to allow the laity to express their opinions, he will discover that they do not always agree with him! Robert Blair Kaiser, who frequently hosted +Hurley and other bishops for dinner during Vatican II, recalls +Hurley reflecting on the impact of promoting lay people in the archdiocese:

I knew that's what I should be doing but I was unprepared for the frank opinions I was getting from one and all. I'd thought everyone was pretty happy with what I'd been doing in Durban but I soon learned I had a long way to go before I could serve the people in a way that they wanted to be served. Ultimately, I swallowed my pride and let the people take charge of their own Church. But, many a night I went to bed with a stomach ache.¹²³²

Kearney's relationship with +Hurley

So +Hurley clearly showed an open-ness towards the laity that was not typical of most bishops of his generation, even if sometimes that left him challenged. What of the particular relationship between him and the lay man Kearney?

Many of those interviewed commented on the closeness of the relationship between +Hurley and Kearney. Anne McKay captures it in this quotation from JRR Tolkien: "All I wanted was a captain worth fighting for."¹²³³

For Kearney, +Hurley was that captain, and he fought for him throughout his 28 years at Diakonia (which he left the year that +Hurley died) and then for the remaining years of his own life, promoting the legacy of +Hurley through books and lectures and eventually the creation of the Denis Hurley Centre. +Hurley had clearly provided for Kearney what the Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern in the early 1980s had feared was lacking in the Church:

Where are the priests sufficiently self-assured in their own identity and faith that they can devote themselves to energising lay leaders committed to reforming the structures of society?¹²³⁴

An insight into Kearney's own view of the relationship comes from an article he wrote in 1997 to celebrate +Hurley's Golden Jubilee. It is a lengthy piece with Kearney taking, for the first time, the role of the official biographer. Some things here are especially relevant: involvement of the laity and +Hurley's desire to encourage their participation with regular diocesan synods, guidelines for lay

¹²³¹ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 369 (DH to Bobbie and Jerry Hurley, from Durban, 1 April 1987, typewritten)

¹²³² Blair Kaiser, Robert. "Understanding the implications of Pope John's *aggiornamento*". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 47

¹²³³ McKay, Anne. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2021 in Durban (Communications Officer at Diakonia)

¹²³⁴ Barta, Russell ed. *Challenge to the Laity* (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 20

involvement and formation for the laity; also justifying his role as a ‘political priest’ coming from his firm conviction for justice which influenced the whole of his life.¹²³⁵ Kearney jokingly says that Hurley is not spending enough time on his memoirs because he is still too focused on the present and the future. The sign-off is interesting: “Paddy Kearney, a friend of Archbishop Hurley, is Director of Diakonia Council of Churches”.¹²³⁶

Kearney himself was involved (with Denis and Argall) in the selection of the letters for publication cited above. As they explain in the foreword, the editors ended up choosing 251 letters out of the 5,000 they reviewed.¹²³⁷ There are remarkably few letters addressed to Kearney selected for the book (perhaps because Kearney did not put them forwards) but Kearney did keep some in his personal archive. There are two that provide some more insight into their relationship and +Hurley’s wider relationship with the laity.

One is a letter from 1998 in which +Hurley thanks Kearney for the lines he had quoted from the scholar Alcuin of York to Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (+Hurley has clipped a biography of Alcuin to the letter). The letter suggests great familiarity and ease of conversation between the two – even if still formal. Perhaps they are implying a comparison between their own relationship and the 8th century friendship between these two ecclesiastics.¹²³⁸

Another is a letter to Kearney in 2003, a year before the Archbishop’s death and when they are already working together on memoirs/ biography. This suggests that they did not see each other so often since +Hurley refers to replying to a letter from two months before (though in this period +Hurley was away in Pretoria and Italy). Kearney had clearly asked +Hurley to clarify some issues, such as the name of his school in Newcastle (there had been mergers since then), and also who took over from him as the youngest bishop in the world (prompting a jokey reminiscence from Hurley about cricket, involving two archbishops).¹²³⁹

Both these letters suggest a high degree of intimacy and friendliness between them, although Hurley also shows this in many other letters he wrote to regular correspondents. At the same time, he ends his letters to Kearney with a signature (typed and written) as ‘+Denis Hurley OMI’ so no there is informality there. (This is in contrast to letters to his family which are signed off as ‘Denis’; to his friends Marly and Petal signed as ‘+Denis’; however, letters to another friend Sr Genevieve are also signed off as ‘+Denis Hurley OMI’, the same as in the letters to Kearney).¹²⁴⁰

So, unlike many bishops of his day (and since), it seems that +Hurley had comfortable and relaxed relationships with a number of lay people; Kearney was one of these but by no means the closest. Theirs was a working relationship that developed into a friendship (as per Kearney’s sign-off in the article quoted above) but conscious that they were still separated by age and ecclesial status.

How do those who frequently observed the two men working together characterise their relationship? And what does this tell us about Kearney’s identity as a Catholic lay person? Some

¹²³⁵ For more on this see Appendix D: “+Hurley the political priest”

¹²³⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) “Hurley’s Golden Jubilee” (*The Southern Cross*, 16 March 97)

¹²³⁷ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 8

¹²³⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/ Letters/3 “Hurley Letters 1991-2004” (Letter from +Hurley to Kearney, 27 March 98); It looks though as if either +Hurley or Kearney was mistaken here since Anselm was Archbishop of Canterbury almost three centuries after Alcuin was operating in York! They may have inadvertently linked Alcuin’s letter to a more famous later Archbishop whereas in fact it was addressed to the less memorable Æthelhard: the illustration of friendship between a scholar and an archbishop still holds.

¹²³⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/ Letters/3 “Hurley Letters 1991-2004” (Letter from +Hurley to Kearney, 9 April 2003)

¹²⁴⁰ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, examples: 279, 294, 372, 491

quotations from those who worked with both of them, at Diakonia and beyond, are enlightening. They commented on the strength of the relationship and also speculate on how reciprocal it was. Both Moore and Keane also commented on the fact that they had similar backgrounds and that this helped as the foundation for the trust.

There was a wonderful relationship between +Hurley and Paddy. So much mutual admiration. Paddy was the Archbishop's go-to man.¹²⁴¹

Paddy idolised +Hurley; he would always defer to him as 'Your Grace'.¹²⁴²

Paddy admired the Archbishop greatly but I wouldn't say he was in awe.¹²⁴³

+Hurley was his guru on the hill. Paddy wanted to fulfil the pathway that +Hurley set him on and carry his vision further. I wonder, if Hurley had not given him this job, would Kearney have been such a radical?¹²⁴⁴

Paddy always got huge support from +Hurley.¹²⁴⁵

Their relationship was hugely mutually respectful; they knew what they could expect of each other. The strongest bond was their Catholicism, both of them believing that the institution to which they belonged needed to be moved. But Paddy was not the junior partner. +Hurley would always do what Paddy wanted him to do; and Paddy was happy to be two steps behind. He was happy for the Church leadership to be the face of the work – both he and Peter Kerchhoff [at PACSA] were happy to do all the work behind the scenes, writing the minutes.¹²⁴⁶

Paddy was always supportive of anything that +Hurley did. For example, Paddy was not fazed by the criticisms of Hurley (such as that he was funding terrorists); instead this galvanised him. I think that it was Paddy who radicalised +Hurley about what was going on – the influence was more that way round. After all, Paddy was on the ground: he was able to introduce people to the Arch. It was Paddy who helped +Hurley to take a stance with the C.O. movement and who organised the Good Friday marches.¹²⁴⁷

Paddy had a great relationship with +Hurley because of their shared involvement in the Struggle and in the Church. They could understand each other and found each other very easy to work with.¹²⁴⁸

+Hurley was Paddy's role model, they both felt an empathy for those who were out of grace with the establishment. +Hurley knew he could trust Kearney to keep confidences. I suspect that without +Hurley, Kearney's life would have been quite bland.¹²⁴⁹

¹²⁴¹ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

¹²⁴² Joseph, Hester. Personal interview by author, 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹²⁴³ Goad, Daphne. Personal interview by author, 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹²⁴⁴ Cormick, Dina. Personal interview by author, 21 December 2020 in Durban (freelance designer at Diakonia)

¹²⁴⁵ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Pinetown (Methodist Bishop & wife)

¹²⁴⁶ Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹²⁴⁷ Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

¹²⁴⁸ Moore, Anne. Personal interview by author, 17 Oct 2020 in Johannesburg GP (member of The Grail)

¹²⁴⁹ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

Paddy was always very close to +Hurley and implemented what he wanted. He was the right arm of +Hurley. Paddy was more traditional at the beginning than the Archbishop. He was challenged by +Hurley but he accepted the challenge and exceeded it.... Paddy was a little afraid of +Hurley's freedom inside the Church and outside. He never criticised the Archbishop's position on anything; he was a real ambassador for him. The foundation of the Denis Hurley Centre was confirmation of Paddy's admiration for +Hurley but it had to be 'faith in action'.¹²⁵⁰

Paddy was motivated by what +Hurley stood for – in fact it was inspiration not just motivation.¹²⁵¹

+Hurley led from the front so he was a role model for Paddy who admired him tremendously. He admired the fact that he was not afraid to be there at the barricades. +Hurley did what his conscience required.¹²⁵²

It was clear that the Arch had Paddy's back and used his convening power (as First among Equals) to mobilise the other religious leaders. But it was only later that I realised how central Paddy also was to +Hurley.¹²⁵³

Longer quotations are worth citing from people who had a privileged view of this most unusual relationship. Kearney's Deputy Director at Diakonia (and later successor) commented:

I often watched the interaction between Paddy and +Hurley: he was his blue-eyed boy; it was a beautiful relationship. It was good foresight of +Hurley to identify Paddy and he, in turn, remained true to the vision of +Hurley.... Paddy was an extraordinary person who was re-energised by his work and his desire to see an alternative society; everyone's quality of life being improved for the better. But it was also because it was about a person he admired: the person who was his role model.... Paddy resigned the year that +Hurley died: I would not be surprised if +Hurley's death was a trigger for his resignation.¹²⁵⁴

Two Anglican bishops, who worked with +Hurley and Kearney during the Diakonia days, also have a good perspective:

It was +Hurley who had the greatest influence on Paddy above all others. They shared a passion for welding Church and theology with the socio-political situation. It was a mutual relationship of dependence and influence.... Sometimes it was +Hurley who was following Paddy; sometimes vice versa. But bear in mind that Paddy was his own person – he was never 'a yes man'. They were very much egging each other on. And then so was I with Paddy: there were times when I was more radical, and times when he was.¹²⁵⁵

¹²⁵⁰ Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author, 17 January 2022 via Zoom (Manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

¹²⁵¹ Duval, Sydney. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (Catholic activist and journalist)

¹²⁵² de Haas, Mary. Personal interview by author, 30 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow activist and mother-in-law to Kearney's niece)

¹²⁵³ Graham, Paul. Personal interview by author, 13 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Methodist Youth Worker)

¹²⁵⁴ Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu. Personal interview by author, 26 May 2022 in Durban (Kearney's successor as Director of Diakonia and sometime Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹²⁵⁵ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

Paddy's relationship with +Hurley was close and profoundly respectful.¹²⁵⁶

The fullest insights into the relationship come from those who worked most closely with +Hurley: first of all, the woman who was his personal secretary for many years and so the lay person who would have seen them together more than anyone else:

There were times when the Archbishop said "I can't take any calls" but then Paddy would phone and he would not take 'no' for an answer and he normally won. The Arch never refused to take his call – Paddy was special. ...But I don't think they were friends (even though +Hurley had many friends). Paddy was driven by +Hurley, by his devotion to him. It made him want to live up to +Hurley's standards. It was as if +Hurley was looking for Kearney – and may be vice versa. It was an unbreakable bond which lasted for years, even after +Hurley's death. They made a formidable pair....

Diakonia was very important for +Hurley since he knew he could not have got a similar result by just working through the SACBC. With Diakonia, he could ensure it went in the right direction. And Paddy put +Hurley in touch with people he would not have access to before. Paddy was a lightning conductor for all sorts of people.¹²⁵⁷

Paul Nadal was Vicar-General to +Hurley from 1984 to 1994 and so the priest who would have seen them together more than anyone else:

I like to think that +Hurley had two blue-eyed boys: Paddy and myself! But +Hurley got something different from Paddy than what he got from me. I think that +Hurley was never a radical in theology or in anything else. He was rather a moderate leaning to the left. But Paddy was sometimes a radical. In fact, sometimes +Hurley would have to calm him down and tell him 'you have overstepped the mark'. What changed +Hurley was his exposure to Cardinal Cardijn's model of "See, Judge, Act."

+Hurley appreciated people who were willing to speak out. Fr Vogt (who was a contemporary of +Hurley) criticised me once for the way that I spoke to the Archbishop so I went to apologise. +Hurley said to me: "I wish more priests would speak to me like you do; you're not afraid to say: 'that's nonsense'." He told me that he knew I would speak the truth even if it killed us – but added that not everyone can take the truth.

Paddy had the same strength of mind though he still always addressed him as 'Your Grace'; he did not have the same familiarity. I never got the impression that Paddy was held back by being a lay person. I certainly never had reason to believe that +Hurley treated Paddy differently because he was not a priest.

Paddy was certainly kept going by his devotion to +Hurley: it was akin to hero worship. The relationship between them was intense. It seemed to me that Paddy was dedicated to two things: to +Hurley and to Jesus Christ and I don't know in which order!

Both of these have commented on Kearney's devotion to +Hurley. It was a devotion that they also shared and they both went on to work with Kearney on the Denis Hurley Centre, Matthias as

¹²⁵⁶ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

¹²⁵⁷ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (Secretary to +Hurley and Secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

Secretary to the Trust and Nadal as a Patron, Trustee and fundraiser. Others involved in the Denis Hurley Centre, support the same view of the closeness of the relationship.

Paddy was certainly driven by his devotion to Denis Hurley. He held him in such high regard as his mentor and role model.¹²⁵⁸

Once writing the biographies was over, it was the Denis Hurley Centre that gave Paddy purpose.¹²⁵⁹

Tully further recalls an incident (in the late 1990s) when he was with Kearney and +Hurley phoned. He was struck by how much +Hurley was still dependent on Kearney's opinion. Tully went on to comment – as a priest reflecting on other priests – that Paul Nadal and Pierre Lavoipierre (a contemporary of Nadal) saw Kearney as 'the silent hero' of the Archdiocese of Durban. However, they were also wary because sometimes Kearney was rocking the boat so they supported him but from a distance. They knew, nevertheless, that Kearney was doing it for the priests of the Archdiocese.

Also reflecting on the relationship, after +Hurley's death, Argall who worked with Kearney and Denis on the collection of letters commented:

Paddy was not defensive of +Hurley. For example, he did not want to suppress the early letters of +Hurley that showed racist language but rather wanted to demonstrate that he had an unfolding consciousness.¹²⁶⁰ It is also noticeable that, in the biography, Paddy included descriptions of some of +Hurley's failed projects.¹²⁶¹

A final comment from +Hurley's successor as Archbishop of Durban:

Paddy was +Hurley's front runner; he kept him informed, advised him on strategy, told him who to look forward to dealing with. Certainly, +Hurley was Paddy's hero and he was motivated by his admiration. But they were not like 'disciple and master' with +Hurley telling Paddy what to do. In fact +Hurley depended on Kearney for information and to understand the possibilities of action.¹²⁶²

So overall, we have a consistent picture of a relationship that is deep, that endures over many decades, and is based a high degree of mutual trust: that is unusual enough in the Church, even more so between an archbishop and a lay man. The relationship certainly developed as Kearney grew more confident and as +Hurley (with advancing years) came to rely more and more on the younger man. What is remarkable is that – for fear of treating either man with hagiographical deference – it is hard to find examples of tension despite them working closely together for over 30 years. What is more, it is far from clear in which direction the influence was stronger: some saying that +Hurley influenced Kearney, some saying that Kearney influenced +Hurley, and some concluding that the influence (and the admiration) went in both directions. This is in contrast to the

¹²⁵⁸ Criticos, Costas. Personal interview by author, 4 September 2021 via Zoom (Building consultant to both Diakonia and Denis Hurley Centre)

¹²⁵⁹ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

¹²⁶⁰ For more on this see Appendix A: "Kearney's racial identity"

¹²⁶¹ Argall, Jane. Personal interview by author, 8 October 2020 in Durban (Librarian at Diakonia and Co-editor of book of +Hurley's letters)

¹²⁶² Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

idea of a 'Father / Son relationship' (which is the term used by two, but only two, of the interviewees, Goad and Goemans).

Both +Hurley and Kearney were keen – in the spirit of Vatican II – to build bridges between the Catholic community and other Christians (fulfilling *Unitatis Redintegratio*), people of other faiths (*Nostra Aetate*) and indeed the wider world (*Gaudium et Spes*). But one had been ordained deacon, priest and bishop and lived for over 70 years under religious vows; and the other 'a mere lay man'. It is interesting that there is no sign that their relationship was influenced in any way by this difference in canonical status. This seems to reflect +Hurley's generally positive attitude towards the laity, Kearney's generally respectful attitude towards the clergy, and the new space for a relationship based on 'the common matrix of priesthood' that *Apostolicam Actuositatem* has allowed.

Kearney's relationship with the Catholic Hierarchy

Exploring Kearney's relationship with +Hurley was, I believe, an important precursor to exploring his wider relationship with the Catholic Church and its hierarchy. After all, Kearney had to deal with bishops other than +Hurley, and also with many clergy. He was also aware that +Hurley did not always concur with the Vatican's approach on certain issues. How willing was Kearney to speak out against the Church? And, when he did so, was he going further than +Hurley did?

This relationship matters especially because *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, whilst affirming the distinct and honourable role of lay people in the Church, is also keen to show them as integrated into the wider Church:

...the lay apostolate ...should be incorporated into the apostolate of the whole Church according to a right system of relationships. Indeed, union with those whom the Holy Spirit has assigned to rule His Church is an essential element of the Christian apostolate. This is most fitting since a particular activity in the Church requires harmony and apostolic co-operation on the part of both branches of the clergy, the religious, and the laity.¹²⁶³

There is a reading of this that suggests that co-operation is something expected of all members of the Church – which means bishops co-operating with priests and the laity; the laity co-operating with bishops and priests; and priests co-operating with both. But, in other places, it is clear that this would be a generous reading and that a hierarchical structure is still assumed: one in which co-operation is expected from the lower tiers towards those higher up the pyramid, but not necessarily the other way round. So how did Kearney live this out as someone clear about his lay identity but also aware that he was in a hierarchical Church?

Yeats, who went on to become an Anglican priest and so comes from a denomination with a tradition of 'loyal dissent', saw Kearney as very faithfully Catholic but with a freedom to act:

Paddy had an informed commitment to his work. His period of formation with the Marist Brothers meant that he had a clear understanding of what Christianity required of him. He saw himself as part of a worldwide Catholic Church engaged in social justice. ... But Paddy

¹²⁶³ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 23

was not a priest. He is a person worth remembering – because he was a lay person. This enabled him to live in a certain way that a priest would not.¹²⁶⁴

At the start of his ministry, Kearney often found himself out of tune with the hierarchy in the Church in Southern Africa. Nolan points out that Kearney was frequently disappointed that the SACBC did not speak out against Apartheid as much as they should have.¹²⁶⁵ But, of course, in this he was entirely in tune with his local bishop +Hurley who over the decades won over his fellow SACBC members until they provided a more united and assertive front in their opposition to Apartheid.

What is more interesting to explore is the degree to which Kearney used his freedom as a lay person to disagree with bishops (including +Hurley's successor) or even with teachings coming from Rome. Peter-John Pearson, a very senior Catholic priest in South Africa, who rose to be Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Cape Town but who, to the surprise of many, was never made a bishop, commented on this:

Paddy never said anything public on controversial issues in the Church. But then neither have I. I was told by many people, and I imagine Paddy was too: "We need your voice in the struggle; don't give people ammunition to silence you." Was this a tactical move on Paddy's part? I assume so; he was not bound by obedience [unlike a priest or religious]. I think that he came to a conclusion about where his energies were best placed to be maximised. After all, most of his high profile years were through the papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI when dissent was not encouraged. Paddy made choices on the issues that he felt should be promoted.¹²⁶⁶

Often it is women in the Church who are best placed to dissent, or to comment on dissent, since they are the least likely to aspire to positions of power. Aitken, a member of the Grail described him as: "Respectful of Church but motivational – not confrontational".¹²⁶⁷ Keane describes Kearney as having 'a conventional relationship with Roman Catholic Church' pointing out that he did not speak out against the Church on any matters.

Paddy would have been loyal and that kept him out of trouble. I am sure that he agreed with +Hurley's comment: 'All we did at Vatican II on liturgy has been wasted' but Paddy just kept silent: that was his sign of disapproval.¹²⁶⁸

The views of Cormick are especially interesting since she was also an ex-religious and spoke out publicly in South Africa for the ordination of women.

Paddy admired the Church. He did not want to rock the boat too much.

I remember that I was once asked to do some work for the Church at the Koinonia Centre but Bishop Barry vetoed my being employed. Paddy did not try to overturn this: his loyalty to the Church was too great. His view seemed to be: that's just the way it is.

¹²⁶⁴ Yeats, Charles. Personal interview by the author, 18 May 2022 via Zoom (Conscientious Objector assisted by +Hurley and Kearney)

¹²⁶⁵ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 18 Oct 2020 in Boksburg GP (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

¹²⁶⁶ Pearson, Peter-John. Personal interview by author, 12 April 2021 in Cape Town (Head of Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office)

¹²⁶⁷ Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

¹²⁶⁸ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

It is interesting that he frequently questioned the human rights of the country but not human rights within the Church. He felt he could challenge political things but not the Church. But then neither did +Hurley. He certainly did not stir things up as much as he could have. I asked +Hurley about this once and I remember him saying to me: “You have no idea what happens when you get to Rome – your voice means nothing.”¹²⁶⁹

Argall comments that, though Kearney was aware that the Church was not a perfect institution, he did not express his frustrations about it publicly. But she gave a specific example of how he might show his views in other ways. When he and Rickard were living in Cambridge MA in 1991, they did not attend the local Catholic chaplaincy at Harvard but instead travelled downtown to worship at St Pauls, a church known for its welcome for the poor and dispossessed but also the existence of a thriving gay community.¹²⁷⁰

Kearney’s friend from later years, Berenice De la Croix, admitted that she was willing to challenge Kearney by raising some difficult church issues.

Paddy tended to sit on the fence – he was not defensive but also was not always critical. He said that you have to understand the full picture. For example, he would say that [Pope] Francis is doing the best he can. I guess he had such loyalty to the Church after so many years. I think he agreed with +Hurley [in opposing Vatican policy] on women priests and contraception. So if he had spoken out on those he would not be going any further than +Hurley did. But I don’t recall him voicing a liberal position on any of the usual ‘litmus test’ issues: gay rights, abortion, clerical celibacy.

I assumed he would be a progressive but he did not voice positions. Perhaps he did not want to do things that would alienate support. I think he did not see it as his mission to move the Church [on everything] but rather to have a tangible impact where he could make a difference. He had other fish to fry. He would always avoid rocking the boat as he grew older. When he received that medal from the Pope it seemed to me that it confirmed him as part of the system but I don’t think he sold his soul to the system.¹²⁷¹

The medal referred to is the *Bene Merenti* mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.¹²⁷² It is given in the name of the Pope to Catholics who have shown long and loyal service (originally, it was a military medal for members of the Papal army). Priscilla McKay comments that Kearney was uncomfortable about the award since there were many more deserving people.¹²⁷³ His niece adds that Kearney was embarrassed by it and it was never on display.¹²⁷⁴

In fact, we have one direct comment from Kearney himself about the award since he refers to it in a speech honouring him (in a different context) in May 2018. He talks about the award as being special, not because it came from the Pope, but because it starts with a recommendation from the local parish and from the diocese.¹²⁷⁵ This clearly fits with his own modesty, as discussed before.

¹²⁶⁹ Cormick, Dina. Personal interview by author, 21 December 2020 in Durban (freelance designer at Diakonia)

¹²⁷⁰ Argall, Jane. Personal interview by author, 8 October 2020 in Durban (Librarian at Diakonia and Co-editor of book of +Hurley’s letters)

¹²⁷¹ De la Croix, Berenice. Personal interview by author, 30 September and 9 October 2020 in Durban (Personal friend)

¹²⁷² “Paddy honoured with Papal Medal” *Emmanuel Cathedral website* undated. <https://emmanuelcathedral.org.za/paddy-honoured-with-papal-medal/> (accessed 5 September 2022)

¹²⁷³ McKay, Priscilla. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow Catholic activist)

¹²⁷⁴ de Haas, Ursula. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Niece of Kearney)

¹²⁷⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/8 “Interfaith” (Speech by Kearney May 2018)

But it also allows him to position the award as honouring his loyalty to the local people (the parish and the diocese) rather than loyalty to an institution or to a distant Pope, whoever he might be.

Briard, who represented the official aid agency of the French-speaking Belgian bishops, commented:

Paddy never spoke of his frustrations with the Church even while Napier was Arch. He simply appreciated the support he received from CIDSE [the Catholic European funding network] and the Protestant funders. I know that +Hurley was disappointed by Napier's approach as being too Roman – but Paddy never mentioned that. He was traditional in his approach to the hierarchy.

But he did once say to me that South Africa is a microcosm of the world: with the best and the worst. On the positive side he would cite collaboration with the laity, the role of women, the power of the Church; and on the other side, all the bad stuff.¹²⁷⁶

The views of people who knew Kearney well, and are at one remove from the Roman Catholic system, are useful in this regard. +Nuttall, an Anglican bishop, commented:

Paddy had an unshakeable devotion as a worshipping Catholic. This remained true even when he saw a shift away from the open windows of Vatican II and the closing of windows by John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Certainly, +Hurley was distressed to see how his own work on liturgy was being undermined. Paddy had an unshakeable devotion to the well-being of the Church – it was the paradox of him being open and yet also having a deep attachment.¹²⁷⁷

This comment of +Nuttall about Kearney mirrors closely a comment made about +Hurley by a Catholic priest who was not afraid to court controversy. One could imagine the same words that Fr Mkhathswa applied to +Hurley being used to describe Kearney:

Whilst he has ruffled many a feather in the Catholic Church, he has also been a very loyal son of the Church. He hobnobbed with the academics, the progressive students and the elite. But as soon as they challenged the doctrines or practices of the Church, he would leap to the defence and authority of the Church.¹²⁷⁸

Verryn, a former Methodist bishop, shared some of the same frustrations but also understood why Kearney might keep silent.

He didn't talk to me about Catholic issues. But that is because the Church is a family: and that means as a member of a family I can gossip but you can't. I think he shared my view that the Church enables integrity and also enables hypocrisy. The Scriptures warn us of the presence of Pharisees in the very heart of the Church.¹²⁷⁹

¹²⁷⁶ Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author, 17 January 2022 via Zoom (Manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

¹²⁷⁷ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

¹²⁷⁸ Mkhathswa, Smangaliso. "That man, Hurley". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 100

¹²⁷⁹ Verryn, Paul. Personal interview by author, 21 March 2021 in Johannesburg (Methodist Minister)

The relationship that Kearney fostered with +Hurley's successor as Archbishop of Durban from 1992 is one useful test of his loyalty to the Church. First of all, what did +Napier himself have to say about Kearney?

Paddy could be very stubborn – but he was not stubborn for the sake of being stubborn; he was stubborn on a principle. I remember him at the meetings at Diakonia of the KZN Church Leaders Group [Kearney remained as secretary even after he had left the role as Director of Diakonia]. Paddy was open to all the church leaders; he was always at their service, to advise them. The CLG worked because it was an informal body: there was no fixed membership, no constitution; it was like a Ministers' Fraternal. It was designed to be free to enable dialogue and draw in even the extremes....

I recall Paddy talking about the Church and it was clear that he knew his Catholic Social Teaching. When he was Chair of the PPC at the Cathedral he was always very active. He would say 'I think the Church should do x' – the implication being that the Church was not taking something seriously – but he said it in a gentle way, never screaming and shouting, always logical and persistent. He was usually asking others to do something that he was already doing himself.

He raised with me the issue of opening the process for the canonisation of +Hurley. I replied that the bishop should respond to the people, you have to let the laity take the lead. You need the devotion of ordinary people in order to get a miracle. Paddy was agitated that I was not enthusiastically supporting the +Hurley cause.¹²⁸⁰

When asked to comment on Kearney's relationship with the Church, a number of interviewees returned to the subject of his views on Cardinal Napier. In some ways, this is a fair comparison: Kearney was clearly very loyal to +Hurley: if this loyalty was to the office of archbishop rather than to the person of +Hurley, it would then presumably carry over in a similar way to +Hurley's successor to the see of Durban.

Snyman, a Dutch Reformed Church Dominee, was someone with whom Kearney seems to have shared some of his frustrations with the Church.

There was a lot of pain around Napier succeeding +Hurley. It was especially hard for Paddy that Napier became Cardinal [in 2001, 3 years before +Hurley's death] since he did not represent +Hurley values. One of the examples was the way in which Napier would always be going on about abortion as if it was the only issue.¹²⁸¹

Duval, who worked closely with successive Archbishops of Cape Town, commented:

One of Paddy's abiding concerns was for Archbishop Hurley's successor and then (later) +Napier's successor. He called regularly to share news of possible successors. We shared a lot at the Hurley requiem at Kings Park Stadium and interment in Emmanuel Cathedral. He

¹²⁸⁰ Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

¹²⁸¹ Snyman, Deon. Personal interview by author, 6 January 2021 in Malmesbury (Dutch Reformed Church Dominee and Co-worker at Diakonia). (In fact, Napier who presided at Kearney's funeral on 1 December 2018, used that occasion to talk about abortion and tried to link the subject to Kearney even though there is no evidence of Kearney ever speaking or writing on this subject.)

also had some choice words for certain members of the hierarchy. It seemed to me that a critical part of our friendship enabled him to let off private steam in my company.

He wasn't blinded by the Church. He was aware of it, warts and all. But it did not stop him for one moment in his work or his faith. Nor did it hold him back when speaking about particular people in the Church. I would share with him to give him a broader understanding of the Church that I was also serving.¹²⁸²

+Hurley's secretary also commented about the Archdiocese under his successor:

Paddy and I were both disappointed at the fact that no one at the Chancery seemed to be focused on +Hurley's funeral when he died. In fact, the Archdiocese of Durban which had been a vibrant diocese, a hive of activity, was reduced to rubble in a short space of time. I think that is why it was Paddy's intentional strategy to have some distance between the Denis Hurley Centre and the Archdiocese. Plus Napier was not as ecumenical as +Hurley.¹²⁸³

Priscilla McKay referred to Kearney's frustrations with +Hurley's successor:

Paddy did not like the rigidity of the Cardinal or his unapproachability. He didn't feel that the Cardinal had the personality to embrace all. Paddy found it disappointing that there wasn't the same warm outreach onto the communities. But the contrast was not just with +Hurley but also with +Barry [Wood, +Napier's auxiliary bishop].¹²⁸⁴

How then did Kearney work with the Cardinal who, as Archbishop of Durban had a key role to play ecumenically and whom Kearney would later need to endorse the creation of the Denis Hurley Centre? Nadal, who stepped down as Vicar-General soon after +Napier took over, explained it thus:

Paddy did not want to rub the Cardinal up the wrong way. So he toed the line. He did not want to be too controversial. I think that it was the ecumenical motivation initially that was key.¹²⁸⁵

Tully was appointed by +Napier in 2002 as Administrator (or Dean) of the Cathedral – a key position in any diocese but all the more so since he was taking over from +Hurley in this role. He would therefore also be one of the driving forces in the creation of the Denis Hurley Centre since it emerged from existing Cathedral projects.

We spoke about how to get things done in the face of the Cardinal since we knew he was not a progressive. For example, we were careful about how we presented things to him. Zuma [when he was President] wanted to visit the Cathedral and lay flowers at +Hurley's grave. We knew the Cardinal would be opposed to this. But we presented this as a useful opportunity for him to speak to Zuma and also stressed that he needed to be seen to be a-political.

¹²⁸² Duval, Sydney. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (Catholic activist and journalist)

¹²⁸³ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (Secretary to +Hurley and Secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

¹²⁸⁴ McKay, Priscilla. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow Catholic activist)

¹²⁸⁵ Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban (Catholic Monsignor, Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

We were very tactical in our approach to Cardinal. We needed help from political people for the Denis Hurley Centre and Paddy knew them and knew how difficult it was to motivate the Cardinal. From the beginning we made it clear to the Cardinal that we were not asking him for money. But we wanted to get him in the pictures. We knew how well red comes out in photographs.

But by making the Denis Hurley Centre a separate Trust it meant that the Archdiocese of Durban could not get its hands on the money that was raised. Paddy was instrumental in wording the documents so that it starts as an Archdiocese of Durban project but then becomes independent. He argued to the Cardinal that this would protect the AoD from any possible legal backlash. Moreover, it would make him look good and would not cost him anything. I don't think the Cardinal realised what he was signing up for.¹²⁸⁶

One of the fullest reflections on this relationship came from Larry Kaufmann, a Redemptorist priest who has had his own tensions with the Cardinal. They are not the subject of this chapter but are worth bearing in mind when hearing his comments.

Paddy was of course concerned about who would succeed +Hurley and he cringed and cried when he heard it would be +Napier. His conservatism was already apparent at that stage [+Napier had been bishop of the neighbouring diocese of Kokstad since 1980]. In his role in the SACBC theological advisory commissions, he had already shown his conservative positions on marriage and sexuality. I recall that +Hurley responded humbly to the news. And Paddy's reply was: 'I have decided I have to work with him. I am not working for the Cardinal; I am working for the people and the memory of +Hurley.'

Paddy had many frustrations with the Church. One was certainly about the issue of the way that women in the church were treated (which is not necessarily the issue of women's ordination). And of course he was opposed to the new translation of the Mass because of his loyalty to +Hurley and the feeling that the work of ICEL was going down the tubes. But Paddy handled it diplomatically and courageously even in the Hurley biography.

Paddy was 100% behind me on the stance I took on same-sex civil partnerships [when Kaufmann was teaching at the Unilever Centre for Ethics at UKZN]: that it was not for the Church to impose its moral systems on secular legislation. But +Napier interpreted it as support for homosexuality and I lost my faculties [permission to operate as a priest in the Archdiocese of Durban] over this issue.

He and I agreed that when we disagree with the Church we don't have to be exiles from the Church; it is our baptismal dignity; that is what gives us our prophetic and teaching authority. We have a right to stay; we don't need the permission of the bishop. This was not a cop out; it was just a way of learning to work the system and work within the system.

For Paddy to be a Catholic was a matter of faith; he believed in that community of discipleship unequivocally. The focus he felt should be on orthopraxis [doing the right thing]

¹²⁸⁶ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

not orthodoxy [teaching the right thing]. This was not just pragmatism; it was an issue of faith, a conviction.¹²⁸⁷

Kaufmann cites, in defence of this position, Hans Küng who had been a *peritus* at Vatican II (alongside fellow rising German theologian, Joseph Ratzinger). Küng had been stripped of his license to teach as a Catholic professor in 1979; nevertheless, he was invited to stay as a personal guest of +Hurley in his flat on Gordon Road in the mid-1980s. It is interesting that Kearney later reads and reviews for *The Southern Cross* Küng's extensive two volumes of memoirs (1600 pages!). Moreover, these reviews are among the ones Kearney chose to be included in his own selected writings.¹²⁸⁸

In fact, these reviews of Küng's biography are part of a pattern in Kearney's later writings. He wrote at least 47 reviews of biographies which he kept in his archive in a special file.¹²⁸⁹ 38 of these are also reproduced in his published collection of writing (cited above) plus there are 9 in the file that are not in the book. What is striking is that almost all the biographies are of champions of the progressive wing of the Church: people not afraid to speak their minds, people marginalized within the Church, people committed to social justice.

A few are about non-Catholics: three South Africans whom Kearney would have known (Charles Yeats, +Trevor Huddleston and +Michael Nuttall) and two more he would not have (Luther and the Dalai Lama). But all of the rest are Catholics. As well as Küng (mentioned above) there are progressive bishops (+Raymond Hunthausen, +Rembert Weakland, +Francis Arinze and +Basil Hume, twice!); controversial Jesuits (the Berrigan brothers, Jacques Dupuis, Fernando Cardenal); a controversial Dominican (Timothy Radcliffe), and two women (Elizabeth Johnson and Dorothy Day). The exceptions to these are the books about John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Robert Mugabe who might be seen as among those who did the marginalizing!

Another unnamed file seems to give insight into Kearney's preoccupations with the Church.¹²⁹⁰ Although these are articles by other people, what Kearney chose to photocopy or print or cut out and keep could be indicative of his own views. The 26 articles provide an interesting insight into his pre-occupations: 7 are about Church hierarchy and 5 about the role of women; there are 3 about the Church in Asia, and 2 each on Liberation Theology and liturgy; one each on the role of the laity, clerical abuse, church building, South Africa, abortion, ecumenism and Catholic Social Teaching. The tenor of the articles is also interesting: my analysis is that while two are conservative in tone and seven are neutral, the majority (17/26) are progressive in their approach.

Particularly interesting examples include:

- a piece controversially entitled 'The body of Christ has AIDS' (William McKinley in *National Catholic Reporter*, September 2000)
- a piece by a Mexican Carmelite writing that there is a culture of violence in the church resulting from centralisation and patriarchal authoritarianism (Camilo Macisa in *The Tablet*, November 2003)

¹²⁸⁷ Kaufmann, Larry. Personal interview by author, 12 Oct 2020 in Durban (Redemptorist priest and activist)

¹²⁸⁸ Kearney, G Paddy. *Faith in Action* (Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal Christian Council, 2017) 238 ("Review of *My struggle for freedom*", *The Southern Cross*, 4-10 August 2004); 255 ("Review of *Disputed truth*", *The Southern Cross*, 27 May-2 June 2009)

¹²⁸⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/6 "Book Reviews"

¹²⁹⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/7 "Church Issues"

- an account of 4,000 lay people meeting in the USA, reaffirming their intention to build up the Church through change from within (*National Catholic Reporter*, August 2004)
- Paul Vallely's lecture in which he describes Francis' attempt to reinvigorate the Synod of Bishops (*The Tablet*, November 2015)
- Cardinal Walter Kasper article 'Mercy is the medicine to heal the wounds of the church' (*The Tablet*, November 2015)

Kearney's file also has copies in English and Zulu (clearly printed for circulation) of Francis' notorious address to the senior Roman curia from December 2014 which talks about the diseases afflicting the Vatican.¹²⁹¹

The views of the editor of *The Southern Cross* (for which many of these reviews were written) are enlightening:

I don't think Paddy was ever unorthodox; he was critical and he appealed to the teaching authority of the Church in voicing positions which the weak and the stupid might interpret as being unorthodox.¹²⁹²

He contrasts this with the approach taken by Kearney's late brother, Jack Kearney, who often used the letters page to express controversial opinions.¹²⁹³ Simmermacher argues that (Paddy) Kearney may have had controversial opinions but expressed them 'with clever care'. The specific example he gives is a review of a book about Archbishop Hunthausen. "He basically lets the book, and the quotes he uses, reflect his views", says Simmermacher, as Kearney retells the story of how +Hunthausen was marginalised under the papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI for his awkward views on social issues. Kearney then appears to vindicate +Hunthausen from two different directions in the final paragraph:

But Cardinal Ratzinger also praised Hunthausen for 'implementing the renewal envisioned by the Council, including lay participation, the creation of consultative bodies, and applying the Gospel to world issues'. This is an important book for all who are interested in the 'unfinished business of Vatican II'. One will inevitably speculate whether Hunthausen would have had a different fate in the papacy of Francis.¹²⁹⁴

In exploring the relationship that Kearney had with the Catholic Church, we have considered the personal relationships he had with +Hurley and +Napier. They were clearly very different personalities and, inevitably, Kearney had a very different relationship with each of them. Since they were both Archbishops of Durban, the cooling in the relationship might be seen as indicative of a lack of loyalty to the office of archbishop. But that is potentially unfair: it is clear that Kearney's commitment to +Hurley was much more than that usually extended by a lay Catholic to their bishop. So a lower level of commitment to +Napier is quite possible without it necessarily signalling a lack of loyalty to the office. And, after all, since Kearney was not a priest operating in the Archdiocese of

¹²⁹¹ "The Roman Curia and the Body of Christ", *Vatican website*, 22 December 2014:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141222_curia-romana.html (accessed 5 September 2022)

¹²⁹² Simmermacher, Günther. Email to the author, 17 March 2021

¹²⁹³ 'Such sexism in Mass Readings', *The Southern Cross*, 23 September 2009: <https://www.scross.co.za/2009/09/such-sexism-in-mass-reading/> (accessed 5 September 2022)

¹²⁹⁴ Kearney, Faith in Action, 279 ("Review of A still and quiet conscience", *The Southern Cross*, 15-21 February 2017)

Durban, he had no obligation under Church law to swear 'obedience' to the ordinary; rather respect for his teaching authority would be sufficient.

There is little evidence that Kearney showed lack of respect for the teaching authority of his local bishop (whoever he might be) or even of the magisterium of the Church. His studied refusal to speak or write a publicly dissenting opinion on controversial subjects suggests a high degree of loyalty, or at least a pragmatism that could be taken for loyalty. But Kearney also remained loyal to his profession as a teacher and so used opportunities that he did have (such as book reviews) to draw attention to wider voices in the Church and – by implication of his tone of voice – indicate an open-ness toward fuller discussion.

Kearney's relationship with clergy

As well as maintaining a co-operative relationship with the institutional Church and its bishops, to achieve what he wanted for Diakonia and for the Denis Hurley Centre, Kearney also needed to build and maintain good relations with individual clergy. This seems to be something that he did very successfully, even if he did not always agree with them, nor they with him.

Vatican II seems to make it clear that it is union with Christ which is the key to ministry of lay people:

Since Christ, sent by the Father, is the source and origin of the whole apostolate of the Church, the success of the lay apostolate depends upon the laity's living union with Christ, in keeping with the Lord's words, 'He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing' (John 15:5).¹²⁹⁵

However, in the paragraph before, the hierarchical Church has peered out from behind the common matrix: it is stressed that it is the role of the clergy to test what lay people are doing:

This should be done by the laity in communion with their brothers in Christ, especially with their pastors who must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts not to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold for what is good.¹²⁹⁶

A principle is thereby enshrined that almost all lay Catholics have experienced over the years: that the apostolate of the laity, especially at parish level, is dependent on the approval or at least toleration of the local cleric, who might be educated, well-informed, unprejudiced and open-minded, but might not be.

+Hurley talks positively – if slyly – about the role of the priest as being the bishop's hands and feet, his eyes, ears and voice.

We all know that in the reading of pastoral letters whether the bishop's words sound like the trumpet of an archangel or like a list from a telephone directory depend completely on the priest.¹²⁹⁷

¹²⁹⁵ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 4

¹²⁹⁶ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 3

¹²⁹⁷ Hurley, *Vatican II*, 46

In his interview, Apelgren recalls an incident involving the youth group at the Wentworth Catholic parish in the early 1970s which would mean the recently laicised Kearney seeing this dilemma at first hand:

The youth group was running a programme on different types of leadership and, alongside Jesus as a role model, we also talked about Mandela and Mohamed. Fr Carey kicked the group out of the parish hall [it is unclear if his objection was political or Christological] and he was backed by the parish council. Paddy did support the youth group but he did not verbalise it at the PPC. However, afterwards he did support the creation of a new organisation involving the same people.¹²⁹⁸

This seems to be an early example of Kearney being diplomatic in navigating the waters of clerical authority. Various interviewees attested to this – sometimes, from the context, they are referring just to Catholic clergy; sometimes to ministers from other Christian denominations as well:

Paddy showed respect for the clerical state but not necessarily for individual clergy.¹²⁹⁹

I always saw him as Church figure. Paddy had great respect for the clergy.¹³⁰⁰

All of the other Trustees [of the Ecumenical Centre] were priests; if Paddy had a problem with one of them, he would not challenge them in the open.¹³⁰¹

Kearney as lay man was not intimidated in the slightest by the clergy. He always came across as profoundly respectful of them and so got respect from them in return.¹³⁰²

Sometimes it seems that Kearney was able to develop good relations with clergy because they respected him as a lay person. But sometimes it seems that it was because his appearance and his personal history blurred the usually clear distinction between the two groups.

Church people were in awe of Paddy: his church involvement was part of why he did what he did. Because he came from that background, he was comfortable with clergy – steeped in that clerical culture. He was on a par with them – in fact sometimes they deferred to him.¹³⁰³

Clergy often forget that Paddy is not clergy.¹³⁰⁴

By contrast, +Hurley's secretary feels that some clergy in the Archdiocese of Durban were keenly aware that Kearney was a lay person:

¹²⁹⁸ Apelgren, Eric. Personal interview by author, 6 October 2020 in Durban (Volunteer at Diakonia and local Government official)

¹²⁹⁹ Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Personal friend and involved in Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace)

¹³⁰⁰ Goad, Daphne. Personal interview by author, 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³⁰¹ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

¹³⁰² Kaufmann, Larry. Personal interview by author, 12 Oct 2020 in Durban (Redemptorist priest and activist)

¹³⁰³ Joseph, Hester. Personal interview by author, 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³⁰⁴ Pearson, Peter-John. Personal interview by author, 12 April 2021 in Cape Town (Head of Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office)

The clergy realised and some members were very irritated. Paddy was in the inner circle – and they wondered how he got to such favoured status in such a short period of time. This caused resentment. It was felt that Paddy got preferential treatment from the Arch.¹³⁰⁵

This is reinforced by comments from Tim Smith who, for part of the 1980s, was a Jesuit priest operating in the Archdiocese of Durban:

There were plenty of clergy who were uncomfortable with +Hurley generally. They would not have spoken out against +Hurley or against Paddy but said things behind the scenes. There was certainly discomfort from some at Paddy being a lay person and an ex-religious. But it was also that for quite a few of the clergy it was Diakonia itself that was the problem. The clear exception to this was [Mgr.] Paul Nadal. He was always a great supporter of Paddy. There was no tension between them perhaps because they were complete opposites. They were a highly complementary pair.¹³⁰⁶

However, this comment is contradicted by Tully, who unlike Smith was a priest of the Archdiocese of Durban and worked closely with Kearney and +Hurley though in later years.

I never experienced priests feeling resentment towards Paddy that he was so close to +Hurley. Paddy was able to mix easily with priests and bishops. He was aware that priests can be prickly and territorial and so he would not push himself.¹³⁰⁷

Campbell, a former priest, says that Kearney's attitude towards the clergy was more than just deference or respect. He had known Kearney when he was an Oblate priest in Durban until he left South Africa and the priesthood in 1977. He was reunited with Kearney in 2009 when he came to Ottawa to do research for the Hurley biography at the Oblate university there. Campbell describes Kearney as showing great compassion towards priests and religious, particularly with regard to the indignity of laicisation (which Campbell had experienced) though Kearney never spoke about why he himself had left the Marists. In particular, Campbell recalls Kearney expressing great anxiety for Stephen Tully who was experiencing some problems: "Paddy was very delicate but concerned."¹³⁰⁸

The insights of co-workers from outside Catholic circles are also useful since other denominations have a different attitude towards clergy. Former Methodist Bishop Norman Hudson commented:

At Diakonia Paddy was always hugely respected even if he was the only non-priest in the room because he was usually the prime mover. Of course, Protestants were more accepting of lay leadership anyway. I did notice that Paddy was very good at stepping back and letting the Church leaders speak – perhaps that was his Catholicism talking! But also helped that he had a certain gentleness while still being a strong leader.¹³⁰⁹

¹³⁰⁵ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (Secretary to +Hurley and Secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

¹³⁰⁶ Smith, Tim. Personal interview by author, 2 September 2021 via Zoom (former Jesuit Regional Superior)

¹³⁰⁷ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³⁰⁸ Campbell, Alex. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 via Zoom (former Oblate priest)

¹³⁰⁹ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Pinetown (Methodist Bishop and wife)

Warmback, an Anglican priest who also worked at Diakonia, points out that Diakonia made use of protection and patronage from Church leaders to give respectability to the organisation.

So there was an in-built clericalism because 'Church leaders' always meant the top of each tree which means the bishops and moderators. Of course, occasionally, there were a few women for example from the Quakers or the Mennonites.¹³¹⁰

Di Oliver, an Anglican lay woman, admits that she was daunted by the clerics.

Was Paddy? Not at all. He was just seen to be the mover and shaker just like Peter Kerchhoff [the Anglican non-priest who ran PACSA]. In fact, the clergy loved having them around; they knew how to help them [the Church leaders] to be what they needed to be.¹³¹¹

It seems that a large part of Kearney's success with clergy is that he made them look good while he usually took the back seat. Kearney would often draft statements, negotiate with the Church leaders until they could all agree and then all sign it. (It was only in exceptional circumstances that Kearney signed the letter on behalf of the Church leaders as happened for example in an open letter sent to Minister Adrian Vlok in 1989.)¹³¹²

While Kearney always treated priests with appropriate respect, he did not feel the need to defer to a priest just because he was a priest. The author recalls a conflict between the Denis Hurley Centre Trust and Refugee Pastoral Care (a project of the Archdiocese of Durban based in the Denis Hurley Centre building). A new priest had been posted by his religious order to oversee the project. For whatever reason – because he was Nigerian, because he was a Spiritan or because of his personality – he seemed to expect that Kearney *as a lay person* would defer to him *as the priest* (and assumed that this was the natural order of things). The conflict came to a head when Cardinal Napier was asked to intervene and it was clear to the author (who was present in the meeting) that Fr Vitalis expected the Cardinal to side with him because he was a priest, and against Kearney and the author who were lay people.

With all the modesty and gentleness for which he was famous, but also the fearlessness and tenacity for which he was also famous, Kearney held his ground in the discussion. One of the issues was that Fr Vitalis was affronted that an Anglican priest had been asked to lead a prayer at the Denis Hurley Centre when there were Catholic priests in the room – the implication being that an Anglican priest would only be 'second best'. Kearney explained the tradition of ecumenism and collaboration of +Hurley; Fr Vitalis looked with horror to the Cardinal for support and the Cardinal replied: "Fr Vitalis that is how we do things here in the Archdiocese of Durban."

And then at the end of the meeting, when it was time for a closing prayer, the Cardinal made a point of asking Prof Geoff Harris – not only not a priest and not a Catholic, but a Quaker – to lead the prayer. Kearney simply smiled, though he confessed to the author afterwards that he was pleased that Fr Vitalis had 'not been allowed to play the clerical card'.¹³¹³

The appearance of Kearney as perfectly composed and confident, as the single lay person in a room surrounded by archbishops, bishops and moderators might have been true on the surface. We have at least one record from Kearney's own journal which shows that sometimes, below the surface, he

¹³¹⁰ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 Oct 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest and co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³¹¹ Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³¹² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002). "Letter from Kearney" (*The Southern Cross*, 28 May 1989)

¹³¹³ Recollection of the author, Meeting held in Durban, September 2017

could be intimidated. The extract comes from an encounter between Kearney and +Francis George whom he is interviewing in Chicago for research for the +Hurley biography.¹³¹⁴ It is interesting because it shows that, even if intimidated, Kearney is not afraid to judge the truthfulness of a Cardinal; and it gives an insight into something that Kearney probably saw frequently: the rather un-Christian rivalry between different Church leaders.

I was anxious about how the George interview would go, whether I would be totally overawed and intimidated, or whether he would be angry about some of my questions and hector me about sources of information. And it was quite intimidating to arrive there 30 minutes before the interview and have time to take in the impressive corporate surroundings right in downtown Chicago. ...

What surprised me is that he didn't balk at any questions, though his nostrils flared for one of the more threatening questions. My overall impression was that he was either lying in some of his responses or his memory was not very good. ...

The sting was at the end, just as he was escorting me to the door and stopped for a moment to tell me something I was not to report, namely that when he had suggested Hurley to the Superior General at a General Chapter it was [Fr Albert] Danker [from South Africa] who had strongly urged him not to do so because Hurley was too domineering and no Oblate Provincials of the Natal Province had been able to get on with him. He really enjoyed telling me that story which put DH in a bad light but through the words of Danker rather than his own.

I was sorry that I didn't ask him who had prompted John Paul II to praise Hurley so strongly in the Oblate General Chapter (in the early 80s when Hurley was SACBC President). Was it George himself?¹³¹⁵

This rather unedifying story suggests that members of the ministerial priesthood are not always working together to build up the Church, let alone working with the members of the common priesthood of the people. And yet that is exactly what Vatican II enjoins the Church to do:

Bishops, pastors of parishes, and other priests of both branches of the clergy should keep in mind that the right and duty to exercise this apostolate is common to all the faithful, both clergy and laity, and that the laity also have their own roles in building up the Church. For this reason, they should work fraternally with the laity in and for the Church and take special care of the lay persons in these apostolic works.¹³¹⁶

One area where Kearney was willing to challenge the Church in a more public way was the failure of bishops and priests to listen to the laity; this seems to have become a more pressing concern of Kearney's in later years. One of the reasons for this was the emergence of an organisation of lay Catholics called 'We Are All Church South Africa' (or WAACSA). Founded in 2010, this was originally inspired by a US organisation 'We Are Church' although in 2019 WAACSA disaffiliated from IMWAC (the International Movement).¹³¹⁷

¹³¹⁴ +George was also an Oblate, though 22 years +Hurley's junior, and as one of the few Oblate Cardinals at the time would have been an important figure for Kearney to get on side.

¹³¹⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 "Morning Pages: May-July 2005" (21 June 2005, Chicago)

¹³¹⁶ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 25

¹³¹⁷ 'History', *We Are All Church* website. <https://www.weareallchurch.co.za/history/> (accessed 5 September 2022)

WAACSA encouraged lay people (and religious and clergy) to come together to discuss various controversial Church subjects, to the annoyance of some members of the hierarchy. There was not a branch in Durban, but there is some hint in Kearney's archive that he was asked to establish one but declined.¹³¹⁸ Kearney did attend meetings of the WAACSA branch in Johannesburg (which was convened by his friend Doug Irvine); Di Oliver also recalls Kearney making a point of going to WAACSA events when visiting Cape Town. "I would get a knowing look from Paddy on some of these issues. But I am not sure that he ever spoke out publicly."¹³¹⁹ Mary Gardner recalls her husband Colin (who died in 2013) being a member of WAACSA but that Kearney was not.¹³²⁰

In an address Kearney gave to the Annual Conference of the Catholic Theological Society of Southern Africa (CTSSA) in September 2012, under the title 'Denis Hurley OMI: keeping alive the dream of Vatican II', he refers to WAACSA:

A more difficult path lies ahead for WAACSA (We are all Church: South Africa) which is more directly challenging in its stance, pushing the boundaries. We can only hope that they will be successful in their dialogue with the bishops—about a number of issues which are currently taboo.¹³²¹

Then, a few months before his death in 2018, Kearney again mentions the organisation. This is in a major article in *Worldwide*, the Comboni magazine, for an edition celebrating 200 years of the Church in South Africa. Entitled "Looking into the Future" it gives an insight into Kearney's concerns for the Church at this point in his life.¹³²² He starts talking about the value of a non-racist culture and also returns to the question of women being treated as second-class citizens in the Church and the value of consulting the faithful. He ends on 'the neuralgic issue called WAACSA' calling them 'intelligent people and adult Catholics who are sincerely grappling with their faith'. He ends by quoting Hurley's motto 'Where the Spirit is there is Freedom' and also the John Henry Newman principle of *sensus fidelium*. "Surely this is the sort of Church we will need as we enter the third century of Catholic involvement in South Africa."

It is a mark of Kearney's concern about the status of the organisation that he, very uncharacteristically, made a public challenge to a cleric on the subject of WAACSA. This was in fact only two weeks before his death (in November 2018) when fellow-activist and friend, Fr Peter-John Pearson, came to Durban to give the annual Justice & Peace lecture in honour of +Hurley. Since Pearson was also at the time Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Cape Town, in the Q&A after the lecture, Kearney challenged him to defend the Archbishop of Cape Town's repeated refusal to allow WAACSA to meet on property owned by the Archdiocese. The response, as Kearney expected, was a fudge, suspecting that Pearson was also uncomfortable with the decision but could not say so in public. What was unusual was that Kearney was using this subject to draw a firm line between himself and a close friend; and that this move would force clergy on one side of the line but allow laity to stay on the other.¹³²³

Despite 60 years of trying to erase or soften or at least redraw this dividing line, there is one way in which it remains part of Catholic culture and that is the use of titles. Every person on the clergy side

¹³¹⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/7 "Church Issues"

¹³¹⁹ Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³²⁰ Mary Gardner, Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Pietermaritzburg (Widow of Chair of Christian Institute)

¹³²¹ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 190 ("Denis Hurley OMI: keeping alive the dream of Vatican II", Address to CTSSA, 10 September 2012)

¹³²² Kearney, G Paddy. "Looking into the Future". *Worldwide* (2018, 28:5)

¹³²³ Personal memory of the author who attended the meeting: Holy Trinity Church, Durban on 10 November 2018.

of the line – whether or not it includes vowed religious – is defined by the use of a title before their name: Bishop, Fr, Br, Sr and many more besides.

From the time of the Reformation, there has been a movement against the most widespread of these titles ‘Father’ citing Jesus’ injunction in Mt 23:9. Ending the use of the more elevated titles is being called for by Hélder Câmara, the icon of Liberation Theology in Brazil, as early as 1971:

Let us take the initiative in abolishing our personal titles of Eminence, Beatitude, Excellency; let us reject the folly of considering ourselves nobles, and renounce our coats of arms and our devices as these seem to be things of no importance. How much all this separates us from our clergy and from our faithful! It separates us from our century which is already adopting a different way of life. It separates us above all from the workers and the poor.¹³²⁴

Câmara’s bold proposal never seems to have found much support. But at least some of the more submissive ways in which Catholics acted towards their bishops soon went out of fashion. Stacpoole shares a jokey story that the first thought of the English bishops meeting in 1966 to discuss the implementation of the Council was how to persuade the laity not to kiss their episcopal rings.¹³²⁵

It is interesting then that Kearney, according to Vorster (who after all is a Methodist), was ‘very respectful of clergy always using their titles which endeared him to them’.¹³²⁶ He particularly recalls that Kearney always addressed +Hurley as ‘Your Grace’.¹³²⁷ This was confirmed by many others including +Hurley’s secretary.¹³²⁸ Goemans also confirms this and saw it as a direct contradiction of their own custom: “That was interesting because we at the Grail had decided not to use the term.”¹³²⁹ When talking about +Hurley, Tully recalls that Kearney would be less formal and refer to ‘the Arch’. He would also call Tully ‘Stephen’ and not ‘Fr Stephen’ in private, though reverting to the title when in public.¹³³⁰

The one area of movement that we do find is recounted by the former Anglican bishop: “Eventually, after first finding it impossible, Paddy moved from calling me ‘Bishop Michael’ to ‘Michael’, which pleased me.”¹³³¹

In summary, in Kearney’s engagements with clergy – Catholic and non-Catholic – he remains almost always publicly respectful: using titles, acknowledging precedence, not challenging people in a way that might embarrass them. This certainly helped him to build and maintain good working relationships with the many clergy on whom his work depended. It also seems to have prevented him from being as forthright as he might have liked to be in publicly backing various causes. Was this evidence of a lack of confidence on his part of his status as a lay person, enjoying the priesthood of all the faithful?

¹³²⁴ Câmara, Hélder. *Race against Time* (translated from French) (London: Sheed & Ward, 1971) 62

¹³²⁵ Stacpoole, Alberic. *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there* (London: G Chapman, 1986) 2

¹³²⁶ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia and Methodist Bishop)

¹³²⁷ This follows the English custom that regards an archbishop as being on a par with a duke in terms of nobility.

¹³²⁸ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (Secretary to +Hurley and Secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

¹³²⁹ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹³³⁰ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³³¹ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

Perhaps we need to turn to someone completely outside the Church networks, Richard Steele, to have a more objective view of Kearney's relationship with the Church and with the clergy:

Paddy was effectively captured by the system and conditioned in a way that he could not undo. Even if intellectually and intrinsically he would have perceived the contradictions, Paddy was always within the institution, he was always within the framework of Catholicism. So he pushed at the obvious doors: he was not afraid to challenge the Church on injustice and race; but he did not challenge on other issues. ... I think this was also linked to his symbiotic relationship with Hurley. This gave him a sense of purpose and so he reserved use of the +Hurley name to serve a real need.¹³³²

Working with clergy on Social Justice

In Chapter 2 and Appendix B, I explore the role for the laity set out by Vatican II and the focus of their apostolate being 'the temporal sphere'. But the same Council documents also allow for the clergy to operate in this sphere and for lay people to operate in the ecclesial sphere. That resulted in lay people often doing what priests and religious used to do; and priests and religious doing what lay people used to do. As part of the earlier cited collection of papers about lay people in the Church in the United States in the 1980s, O'Brien Steinfels explains that this situation is especially created in the area of social justice:

The crisis of meaning and the turning inward have perhaps been more personally difficult and disorienting for religious and clergy. As a result, thousands have abandoned their religious vocation and, not infrequently, left the Church as well. For others, attention to peace and justice, urban renewal or community organising has offered a respite from the tensions of intra-Church problems.¹³³³

Following a similar train of thought, Barta points out that the irony is that clericalism returns, but from an unlikely direction:

These [activist] priests and religious have sought to impose their own agendas for the world upon the laity. Indeed if, in the past, the Church had suffered from a tendency to clericalisation on the right, it may now face the threat of a revived clericalism – on the left.¹³³⁴

It would be one of the great ironies of history if the era of Vatican II which opened the windows of the Church to the world were to close with a Church turned in on herself.¹³³⁵

Barta and O'Brien Steinfels were writing from an American perspective, and forty years ago when there was a sufficient superfluity of priests that they could get involved in secular matters. These days, with each priest running multiple parishes, and most religious aged 70 plus, it is unlikely that that would happen. But the attitude that it betrays is one that is still potentially a risk.

¹³³² Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

¹³³³ O'Brien Steinfels, Margaret. "Postscript – what is to be done?". *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 132

¹³³⁴ Barta, *Challenge to the Laity*, 22

¹³³⁵ Barta, *Challenge to the Laity*, 25

When at Diakonia, Kearney found himself as a lay man running an organisation whose board was, predominately, made up of ordained ministers. Inevitably, the ones who most wanted to represent their denominations and serve on the board were likely to be just those activist priests (and pastors) most tempted 'to impose their own agendas for the world upon the laity'. Moreover, first among those would have been +Hurley, the Chair of Diakonia and Kearney's patron. The deftness with which Kearney handled this is one of the marks of success of Diakonia.

Various co-workers commented on Kearney's ability to navigate between the competing agendas of the board members, while also staying focused on what he believed to be the right path for the organisation. At the same time, those activist priests and pastors who joined the staff of Diakonia – and there were several over the years including one retired archbishop – learnt under Kearney's gentle but firm guidance that this was not a place in which clericalism was tolerated. For Kearney, what mattered most were the compassion in your heart and the brains in your head, not what collar you wore around your neck.

There were in the Catholic world a number of priests who were very involved in anti-Apartheid activism (and there was earlier mention of Fr Smangaliso Mkhathshwa who later held senior political office in the post-1994 Government while remaining a priest). But Egan points out that a good number also felt that, in the 1960s, they had to leave the clergy in order to work for justice. Notable examples are Fr Colin Collins, who had been Secretary General of the SACBC in the late 50s/60s and the national chaplain of National Catholic Federation of Students but who left the priesthood in 1969; and a Franciscan priest who worked very closely with +Hurley, Fr Cosmas Desmond.¹³³⁶

Kearney knew that he needed priests and bishops speaking for Diakonia – to give authority not just within the Church but also within wider South African society – and that he could work well with them. Mike Vorster, a Methodist minister, later a bishop, who worked closely with Kearney at Diakonia reflected on Kearney's way of working.

Whereas PACSA [in Pietermaritzburg] was more of a group of church activists, Diakonia was working with the churches, changing the churches, always on behalf of the churches. ... Paddy knew who were the movers and shakers, they were not necessarily the leaders. But he also knew you had to have legitimate church leaders who can engage in public spaces. There needed to be consistency for the public face of the church. He used the Patrons [listing the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian leaders] as an umbrella for Diakonia but Paddy did all the leg work.¹³³⁷

This public political role for religious leaders came under pressures from two very different directions.

On the one hand, the Nationalist Government proposed legislation in 1988 called 'The Promotion of Orderly Internal Politics Bill'. A long letter, signed by +Hurley, the other Catholic archbishops and a few other bishops appeared entitled 'Bishops speaking for Justice is not meddling in Politics'. It voices opposition to the legislation, which it sees as allowing the government 'to decide arbitrarily which good works should be done in this country'. Kearney was conscious that this was legislation that would have affected Diakonia.¹³³⁸

¹³³⁶ Egan, Anthony. Personal interview by author, 16 October 2020 via Zoom (Jesuit priest and theologian)

¹³³⁷ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia and Methodist Bishop)

¹³³⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002). "Bishops speaking for Justice is not meddling in Politics" (*The Southern Cross*, 27 March 1988)

On the other hand, Catholic clergy were under pressure from the Vatican, under John Paul II who was very wary of 'political priests'. Kearney's archive contains an article (in a secular paper) which describes how +Hurley at the bishops' plenary asked the Apostolic Delegate to clarify the Pope's stance on political activity.¹³³⁹ This is followed by the vindication of +Hurley on the front page of the Catholic newspaper: "No Papal ban on bishops in politics says Hurley!"¹³⁴⁰

When +Hurley celebrated his 50 years as a priest, there is a long interview with him in which he comments on the label 'political priest'. He explains that he has never sought political office but there are other ways of being political such as participating in the promotion of a Christian social conscience in matters economic and cultural. He stresses: "This is essential to any priest."¹³⁴¹ For more on this see Appendix D: "+Hurley the political priest".

Whereas in some situations the involvement of priests and bishops 'in the temporal order' has stifled the scope of lay people, Kearney's experience was very different and much of the credit for that must lie with the personality of +Hurley. Let me quote again the question asked by Barta, the answer to which could have specifically been +Hurley:

Where are the priests sufficiently self-assured in their own identity and faith that they can devote themselves to energising lay leaders committed to reforming the structures of society?¹³⁴²

Goldie shows that such fears were being voiced even at the time of the Council, quoting from a 1964 book by a French layman Michel Carrouges *Le Laïcat: mythe et réalité* ("The laity: myth and reality"):

The laity are glorified in the theological stratosphere and raised to the dignity of a myth, as a new panacea, while an old clerical instinct is just as surely blocking the path of a new laity. The clergy are torn between contradictory desires. They would like to have 'adult lay people', capable of unreserved dedication; but at the same time they dread such laypeople, for they would have to discuss with them adult to adult.¹³⁴³

There is an echo here of the complaint voiced by +Hurley over dinner with Robert Blair Kaiser about what happens when adult lay people actually voice their opinions.

Diakonia – because it was overseen by a Council whose members were, or were appointed by, Church leaders – had an in-built tendency to clerical governance. Interestingly, when Kearney created the Denis Hurley Centre many years later, only one priest is guaranteed a role as a Board Member out of 12 (even if others have been selected on their merits); and there are no clergy at all among the management team.¹³⁴⁴ One of that team saw this as a particular strategy by Kearney:

He was very uncomfortable with priests being in charge; Paddy wanted lay people to take a role.¹³⁴⁵

¹³³⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Daily News*, 23 January 87)

¹³⁴⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Southern Cross*, 15 February 1987)

¹³⁴¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*The Southern Cross*, 23 July 89)

¹³⁴² Barta, *Challenge to the Laity*, 20

¹³⁴³ Goldie, Rosemary. "Lay, Laity, Laicity: a bibliographical survey of three decades". *Elements for a Theology of the Laity. The Laity Today – bulletin of the Pontifical Council for the Laity* (1979, 26) 128

¹³⁴⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/1 "2009"

¹³⁴⁵ Ntamubano, Jean-Marie. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2022 in Durban (Manager of Denis Hurley Centre)

This sometimes led to tensions between the lay-led Denis Hurley Centre and the cleric-led Cathedral parish from which it had emerged. Kearney's notes from a meeting in October 2010 include this comment:

Several concerns were expressed at the most recent meeting of the PPC [Parish Pastoral Council]: that the Denis Hurley Centre is becoming too separate from the parish, that its fundraising activities are not really engaging with the isiZulu speakers; that the DHC brand is overwhelming the cathedral brand; as well as some feedback from the priest that the DHC seems to have taken over the Cathedral.¹³⁴⁶

In fact, the priest from the Cathedral who helped Kearney set up the Denis Hurley Centre would often comment (referring to this author) on how wonderful it was that a *lay person* was running the organisation. Whilst intending to be affirming of the laity, the comment is highly problematic as if a) this was unusual, b) it was only by special dispensation of the Church and c) that the clerical/lay status of the individual was even a relevant criterion as opposed to their professional skills. Kearney would simply smile at the author when this comment was made as if to say: 'even the most enlightened priest still cannot resist being clerical!'¹³⁴⁷

The exploration above about Kearney's relationship with the clergy is based on the pragmatic recognition that he was working with people with clerical titles and clerical status. This takes for granted that the clergy/ lay distinction is one that is operative (though leaving to one side whether it is valid or useful). Appendix B (on the Apostolate of the Laity) explores this question in some detail pointing out some of the ambiguities and inconsistencies both in the Council documents and in the later practice of the Church. But those categories remain stubbornly to the fore in Catholic circles. So, to understand Kearney's relationship with the Church we should try and look at it through the clergy/lay paradigm.

Kearney as an ex-cleric

I want to start by looking at Kearney as an 'ex-cleric'. As explained in Chapter 2, even though he was never ordained (or planning to be ordained), Kearney's experience with the Marist Brothers functionally separated him from the laity for 10 years of his life.¹³⁴⁸ Though 'ex-cleric' might seem an odd category to some outside the Catholic world, inside it is not uncommon.¹³⁴⁹

¹³⁴⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/1 "2010"

¹³⁴⁷ Author's own recollection from around mid 2015.

¹³⁴⁸ Appendix B from P. 366 explores in more detail the question of the categories of 'lay' and 'cleric'. It explains that while there is a distinction *de jure* (which places religious brothers on the lay side of the divide), there is also a *de facto* distinction (which places brothers on the clerical side of the divide because their way of life). Examples are given of the way in which Vatican II documents themselves are inconsistent about this.

¹³⁴⁹ It is in fact a category in which I often find myself placed, having spent six years as a Jesuit (though not a priest) and then having worked very publicly for the Jesuits as a lay man. It seemed that for other people (Jesuits and lay people) to understand me, they had to see me as somewhere between a Jesuit and a lay person. Moreover, this was not uncommon among former Jesuits. We would sometimes joke that after we stopped putting SJ after our names we should replace it with XJ! In fact, when I worked for the UK Catholic development charity CAFOD, my boss was a former priest and my team included several other former priests, seminarians, monks and nuns. We were lay people – but an unusual group of lay people!

After the Marists, Kearney was working a lay person with a broad variety of people: some lay, some religious, many of them clergy (from a range of denominations and faith traditions). Did it matter to him or to them that he had once not been a lay person?

On the one hand, many of them did not realise that he had ever been in religious life. Joan Kerchhoff, whose late husband Peter was a very close collaborator of Kearney, does not recall being aware that Kearney had been a Marist brother.¹³⁵⁰ Vanessa Franks, who was his secretary at Diakonia for a number of years, simply asked: “Didn’t he study some theology?” She recalls that when, as often happened, people called him Fr Kearney, he would just laugh (but clearly never explained to her the source of the confusion).¹³⁵¹ +Hurley’s successor as Archbishop of Durban says that it was from other people that he found out that Kearney had been a Marist.¹³⁵² Kearney’s successor as Director of Diakonia says that she was conscious that Kearney was a lay person and that he earned a lot of respect from religious leaders because of this and that he did not worry much about it. But, she added, he never talked about having been a Marist.¹³⁵³ A senior cleric in Cape Town who knew Kearney for many years admitted that for a long time he did not even know that Kearney had been a religious.¹³⁵⁴

Colleen Irvine also said that Kearney never talked about having been a Marist (even though he regularly had dinner with the Irvines and Br Mario Colussi). She thought it noteworthy that, despite knowing him for many decades, Kearney had never talked about his faith with her or even what he thought of as his place in the world. This was especially interesting since she was aware that there were a number of former-religious, including ex-Marists, like Tim Dunne, Mike Murphy and John Morrison whom she and Doug knew and who were all involved in the Justice & Peace movement.

The only person close to Kearney who had any recollection of him talking about his life as a religious was Fr Stephen Tully with whom he worked to found the Denis Hurley Centre: “Paddy shared a few stories about the Marists; it was clear that he enjoyed his time there.”¹³⁵⁵

Nevertheless, many were confused about what Kearney’s status was. In fact, on his death, two major news channels instinctively referred to him as ‘Father Paddy Kearney’.¹³⁵⁶ Even someone very close to him, but by her own admission not involved in Church matters, seemed confused about what claim Kearney could make on the Church. De la Croix, who was a close companion in Kearney’s final years, assumed that when he grew old ‘the church would keep an eye on him’ or he would ‘retire to somewhere like Sabon House’ [the retirement home for Oblates, where +Hurley had spent his final years].¹³⁵⁷

¹³⁵⁰ Kerchhoff, Joan. Personal interview by author, 6 April 2022 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of head of PACSA)

¹³⁵¹ Franks, Vanessa. Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Durban. (Secretary of Kearney at Diakonia)

¹³⁵² Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban. (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

¹³⁵³ Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu. Personal interview by author, 26 May 2022 in Durban. (Kearney’s successor as Director of Diakonia and sometime Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³⁵⁴ Pearson, Peter-John. Personal interview by author, 12 April 2021 in Cape Town. (Head of Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office)

¹³⁵⁵ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban. (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³⁵⁶ “Anti-Apartheid icon Father Gerald Patrick Kearney has died” *News 24*, 23 November 2018.

<https://www.news24.com/News24/anti-apartheid-icon-father-gerald-patrick-kearney-has-died-20181123> (accessed 20 August 2022); “Anti-Apartheid activist Father Paddy Kearney remembered” *SABC TV News*, 30 November 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sbw-jJnr1M> (accessed 20 August 2022)

¹³⁵⁷ De la Croix, Berenice. Personal interview by author, 30 September and 9 October 2020 in Durban (Personal friend)

For some people, Kearney's identity is not clear-cut and that is an advantage. His Belgian donor and friend, Briard, said of him:

His identity as a lay person is interesting. Of course, he was a lay person but in his own approach he continued to draw on his previous religious formation. He was between the two states. In his commitment as an activist, he was very much in the world; for Europeans it was surprising to see someone from a religious background in a secular role.¹³⁵⁸

Anglican priest and co-worker, Warmback, also hints at this undefined middle space:

Paddy never spoke about his past. People knew he had been a Marist but he did not mention it. He also never mentioned being on the Cathedral PPC. And he never asserted being a lay person. He occupied a kind of liminal space in which he respected the clergy and made use of them. But he was not bought into the machinery of the Church which can be self-serving and self-protecting and consuming of people.¹³⁵⁹

A Muslim couple who knew Kearney over many years also hint at this mixed identity:

Now I think of him as a priest – but he was just one of us.¹³⁶⁰

And even more intriguingly, Priscilla McKay who knew the whole Kearney family well, recalls that his younger brother Brian at one of the memorials said to her 'The Church stole our brother': a reference presumably not just to his time as a Marist but his whole life.¹³⁶¹

As has been mentioned earlier, Kearney was by no means alone in being someone in the early 1970s who had left religious life. Colin Collins and Cosmas Desmond both left, complaining that the Church was taking too long to change. A footnote in the book of +Hurley's letters comments:

When he left the priesthood, DH wrote the following to an Australian correspondent by the name of B. Peters on 23 January 1973 : "Father Cosmas did not receive all the support he should have from his own Church because in carrying out the task to which he felt he was called, he stepped somewhat outside the groove of the ordinary clerical approach to such questions. However, he did a wonderful job in exposing the tragic conditions of those condemned to resettlement and in giving Christian witness to his own zeal for justice and compassion."¹³⁶²

Many of those who left, like Kearney, not only stayed involved in the work of the Church but also stayed close to the spiritual traditions that had nurtured them. Writing in his 'Morning Pages' (his daily private journal) in June 2005, while staying at the seminary outside Milwaukee, Kearney confides:

¹³⁵⁸ Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author, 17 January 2022 via Zoom (Manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

¹³⁵⁹ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 Oct 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest and co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³⁶⁰ Coovadia, Jerry and Hamad, Zubie. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 in Durban (Struggle activists and husband and wife doctors)

¹³⁶¹ McKay, Priscilla. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow Catholic activist)

¹³⁶² Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 255-6 (Footnote)

I was pleased to be there and moved by several of the songs. Felt so much at home in this religious atmosphere. It seemed to me at this moment that I could easily fit into such a community and that was a very moving feeling for me.

Mention was made earlier of the fact that, on his death, some of the media referred to Kearney as 'Fr Paddy'. Similarly, in his own archive there is a letter from September 2012 in which the Irish ambassador confirms R0.5M towards the construction of the Denis Hurley Centre and addresses this to Fr Paddy Kearney.¹³⁶³ Kearney's mentee, Nyuswa, was aware of these confusions and often experienced the same since he was also a lay man working closely with a number of clergy:

If called a priest, Paddy would react with a smile and would not deny it. If that was the impression that people had, it was not worth arguing. If that was easier for them then that was OK rather than trying to explain that he was an ordinary man.¹³⁶⁴

But this misconception was not without its foundations. One of his closest friends, Goemans, who unlike other Grail members only knew him after he left the Marists, commented at length:

Basically he had a vocation. If the Marists had been more forthright, he would have stayed. His later life indicated that he never gave up that commitment. He almost made me feel guilty when I took a day off – even after a full day in the sun on a Sunday.

My picture of Paddy is of someone very spiritual. More than once – while he was living with Carmel – I went to his house and saw a Breviary lying on the coffee table.¹³⁶⁵ There was a spiritual rhythm to his life. And in his final years, he loved reconnecting with Mario and Jude [Br Mario Colussi and Br Jude Pieterse, both Marists].¹³⁶⁶

McCrindle suggests that such personal links might have been hard. He explains that Marist records do not report who left; it has to be deduced from the absence of names that used to appear.

Marists found it difficult to relate to Marists who left. I think that ex-sisters were more likely to keep in touch than ex-brothers. For a long time, Paddy did not keep in touch with other Marist Brothers after he left.¹³⁶⁷

Of course, Kearney was never ordained, so he does not fall under that definition of 'cleric'; but his vows did remove him from society and it is on that basis that he might be seen as an ex-cleric. This sense of Kearney being outside of society was felt by +Hurley's secretary who later did lots of work for him, transcribing the interviews he conducted for his +Hurley biography.

I remember when my husband got ill. Paddy had little understanding of what other pressures there were in my life. This was typical of the Church failure to understand ordinary people. It seems to me that people who work for the church must not be married

¹³⁶³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/2 "2012"

¹³⁶⁴ Nyuswa, Mxolisi. Personal interview by author, 5 May 2022 via Zoom (Head of KwaZulu Regional Christian Council)

¹³⁶⁵ The Breviary is a single volume book containing the Office of the Hours. Although this might occasionally be used by lay people (and indeed Vatican II encouraged it), this form of regular prayer is primarily associated with priests (who are required to say it) and religious (who are expected to).

¹³⁶⁶ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹³⁶⁷ McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Fellow Marist novice/ brother)

or even have a dog. Maybe Paddy fell into the trap that clergy fall into of not understanding that people have a real life.¹³⁶⁸

A confusion of status can happen when lay people like Kearney take up a role in the ecclesial sphere. (This is explored in more detail in Appendix B.) Marciniak sums up the problem as follows:

What bedevils our pastoral theology and existing practice is the mind-set that automatically expects a lay person who is deeply committed to Jesus Christ to become a para-cleric in the Church's civil service as a mini-priest or mini-sister.¹³⁶⁹

More vividly, Worlock quotes the Tablet's Rome correspondent as saying that the lay man had emerged from Vatican II as a 'kind of bowler-hatted monk'.¹³⁷⁰ Expressing a similar anxiety, he also quotes Pope John Paul II (addressing the Swiss bishops in 1984) who warns against the danger of 'the clericalisation of the laity and the laicisation of the clergy'.¹³⁷¹

Writing much earlier, Goldie explores this idea of the unusual position of lay people like Kearney who work for the Church (who may or may not have had some religious formation themselves). She mentions that a debate arose in the 1950s about full-time Catholic Actionists or Church-workers and whether they could be authentic laypeople or only 'clericalised' laity?¹³⁷² She attributes to Karl Rahner the claim that 'non-ordained members of the faithful who work full time in the apostolate, pass by that very fact into the ranks of the clergy.

Full-time leaders of Catholic Action and the staff of our works for Christian education and propaganda, while not sharing in the power of Order, would however share in the power of jurisdiction and would become clergy without a cassock. Lay people could therefore be apostles in the full sense, but on the condition that they gave up their lay status.¹³⁷³

Interestingly, this analysis is based on two problematic assumptions: that to be 'an apostle in the full sense' you could not be an authentic lay person; and that someone could give up their lay status without taking on another status. But, as was discussed earlier, there is no initiation rite to stop being lay; there are only rites to become ordained or vowed.

This passage seems to be pre-occupied with the idea of the status of the person rather than their actions. But in a later passage, Goldie also uses the model of seeing someone in terms of their actions rather than status. For example, she refers to the possibility that under certain circumstances, when the community is deprived of an ordained minister, a non-ordained leader of the community can act as an extraordinary minister of the sacrament of the Eucharist.¹³⁷⁴ 'Act as' suggests that the focus is on 'ministry' as a temporary characteristic in place while the service is being provided, not on 'minister' a permanent change in status.

Osborne provides an insight into this focus on ministry not minister.¹³⁷⁵ He makes the point that the origin of a cleric in the post-Apostolic age was someone called out from the community, not as a

¹³⁶⁸ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (Secretary to +Hurley and Secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

¹³⁶⁹ Marciniak, Ed. "On the Condition of the Laity". *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 34

¹³⁷⁰ Worlock, "Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II", 249

¹³⁷¹ Worlock, "Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II", 252

¹³⁷² Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 110

¹³⁷³ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 117

¹³⁷⁴ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 138 (Goldie was writing in 1979 by which time the idea of lay men *and* women in parishes being formally commissioned to be 'Lay Ministers of the Eucharist' was gaining in popularity.)

¹³⁷⁵ Appendix B from P. 370 explores in more detail whether the category of 'lay' is even a useful one.

permanent separation but rather a functional one during a liturgical celebration: the one who is leading is separated from those who are following: “The specific distinction originates on the basis of a pastoral situation and not on the basis of any formalised dogmatic stance.”¹³⁷⁶

Kearney makes a comment in his ‘Morning Pages’ from 2005 which suggests a sympathy with this understanding of ministry, even in the context of the Eucharist:

Went to Mass with Mildred [Neville, formerly of CIIR] at the local parish church with Fr Willy. I noticed again how gently submissive he is, giving Communion from the cup, with two women giving the hosts; and after Communion it was a woman who put the ciboria away in the tabernacle and locked the tabernacle, generally a role reserved to the priestly caste or Deacons etc.¹³⁷⁷

Could Kearney be a priest without realising it?

But usually the term minister (or cleric or priest or deacon) is one which is conferred through a ceremony (a laying on of hands, or a commissioning, or ordination) presided over by a religious leader with the authority to do so. Recall that when Kerchhoff and Aitchison became Anglican deacons, their work in helping the poor exempted them from the formal training but not from the formal ceremony. There might, however, be a way of seeing Kearney as ‘ordained’ without the need for such a ceremony and it also comes from an ancient source. Rademacher has identified that in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus of Rome (from about 215 CE) there is evidence that ordination can be deemed to have come about by virtue of the experience of persecution.

If a confessor has been in chains for the name of the Lord, hands are not imposed on him for the diaconate or the presbyterate; for he has the honour of the presbyterate by the fact of his confession.¹³⁷⁸

During the time of the early Christians, a ‘confessor’ was a person who had been arrested, persecuted and, through all his trials, confessed his faith but was not killed. That would be a fair description of Kearney’s own experience in the 1980s! Confessor was in fact the usual Latin translation for the Greek word martyr which also at its roots refers to giving witness but as it is used in English definitely does imply that the witnessing ends in death.

It is entertaining to consider the idea that Kearney (and others) might qualify for the status of being clerics without needing to be ordained. But this still assumes that there is a useful distinction to be drawn between the cleric and the non-cleric.¹³⁷⁹

Osborne again challenges this. He lists 15 titles for ‘ministers’ used in the New Testament and wonders how the term cleric might be applied. He suggests that there are three possible positions:

- 1) that all are ‘clerics’, in which case that means teachers as well as deacons
- 2) that none are ‘clerics’ in which case *episkopoi* (bishops) are not clerics either

¹³⁷⁶ Osborne, *Ministry*, 21

¹³⁷⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 “Morning Pages: May-July 2005” (30 May 2005, London)

¹³⁷⁸ Rademacher, William. *Lay Ministry – a theological, spiritual and pastoral handbook* (New York NY: Crossroad, 1991) 53

¹³⁷⁹ See also Appendix B: Vatican II and the Laity.

- 3) that there is a selective process by which some ministers are clerics and some are not; but he points out that there is no criterion within the New Testament which would justify this

This problem occurs because, he reminds us: “In all of these New Testament passages, *kleros* is never used for either a minister or a ministry.”¹³⁸⁰

By taking us back to the New Testament, Osborne is drawing attention to the fact that the distinction between lay and cleric is not scriptural but rather one that emerges and hardens over time in the life of the Church. One of the key triggers is the issue of celibacy. This starts with the influence of Origen c.250 CE (and then Augustine c.400) in promoting celibacy. Origen argues that celibate Christians could give themselves more intensely to others and they would, already in this life, be moving toward an invisible angelic world and union with Christ.¹³⁸¹ If this language sounds archaic recall that this is what Kearney was being taught as a Marist novice in 1960 (and is also what I was taught as a Jesuit novice in 2001!).

The idea of celibacy as a characteristic of ministry then becomes further reinforced, Osborne shows, at 500 year intervals: through the growth of the monastic movements in the second half of the first millennium; the imposition of mandatory celibacy on priests in the West after the Great Schism; and the decision of Reformers to dispense with celibacy (thus prompting the Counter-Reformation to strengthen it further).

Celibacy, for Roman Catholics, thus becomes the traditional way of defining those who are called for ministry.¹³⁸² Vatican II tries (in part) to change this but has 1500 years of tradition to overcome – recall, for example, the grudging way in which *Lumen Gentium* conceded that permanent deacons *could* be married but clearly prefers that they are not. Osborne sets out the challenge clearly:

Religious life needed to be re-evaluated from top to bottom, and those who were hanging on to the ‘traditional’ and the ‘tried’ found themselves often hanging onto a form of religious life which had no contemporary meaning. The criterion should not have been what had always been traditional in a given community, but rather what is the very meaning of Gospel discipleship.¹³⁸³

Osborne argues further that one of the reasons why popes continued to see lay people in an inferior and secondary way was not just the bias towards celibacy but also the effect of the American and French revolutions. This period broke the previous understanding of the relationship between Church and State and, as a result, coloured the Church’s approach to the non-clerical world. It could be argued that the New Testament actually supported the radical view of equality that these Revolutions promoted. But this would not help since using loyalty to the New Testament as the primary criterion was seen as Protestant; and instead loyalty to the pope is what served as the fundamental criterion of discipleship:

¹³⁸⁰ Osborne, *Ministry*, 17

¹³⁸¹ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 63

¹³⁸² To the shock of many Catholics this is, of course, not the whole picture. Not only are Orthodox priests married, but so are Eastern Rite ‘Greek Catholic’ priests; in recent years there has also been the appearance of married priests, even in the West, because of the dispensation granted to Anglican clergy who have converted.

¹³⁸³ Osborne, *Ministry*, 514

The aspiration of the two revolutions, American and French, for the dignity, freedom and equality of all human beings did not find a welcoming home in the church leadership of the Roman Catholic Church.¹³⁸⁴

We can I think conclude that Kearney would have been very uncomfortable with being seen as an ex-cleric, a semi-cleric or a clericalised lay person. The very notion of cleric, as one who is separated from and elevated above the *laos* (the people of God) is one that he does little to support and much to challenge. Whilst it might have been an obsession of other people in the Church – lay people and clergy – it does not seem to be one that he shared.

Kearney as a lay person

If we accept the duality of cleric/lay, then the alternative is for Kearney to be seen as a lay person. After all, when asked why writing about Kearney would be worthwhile, a number of interviewees specifically drew attention to the fact that he was a lay person. For example:

He was a model lay person.¹³⁸⁵

He is a person worth remembering – because he was a lay person.¹³⁸⁶

Paddy was a lay man of the late 20th century; it is important to see what that meant.¹³⁸⁷

Church history has been as negligent as Vatican documents in failing to mention lay people (unless they are emperors or kings); their lives are almost never the focus of any research. Since Kearney was a lay person working in Church circles in the period after Vatican II, exploring his life through this lens might be valuable.

But there are various problems with this category – that it is unclear, that it is negative, that it should apply to everyone – and these have already been discussed in Appendix B and Chapter 2. Is there a positive way in which Kearney can be categorised as a lay person?

Osborne has a proposal. He points out that the traditional view (what he calls Gratian's view) divides the whole Church into either the cleric or the lay. But he then proposes an alternative *schema* which he calls the 'vocation view': this sees the whole Church as the 'people of God' and within that small segments which would include 'cleric', 'lay' and 'other vocations'. The implication is that 'lay' is not a leftover category but a specific vocation to which some, but not all, non-clerics are called. A lay vocation would thus be intentional and it might be one chosen by someone, like Kearney, who has previously had a vowed vocation, though not necessarily. This would tie in with the idea of specific vocations – to the married life, to youth. Osborne defines vocation as requiring both *communio* and *mission*.

¹³⁸⁴ Osborne, *Ministry*, 515

¹³⁸⁵ Criticos, Costas. Personal interview by author, 4 September 2021 via Zoom. (Building consultant to both Diakonia and Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³⁸⁶ Yeats, Charles. Personal interview by the author, 18 May 2022 via Zoom. (Conscientious Objector)

¹³⁸⁷ Campbell, Alex. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 via Zoom. (former Oblate priest)

Lay ministry, in this approach, is an ecclesial entity, with its own grace-given vocation, with its own role within a *communio* and with its own *missio*, which is ecclesial, even though it involves an extra-ecclesial ministry and mission as well.¹³⁸⁸

Such an approach does not dispense with the categories of ‘cleric’ or ‘lay’ but reimagines them in a more positive way. Interestingly, the main positive way in which Kearney’s vocation has been described by those who knew him was not as ‘cleric’ or ‘lay person’ but as ‘teacher’.¹³⁸⁹ In a profile of Kearney written for a Hindu website around 2010 and with his co-operation, it is interesting that mention is made that he taught at St David’s but there is no mention of the Marists.¹³⁹⁰ This prioritisation of ‘teacher’ over ‘Marist’ was confirmed by several interviewees:

Paddy did not want to be a priest. He wanted to be a teacher. I also loved teaching – I went to a Marist school and I also, for a while, wanted to be a Marist Brother. But I knew that it was a hard life. My mother said to me: if you want to give yourself to God, become a priest and that is what I did. But Paddy became a brother and teacher.¹³⁹¹

Why did I join the Marists? Because I was at a Marist school and I always wanted to teach. I compare myself with Paddy – he could have become an Oblate or a diocesan priest but he chose to be a brother. He was dogged. Is doggedness a trait of the Marists? I think so. It is also a trait of being a good teacher. Paddy was a good teacher. Remember that Champagnat [the founder of the Marists] only became a priest because of the French revolution. He was also a teacher at heart.¹³⁹²

Why did Kearney want to be a brother and not a priest? He did not talk about it. I think he liked teaching. The main teaching orders in South Africa were of brothers [Christian Brothers, Marist Brothers] and not of priests [Jesuits, Salesians]. He liked teaching, he liked the boys. He did not talk much about his faith. He just loved the Church.¹³⁹³

‘Teacher’ (as Osborne pointed out above) is one of the 15 ministries specifically mentioned in the New Testament. Of course, the majority of Catholic teachers these days are lay people, and when there were larger congregations of religious, it was sisters and brothers who were usually the teachers (and thus also canonically lay people). But as Ceruti mentioned above, there are also Catholic priests who are teachers. So how would they fit into this schema? Rademacher has a suggestion:

Clergy and laity need to be defined in terms of their ministry function not their place. For example, when a priest is teaching in a school is that a priestly ministry and if so why is the lay person teaching not involved in the same ministry? The ministry is the function of teaching.¹³⁹⁴

¹³⁸⁸ Osborne, *Ministry*, 599-600

¹³⁸⁹ Appendix F: ‘Tria Munera’ explores the office of teacher alongside the traditional threefold offices of priest, prophet and leader.

¹³⁹⁰ Pillay, Indhramnie. “Paddy Kearney – Icon of Peace and Nonviolence”. *Satyagraha – in Pursuit of Truth*.

<https://www.satyagraha.org.za/word/paddy-kearney-icon-of-peace-and-nonviolence/> (accessed 3 May 2022)

¹³⁹¹ Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban (Catholic Monsignor, Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³⁹² McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹³⁹³ Ceruti, Ines. Personal interview by author, 8 April 2019 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹³⁹⁴ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 129

Had Kearney remained a teacher then we could settle on that as his ministry. But although he was always teaching, he performed a number of other functions as well. In fact, the scale of the planned Diakonia project is one that even surprised someone like Albert Nolan:

I had a great admiration for Paddy. The idea that he started Diakonia and succeeded. I didn't think that anyone could do that and particularly not a lay person. To be both a Christian and to work for Justice just sounded too ambitious!¹³⁹⁵

If Nolan was surprised that a lay person could achieve this, some of those who worked closely with Kearney felt that it was his lay status that helped make it possible.

He was conscious that he was lay and that it was important to remain lay; lay leadership was important to him. It meant that he was outside of clerical structures.¹³⁹⁶

I think he must have made a conscious decision to not be a member of the clergy.¹³⁹⁷

Because Paddy was a lay person, he did not come with the trappings of Catholicism. But I can't remember him discussing his lay status.¹³⁹⁸

A longer reflection comes from +Phillip. Though ordained (as priest and bishop), he is outside the Roman Catholic structures inhabited by Kearney and so can offer a wider perspective. Particularly noteworthy is his final comment, not one that one would expect a Catholic bishop to say about a lay person:

Paddy was not ordained. I suspect that something of a personal decision. It might even have been political – his commitment to the liberation enterprise was so deep. He was always a measured person. I didn't get the sense that he wanted to be anything else than a lay person. He accepted and I think even celebrated the fact that he was a lay person. I reflect on why I became a priest – to empower me and equip me to be salt in the world; I wanted to try and make a difference. For Kearney, being part of the Church was enough.

I have to admit that, being a priest, I feel somewhat restricted; I don't have the freedom to say and do things. But even if he had been ordained, Paddy need not have felt restricted because +Hurley was radical in so many ways; Kearney was a gentle radical – but always in a gentle pastoral way. He was close to being my confessor; I could bare my soul to him; he was a good listener.¹³⁹⁹

+Phillip within his Anglican jurisdiction promoted lay people; it was certainly something that Vatican II enjoined on the Catholic bishops.

¹³⁹⁵ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 18 Oct 2020 in Boksburg GP (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

¹³⁹⁶ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹³⁹⁷ Argall, Jane. Personal interview by author, 8 October 2020 in Durban (Librarian at Diakonia and Co-editor of book of +Hurley's letters)

¹³⁹⁸ Graham, Paul. Personal interview by author, 13 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Methodist Youth Worker)

¹³⁹⁹ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

The hierarchy should promote the apostolate of the laity, provide it with spiritual principles and support, direct the conduct of this apostolate to the common good of the Church, and attend to the preservation of doctrine and order.¹⁴⁰⁰

It is, however, unfortunate that the specified end goal is not the salvation of the world or growth in holiness (which are, in other places, presented as the purpose of the Church) but rather ‘the preservation of doctrine and order’. It seems that again, in trying to say something positive and progressive, the Council Fathers are trapped by their own heritage and baggage.

There is something of the same feel when they try to provide a model for lay people. Recall that the defining characteristic of lay people (and the lay apostolate) is that they are *not* separated from the world. It is, thus, curious that the model given is of a lay woman who for 2,000 years (and in particular in the 110 years preceding Vatican II), successive popes have been trying to separate as much as possible from ordinary human beings:

The perfect example of this type of spiritual and apostolic life is the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles, who while leading the life common to all here on earth, one filled with family concerns and labours, was always intimately united with her Son and in an entirely unique way cooperated in the work of the Saviour.¹⁴⁰¹

When a Marist, Kearney’s formation would have included much devotion to Mary.¹⁴⁰² I doubt, however, that he would have seen her as the most useful exemplar of the lay apostolate.

Leaving aside the model of Mary, it is still tempting to see Kearney’s relationship with the Church through the lens of him being ‘a lay person’. This can be presented in a positive way as +Nuttall does:

He seemed to me to thrive as a lay person, having made the difficult decision to leave the Marist Brothers after a professed membership of some ten years. This act of courage and conviction made him, surely, a convinced layman, not a nominal one. His subsequent work in important lay roles (university lecturer, director of Diakonia, founder and director of the Denis Hurley Centre) demonstrated this truth.¹⁴⁰³

But I fear that this still does Kearney a dis-service: it assumes a dualism that he did not espouse, a clericalism that he negotiated but did not promote, and an ecclesiology that does not honour ‘the common matrix’ of all believers. For all of the attempts over the past 60 years to bring the laity out from under the shadow of the clergy, it still remains a leftover category; moreover, it is one that is defined by the very people who are not part of that category. We may have moved a little way from the 1891 reference that Goldie found (“For ‘Laity’, see ‘Clergy’”) but perhaps not that far.¹⁴⁰⁴

The fact that the question of the role of lay people is unresolved is for Joan Chittister not surprising since it is one of a wider set of unresolved issues, which she challenges the Church to face:

¹⁴⁰⁰ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 24

¹⁴⁰¹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 4

¹⁴⁰² “Update February 2019”, *Denis Hurley Centre*, <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 21 September 2022)

¹⁴⁰³ Nuttall, Michael. Email to the author, 8 October 2020

¹⁴⁰⁴ Goldie, “Lay, Laity, Laicity”, 123

The limiting definition of the seven sacraments, the restriction on lay participation in the church, the loss of the scriptural meaning of ministry, the clericalisation of the church, the effects of sexism on sacramentality, an inadequate understanding of the nature of the Christian call: are all stones across the door of the tomb that block the resurrection of the Church to the fullness of life.¹⁴⁰⁵

She is challenging here the hard line which exists in the Church between lay and non-lay, and suggests that this is in turn tied in with many other concepts. It is interesting to note that as a vowed religious woman (a Benedictine) she would be seen by many in the Church as being on the non-lay side of that line; but as a woman and one who has spoken publicly about the ordination of women, she would be seen by others (and especially ordained clergy) as being on the lay side of the line.

Kearney's view of the role of laity and clergy was strongly driven by Roman Catholic tradition. But his close collaboration with other Christian denominations would have exposed him to other models: ones in which there were married clergy, women clergy, un-ordained ministers, and indeed ecclesial models which are not founded on drawing hard lines between categories of disciples at all.

Rademacher makes a comparison, especially relevant given Kearney's commitment to ecumenism, between our failure to find a truly collaborative model ecumenically and our failure to find partnership in ministry within each denomination.

We might begin the process by following Paul who called all his fellow labourers *synergoi* 'energy sharers' 'ministry partners'. The director of religious education, the parish secretary and the SVDP workers could help the cause along by calling their pastors, their bishops and the neighbouring Protestant ministers 'Partners in the ministry of Christ'.¹⁴⁰⁶

Kearney as a disciple

I would therefore like to argue that we have a much simpler way of characterising Kearney and one towards which he would have instinctively warmed. It does not tie him to a canonical status of lay person; nor does it try to map a journey from lay to cleric to ex-cleric. Instead, it sees him throughout his whole life as a *synergos* 'an energy sharer', 'a ministry partner' or most simply 'a disciple'.

It has already been mentioned that the very categories of cleric and lay are not used in the New Testament Church and it seems the concepts were unknown to Christ and to the first disciples. In analysing how the category emerges in the early Church – and what it actually means – Faivre starts with a chapter amusingly called: "The wonderful time when there was neither Clergy nor Laity!". I should like to reimagine Kearney as living in 'that wonderful time'.¹⁴⁰⁷

In taking this approach, I am drawing on Osborne who suggests that there are three points of departure for the study of the role of the lay person in the Church: the first starts from the emergence of a group of people who are set apart; the second follows strictly the Roman Catholic

¹⁴⁰⁵ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, viii

¹⁴⁰⁶ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 187

¹⁴⁰⁷ Faivre, Alexandre. *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 1990) 3-14

Code of Canon law; and the third starts from the scriptural usage or rather non-usage of the terms 'clergy' and 'lay'.¹⁴⁰⁸

The first approach would overly stress Kearney's relationship with the Church as an ex-cleric; the second would put too much weight on the canonical category of 'lay person' with all the weaknesses that that involves. I prefer instead the third which, returning to the New Testament Church, places the focus on each of the Baptised equally, without concern about status or title.

Osborne in his 600+ pages about 'Lay Ministry' reaches this conclusion:

As Jesus once said: 'The one who sees me, sees God as well.' Discipleship of Jesus means: Anyone who see a credible disciple of Jesus sees Jesus as well, which can only mean that one begins to see in such an encounter the contours of a credible God.¹⁴⁰⁹

Without using these exact words, various people who knew Kearney well have described an encounter with him as an 'encounter with the contours of a credible God': Catholics like Hester Joseph or Sarah Kearney; other Christians like Paul Verryn and Frank Chikane; people of other faiths like Ela Gandhi and AV Mohamed.

Osborne points out that throughout the New Testament (in the Gospels, in Acts, in the Johannine writings, in the Pauline corpus, in the additional epistles) there is much instruction on how to be a disciple. By contrast, there is only a small amount of instruction on how to be a Christian leader and, even when leadership is referenced, there is no suggestion that discipleship for leaders is different from discipleship for followers.

The New Testament as such is much more a manual of discipleship for all Christians than a manual for discipleship written in an exclusive way for Christian leaders.

Discipleship, as found in the New Testament, is the point of departure for an investigation of the lay person in the Church, for only if Christian lay men and women exist in a community that fosters such discipleship do we even have an *ekklesia*. Without Jesus, of course, there is no Church; but without disciples of this same Jesus, we also have no Church.¹⁴¹⁰

This lens of 'disciple', working alongside other disciples, makes it easier to understand Kearney's role in various aspects of his life. Thus, when he is a teacher, he is not sometimes a vowed religious and later a lay man: he is a disciple who exercises his discipleship through teaching. When he is Director of Diakonia, he is not a lay person working for an archbishop (or the Deacon of Diakonia) but a disciple called to a ministry of challenging injustice. When he is Chair of the Gandhi Development Trust, he is not a Christian working with Hindus, he is a disciple who exercises his discipleship through good administration with people of other faiths. And when he sets up the Denis Hurley Centre, he is not an ex-Marist working with a priest and an ex-Jesuit, but one of a group of disciples called to provide discipleship to assist the poor.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Osborne, *Ministry*, 8-10

¹⁴⁰⁹ Osborne, *Ministry*, 609

¹⁴¹⁰ Osborne, *Ministry*, 109-110

Osborne argues: “All Christians are equal at this foundational and most sacred level of discipleship.” He further points out that equality and commonality is not just about ordination but also gender and ethnicity.¹⁴¹¹

Briard also saw equality of discipleship as something that for Kearney would bring down all barriers: “No Apartheid in the Church – no separation between bishops and priests; between clergy and lay. Paddy was a concretisation of this thinking.”¹⁴¹²

There is an interesting example of this from the early days of Diakonia, in Kearney’s files: a report of a meeting when he was invited to address the SACBC plenary in Pretoria. As well as a host of bishops, also attending are a number of people who are not bishops – some priests, some lay people; some men, some women; some white, some black. All are there as disciples and the statement that they make (demanding citizenship and human rights for all who live in South Africa) shows the commitment to equality that is the essence of discipleship.

We affirm that in this we are on the side of the oppressed, and as we have committed ourselves to working within our Church for a clearer expression of solidarity with the poor and the deprived, so we commit ourselves equally to working for peace through justice in fraternal collaboration with all other Churches, agencies and persons dedicated to this cause.¹⁴¹³

Both Kearney and +Hurley knew that such equality in the Church would be a long time in coming. As early as 1967, +Hurley wrote about a meeting of lay people in which he saw that equality of discipleship would not be recognised overnight:

The Congress of the Lay Apostolate finished yesterday with a three-hour speak-feast. Most of the members of the Synod attended it. After an hour and a half, however, one or two busy cardinals got up to go out, and twenty or thirty others followed them. It was too bad! Especially as a young American had just given his impressions of the Congress and had told us in surly tones that youth couldn’t wait for the establishment to catch up. It looked like a protest of cardinals, or a strike called by the hierarchy against the laity...

The whole emphasis in the Lay Congress was on the Christian’s duty in the world. At this rate, Catholics are really going to be a force to be reckoned with in the not too distant future. However, there were some warnings not to go too fast; a very lovely one from a Protestant observer and a very witty one from a Spanish delegate, who pointed out that when Peter and John raced to the tomb on Easter Sunday, John got there first but waited for Peter who finally did arrive too!¹⁴¹⁴

Sometimes in his life as a disciple, Kearney was Peter, sometimes he was John and sometimes he was observing the two. There is an interesting juxtaposition of papers in his archives about the Denis Hurley Centre from the first year of its operations (2015). He is, in two different places, writing about the arrival of this author as Director and the departure of Stephen Tully as

¹⁴¹¹ Osborne, *Ministry*, 541

¹⁴¹² Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author, 17 January 2022 via Zoom (Manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

¹⁴¹³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980) “SACBC Plenary” (*The Southern Cross*, 2 January 1977)

¹⁴¹⁴ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 218-9 (DH to Eileen Hurley, from Rome, 19 October 1967, typewritten)

Administrator of the Cathedral. What is interesting in his descriptions is that his focus is on the proven ministries of the individuals not their status.

[Raymond Perrier] is a skilled, energetic and imaginative person who did an excellent job in reviving interest in Vatican II all over SA. I am impressed by his fundraising experience with CAFOD, the time spent in tough situations in Uganda and the marketing experience in New York. He also had a tonk at becoming an SJ some years ago.¹⁴¹⁵

The departure of Fr Stephen is a huge challenge for us. He has been an important presence in this parish for the past 14 years and in the Denis Hurley Centre project for the past 7 years. It was his vision that made this possible and the trustees passed a unanimous resolution of thanks to him for all he has done for this project. During all of that time he literally 'walked the talk' and we are all immensely grateful to him and very sad that he is no longer with us.¹⁴¹⁶

Kearney is not interested in drawing lines between his co-workers to separate them based on status; nor is he interested in drawing such lines in his own life. The only differences worth highlighting are practical and pastoral ones. In this, he is following the same line as Goldie:

If 'lay person' is a pastoral concept, there are as many lay vocations as there are lay people. There are as many different ways of assuming secularity as there are different lay (or rather Christian) vocations. Orders and Marriage are the only factors which establish clear vocational divisions among the baptized. For the rest, there is no break in continuity between the different vocations, except in a practical and pastoral sense.¹⁴¹⁷

This understanding of lay returns us to the radical idea of the people of God, to which all are called at Baptism, and is a category that someone does not leave even if they are ordained or take religious vows. The lack of an adult ceremony, like ordination or solemn vows, might make this vocation less apparent but that does not mean that it is not true and fundamental.

Even if the 'ordinations' of baptism and confirmation happen when the candidates are too young to understand their responsibilities, they continue to call the recipients to the ongoing fulfilment of the responsibilities of the various stages of their adult vocation.¹⁴¹⁸

The people who worked closely with Kearney over many decades saw in him someone who progressed through 'various stages of his adult vocation', constantly seeking new ways in which to be a disciple.

Goemans has been ambivalent about Kearney's status, noting that he talked a bit about why he left the Marists, seemed to still live a life of Marist simplicity, and never discussed his lay status. But her conclusion tends towards the clear but demanding concept of discipleship:

¹⁴¹⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/4 "2015"

¹⁴¹⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/4 "2015" (Comment to the PPC, August 2015)

¹⁴¹⁷ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 131

¹⁴¹⁸ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 174

My sense is that he felt that it was just important to be involved in the Church. We the people of God have this work to do and we are in a partnership.¹⁴¹⁹

His secretary, Franks, makes a similar point but without using ecclesial language:

Paddy could have been wealthy with a fancy car. He did not have to do all this sacrifice. But he chose not to make money and he never spoke about why. He loved his work and was passionate about making a difference.¹⁴²⁰

Irvine, who was there when +Hurley first approached Kearney, saw the Archbishop's role as significant in Kearney's call to discipleship:

+Hurley saw in Paddy the potential and his willingness to make that his career. Without that Paddy would have been a professor: safe, prosperous, respectable.¹⁴²¹

Nicholson, who saw Kearney at his lowest when he was detained without trial, recognises that this discipleship is one that has no natural end:

Why did Paddy carry on? Later he saw that liberation had not been achieved. There was still lots to do. Perhaps he realised that immediately in 1994. Plus he did not have any other interests. What would he have done? He would not have wanted to join the establishment the way that some activist clergy did.¹⁴²²

One of those activist clergy who did join the establishment was Chikane (who was a Cabinet Minister from 1999 to 2009). His comment on Kearney's role is simple and yet laudatory:

Paddy remained Church. He was not a priest but a servant of God; you don't need to be a priest to be a servant; his life demonstrated much more. Paddy remained a servant of the people; a servant of the Church, an expression of what the Church should be in community. He worked with the community; he did not translate himself into a political activist. In that regard he was unique. He was God's servant – there to serve the people.¹⁴²³

+Phillip uses similar language. When he stepped down from Diakonia in 2004, Kearney had been recommended by +Phillip for a job at the SACC (where Chikane had been). +Phillip explains that he had to tell Kearney that the answer was 'no' because he would be of greater value where he was in Durban. "Paddy desired nothing more than to serve the people: if I had to give him a title it would be 'a servant of the people'."¹⁴²⁴

Keane is in perhaps the best positions to give an overview of his life, having observed him for 52 years.

¹⁴¹⁹ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹⁴²⁰ Franks, Vanessa. Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Durban (Secretary of Kearney at Diakonia)

¹⁴²¹ Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Personal friend and involved in Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace)

¹⁴²² Nicholson, Chris. Personal interview by author, 1 September 2021 in Durban (Lawyer during detention appeal)

¹⁴²³ Chikane, Frank. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2021 via Zoom (Secretary General of SACC 1987-94)

¹⁴²⁴ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

I see Paddy's life as a progressive involvement. I have known people who stayed on the same track and were always unhappy. There were parts of him that changed and parts that did not. Throughout the whole story he remains a white middle-class South African: I have known many priests and sisters who tried to lose themselves – but unsuccessfully. We can't give up our core identity. But new layers have come on according to his situation. He died happy because he was fulfilled. The strength that went before maintained the chain but there was a new focus each time. It was a process of concatenation. Each chapter was a new story.¹⁴²⁵

Put more simply another friend of many years summed him up:

A Christian to be admired because he lived his faith in every possible way.¹⁴²⁶

¹⁴²⁵ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

¹⁴²⁶ Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness! (Mt 25:23)

How are we to remember Kearney?

The Scripture quotation above was cited by Cardinal Napier, Archbishop of Durban, after Kearney's death; it was used at his funeral on 1 December 2018; and it is inscribed on the plaque that commemorates Kearney at the Denis Hurley Centre.

It is an apt quotation since it references a number of things: the completion of a life of hard work – almost 60 years in active ministry; the promise of a future reward that Kearney neither enjoyed nor sought in his lifetime; his faithfulness – to the cause of justice, to the institutions with which he worked, to the Church itself, to +Hurley and above all to Christ. Most of all it calls Kearney 'servant', a title that would have sat very comfortably with him. In Chapter 2, I talked about the way in which the ordained role of 'Deacon' had inappropriately been justified by Acts 6: 1-7; whereas in fact that Scripture references *diakonia* and the most suitable English personal noun for someone who exercises *diakonia* is 'servant'. Of course, Diakonia is also the name of the organisation that Kearney led for 28 years.

I have throughout this dissertation explored different aspects of Kearney's identity: as a Marist, as a teacher, as an activist, as a lay man, as a Catholic, as an ecumenist, as a person of faith. In addition, in Appendix A, I look in more detail at his racial identity and in Appendix F his living out of the threefold office – the *Tria Munera* – of priest, prophet and leader. There are many different lenses through which one can look at Kearney's life. In conclusion I want to try and draw these threads together.

The interviews conducted with people who knew him – 70 people who cover between them almost six decades – showed the richness and the diversity of his life. But there was one thing on which they were all agreed. Without exception (though of course they were a selected group) all the people interviewed felt that remembering Kearney was a worthwhile thing to do: for the Church and for South African society. That in itself is significant. Despite the academic resources of the country, the number and range of biographies or memoirs of South Africans is still quite few. For those involved in politics, it tends to be the 'big men' who get written about: the ones who dominate a room and have grand prestigious titles – not the quiet people behind the scenes. For those involved in religion, it also tends to be the 'big men' who get written about: the ones who dominate a church and have grand prestigious titles – not the lay people behind the scenes. Kearney did not dominate rooms and his professional titles were very ordinary.

So how are we to remember Kearney? Fatima Meer, Muslim anti-Apartheid activist, offers a reflection about +Hurley on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee in 1997 which is quoted by Kearney but could easily be a description also of himself:

Born in South Africa, rooted in an Irish Catholic tradition, a continuous presence in our midst, guiding us through all our travels, standing with us in our afflictions and pointing the way to better things to come as they have today ... ministering to all South Africans and particularly to those who have been overlooked by society ... realising a universalism, an

activism that embraces all humanity and all life and removes all barriers between the temporal and spiritual, the Catholic and non-Catholic, the Christian and non-Christian.¹⁴²⁷

All of that is true of Kearney; there is, moreover, an additional aspect of universalism that he embodies, which is critical given the clerical Church that he belonged to: his ability to remove (or at least challenge) the barriers between clerical and lay, between religious and secular.

As was explored in Chapter 2, one of the most striking early decisions of Kearney was both to join and then leave the Marist Brothers. His departure in the late 1960s could be lumped in with the many priests and religious sisters and brothers who ‘left the Church’ after Vatican II in what has been termed an ‘exodus’. But Rademacher explores the word ‘exodus’ not as a failure but rather as a way of understanding the various transitions that people go through as they develop, and also that the Church must go through as it develops.¹⁴²⁸

As the ministers’ faith goes through various phases and styles, their ministry will be affected as it interacts with the process of this faith relationship.¹⁴²⁹

Developing his ministry – not for his own benefit but for the benefit of others – is a recurrent theme of Kearney’s life. When a young Marist, in an institution which did not encourage personal questioning, Kearney shocked Peter Taylor, a fellow scholastic, by asking the question ‘what do you want to do with your life?’ Taylor’s reflections on Kearney more than half a century later are enlightening:

How can we remember Paddy? As a follower of Jesus; a committed Christian. No one chooses the family they are born into but Paddy, as he developed as a Christian, was growing into one family, the human race. He was helped in this by his natural talent to mix with people of all ranks and races. If you compare the Marist and the post-Marist Paddy, you see how he discovers that there is no need to insist on conformity: that that is not the definition of obedience to God’s will.

He did learn something from the [Marist] brothers: the fundamental spiritual virtue of humility, simplicity and modesty. To quote John the Baptist speaking of Jesus: ‘He must increase and I must decrease’. But when we were there, the brothers never mentioned this as having anything to do with God. Vatican II called Religious Orders to go back to their origins and original spirit. For the Marists that includes ‘have a special predilection for the poor’. Marcellin Champagnat started the brothers because of the shock he received when a poor teenager was on his death-bed and did not know God or about salvation.

It seems that Paddy [long after he left the Marists] was going more monastic in his personal living (the kind of flat, etc) in his later years. And he was always at the service of others, asking them: ‘what can I do for you?’¹⁴³⁰

¹⁴²⁷ Kearney, Paddy. “Courageous and Consistent Witness”. *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 17

¹⁴²⁸ Rademacher, William. *Lay Ministry – a theological, spiritual and pastoral handbook* (New York: Crossroad, 1991) 134

¹⁴²⁹ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 87

¹⁴³⁰ Taylor, Peter. Personal interview by author, 1 February 2021 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney)

Kearney's relationship with +Hurley

One major question to answer in relation to remembering Kearney is his relationship with Archbishop Hurley. As was detailed in Chapter 7, +Hurley's presence dominated Kearney's life: not only was he Kearney's bishop from the age of 4 until the age of 51, but for the 28 years that Kearney was at Diakonia, +Hurley was effectively his employer. Moreover, the influence did not end there since, in the 12 years between stepping down as Archbishop and his death, +Hurley continued to work closely with Kearney (not least on preparing his memoirs); then after +Hurley's death, Kearney spent the last 14 years of his own life writing about, talking about and commemorating +Hurley.

So it is tempting to see Kearney as a disciple of +Hurley and even to reduce Kearney to nothing more than a mirror of +Hurley or an extension of him. I think this is inadequate and an interpretation that both of them would have rejected. As was explored in Chapter 7, the movement of influence between them was by no means in one direction: while most interviewees acknowledged +Hurley's influence on Kearney, many also gave examples of Kearney's influence on +Hurley. And while there were similarities in their background – which is why Meer's quote above can be apposite – they came to maturity during different periods of the country's history (+Hurley during the Depression and the dominance of the English-speaking South Africa Party; Kearney during the aggressive assertion of the National Party), and also during different periods of the Church's history (+Hurley during a final period of ultra-Montanism under successive Popes Pius, Kearney during a flowering of open-ness under John XXIII).

But the key difference is their status within the Church. +Hurley and Kearney shared similar views about ecumenism, about other religions, about justice, about the role of the Church in the world. But the way in which these then expressed themselves is bound to be different: one of them was thrice-separated from the ordinary world (+Hurley was a religious, a priest and a bishop); the other lived the life of an ordinary Christian (even if the work he did was extraordinary). And this is even more significant because Kearney – unlike other young Catholic men who were strongly influenced by +Hurley like Paul Nadal¹⁴³¹ – chose not to follow him along the obvious path of ordination.

+Hurley himself articulates this important difference as early as 1961 (long before he was working with Kearney) when, in a letter, he recognises lay people as enjoying a flexibility that clergy might not.

I suppose you should have my formal permission to attend meetings of the National Christian Council in Durban because the Catholic Church cannot officially associate itself with that body. ... Next year I hope to have someone in the ranks of the clergy in Durban who would be able to play a much more active part in ecumenical contacts.¹⁴³²

Clearly, as a bishop, +Hurley was able to do things that Kearney could not; but as a lay person, Kearney was also able to do things that +Hurley could not. He had a freedom to manoeuvre and forge alliances which, as +Hurley indicates in the letter above, was harder for a cleric precisely because his views (on ecumenism, for example) were ahead of their time.

One of the critical experiences they shared was the consequence of Kearney's detention in 1985 (see Chapter 5). It is unlikely that Kearney could have had the same impact as +Hurley in pursuing a legal case against the Nationalist Government and successfully challenging their Section 29 order. But it is

¹⁴³¹ Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban. (Catholic Monsignor, Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁴³² Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 142-3 (Letter to Clifford de Gersigny, from Durban, 1 June 1961, typewritten)

also unlikely that +Hurley would have been detained without trial in a similar way to Kearney which is what created the opportunity for the case. Both played essential but different roles in this event.

Besides, even when they did do the same things – e.g. marching for justice – there is a fundamental difference in the perception of an action carried out by a bishop and the same action carried out by a lay person. A clerical mind-set might fall into the trap of thinking that automatically the action by the bishop was more impactful than the same action by a lay person. And that would often be the case. For example, +Hurley took advantage of his status to protest outside Durban City Hall knowing that he was less likely to be harassed by the police and also that his presence was more likely to draw attention to the cause. Kearney was aware of this and encouraged +Hurley to be publicly visible in his protests, such as the Good Friday Services.

But sometimes the reverse was true and it was the action by the lay man that was more unexpected. For example, the Church has plenty of charitable organisations set up by bishops whose existence goes unremarked: part of the impact of the DHC is the fact that it was created and championed by Kearney (and other lay people) in ways that strongly asserted the apostolate of the laity and thus a Vatican II model of Church. Whilst such action by the laity would have been something that +Hurley strongly supported, it would have lost its impact if he was too closely involved.

The relationship between the two of them was thus symbiotic: each benefiting from the presence of the other. In Appendix E, for example, I show that while Gandhi had an influence on +Hurley, and that that in turn influenced Kearney, there was also a direct Gandhian influence on Kearney, in part because of his own close ties with the Gandhi family in Durban.

The relationship between +Hurley and Kearney was so close that we cannot always say where one ends and the other begins, or who has the greater influence on whom. That is why, throughout this work, I have admitted that in looking at Kearney's actions we might sometimes be seeing the result of his own independent motivation, sometimes the impact of +Hurley's influence on him, and sometimes evidence that he is influencing +Hurley.

The complex relationship is summed up by a woman who knew them over many decades – from involvement with the End Conscription Campaign in the 1980s, to acting as a PR for Diakonia through the 1990s and then working closely with Kearney on the promotion of his books about +Hurley and the creation of the Denis Hurley Centre. Illa Thompson comments:

Thinking back, I appreciate the Yin and Yang dynamic between Paddy and +Hurley – they indeed were opposite but interconnected forces. I suspect Hurley admired, listened and deferred to Paddy as much as Paddy did to Hurley. I suspect they influenced each other and were influenced by each other. I think they were a complementary match – spiritually, intellectually, academically and philosophically, which enabled them to work so well together as a result.¹⁴³³

The final point that needs to be made – because it can be otherwise taken for granted – is just how unusual it is for a Catholic bishop of this period to have as a close confidant and collaborator a lay man. And vice versa how unusual it is for a lay person to be so close to a Catholic bishop. In Chapter 7, I mentioned the way in which Kearney drew +Hurley's attention to the friendship between

¹⁴³³ Thompson, Illa: Personal interview by author, 28 September 2022 in Durban (member of End Conscription Campaign, PR consultant to Diakonia and Denis Hurley Centre)

another Archbishop (Anselm of Canterbury) and a scholar (though also a priest) Alcuin of York. Is it perhaps telling that Kearney has to go back 12 centuries to find a parallel to their friendship?

This is not to exoticise the relationship or to have it overshadow who Kearney was in his own right. But it is to stress that we cannot understand Kearney without understanding +Hurley: and that one of our best ways of understanding +Hurley is through the many pages that Kearney devoted to writing about him.

Kearney: liminal or situated?

The unusual nature of Kearney's situation in the Church – a former religious, who became a lay man but spent most of his time with clerics – can lead to a way of characterising him that I feel is unhelpful. It draws on the concept of liminality, originally coined by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep and then popularised by Victor Turner.¹⁴³⁴ The concept – based on traditional rites of passage – describes a position which is between two more fixed states (e.g. childhood and adulthood), a transitional space 'at the threshold' (Latin: *limen*). Theologians have taken up this theme to describe the position of a Christian who is living in this world but who is constantly looking to a world beyond.¹⁴³⁵

Applying the term liminality to Kearney (as some interviewees did¹⁴³⁶) might be to suggest that he is not really a lay person and not really a cleric and sitting, awkwardly, between the two waiting for his position to be resolved one way or another. It is true – from the comments of people who were interviewed – that there were aspects of his life that placed him closer to the clergy and aspects that placed him closer to lay people. But I would be reluctant to invoke liminality. The danger is exacerbated if this liminal concept is then extended further: to suggest that Kearney was in a liminal space between Catholic and Protestant, or between white and non-white, or between peace-maker and political activist. But each of these dichotomies makes the same assumptions: that the categories presented are fixed and exclusive; and that the only resolution is to choose between one or the other.

I would like to suggest instead that there is a fairer way of describing the complexity of Kearney's position which is not 'either/or' but 'both/and'. Kearney was not a man of separating categories; he was a man of bringing together. This is supported by the frequency with which interviewees talked about how authentic and integrated Kearney was. He did not spend his life in liminal positions that were waiting to be resolved: rather he had a clear position, which because of his authenticity, enabled him to engage with those whose positions were different.

Thus, I think we can describe him as a lay man (who after all never was ordained and never sought ordination) who at the same time was able to engage confidently with those who were ordained.

We can also say he was a Roman Catholic, never lukewarm in his commitment to his denomination, who at the same time was able to engage confidently with Christians of other traditions; and he was a Christian, sure of the saving power of Christ as Saviour, who at the same time was able to engage confidently with people of other faiths.

¹⁴³⁴ For more on liminality, see: Thomassen, Bjørn. "The Uses and Meaning of Liminality", *International Political Anthropology*. (2009, Mar 3:2,1) 5-28

¹⁴³⁵ Russell, Annette. "In the World but not of the World: The Liminal Life of Pre-Constantine Christian Communities", PhD dissertation (UCLA, 2003)

¹⁴³⁶ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest, co-worker at Diakonia)

Kearney was a peace-maker, committed to a path of non-violence, who at the same time was able to work with activists of a variety of hues who shared his goals. And he was a political player who knew how to work with a range of politicians, who at the same time was never tempted to join their ranks.

He was a white man, who was conscious of but not ashamed of his cultural identity, who at the same time was able to engage with people of very different cultural backgrounds (even if he did not always have the linguistic skills). And he was a South African who cared deeply for his country, who at the same time was proud of his Irish roots.

Moreover, in each of these aspects of his identity, he was confident enough that he could question some of the assumptions and claims of the institution or the tribe, and not feel he was being disloyal by doing so. +Hurley's great hero was Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit priest and scientist whom the Vatican had tried to silence.¹⁴³⁷ At the Council, +Hurley quoted from him in St Peter's calling him 'a loyal son of the Church' – not despite his questioning but because of it.¹⁴³⁸ I think that Kearney would have been proud if, on a similar basis, he was described as 'a loyal son of the Church'.

Kearney was able to hold these multiple positions, without feeling the need to resolve any presumed tension; and he was able to ask hard questions about those positions, without the fear of being disloyal. I would argue that this is because there was an inherent integrity about who Kearney was and what he stood for. That meant that complexities and confusions which might have unbalanced others did not pose a problem for him.

Integration in Kearney's commitment to justice

There was a pattern of integration in his personality and that was also true of his theology.

In approaching Kearney's life, I started with the lenses of different documents of Vatican II as a way of covering the different aspects of his ministry: thus *Unitatis Redintegratio* could be used to understand his commitment to ecumenism; *Nostra Aetate* to interfaith relations; *Apostolicam Actuositatem* to the role of the laity, *Gaudium et Spes* for the commitment to fighting Apartheid. All of this is true. But this would suggest that each of these was a distinct aspect of Kearney's life, and that each can almost be viewed independently. This might be true of other characters in modern Church history: after all not all those involved in the ecumenical movement are passionate about justice; not all those who care about the role of the laity are engaged in inter-religious dialogue.

Outler, a Methodist observer at Vatican II, had witnessed the way in which people of faith would choose to prioritise one issue over another and thus defeat what they were trying to achieve:

The new generation of theologians profess to be more deeply scandalised by injustice than by disunity (as if they had been forced to such a choice!). ...They ignore the fact that Christians united for justice while separated from each other at the Lord's Table send the wrong message out to a sceptical world.¹⁴³⁹

But Kearney was committed to all of these issues and more besides. In his case, I would argue, these are not different issues, or even different but inter-related issues; I would suggest that they are in

¹⁴³⁷ Denis, "The Historical Significance of Denis Hurley's Contribution to the Second Vatican Council", 211-212

¹⁴³⁸ Hurley, Denis. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 172

¹⁴³⁹ Outler, Albert. "Strangers within the Gates". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 180

fact all the same issue. Just as the Trinity is one Godhead albeit manifesting as different persons, so Kearney's fundamental concern is a single one which then manifests as campaigning for different causes. For Kearney, that prevailing concern is separation and exclusion: and every aspect of his ministry is dedicated to overcoming this. Clearly, his most famous area of ministry was in combating Apartheid, a word which is simply the Afrikaans for 'separateness'. The framers of Apartheid argued not only that people *could* be separated (based on physical characteristics sometimes so arbitrary that a 'pencil test' was needed¹⁴⁴⁰) but that they *should* be separated for the good of all. Separateness was not just possible but to be desired and encouraged.

This could not have been further from Kearney's worldview. He believed passionately that people of different colours should not be separated and that is why it was important for him to combat Apartheid. Initiatives such as the 'exposure visits' were not just about sharing information (after all there were other ways of doing that) but sharing space: people of different colours living together for a few days. It is then logical that, after the end of Apartheid, he would use the same energy to show that people of different economic classes should not be separated and so, in his later years, dedicate himself to the fight against poverty. The whites-only beaches of the 1970s were an affront to Kearney but so were the middle-class-only gated communities of the 2010s.

Once we see combating 'separateness' as his prime motivation, then all his other activities fall into line. People of different denominations should not exclude each other and that is why it was important for him to fight for ecumenism. In the same way, though this was a slower realisation for him, people of different faiths should not exclude each other and that is why it was important for him to engage in inter-religious dialogue. (This latter example should not be taken lightly: there are people in the Christian ecumenical movement who are motivated by the idea of reuniting Christendom as a bulwark against Islam, not as a precursor for bringing together the children of Sarah and the children of Hagar.)

Separateness within the Catholic Church was also to be combatted. Parishes might be a useful organising system but, because they are geographic, they tend to reinforce spatial segregation (whether racial or economic or both). That is why Kearney went out of his way to attend parishes outside his area, and also to create diverse small Christian communities as an alternative form of parish. Status also creates separation within the Church. For Kearney, priests, religious and laity should not be separated, and so his fight is not *for* the laity (as opposed to the clergy) but rather for the *laos* (the people of God, the faithful) that all should be united as equal members of one Church: 'the common matrix'. And, one could go further and see his open-ness to suffering – both accepting his own suffering and accompanying others in their suffering – as a response to the understanding that suffering is the ultimate form of exclusion which needs to be redeemed.

The most important way in which Kearney resists separateness is avoiding the trap of dividing the sacred from the secular. This could take two forms: within the Church, it is the attempt to distinguish two spheres of operation, the temporal and the ecclesial. In Chapter 2, we saw how Vatican II documents tie themselves in knots in trying to hold the distinction between the two. But the separation is also a risk for the Church's relationship with the world. If the domain of the Church is purely the 'sacred', then on what basis can it claim influence (or even have a legitimate opinion about) the secular? *Gaudium et Spes* is the final response to this: the Church inhabits all of the world because God inhabits all of the world.

¹⁴⁴⁰ This was the infamous test whereby a pencil was placed in someone's hair and how easily it fell out determined whether they were white, coloured or black. See: Brander Rasmussen, Birgit. *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*. (Durham NC: Duke, 2001) 133

Frank Chikane states bluntly that for Kearney, there were ‘no boundaries between secular and sacred’.¹⁴⁴¹ This is in contrast to what Rademacher sees as an essential (if un-desired) dualism in the Catholic worldview. The approach means that even something as well-intentioned as sacred symbols can have unintentional consequences:

When these earthly symbols are endowed with objective holiness, everything outside the symbol is unholy: Sunday is holy, Monday is not; church is holy, K-mart is not; soul is holy, body is not; priest is holy, lay person is not. Locating the holy runs the risk of constructing a worldview based on the dualism of sacred /secular, supernatural /natural, spiritual /material.

It is not unusual to hear Catholic laity say: ‘We take care of the material things so Father can take care of the spiritual.’ In Catholic parishes, the people who distribute the Eucharist in the sanctuary are called ministers, the members of the SVDP who feed the hungry are not called ministers; lectors who serve in the holy sanctuary are called ministers, members of the Legion of Mary are not. Jesus on the other hand ministered in the streets, not in the Temple. He served as Lector once, but mostly ministered in the secular world of lepers, lawyers, fishermen, Samaritans, outcasts, prostitutes and tax collectors.¹⁴⁴²

Rademacher sees this tendency to dualism as something which goes right back to the person of Christ and the inherent dualistic language in which he is described:

In relating ministry to the incarnation, we need to ask whether ministry is an extension of Christ’s divinity, of his humanity, or both. Because of the over-emphasis on the divinity of Christ, it is difficult for many Catholics to really include the humanity of Christ in their definition of Christian ministry. A Christology without duality seeds God’s presence in the whole man, Jesus Christ. His saving activity lies not in the fact that a divine nature bears a human nature, but in the human nature, and above all, in the human person himself.¹⁴⁴³

Goldie says something similar when she questions the idea of two parallel orders (that of creation and redemption). She commends Congar’s idea that it is through temporal activity that lay people will carry out their ecclesial vocation: “This gives a way out of the interminable disputes between the partisans of incarnation and eschatologism.”¹⁴⁴⁴

This is the approach of Kearney: a clear commitment to an integrated theology in which temporal activity and ecclesial vocation are hand in hand.¹⁴⁴⁵ Since integration is the opposite of separateness, it provides an alternative to the racial, economic, denominational, religious or hierarchical separateness that Kearney wishes to challenge. Although in Kearney’s writings he does not explicitly make this point, there is an underlying theme to his worldview that provides theological justification for the principle of integration. I think there are three bases for this:

- First, God’s act of creation (which he repeatedly saw as ‘good’)¹⁴⁴⁶ connects the sacred and the secular from the beginning of human history

¹⁴⁴¹ Chikane, Frank. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2021 via Zoom. (Secretary General of SACC 1987-94)

¹⁴⁴² Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 127

¹⁴⁴³ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 127

¹⁴⁴⁴ Goldie, Rosemary. “Lay, Laity, Laicity: a bibliographical survey of three decades”. *Elements for a Theology of the Laity. The Laity Today – bulletin of the Pontifical Council for the Laity* (1979, 26) 118

¹⁴⁴⁵ This is explored more in Appendix B: Vatican II and the Laity.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Gen 1: 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 24 31

- Second, the humans that God creates are all equally born in the image and likeness of God (so there is no justification for separation between humans)
- And third, as indicated above by Rademacher, the incarnation of Christ challenges the idea that the divine and the human (the sacred and the secular) cannot be brought together

Dych challenges the dualism which objectifies God into another object, and so creates the pseudo-problem of how to put God and humans back together.

It is the dualism in our theology of faith, and of hope and charity as well, that creates the necessity of putting things together that never should have been separated in the first place.¹⁴⁴⁷

From the false dualism of sacred and secular potentially come a range of other false dualisms which are also contrary to an integrated theology: it is not faith vs reason but faith and reason; not work or prayer but work and prayer; not *kerygma* or *diakonia* but *kerygma* and *diakonia*; not faith or action but 'faith in action' (the title of Kearney's anthology); not faith or justice but the 'faith that does justice' (as promoted by the Jesuits). In fact, this last phrase is the context of Dych's exploration of dualism and he sees the statements of *Gaudium et Spes* as going some way to resolving that dualism.

Conclusion

Each of the identities mentioned above – Catholic, Christian, man of faith; Marist, lay man; teacher, administrator, activist, peace-maker, founder; priest, prophet, leader – are aspects of Kearney's ministry. Rademacher uses the term minister to refer to any Christian engaged in ministry (not just the ordained) and provides a way of unlocking the question of how to remember Kearney. He points out that that ministry will vary over time and come from different sources: called by the community, called by someone in authority, defined by place, defined by function, and only sometimes created by some kind of certification or ordination. But he then asks if there is any substantial difference between these:

What is the difference between a service and a ministry, are there official and non-official ministries? What is the difference? What does official add to or subtract from ministry?¹⁴⁴⁸

The whole pilgrim church is a community of ministers to the reign of God. The church is not meant to be a minister to itself. For this reason many ministries will not be *official* church ministries.¹⁴⁴⁹

Kearney's life was a life of ministry – and a life in which he was minister in various ways – the absence of an official title for most of his ministries does not in any way subtract from his ministry.

Goldie sums up a similar idea, perhaps more poetically:

¹⁴⁴⁷ Dych, William. "The Dualism in the Faith of the Church". *The Faith that does Justice - examining the -Christian Sources for Social Change*. John C Haughey ed. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 65

¹⁴⁴⁸ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 3

¹⁴⁴⁹ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 20

Finally, after losing sight of the laity as an 'ecclesiological category', after seeing their specific character absorbed into 'laicity' or 'secularity' considered as a dimension of the *whole* Church, we shall meet them again as a 'pastoral category', in all the diversity of their lay vocations: members of God's people, of the body of Christ, 'living stones making a spiritual house', responding in a personal vocation to the call of God addressed to them, through and within human history.¹⁴⁵⁰

Kearney's vocation was lived out within human history: within a particular period of history that was epoch-making for the Church and for South Africa. His vocation was specific and his spirituality specific, nurtured by the social, political and ecclesial circumstances in which he found himself. He was thus greatly helped by his proximity to a fellow Christian who was also very clear about his vocation, and who understood how to nurture vocation in others. And as Kearney learnt from +Hurley, so others learnt from Kearney.

Nevertheless, despite the appearance of hero-worship, Kearney was fundamentally modelling himself on Jesus Christ who is the source of all ministry in the New Testament:

Throughout Acts, any community task, from serving at tables to the preaching of the apostles, can be called a ministry, *diakonia*, since all of this is service for God in the community. Luke emphasises that service among the Christians comes from the Lord (God has assigned the lot *kleros*, even to Judas) and it involves service rather than hegemony.¹⁴⁵¹

The variety of the ways in which Kearney lived out his ministry – through so many changes in the life of the Church and of South Africa – reinforce the view that discipleship is a commitment to the unknown. The true mark of Kearney's discipleship was, in fact, not what he did, or how many people he impacted, or even the ways in which he delivered. The true mark was his willingness to go where he was led.

This takes more faith than being a priest, prophet or leader. It takes more faith than being a teacher. It takes more faith than being a Marist or a lay person or a married man. It is the faith in Jesus Christ that enabled Kearney to set off and keep changing direction without actually knowing what the final destination was. This is the vocation that Jesus warns Peter will be his fate in the coda to the 4th Gospel (Jn 21:18). And it is an understanding that Kearney was already aware of from a relatively young age. In 1973, Kearney ends his dissertation with Illich's own words and they could also be a way of summarising Kearney's life:

We leave home on a pilgrimage. But it is not the pilgrimage of the West which leads over a travelled road to a famed sanctuary. It is the pilgrimage of the Christian East which does not know where the road might lead and the journey end.¹⁴⁵²

¹⁴⁵⁰ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 108

¹⁴⁵¹ Osborne, *Ministry*, 13

¹⁴⁵² Kearney, "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", 133

Printed Sources and Abbreviations

Archives

The principal archive material used is from the set of papers left by Kearney on his death (his personal archive). I have worked with these files, and built on the cataloguing that Kearney had already begun, so that these papers have now been incorporated into the archive of the Denis E Hurley Library at St Joseph's Theological Institute (SJTI) based at Cedara near Pietermaritzburg.

Since most of the material is related to Paddy Kearney, it has the primary reference 'SJTI Archive: BIO-496'. The main categories in the archives, and the key material included, are:

- BIO- 496/A Curriculum Vitae, documents about family, religious, educational background, achievements, special documents. Here are included Kearney's B.Ed. and M.Ed. dissertations and preparatory papers.
- BIO- 496/C Correspondence to and from Kearney (in particular the handwritten letters that he sent to his parents during extensive travel abroad in 1958, 1972/73 and 1991/92).
- BIO- 496/D Unpublished material such as Diaries, Notebooks, Sermons, Reports, Liturgical Notes, Spiritual Writings, Hymns, Poetry, Annotated Items e.g.: Pamphlets, Programmes etc. This includes 'Morning Papers', a daily journal that Kearney kept when travelling to UK and USA (mid 2005) and UK and Ireland (mid 2006). Here are also minutes from meetings attended by Kearney in relation to the Cathedral and also the Social Cohesion Group.
- BIO- 496/E Ecumenical material related to Diakonia and the various other KZN Christian organisations and also the Gandhi Development Trust.
- BIO- 496/H Kearney's own work pertaining to Archbishop Hurley: this is extensive and includes press clippings about +Hurley, letters from +Hurley, papers presented by +Hurley, and Kearney's papers for the preparation of his books about +Hurley.
- BIO- 496/P Published material by or about Kearney such as Addresses, Lectures, Articles, Reports, Newspaper Cuttings (plus there is also a published anthology of his writings)¹⁴⁵³
- BIO- 496/XP Photographs and Slides (though a much more extensive electronic collection of images resides with the Denis Hurley Centre).
- BIO- 496/XV Videos, DVDs, CDs

In the SJTI archive, materials that are referenced 'SJTI Archive: BIO-11' are related to +Denis Hurley. Key among this now are the papers that were in Kearney's personal archive in relation to the Denis Hurley Centre.

BIO - 11/W/3 Minutes of meetings, reports from architects, press clippings

In addition, I have had permission to access the following archives:

- Archdiocese of Durban, housed at the Chancery, 154 Gordon Road, Durban (Contact: chancery@aod.org.za)
- Denis Hurley Centre, housed at their building at 2 Cathedral Road, Durban (Contact: admin@denishurleycentre.org)
- Diakonia Durban Council of Churches, housed at their building at 20 Diakonia Avenue, Durban (Contact: centremanager@diakonia.org.za)
- Gandhi Development Trust, housed at Durban University of Technology (M.L. Sultan Campus), Centenary Road, Durban (Contact: info@gdt.org.za)
- Marist Brothers of South Africa, housed at Sacred Heart College, 15 Eckstein Street, Johannesburg (Contact: mario.colussi@marist.org.za)

One general archive resource that has also been used is the *South African History Archive* which I have accessed on line (<https://www.saha.org.za>) and also at their reading room at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Contact: debora@saha.org.za).

¹⁴⁵³ Kearney, G Paddy. *Faith in Action* (Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal Christian Council, 2017)

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Vatican Sources

In addition to the publications above, reference is also made to a number of Vatican documents. There are various translations of these available and all are accessible from the Vatican website. The principal documents used are those of the Second Vatican Council, which are as follows (listed in order of date of promulgation):

- Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*)
- Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication (*Inter Mirifica*)
- Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*)
- Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*)
- Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*)
- Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church (*Christus Dominus*)
- Decree on Priestly Formation (*Optatam Totius*)
- Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*)
- Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*)
- Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educationis*)
- Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*)
- Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*)
- Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*)
- Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*)
- Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*)
- Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*)

In addition, other Papal encyclicals and addresses are referenced (listed in chronological order):

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1906 | <i>Vehementer Nos</i> : Pius X |
| 1928 | <i>Mortalium Animos</i> : Pius XI |
| 1931 | <i>Non abbiamo bisogno</i> : Pius XI |
| 1961 | <i>Humanae Salutis</i> : John XXIII |
| 1962 | <i>Gaudet Mater Ecclesia</i> : John XXIII |
| 1963 | <i>Pacem in Terris</i> : John XXIII |
| 1964 | <i>Ecclesiam Suam</i> : Paul VI |
| 1967 | <i>Sacerdotalis Caelibatus</i> : Paul VI |
| 1967 | <i>Populorum Progressio</i> : Paul VI |
| 1968 | <i>Humanae Vitae</i> : Paul VI |
| 1971 | <i>Octogesima Adveniens</i> : Paul VI |

Abbreviations

ACM:	Active Citizens Movement
CAFOD:	Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (UK-based)
CCS:	Centre for Catholic Studies at University of Durham, UK
CI:	Christian Institute of Southern Africa
CIIR:	Catholic Institute for International Relations (UK)
CLG:	Christian Life Group (a form of sodality)
CLG:	(Natal/KZN) Church Leaders Group
C.O.:	Conscientious Objector or Conscientious Objection
CRC:	Community Resource Centre
CST:	Catholic Social Teaching
CTSSA:	Catholic Theological Society of Southern Africa
DHC:	Denis Hurley Centre
ECC:	End Conscription Campaign
FMS:	Little Brothers of Mary, aka the Marists
ICEL:	International Commission for English in the Liturgy
ICON:	International Centre of Non-Violence at Durban University of Technology
ICT:	Institute for Contextual Theology
J&P:	Justice & Peace
LRC:	Legal Resources Centre
KZN:	Kwa-Zulu Natal
KZNCC:	Kwa-Zulu Natal Christian Council
OMI:	Oblates of Mary Immaculate
OP:	Order of Preachers, aka the Dominicans
PACSA:	Pietermaritzburg Association for Christian Social Action
PPC:	Parish Pastoral Council
RPC:	Refugee Pastoral Care
SACBC:	Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference
SACC:	South African Council of Churches
SAIIR:	South African Institute for Race Relations
SCA:	Student Christian Association
SCC:	Small Christian Community/ -ies
SJ:	Society of Jesus, aka the Jesuits

SPRO-CAS:	Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society
TEEC:	Theological Education by Extension College
TRC:	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCT:	University of Cape Town
UDF:	United Democratic Front
UKZN:	University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
UN:	University of Natal
WAACSA:	We Are All Church South Africa
WCC:	World Council of Churches
YCS:	Young Christian Students
YCW:	Young Christian Workers

Oral Sources: List of Interviewees

The following 70 people were personally interviewed by the author between 2019 and 2022: they cover every period of Kearney's life: from childhood, through the Marists, University of Natal, Diakonia and the Denis Hurley Centre. The list includes people who knew him professionally and also personally.

Mostly, the interviews were conducted in person; however, in a few cases, they were via Zoom because of distance or COVID restrictions. Consent forms and contemporaneous notes from the interviews plus (in most cases) live recordings have been archived.

Given that many of the interviewees were contemporaries of Kearney and so in their 80s, sadly a few of them have died since this research took place: we mourn their passing and commend their souls to the Lord. (Their names are marked †)

Aitken, Marilyn: 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of the Grail)

Apelgren, Eric: 6 October 2020 in Durban (volunteer at Diakonia in 1980s and now local Government official)

Argall, Jane: 8 October 2020 in Durban (librarian at Diakonia, co-editor with Kearney of 2018 book of +Hurley's letters)

Briard, Jacques: 17 January 2022 via Zoom (manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

Campbell, Alex: 18 January 2022 via Zoom (former Oblate priest originally from Durban)

Cason, Fred and (†)Marylyn: 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

Ceruti, Ines: 8 April 2019 in Johannesburg (member of the Grail)

Chikane, Frank: 14 September 2021 via Zoom (Secretary General of SACC 1987-94)

Colussi, Mario: 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney)

Coovadia, Jerry and Hamad, Zubie: 18 January 2022 in Durban (Struggle activists and husband and wife doctors)

Cormick Dina: 21 December 2020 in Durban (freelance designer for Diakonia)

Corcoran, Cathy: 24 January 2022 (CAFOD manager with responsibility for South Africa in 1980s/90s)

Criticós, Costas: 4 September 2021 via Zoom (building consultant to both Diakonia in early 1990s and Denis Hurley Centre early 2010s)

De la Croix, Berenice: 30 September and 9 October 2020 in Durban (personal friend in later years)

Egan, Anthony: 16 October 2020 via Zoom (Jesuit priest and theologian)

de Haas, Mary: 30 September 2020 in Durban (fellow activist and mother-in-law to Kearney's niece Ursula)

de Haas, Ursula: 27 October 2020 in Durban (daughter of Kearney's younger brother Brian)

Duval, Sydney: 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (Catholic activist, journalist and long-time friend)

Dziva, Doug: 15 March 2021 in Pietermaritzburg (Director of KZN Christian Council)

Erwin, Alec: 19 August 2022 via Zoom (trade unionist; later Cabinet Minister 1996-2008)

Franks, Vanessa: 2 October 2020 in Durban (Kearney's secretary at Diakonia)

Gandhi, Ela: 18 March 2021 in Durban (fellow founder of Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

Gardner, Mary: 2 October 2020 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of Colin Gardner, Chair of Christian Institute)

Goad, Daphne: 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

Goemans, Loek: 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of the Grail)

Gounden, Vasu: 18 February 2022 in Durban (Executive Director of Accord from 1992)

Graham, Paul: 13 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Methodist youth worker in 1980s)

Hemson, Crispin: 10 March 2021 in Durban (Director of ICON at DUT)

Hudson, Norman and Estelle: 18 September 2020 in Pinetown (Methodist Bishop Natal Coastal 1990-1996 and onetime Chair of Diakonia, and his wife)

Irvine, Colleen: 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (personal friend and involved in Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace in the 1970s/80s)

Irvine, Doug: 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (personal friend, colleague at University of Natal, and Chair of Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace in the 1970s/80s)

Joseph, Hester: 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

Kaufmann, Larry: 12 Oct 2020 in Durban (Redemptorist priest and activist)

Keane, Marie-Henry: 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

Kearney, Sarah: 17 September 2020 (daughter of Kearney's older brother Jack)

Kerchhoff, Joan: 6 April 2022 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of Peter Kerchhoff, head of PACSA)

Lindegger, Graham: 1 November 2020 in Pietermaritzburg (student at St David's Inanda 1964-68)

Linden, Ian: 10 September 2021 via Zoom (Manager at CIIR, UK-based donor)

Mahomed, AV: 15 September 2020 in Durban (Chair of Jumma Masjid Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

Matthias, Julie: 20 November 2020 in Durban (secretary to +Hurley 1976-87 and secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust 2017-19)

McCrindle, Tim: 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney)

McKay, Anne: 21 October 2021 in Durban (communications officer at Diakonia)

McKay, Priscilla: 18 September 2020 in Durban (fellow Catholic activist)

(f)Mkame, Liz: 17 December 2020 in Pinetown (co-worker at Diakonia)

Moore, Anne: 17 Oct 2020 in Johannesburg (member of Grail community)

Moran, Brendan: 16 March 2021 in Durban (member of End Conscription Campaign)

Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu: 26 May 2022 in Durban (Kearney's successor as Director of Diakonia 2004-2020; sometime Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

(I)Nadal, Paul: 26 October 2020 in Durban (Catholic Monsignor, Vicar-General to +Hurley 1984-94, and Patron/ Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

Napier, Wilfrid: 28 September 2020 in Durban (Catholic Archbishop of Durban 1992-2021 and Cardinal from 2001)

Nicholson, Chris: 1 September 2021 in Durban (founder of Durban Legal Resources Centre, lawyer during 1985 detention trial; later high court judge)

(I)Nolan, Albert: 18 Oct 2020 in Boksburg GP (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

Ntamubano, Jean-Marie: 14 September 2022 in Durban (manager of Denis Hurley Centre from 2015)

Nuttall, Michael: 23 September 2020 in Howick (Anglican Bishop of Natal 1982-1999)

Nyuswa, Mxolisi: 5 May 2022 via Zoom (Head of KwaZulu Regional Christian Council)

Oliver, Di: 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

Pearson, Peter-John: 12 April 2021 in Cape Town (Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Cape Town; director of Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office)

Phillip, Rubin: 25 May 2022 in Durban (Anglican Bishop of Natal 1999-2015; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

Smith, Tim: 2 September 2021 via Zoom (former Jesuit Regional Superior)

Snyman, Deon: 6 January 2021 in Malmesbury (Dutch Reformed Church Dominee and co-worker at Diakonia)

Steele, Richard: 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

Taylor, Peter: 1 February 2021 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother with Kearney)

Thaw, Davine: 21 February 2022 in Durban (consultant to Diakonia and Denis Hurley Centre)

Thompson, Illa: 28 September 2022 in Durban (member of End Conscription Campaign, PR consultant to Diakonia and Denis Hurley Centre)

Tully, Stephen: 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

Verryn, Paul: 21 March 2021 in Johannesburg (activist and Methodist Bishop Central District 1997-2009)

Vinsen, Coral: 21 December 2020 in Durban (member of the Black Sash)

Vorster, Mike: 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia from 1984, later Methodist Bishop Natal Coastal 2009-2018 and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

Warmback, Andrew: 21 Oct 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest and co-worker at Diakonia)

Yeats, Charles: 18 May 2022 via Zoom (Conscientious Objector)

Attached is a copy of the interview guide that was used.

PROPOSED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Format: Semi-Structured Interview lasting approximately 60-90 mins

(10 question areas x 6-9 minutes each)

1. Briefly describe your relationship with Paddy Kearney. When did you first meet? In what context? How long did you know him? How well do you feel you knew him?
2. How do you feel about the idea of research about Kearney's life being conducted? To whom do you think this research would be of value? What should be its key message?
3. Focusing on each area of Kearney's life when you knew him:
 - i. In what ways did you see him working as an activist?
 - ii. What do you think motivated his work as an activist?
 - iii. Who were the main people who influenced him?
 - iv. What written works do you recall him being influenced by?
4. How would you describe Kearney's relationship with South Africa? With the Nationalist Government? With the Struggle movement? With the post-94 ANC Government?
5. How would you describe Kearney's relationship with Catholic Church? Did this change over time? How do you feel Kearney felt about his status as a lay man?
6. In what ways do you feel Kearney changed over the time that you knew him?
7. What recollection do you have of specific memorable incidents involving Kearney: for example in national meetings, diocesan meetings, academic circles, religious houses, parish groups, informal gatherings, political meetings?
8. What do you feel Kearney would have been most proud of? What would have most disappointed him?
9. Did Kearney ever do something that really surprised you? What and why?
10. How would you characterise the differences (if any) between the public Kearney and the private Kearney? Who do you think knew him best?

Appendix A: Kearney's own sense of racial identity

Background

In Chapter 4, I quote some references to Kearney on his departure from Diakonia which drew attention to his race and suggested that he was viewed differently by (some) black staff and by (some) white staff. I therefore want to explore, based on his own self-disclosure and also comments made about him by others, his sense of his own racial identity.

In doing this, I (reluctantly) conform to the South Africa standard which assumes that race can be used as substantive noun for a fixed category of person. I also conform to the South African usage of the categories of black, coloured, Indian and white. For simplicity, I will avoid using inverted commas around the term race, or any of the racial categories. But, from the outset, I want to declare that I regard not only those four terms but the very category of race itself as at best contested and in most cases invalid: the use of inverted commas would draw attention to my belief that they are terms which are not fixed and not naturally occurring. This approach is widely supported in academic literature.¹⁴⁵⁴

It is also, interestingly, supported by Vatican II. Although the documents decry the problem of racial prejudice, the term race in the singular is used commonly by the Council Fathers in a positive and inclusive way to mean 'the human race'; the only time they allow themselves to use the term 'races' in the plural - suggesting different groups of people – are in a few situations where they immediately stress the importance of unity and equality.¹⁴⁵⁵

Hurley and Race

Before I look at Kearney's comments about his own sense of race, I will start with comments that he makes about +Hurley. These are important because of the enormous influence that +Hurley had on Kearney but also – as pointed out by Sr Marie-Henry Keane – the two of them shared a very similar background, even if born 27 years apart.¹⁴⁵⁶

Given his background, it would not be surprising if +Hurley had grown up with a strong sense of his white identity and, with that, an unquestioned and presumed superiority: in this he would have been completely typical of South Africans with his background. There is some evidence that this was the case with +Hurley and that Kearney is initially worried about admitting this. When he travels to the UK and Ireland in 2006 to research his biography of +Hurley, he confides to his journal his concerns about racist comments made by the young +Hurley and whether or not to include them in the book. For example, Kearney comments on writing the section about +Hurley traveling to Europe and the comments he made (in a letter) about the Indian passengers on the Carnarvon Castle.

¹⁴⁵⁴ For example: Williams, Patricia *Seeing a Colour-Blind Future* (London Virago, 1997); Solomos, John & Back, Les. *Racism and Society*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996); Essed, Philomena & Goldberg, David eds. *Race Critical Theories*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Bulmer, Martin & Solomos, John eds. *Racism* (Oxford: OUP, 1999)

¹⁴⁵⁵ For example: *Gaudium et Spes* 75

¹⁴⁵⁶ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

“Either the Hurley family will hate me if I mention it; or Margaret Horton Canton¹⁴⁵⁷ will despise and harass me if I exclude it; perhaps I should let Jeremy [Hurley] know.”¹⁴⁵⁸ The next day he is still concerned about the Archbishop’s comments on Indians “How will faithful Indian and Coloured Catholics feel about their beloved Archbishop?” He also recognises that this could damage +Hurley’s chances of canonisation if it is held against him.¹⁴⁵⁹

In the end, he does include the offending quotation in the biography.¹⁴⁶⁰ The collection of published correspondence that follows nine years later contains the whole letter which at least provides some context.¹⁴⁶¹

But interestingly, Kearney recognises that it is not only prejudice based on skin colour that he needs to confront. He also struggles to write about +Hurley’s understanding of the Irish attitude towards the English and how this becomes more negative while he is in Ireland, having inherited a pro-English attitude from his parents.¹⁴⁶² (+Hurley was arriving in Ireland in 1932 when the wound of Irish partition was still only 11 years old.) In commenting on +Hurley, Kearney sadly gives no insight into his own view of the historic relationship between the Irish and the English. In his interview, Brendan Moran was at pains to stress how important Irishness was to Kearney’s identity:

We are both African men with Irish history. It’s where our fire came from. Irish history was so important to Paddy – he used to attend the Irish history meetings at the clubhouse. He publicly identified as Irish.¹⁴⁶³

However, since this is not substantiated by any other interviewee, nor by anything in Kearney’s own writings, we might conclude that it is mostly projection on Moran’s part. Given the importance to Kearney of asserting a South African identity – and a South African identity that embraced people of all colours – one can imagine that he did not want to fall prey to the accusation levelled at South Africans who stemmed from the British Isles that they were *soutpiel*.¹⁴⁶⁴

Once the biography is published, Kearney is more comfortable with confronting +Hurley’s youthful racism and sees it instead as an opportunity to present evidence of the scale of the Archbishop’s conversion to the cause of justice. Thus, in 2010, he delivers a paper provocatively titled: “From racist youth to anti-Apartheid archbishop: snapshots of a difficult transition”. In this, he explores events and themes in the life of +Hurley whom he calls ‘a typically racist white youth’, leading to his becoming a bold and courageous opponent of Apartheid as an archbishop. He quotes him directly:

I speak to you as one who was born into the privileged race of South Africa, who grew up accepting ... the fact that there were two kinds of men, utterly, completely, inevitably distinct; one superior, the boss, the master; the other inferior, the servant, the underdog; one with a white face, the real man; the other ... with a dark face, half a

¹⁴⁵⁷ The writing is unclear so this might not be exact; I have not been able to substantiate the name from other sources.

¹⁴⁵⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 “Morning Pages: April-June 2006” (30 April 2006, London)

¹⁴⁵⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 “Morning Pages: April-June 2006” (1 May 2006, London)

¹⁴⁶⁰ Kearney, G Paddy. *Guardian of the Light* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2009) 25

¹⁴⁶¹ Denis, Philippe, Kearney, Paddy & Argall, Jane eds. *A Life in Letters – selected correspondence of Denis Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2018) 14-18 (DH to the Hurley family, from Braemar Road, Cape Town, 26 January 1932)

¹⁴⁶² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 “Morning Pages: April-June 2006” (3 May 2006, London)

¹⁴⁶³ Moran, Brendan. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (Member of End Conscription Campaign)

¹⁴⁶⁴ “Definition of *soutpiel*”, *Dictionary of South African English* <https://dsae.co.za/entry/soutpiel/e06732> (accessed 2 October 2022)

man; and with that dark face I associated, and I apologise to all those whom the words offend, all that was unpleasant and uncouth and uncivilised.¹⁴⁶⁵

In a later paper in 2016, Kearney identifies +Hurley's experience in Europe as the key to understanding what prompted him to change.

Years later, reflecting on his studies overseas, Hurley said that he had left South Africa 'very much as a white boy'. When he returned in 1940, he discovered that all the social teaching he had learnt in Rome challenged 'in a most striking way ... the racial situation in South Africa.' He was ready, at least at an intellectual or cerebral level, to take up the cudgels. ... He was still a long way from being the activist he would become in later life.¹⁴⁶⁶

I mention these examples of Kearney commenting on +Hurley because I think there are some useful parallels. For both of them it was the experience of being outside South Africa that helped them to question the racial identity (and racial prejudices) that were typical of their class and culture at that time. But I think it is fair to say that Kearney did not start off needing as much conscientisation as +Hurley did: there is no evidence of youthful racial prejudice to match the youthful denominational prejudice that was mentioned in Chapter 3.

Kearney's exposures overseas

There is nothing in the letters from Kearney's first exposure overseas to give much insight into his personal racial perspective aged 16. We know from Colussi, that his second exposure overseas as a Marist novice in Australia meant that he lived with non-white people for the first time and that he would have heard the comments that other white people (in this case Australians) made about racist white South Africans.¹⁴⁶⁷ But we do not have Kearney's personal comments on that experience.

We do however have some insights from his third exposure overseas when he travelled to America, Mexico, Italy, UK and sent letters home to his parents for the whole duration of the trip (19 Sept 1972 – 30 Nov 1973).¹⁴⁶⁸

For example, he writes very enthusiastically from Toledo Ohio about the project he is working on (led by a Black American, Mr Wes Jones, Director of the Afro-American project) which aims:

...to improve the poor self-image of the negro student by showing him what contributions his people have made to the USA and by teaching him something of his history – the project also draws up materials for use with white children to improve their respect for the blacks. The work they are doing is of outstanding calibre, and one could dearly wish to see a similar approach in South Africa – but we're a long way from that. Some people are very amused to

¹⁴⁶⁵ Kearney, G Paddy. *Faith in Action* (Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal Christian Council, 2017) 155 ("From racist youth to anti-Apartheid archbishop: snapshots of a difficult transition", *Midlands Meander Literary Festival*, 8 August 2010)

¹⁴⁶⁶ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 148 ("Denis Hurley and the Great Dictators: a reflection on his studies in Rome in the 1930s", South African National Society Durban, 9 February 2016)

¹⁴⁶⁷ Colussi, Mario. Personal interview by author, 13 and 16 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹⁴⁶⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/C/1 "Kearney's letters to his parents, September 1972 to November 1973"

think of a white South African working on the Afro-American project but so far I haven't encountered any prejudice.¹⁴⁶⁹

I infer from this a cheeky irony in his tone of voice: contrasting the prejudice that he would be expected to have towards his black colleague with the prejudice that he feels that they might justifiably have towards him. A letter a few days later confirms that he is learning to see white South Africans as others might see them and realise how problematic that could be. He describes a visit to the house of his lecturer, Dr Leo Leonard, who is a white South African and exclaims to his parents that he 'has a picture of Dr Verwoerd on the wall!'.¹⁴⁷⁰

His increasing ability to be objective about racial issues is displayed in a letter a few months later in which he is describing the area where he lives:

Upton Avenue, one is told is 'becoming a bad area' – now lest that send you into some sort of panic let me translate the term for you; it simply means that more black people are moving here than whites; the whites of course are moving further out to the suburbs. Someone joked that 'Integration is the time between the first black family moving in and the last white family moving out'.....You racist South Africans will be relieved to know that there are no blacks living in this apartment block.

Two interesting comments come from this paragraph: first, that in calling his parents (with only partial humour) 'you racist South Africans' he is clearly distancing himself from the tribe. And secondly that he clearly does not regard as 'black' the Iranian flatmate he had mentioned in a previous letter, even though in South African terms at the time a white person would no more have lived with an Iranian (who would be classified as coloured or Indian) than with an African.¹⁴⁷¹

The final comments, on the journey towards self-awareness, are from the end of his trip when he is in the UK. He expected, but did not receive, 'a cool reception' at Oxford from Prof Kenneth Kirkwood who was the Rhodes Professor of Race Relations. It is not clear why Kearney thought the reception would be cool since Kirkwood, like Kearney, was a white South African liberal and in fact had founded the Institute of Social Research at the University of Natal in Durban. But more interesting is what happens when he meets a non-white person in the field:

Cooler reception came from the librarian (Indian) at the Institute of Race Relations who said that it would not be possible for him to speak to me. ("All white South Africans are guilty until proved innocent!"). However, he asked one of his white assistants to show me around. Not a bad thing for a South African to get some practical idea of what Apartheid is like.¹⁴⁷²

These small self-disclosures to me betray a number of insights into Kearney. That, while conscious of being white, he wants to distance himself from the baggage that comes with that identity; that he is enjoying the freedom of being able to view himself, and people like him, with some distance; and that he is not surprised if others have prejudices against him and that this does not anger him.

¹⁴⁶⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/C/1 "Kearney's letters to his parents, September 1972 to November 1973" (14 October 1972)

¹⁴⁷⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/C/1 "Kearney's letters to his parents, September 1972 to November 1973" (31 October 1972)

¹⁴⁷¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/C/1 "Kearney's letters to his parents, September 1972 to November 1973" (3 February 1973)

¹⁴⁷² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/C/1 "Kearney's letters to his parents, September 1972 to November 1973" (10 October 1973)

Many years later he recounts another incident which shows that – even though he does not exploit his ‘white privilege’ – he is aware that he still carries it. He is describing some difficulties that he is having at a Chicago post office and wonders why the official will not solve his problem:

He was perfectly pleasant about it and I don't think he was punishing me for being a white South African.¹⁴⁷³

‘White Liberal’

White people like Kearney, who showed sympathy for non-white South Africans and for the political cause of a racially equal South Africa, were often grouped together at that time under the general heading of ‘White Liberals’. This was a term of pride for those who shared these values; equally it was used as a term of disparagement by those who did not. The political institution that was the Liberal Party had already been banned (in 1968) by the time that Kearney was politically active so it would have been too late for him to join even if he wanted to. Also there is no evidence that +Hurley was ever a member. But they both were associated, socially and intellectually, with people who had been leading lights in the Liberal Party, not least their leader Alan Paton, an academic at the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of Natal. For example, Paton was behind the journal *Reality* which has been referenced and to which Kearney contributed.

Paton uses memorably self-deprecating words to describe himself: ‘like so many other liberals, useless but decent.’¹⁴⁷⁴ Is this a danger that someone like Kearney could have fallen into? We have already shown that Kearney was far from ‘useless’ and certainly always ‘decent’. But was he living down to Turner’s prediction (accusing himself as well as others):

White liberals remain Whites first and liberals second.¹⁴⁷⁵

Some interesting comments came from people who were interviewed. First from other ‘white liberals’! Hemson speaks positively about how Kearney managed his white identity:

Paddy was more conscious of his whiteness than most white people would have been at the time. He would ask the question: how do we minister to whites? How do we change their attitudes? There was actually more awareness of the need to do this among Christians (like Paddy) than among the Marxists. Paddy was genuinely trying to be a white person who was connecting with black people at a level of deep significance. This all came from his profound desire for justice.¹⁴⁷⁶

Aitken is less complimentary and the questions she raises are significant.

Did Paddy have any real personal friends across the colour line? I don’t think so. He didn’t learn Zulu. I am not even sure that he tried to greet people in Zulu. Although he did, when appropriate, put in the effort to have an interpreter so that the other person could speak

¹⁴⁷³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 “Morning Pages: May-July 2005” (22 June 2005, Chicago)

¹⁴⁷⁴ Paton, Alan. *Journey Continued*. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 106

¹⁴⁷⁵ Turner, Rick. *Eye of the Needle* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1980) 138

¹⁴⁷⁶ Hemson, Crispin. Personal interview by author, 10 March 2021 in Durban (Director of ICON at DUT)

freely in their own language. But this was in contrast to +Hurley who could say Mass and preach in Zulu.¹⁴⁷⁷

In Chapter 2, I commented on how in the 1970s Kearney (and his then wife) had travelled a long distance to attend a coloured Catholic parish and not the white-dominated parish in the area where they lived. Cardinal Napier had commented that Kearney later ended up doing something similar ('as a form of protest') by staying as the lone white parishioner at the Cathedral when the profile of the parish changed.¹⁴⁷⁸

Tully – who was his parish priest at that time – sees Kearney as transcending racial categories.

In 1994 many white people left Emmanuel Cathedral and the Zulus came; by 2001 the Zulus were leaving and the [African] refugees were arriving. But Paddy stayed part of the parish. But he was not conscious of being white there and others were not conscious of it. He was not seen as white; Paddy was just Paddy. It was partly because he had no airs and graces.

He did sometimes wear a Madiba shirt [a collarless African shirt popular with Mandela] but this was not a statement; it was just what he wore. He was certainly highly revered by parishioners; but it was not because he was white. But non-whites did have a higher regard for him than whites because he was fighting their fight.¹⁴⁷⁹

Views of those close to Kearney

What are the views of some of those 'non-whites' with whom he was close? First of all, two people who were born in South Africa but would be categorised as Indian.

I don't think he ever classified himself as a white man. He was never showing superiority. He never classified himself above others. He took all people – black, Indian, coloured – as being on the same level as him. But he did not drop his standards. He was not embarrassed about being white.¹⁴⁸⁰

When you talk about it I suddenly realise that Paddy was white.¹⁴⁸¹

And what about people who are black? Chikane commented:

Paddy became human and saw other people as human beings and related to them as if he was not white. It was just what God wanted us to be. His whiteness did not matter. I never thought of him as a white person.¹⁴⁸²

¹⁴⁷⁷ Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

¹⁴⁷⁸ Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

¹⁴⁷⁹ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of DHC)

¹⁴⁸⁰ Mahomed, AV. Personal interview by author, 15 September 2020 in Durban (Chair of Jumma Masjid Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁴⁸¹ Gandhi, Ela. Personal interview by author, 18 March 2021 in Durban (co-founder of Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁴⁸² Chikane, Frank. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2021 via Zoom. (Secretary General of SACC 1987-94)

This could be used as evidence to argue that Kearney was quite different from the typical 'White Liberal'. Nyuswa is also a black Christian leader and much younger than Chikane. He was very close to Kearney through many years of being mentored by him:

I remember watching Paddy in workshops under the trees – Paddy was colourless. If he was with yellow people, he would turn yellow, if he was with red people he would turn red. I never experienced any distance between us. The ecumenical work was the common language which created the identity between us. There was nothing to be reminded that he was a white man. Even when it comes to diet. He did not have a different dish – he just served himself from the same dish as others.

The only hindrance was that he did not speak the language – though he did understand it. He did not want to come out about his understanding of Zulu. He was there as an observer but he would make comments in English which would capture perfectly the meaning of the Zulu conversation. He also understood Zulu habits and culture and practices. But I can't recall him ever trying to speak Zulu.¹⁴⁸³

In considering racial attitudes in South Africa, we also need to distinguish between two types of white people. The legacy of the Anglo-Boer Wars means that there can be just as much animosity between Afrikaners and English-speaking white South Africans ('Anglos') as between people of different skin colour. Note that in South Africa even someone like Kearney of Irish descent would be 'Anglo' for racial purposes with no distinction drawn by the Afrikaners between people of English descent or of Irish. This is ironic since in Ireland, Anglo would be used in two quite different ways: people living in Ireland who did not identify as Irish would use it to proudly assert their English (and usually Anglican) heritage; people living in Ireland who did identify as Irish (presumably Kearney's ancestors) would use it pejoratively to describe the same group.¹⁴⁸⁴

There was at least one Afrikaner with whom Kearney was close, Ds Snyman.

I was actually surprised that Paddy allowed me to become his friend. There is a subtle superiority that the Anglos like to project. But I never experienced that with Paddy though I did with another Anglo at Diakonia. It struck me that, by the time I got there, Paddy had no one with whom to reflect on his experience of being a white person in a black world. He had a great sensitivity to the way in which the Afrikaners had been persecuted by the British. I think he had more hope that Afrikaners would transform than the English.¹⁴⁸⁵

This would suggest that Kearney's concerns about those who were racially oppressed were in fact general concerns for anyone who was oppressed. That meant his concern extended to a desire to affirm all groups even if they (like the Afrikaners) had once been the oppressors.

Kearney had a particular way to demonstrate this when, in May 2010, he won the Murray-Tutu Award for his biography about +Hurley.¹⁴⁸⁶ Andrew Murray (of Scottish Calvinist origin) was a Dutch Reformed Church Dominee. Historically, the prestigious award had only been for Afrikaans

¹⁴⁸³ Nyuswa, Mxolisi. Personal interview by author, 5 May 2022 via Zoom (Head of KwaZulu Regional Christian Council)

¹⁴⁸⁴ Famously, the Duke of Wellington had been born in Ireland and was asked once if he considered himself an Irishman. He replied: "Just because a man is born in a stable that does not make him a horse."

¹⁴⁸⁵ Snyman, Deon. Personal interview by author, 6 January 2021 in Malmesbury (Dutch Reformed Church Dominee and co-worker at Diakonia)

¹⁴⁸⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/ 5 "Murray/ Tutu Book Award – May 2010"

theologians but, with the new South Africa, it has been renamed the Murray-Tutu Award and there was now a category for an English-language writer.

In his acceptance speech, Kearney relates the story of a Pietermaritzburg Debating Society competition in 1945 in which a school student who spoke in Afrikaans was being teased by English-speaking contestants. +Hurley showed support for the boy and even spoke in Afrikaans himself. He uses this to show that +Hurley's political differences with (most) Afrikaners were not evidence of personal hostility. He then allied himself with the same position by using the same method for winning over his audience – Kearney's two final paragraphs were also in Afrikaans (though personally this author never heard him speak the language in the eight years of our acquaintance!).

Personal Transformation

Like so many white Christians of his generation fighting for justice, Kearney had to realise the need for a personal transformation if he was to be effective in the transformation of society. Turner argues that whites need to change because they are also victims: this is not an ideal way for anyone to live.

In South Africa whites as well as blacks are victims of the social structure. They are of course victims of a different kind: the bulk of the whites are responsible victims, who exercise coercive power to keep the structure in existence.¹⁴⁸⁷

But he also warns against the subtle way in which whites, especially English-speaking whites, might appear to be progressive but actually have the opposite effect. For example, he points out that the job of the English language universities is 'to prepare white technocrats for their positions within the white elite'.

Their pose of virtuous academic neutrality in fact means they are efficient servants of the existing interest structure.¹⁴⁸⁸

A fellow-traveller, and unlike Turner a fellow-believer, says something similar but more positively:

We as Whites have had our vision [of the Gospel] blurred and our hearing hardened by living in this society inescapably as part of the oppressing class and also by centuries of teaching which, while claiming to be 'pure' Christianity, is based on and influenced by Western thought and Western cultural and social values.¹⁴⁸⁹

Turner had used the 'eye of the needle' image from Mt 19: 23-26 to describe something that is almost – but not quite – impossible. Cosmas Desmond also sees transformation for White South Africans as something which is almost – but not quite – impossible but can be achieved with the help of Black South Africans:

¹⁴⁸⁷ Turner, *Eye of the Needle*, 10

¹⁴⁸⁸ Turner, *Eye of the Needle*, 137

¹⁴⁸⁹ Desmond, Cosmas. *Christians or Capitalists?* (London: Bowerdean, 1978) 47

This does not mean that Blacks are necessarily better Christians than Whites, but that Blacks can more effectively correct the distortions that Whites have introduced into Christianity and can thus lead both Blacks and Whites to a more authentic practice of Christianity.¹⁴⁹⁰

+Tutu, in an interview with Wallis and Hollyday, says something similar:

We who are Black have an advantage over those who are White. But I think a number of Whites have come to the experience of seeing some of the pain, and it's carried into their hearts.¹⁴⁹¹

Kearney was one of those whites who carried in his heart some of that experience of pain: his own pain as a result of intimidation and detention; and the pain of those he took the trouble to get close to. I do not know if Kearney would have gone so far as to voice the idea that Black Christians must liberate Whites: but he would certainly have read the article in *Reality* at about the same time that he was contributing to the journal and, I suspect, would have agreed with the conclusions of the author:

Be it as it may, white people, whether we like it or not, are our brothers. We owe them not just passive love but creative and creating love.

As a black Christian, I feel obliged to thank white European Christians for having realised that God did not send them to white people only, but also to me, black as I am. In saying this, I hope that white people will be generous enough to reciprocate this sentiment of mine, as I feel moved at this hour that God has also sent me as a black person to tell them the Good News: that God has died in Christ to liberate the white man from the urge to oppress the black man.

God will ask: 'Black man, where were you when the white man abandoned my Gospel and went to destruction?'. When the black man answers: 'I was only a k*ff*r, how could I dare to preach to my baas?', God will say: 'Was Christ's resurrection not sufficient to liberate you, black man, from that kind of spiritual and psychological death? Go to eternal condemnation, black man, for you did not muster courage to save your white brother.'¹⁴⁹²

¹⁴⁹⁰ Desmond, *Christians or Capitalists?*, 150

¹⁴⁹¹ Wallis, Jim and Hollyday, Joyce. *Crucible of Fire: the Church confronts Apartheid* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1989) 65

¹⁴⁹² Buthelezi, Manas. "Black Christians must liberate Whites". *Reality: a journal of liberal and radical opinion* (1973, 5:3) 5

Appendix B: How successfully does Vatican II present the Apostolate of the Laity?

Development in the understanding of the laity

The Catholic tradition into which Kearney was born in the middle of the 20th Century was one which drew a very hard line between lay people and a tiny separated group of special Catholics. Sometimes this group only included ordained men (bishops and priests), sometimes it extended to include religious brothers and sisters who, though not ordained, had taken vows. Either way, a clear distinction was drawn between those who lived apart from the world, and the vast majority of Catholics who lived in the world (the lay people). There is extensive literature on this subject and I do not intend to review it all in this short Appendix. However, I have been informed by key writers who had an influence before and immediately after the Council (Congar, Schillebeeckx) as well as later writers who are cited below.¹⁴⁹³

Not only was it a hard distinction but it was one which focused all its interest on the tiny separated minority, with almost nothing to say about the vast majority. Goldie, for example, has found an 1891 German theological dictionary *Kirchenlexicon* which does have an entry for *Laien* but then merely refers the reader to the entry *Clerus*. The implication is that the only thing worth saying about lay people is that they are not clergy!¹⁴⁹⁴

But what is the origin of drawing such a hard line between different categories of Catholics? Osborne points out that there is no foundation for this in Scripture:

The negative implications are almost entirely involved with the non-scriptural use of the term *laikos* and with the quite limited scriptural use of the term *klerikos* [usually referring to selection by lot]. Moreover, the New Testament does not use the terms ordination, ordained or non-ordained at all.¹⁴⁹⁵

I do not intend to present a full history of the development of the lay person in the Catholic Church: that would be to try and rival Osborne's 600 pages! But, in summary, I would argue (with Osborne, Rademacher, Lakeland and others) that there were four phases up to Vatican II:

- 1) a New Testament period with distinctions of ministry but not of status;
- 2) from the Early Church till the end of the First Millennium, when there were categories but some fluidity between them, without much emphasis on the separatedness of the clergy and no enforced celibacy for priests;

¹⁴⁹³ Congar, Yves. *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of Laity*. Donald Atwater trans. (London: Bloomsbury, 1957)

¹⁴⁹⁴ Goldie, Rosemary. "Lay, Laity, Laicity: a bibliographical survey of three decades". *Elements for a Theology of the Laity. The Laity Today – bulletin of the Pontifical Council for the Laity* (1979, 26), 123. (Goldie in fact was the first woman to serve in an executive role in the Roman Curia when she was undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity from 1967 to 1976. She also served as one of the fifteen women auditors during Vatican II.)

¹⁴⁹⁵ Osborne, Kenan B. *Ministry – lay ministry in the Catholic Church, its history and theology*. (Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 1993)

3) the first half of the Second Millennium after the East and West of the Church divided. During this period, celibacy was imposed on all priests in the West, there was a great growth in orders of vowed men and women living apart from society, and the scholastic model of theology began to dominate.

4) the Council of Trent until Vatican II, when the distinctions between clergy and laity were hardened and exaggerated, and levels of control further tightened, as a defensive move firstly against the Reformation and then against the Enlightenment. This greatly increased the status of clergy and religious, and greatly diminished the status of the laity.

It is in reaction to phase 4) above that Vatican II sets out its vision for the laity within the Church. Rademacher sees the assertion of the priest as separate and as a perfect model of the Christian life, as a direct reaction to the Reformation.

With the Protestant Reformation threatening its teaching, the Catholic Church concentrated on *official* ordained ministers. After Trent, these ministers were trained under tight control in special seminaries under the watchful eye of the diocesan bishop.¹⁴⁹⁶

A separated clergy was not only more official but also more controllable. As the role of the clergy was enhanced, so the role of the laity diminished. What is more, the notion of the laity was in danger of being seen by the Church hierarchy not just as neutral or negligible but actually hostile to the Church.

In a number of Roman Catholic writings of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the very term 'lay' connoted anti-clericalism, rejection of the Catholic Church, a prolongation of the secularist ideas which Church leadership associated with the French Revolution.¹⁴⁹⁷

For the most part, lay people had no role to play. Pius X makes this very clear in his 1906 encyclical:

The one duty of the multitude is to allow themselves to be led and, like a docile flock, to follow the Pastors.¹⁴⁹⁸

There were a few instances where lay people operated independently of the bishops. For example, Novak mentions in the United States the Catholic Congress of 1889 as 'a congress of laymen, called by laymen, organised by laymen'.¹⁴⁹⁹ But given their fears, it is not surprising that any role that most bishops saw for the laity was very much under their control. Thus, we see the emergence of a number of movements under the title of 'Catholic Action' formalised by Pope Pius XI in 1930.¹⁵⁰⁰ These recognised the role of Catholic lay people in the workplace (e.g. Young Christian Workers), but operating on behalf of the hierarchy.

Osborne, when reviewing the role of lay people in the church in the 19th and 20th centuries, recognises that there were some Catholic lay movements 'under the impetus of lay men and women' and *without* the leadership of the hierarchy. He notes that while some saw these as an

¹⁴⁹⁶ Rademacher, William. *Lay Ministry – a theological, spiritual and pastoral handbook*. (New York NY: Crossroad, 1991) 1

¹⁴⁹⁷ Osborne, *Ministry*, 18

¹⁴⁹⁸ *Vehementer Nos* 8, quoted in Lakeland, Paul. *Catholicism at the Crossroads – how the Laity can save the Church*. (New York NY: Continuum, 2003) 30

¹⁴⁹⁹ Novak, Michael. "What the Laity can Teach the Church". *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 46

¹⁵⁰⁰ Aumann, Jordan. "Non-ordained Ministry and Lay Apostolate after Vatican Council II". *Angelicum* (1986, 63-3) 405

essential part of the Church, others saw them as dissident groups. He places these in contrast to what came to be known as Catholic Action ('the sharing of the laity in the Apostolate of the hierarchy') where hierarchical leadership and control was key.¹⁵⁰¹

At its worst, this reduced the role of laity to one of fulfilling the vocation of the bishop, without any sense that lay people might have a vocation of their own. Rademacher quotes from Pius XI's 1931 encyclical *Non abbiamo bisogno* which, while defending Catholic Action against the attacks of Mussolini, does so to protect the honour of the bishops not the members of Catholic Action themselves. Rademacher concludes:

The laity then will share in the Apostolate, not in virtue of their baptism or the gifts of the Spirit, but in virtue of a special mandate from the bishop who has jurisdiction over them.¹⁵⁰²

What works in Europe is then seen as the operating model for the Church in the rest of the world. Thus Hastings, talking about the Holy Year of 1950 and Pius XII, describes Catholic Action as 'an organisation firmly controlled by the hierarchy' and that this model was proving to be 'a more effective and reassuring one' and 'the model that missionaries were endeavouring to export to other continents'.¹⁵⁰³ Hurley's early focus as a bishop on Catholic Action suggests that this was his approach as well.¹⁵⁰⁴

As I shall show, many things did change at Vatican II, so we are now in a 5th phase. This has been created partly by a change of teaching by the Church but also, since Vatican II, a huge decline in the number of priests and religious. This has led to a number of effects which are perhaps at odds with each other: an increase in the role of the laity, a blurring of the lines between clergy and laity, a defensive assertion of the role of the clergy, the creation of ordained married men as deacons, the emergence of un-ordained lay para-clerics, and a general confusion in respective roles. There is thus a contestation between those who want to return to phase 4) and those who see the possibility of a return to phase 2) or even to phase 1).

What changed at Vatican II?

Fundamentally, the Church's teaching about the laity changed dramatically at Vatican II – not just the specific understanding of the role of the laity *per se* but also how the laity fitted in as part of the Church overall. There were, of course, movements before Vatican II that anticipated and prepared for these changes.

Goldie gives a number of examples. She quotes Pius XII as saying to the College of Cardinals in 1946 "The laity are the Church".¹⁵⁰⁵ She further points out that the World Congress for the Lay Apostolate had already been held twice before Vatican II (in 1951 and 1957).¹⁵⁰⁶ A 1961 bibliography she found called *Laici in Ecclesia* published in Geneva cites 1,412 titles about the laity in the Church.¹⁵⁰⁷ One of the key authors would have been the French Dominican Yves Congar whose *Jalons pour une*

¹⁵⁰¹ Osborne, *Ministry*, 511

¹⁵⁰² Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 77

¹⁵⁰³ Hastings, Adrian. *A History of African Christianity - 1950-75*. (Cambridge: CUP, 1979) 55

¹⁵⁰⁴ Kearney, G Paddy. *Guardian of the Light* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2009) 58

¹⁵⁰⁵ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 110

¹⁵⁰⁶ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 115

¹⁵⁰⁷ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 109

théologie du laicat was published in French in 1953 and appeared in its first English translation in 1957.¹⁵⁰⁸

Goldie quotes from a lecture by Schillebeeckx in 1958 (gendered language uncorrected):

The layman in the Church is a Christian, a member of the ecclesial people, of the kingdom of God on Earth, for which he too bears responsibility. The Church is a missionary, apostolic community, but her mission has a priestly form and a lay form, each is a distinct shape or manifestation of the one Apostolate of the whole Church.¹⁵⁰⁹

So already the notion that lay people had a role in the Church and that that role was distinct from (if complementary) to that of the ordained, is being seeded. At the Council, the Fathers presented this new teaching twice, lest there be any doubt about its importance. The specific ‘Decree on the Laity’ – *Apostolicam Actuositatem* – was promulgated at the end of the Council in November 1965. At almost 12,000 words, it is almost as long as the document on Priesthood, longer than the one on Bishops, and much longer than the one on Religious Life. But all of these 1965 Decrees are anticipated in the longest document of the Council, *Lumen Gentium* which had appeared one year earlier and is styled ‘The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church’. This is where Vatican II introduced the subject of the laity; according to Osborne, the way in which it did so is even more significant:

Of fundamental importance to the basic ecclesiology of Vatican II is the fact that the second chapter of *Lumen Gentium* entitled *De Populo Dei* (‘On the People of God’), was deliberately placed before the chapters on the hierarchy, on ‘lay’ ministry, and on vowed religious. In doing this, the bishops at Vatican II want to describe the common matrix for all Christians.¹⁵¹⁰

The laity are not presented as an add-on or as the lowest layer of the pyramid, but instead situated in the strongest position as being part of the People of God, on a par with those from whom they had been separated since Trent. Shriver makes a claim (that I have not found elsewhere) that it was in fact Archbishop Wojtyla of Krakow who recommended that *Lumen Gentium*, instead of starting with the Pope and working down, should start with the laity “because the Pope and all other ecclesiastics are ‘servants of the servants of God’ – helpers of the laity, inspirers of the laity, spiritual directors of the laity. They are consecrated, not to supplant the laity but to assist them to perform their roles in the world.”¹⁵¹¹ Given the way in which some of the advances of the laity were reversed after 1978, when +Wojtyla became Pope John Paul II, and his tendency to prefer lay movements with a strong clerical component, that is a remarkable claim. (The conventional version of this story is that it was Cardinal Suenens of Belgium who made this suggestion and also proposed the title *Lumen Gentium*.)¹⁵¹²

In his own reminiscences of Vatican II, Suenens provides a negative as well as a positive argument for the need of the Council to focus on the laity:

Our separated brethren reproach us for the sins of clericalisation, of stifling the laity. They believe in the priesthood of all the faithful and assign an important role to them. Often,

¹⁵⁰⁸ Congar, Yves. *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of Laity*. Donald Atwater trans. (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1957)

¹⁵⁰⁹ Goldie, “Lay, Laity, Laicity”, 113

¹⁵¹⁰ Osborne, *Ministry*, 530

¹⁵¹¹ Shriver, Sargent. “Religious Values and the Good Society”. *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 110

¹⁵¹² Lavin, Margaret. *Vatican II – Fifty Years of Evolution and Revolution in the Catholic Church*. (Toronto: Novalis, 2012) 33

when a Catholic leaves the Church and joins a sect, he will say that he has found there a religion in which he is more respected and finds more to do.¹⁵¹³

When so much of the Tridentine model of a separation between lay and clergy was based on its theology of priesthood, it is noteworthy that it is the very word 'priest' that is used by the writers of *Lumen Gentium* as the hinge for their description of who the People of God are. 'Priest' is now a term that can be applied to the un-ordained as well as the ordained.

Christ the Lord, High Priest taken from among human beings, made the new people 'a kingdom and priests to God the Father'. The baptised, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, in order that through all those works which are those of the Christian, they may offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the power of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. ...

Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated: each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power he enjoys, teaches and rules the priestly people; acting in the person of Christ, he makes present the Eucharistic sacrifice, and offers it to God in the name of all the people. But the faithful, in virtue of their royal priesthood, join in the offering of the Eucharist. They likewise exercise that priesthood in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity.¹⁵¹⁴

Osborne concludes:

In the very structuring of the document *Lumen Gentium*, and in the theology behind the structuring, the bishops of Vatican II not only relativized the hierarchy vis-à-vis Jesus (the Christological dimension) but also relativized the hierarchy vis-à-vis gospel discipleship (the ecclesiological dimension).¹⁵¹⁵

He highlights that this approach of reforming the People of God, and not just the hierarchy, links the approach of Vatican II to the Reformation rather than the Counter-Reformation:

Whereas in some of the reform movements of the 1500s, the goal was to reform the people of God, so that from such a reformed group new leadership might arise, the Roman Catholic approach at Trent was clearly the opposite, believing that a reformed leadership, particularly episcopal and presbyteral, would produce a reformed people.¹⁵¹⁶

When talking later about the specific role of the laity within the wider Church, *Lumen Gentium* is not afraid to recognise that there will be unity and also diversity and that this is part of God's plan. Within the People of God, all are brothers (and presumably sisters) of Christ, and so therefore also brothers and sisters of each other, a far cry from the model of subjects and rulers.

¹⁵¹³ Suenens, Léon-Josef. "A Plan for the Whole Council". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 100 (He is quoting from the plan that he presented to John XXIII in 1962, soon after the start of the Council).

¹⁵¹⁴ *Lumen Gentium* 10

¹⁵¹⁵ Osborne, *Ministry*, 540

¹⁵¹⁶ Osborne, *Ministry*, 435

By divine institution, Holy Church is ordered and governed with a wonderful diversity... Therefore, the chosen People of God is one: 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism'; sharing a common dignity as members from their regeneration in Christ, having the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection ...

For the distinction which the Lord made between sacred ministers and the rest of the People of God bears within it a certain union, since pastors and the other faithful are bound to each other by a mutual need. Pastors of the Church, following the example of the Lord, should minister to one another and to the other faithful. These in their turn should enthusiastically lend their joint assistance to their pastors and teachers. Thus, in their diversity, all bear witness to the wonderful unity in the Body of Christ. ...

Therefore, from divine choice the laity have Christ for their brother who though He is the Lord of all, came not to be served but to serve. They also have for their brothers those in the sacred ministry who by teaching, by sanctifying and by ruling with the authority of Christ feed the family of God so that the new commandment of charity may be fulfilled by all.¹⁵¹⁷

For the first time, an Ecumenical Council is acknowledging the specific presence of lay people in the Church. In fact, as Worlock recalls, they even invited a lay person to address the Council, arguably the first lay voice *in aula* since Nicaea. At the 3rd session, Patrick Keegan, then President of YCW International spoke to the assembled bishops:

The lay apostolate cannot be an isolated entity in the Church. It reaches its fullness in close collaboration with all the other members of the Church. By its very nature it demands a constant and regular exchange between the hierarchy and the laity. It is for us as lay people to bring to our pastors our experience of the needs of the world in which we live, and to seek from them guidance in our endeavour to respond to these needs.¹⁵¹⁸

Keegan later commented on *Apostolicam Actuositatem* as 'an epoch-making document in the history of the Church'.

For the first time the apostolic activity of the laity is the object of a conciliar decree. The decree consecrates all the achievements of the lay apostolate of the previous forty years; it also ratifies most solemnly the task of the lay man in the Church, the people of God.¹⁵¹⁹

Lumen Gentium not only acknowledges the presence of lay people but goes even further in attributing to them the threefold functions of Christ that were previously only associated with the ordained.

These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out, for their own part, the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.¹⁵²⁰

All the people of God are thus united in one mission, even if they have different ministries. Worlock quotes Congar as saying:

We rejoice at this return to the idea of ministries, in the plural, in contrast to the usage which for so long has reserved this term for the ministry of the priest alone. Laymen must

¹⁵¹⁷ *Lumen Gentium* 32

¹⁵¹⁸ Worlock, Derek J H. "Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 248

¹⁵¹⁹ Worlock, "Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II", 249

¹⁵²⁰ See Appendix F for an exploration of the *Tria Munera* in relation to Kearney.

be able to exercise this true ministry in the Church, if their apostolic service is to have any kind of stability and is to be recognised in the Christian community.¹⁵²¹

The Fathers then feel they need to define what part of that mission is entrusted to the laity:

What specifically characterises the laity is their secular nature... the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that, by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel, they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven.¹⁵²²

This mission of the laity is by no means an easy one and the Council Fathers are not afraid to set a significant challenge. In fact, one year later, they are using language about the laity which in previous decades would have been expected to be applied to those vowed to religious life:

In the pilgrimage of this life, hidden with Christ in God and free from enslavement to wealth, they aspire to those riches which remain forever, and generously dedicate themselves wholly to the advancement of the kingdom of God and to the reform and improvement of the temporal order in a Christian spirit.

Impelled by divine charity, they do good to all people ... Following Jesus in His poverty, they are neither depressed by the lack of temporal goods nor inflated by their abundance; imitating Christ in His humility, they have no obsession for empty honours but seek to please God rather than humans, ever ready to leave all things for Christ's sake and to suffer persecution for justice sake, as they remember the words of the Lord, If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.¹⁵²³

Contradictions in the teaching of Vatican II with regard to the laity

Lumen Gentium has the difficult task of wanting to assert the dignity of lay people while also explaining how they are distinct from those who are not lay. The challenge of showing how laity and clergy are 'the same but different' inevitably creates confusion, ambiguity and inconsistencies. One of the reasons for this is the desire to hold the tension between wanting to show the *difference* between clergy and laity and also wanting to show the *equality* of all Christians. But the (apparent) contradictions are also the result of the fact that the subject was discussed in different commissions with different constellations and also different positions. For example, though +Hurley was not on the Commission for the Laity, his view on the role of the laity will still have influenced the "Decree on Priestly Training" and he was a member of that Commission.¹⁵²⁴

The application of the word priest to all the baptised in *Lumen Gentium* 10 under the concept of 'the priesthood of all the faithful' then forces the Council to create a new term 'ministerial priesthood' to label those who are priests through ordination and not just by baptism. This creates a potential confusion of language which is not resolved. Osborne suggests that bishops at Vatican II were offered a variety of ways of distinguishing between the priesthood of all believers and the ordained priesthood. They did not endorse any of them but that simply left hanging the question of the meaning of the name 'priest'. It is intriguing to consider the alternatives they were given:

¹⁵²¹ Worlock, "Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II", 242

¹⁵²² *Lumen Gentium* 31

¹⁵²³ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 4

¹⁵²⁴ *Optatam Totius* 11, 20

distinguishing lay vs ordained by talking about a) a 'figurative' or 'spiritual' priesthood vs a 'real' priesthood; b) an 'interior' priesthood vs an 'exterior' priesthood; c) a 'private' priesthood vs a 'public' priesthood; d) an 'incomplete' priesthood vs a 'full' priesthood; and e) (bizarrely!) a 'feminine' priesthood vs a 'masculine' priesthood.¹⁵²⁵

It is not helped that there is inconsistency about who is included in a category: sometimes a certain term is used to refer to all the baptised *including* those who are ordained, and sometimes the same term refers to all the baptised *excluding* those who are ordained.

It is initially clear that the starting point for Vatican II's understanding of the laity is their membership of the People of God which means *all* the baptised. Vatican II uses three different titles for this idea of the common matrix of all Christians: 'people of God', 'the Christian faithful' and 'the priesthood of all believers'. But at other times, it uses these same terms to define the laity over and against the ordained. So, Osborne argues, the same names continue to be used to indicate a non-common situation.¹⁵²⁶

Similarly, where the Pope or bishops or priests 'address the faithful' 'call on the faithful' or 'pray for the faithful' ...the term 'faithful' does not mean all baptised but those who are not the Pope or the bishop or the priest.¹⁵²⁷

Furthermore, Vatican II has to define who the laity are. The definition seems clear from *Lumen Gentium* 31: "The term laity is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in holy orders and those in the state of religious life specially approved by the Church."

It is problematic that this is a negative definition – the laity are those left over after removing certain people. Lakeland offers his students an interesting challenge: to define laity without using the n-word i.e. 'not'. He concludes that it is very hard indeed.¹⁵²⁸

But more problematic is the inconsistent way in which 'lay' is applied: sometimes it seems to follow the *Lumen Gentium* definition; but sometimes it seems to include *all* those who are not ordained (thus leaving religious brothers and sisters in the lay category). For example, throughout *Perfectae Caritatis*, the Vatican II document on religious life, a distinction is drawn between 'clerical and lay religious' – the former being priests who are religious and the latter being brothers who are religious but not ordained and, of course, all sisters.¹⁵²⁹

Osborne tries to salvage this by suggesting that *Lumen Gentium* 31 was not meant to be a definition but a working explanation, though it is unclear if that actually helps.¹⁵³⁰ Earlier on, he does at least suggest that, even if the line is a hard one, it can be re-drawn by the Church. He points out that the 1983 Code of Canon law alters the position of 1917 Code.

The juridical status of sacred ministers is not necessarily divinely given but is determined in church law and is changeable (as indeed it has been changed in several respects by this Code).¹⁵³¹

¹⁵²⁵ Osborne, *Ministry*, 536

¹⁵²⁶ Osborne, *Ministry*, 530

¹⁵²⁷ Osborne, *Ministry*, 534

¹⁵²⁸ Lakeland, *Catholicism at the Crossroads*, 25

¹⁵²⁹ *Perfectae Caritatis* 8, 10, 11

¹⁵³⁰ Osborne, *Ministry*, 538

¹⁵³¹ Code of Canon Law, text and commentary page 132 quoted in Osborne, *Ministry*, 44

If the definition is not always clear, nor is the specificity of the role. The apparently clear role of the laity 'to transform the temporal world' is also blurred. So having said that 'what specifically characterises the laity is their secular nature', *Lumen Gentium* then adds: "It is true that those in holy orders can at times be engaged in secular activities, and even have a secular profession."¹⁵³² Those who are not ordained but vowed (and so may or may not be lay) are also presented as having a role in the temporal order: "Similarly, by their state in life, religious give splendid and striking testimony that the world cannot be transformed and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes."¹⁵³³

Not only do the laity share their secular role with the non-lay, they also share the sacred role.

In fulfilling this mission of the Church, the Christian laity exercise their apostolate both in the Church and in the world, in both the spiritual and the temporal orders. In both orders, the lay person, being simultaneously a believer and a citizen, should be continuously led by the same Christian conscience.¹⁵³⁴

If lay and non-lay are sharing the same apostolates, the issue of who owns the apostolate again arises. Goldie argues that the Council swings back and forth between two positions: *Lumen Gentium* 2 prioritises the active presence of Christians in the world but has consequences for the ministerial priesthood; *Lumen Gentium* 4 returns to the clerical approach which would still leave the layperson a subject of the hierarchy. She says 'this is flagrant' in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*.¹⁵³⁵ For example, there is still an echo of the preference for lay people as an instrument of the hierarchy rather than operating on their own.

Maintaining the proper relationship to Church authorities, the laity have the right to found and control such associations and to join those already existing.¹⁵³⁶

Organisations in which, in the opinion of the hierarchy, the ensemble of these characteristics is realised, must be considered to be Catholic Action even though they take on various forms and titles because of the needs of different regions and peoples.¹⁵³⁷

All associations of the apostolate must be given due appreciation. Those, however, which the hierarchy have praised or recommended as responsive to the needs of time and place, or have ordered to be established as particularly urgent, must be held in highest esteem by priests, religious, and laity and promoted according to each one's ability.¹⁵³⁸

Rademacher suggests that this is inevitable because *Lumen Gentium* continues the 'levels' theology of Trent, keeping the ordained clergy as a category of ministry with the laity defined in contrast with the clergy.

Shared ministry therefore is not accomplished by a common participation in the priesthood of the baptised but by sometimes arbitrary or canonically determined methods of passing on

¹⁵³² *Lumen Gentium* 31

¹⁵³³ *Lumen Gentium* 31

¹⁵³⁴ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 5

¹⁵³⁵ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 121

¹⁵³⁶ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 18

¹⁵³⁷ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 20

¹⁵³⁸ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 21

power from a higher level. Baptism is thus undervalued. Jurisdiction, still linked to levels of ordination, controls and shapes the ministry 'from above'.¹⁵³⁹

He points out that while *Lumen Gentium* 3 presents a new model of episcopacy, it still contains 13 references to Ignatius of Antioch's monarchical view of the bishop: the centre of unity, the chief place among ministers, the teacher of doctrine, the officer of good order.¹⁵⁴⁰

This paradox in the role of the bishop, and especially the role of the pope as Primate, is described by Hebblethwaite in his monumental biography of Paul VI. He contrasts two moves by Paul in 1967-8: a progressive one in setting up the Council of the Laity; and a conservative one by reasserting the Papal magisterium by publishing three encyclicals.¹⁵⁴¹ Moreover, while one of these *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* (confirming the celibacy of priests) was about the ecclesial order, the other two *Populorum Progressio* (on development) and *Humanae Vitae* (on contraception) were clearly in the temporal order. And whereas, in line with *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, input from lay people was sought for the former, it was specifically rejected for the latter.

One of the reasons for these ambiguities is the desire of *Lumen Gentium* to develop a new ecclesiology, with the notion of the People of God at its centre, while at the same follow the top-down perspective of Vatican I on the grounds that the Church never errs and that the previous doctrine must be upheld at all costs. This affected not only the position of the laity but also the relationship between bishops and the Bishop of Rome.

That is why Paul VI agreed to the pressure put on him by a group of conservative theologians to insert and endorse the *Nota praevia*, a document "explaining" (but in fact contradicting) *Lumen Gentium* without any consultation with the Conciliar bishops. The *Nota Praevia* aggressively endorses the doctrine of Vatican I on pontifical primacy (against Conciliarism) and progressives like Hurley were not happy.¹⁵⁴² In fact, as early as October 1962, Hurley was recommending that in the 'Message to the World' (that will be presented as the first document from the Council), "the reference to papal primacy be dropped to take into account the sensitivities of the non-believers and of the 'separated brethren'."¹⁵⁴³

Vatican II's position on the laity seems blurred looking back on it 60 years later; but, in fact, for some these fault lines were already discernible at the time. Goldie quotes from Hans Heimerl, writing in March 1966 only a few months after the end of the Council.¹⁵⁴⁴ He wrote that in *Lumen Gentium* there are four possible concepts of the lay person. They all start from the generic element of the full dignity of the Christian mission, and affirm this as a state that is common to all members of God's people, laity and clergy. But then they take the lay person in four possible directions:

- 1) a negative single-pole concept: the lay person is one who is not a cleric
- 2) a negative double-pole concept: the lay person is one who is neither cleric nor religious

¹⁵³⁹ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 79-80

¹⁵⁴⁰ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 52

¹⁵⁴¹ Hebblethwaite, Peter. *Paul VI the First Modern Pope* (New York NY: Paulist Press, 1993) Chapter 28

¹⁵⁴² Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 122

¹⁵⁴³ Denis, Philippe. "Archbishop Hurley's contribution to the Second Vatican Council". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 9

¹⁵⁴⁴ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 122

- 3) a positive *essential* single-pole concept: the lay person is one who collaborates with the official priesthood for common worship and the building up of the body of Christ
- 4) a positive *existential* bipolar concept: the lay person is seen in their temporal situation and with their task in the world

Already he was warning against 4) because it suggests that the hierarchy has no influence in the world and that the lay person has no competence in the Church.

The best that we can conclude, with Rademacher, is that while Vatican II makes definite progress with regard to the role of the laity, it cannot in one move make up for 2,000 years of neglect:

The term 'lay person' is still weighed down, not only with an historical and cultural linguistic usage expressing contrast, but also one expressing a relative identity that seems to be negative and that *Lumen Gentium* was not able to avoid, although it reduced it to a minimum.¹⁵⁴⁵

Fortunately there have been many positive developments towards the diversification of ministry in the pastoral experience of the post-Conciliar church. By patiently allowing room for the creativity of the Spirit within the baptised community, the Council encouraged the ministries to develop 'from below' in the actual pastoral experience of the church without pressing them *a priori* into rigid categories imposed 'from above'.¹⁵⁴⁶

Is 'lay person' even a category?

The discussion above is important for our exploration of the vocation of Kearney since he undergoes a transition: from being a lay person (1942-1959), to not being a lay person (1960-1969, though by virtue of religious life rather than ordination) to being a lay person again (1970-2018).

But is the very category of lay person a useful one? The role of the laity has certainly preoccupied the Catholic Church for the last 60 years and already was emerging in the decades preceding the Council. It has also been a concern of other Christian denominations. Marciniak quotes Dr Albert Outler, a professor at Southern Methodist University who had been one of the privileged non-Catholic observers at Vatican II. He comments that all denominations have reformed their structures in modern times but with few 'genuinely positive results in and to the world'. Moreover, often the reform has been done in the name of the laity:

More has been said about the prime function of the laity as the Church visible in the world...but very little has been realised in terms of turning such a vision into reality.¹⁵⁴⁷

To be focused on the role of the laity presupposes that there is a clear sense of the category of the laity. Some have challenged this. Yves Congar is seen as the key Catholic theologian thinking about the laity, before the Council and in the immediate aftermath. But Goldie suggests that Congar himself went on a journey in which the category of 'laity' became less straightforward: from the

¹⁵⁴⁵ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 81

¹⁵⁴⁶ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 83

¹⁵⁴⁷ Marciniak, Ed. "On the Condition of the Laity". *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 34

trinomial clergy-religious-laity, to the two binomials hierarchy-laity and religious-non religious; in favour of the binomial 'community plus ministries/charisms'.¹⁵⁴⁸

There is a vision based on communion: finally, a relationship with the world, the *saeculum*, related more to personal charisms than to any rigid distinctions between hierarchy, religious and laity.... The whole community is challenged by the *saeculum*, even if some through a free gift of the Spirit, have a particular relationship to secular reality.

I suggest that we can see the challenge to the category coming from three directions.

First of all, if laity (as *Lumen Gentium* 31 clearly define them) are those who are *not* something (*not* priests, *not* religious) then can it be a category in its own right at all? To be a category, there needs to be a way of entering the category. But Osborne points out that the sacraments of initiation (Baptism-Confirmation-Eucharist) signify entering into the common matrix (joining the people of God/ the faithful/ the priesthood of all believers); it is not a sacramental initiation into a lay status.¹⁵⁴⁹ The only initiation that makes someone a lay person are the initiations of *other* people (ordination to the priesthood, taking of religious vows) which remove them into a new category (non-lay). This seems a weak basis for a theological concept that has to carry so much weight. This is even more true when the Council is even confused about who has actually been removed into a new category: is it just the ordained (as per *Perfectae Caritatis*) or is it the ordained and the religious (as per *Lumen Gentium*)?

Moreover, how could one characterise the relationship of Jesus to this negative category?

If Jesus is the source, origin, model and measure of all Christian leadership, then Jesus himself cannot be seen as either lay or cleric. A clerical Jesus cannot be called the source, origin, model and measure of lay Christian ministry and vice versa. In other words Christology itself does not provide a base for the lay/cleric distinction in the church.¹⁵⁵⁰

Secondly, it is quite unclear what the purpose of the category is. As has been explored above, the Council documents seem to tie themselves in knots in defining the apostolate of the laity. *Lumen Gentium* 31 starts off by focusing on their role in the secular world:

What specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature.

But then it takes back the very specificity it has highlighted:

It is true that those in holy orders can at times be engaged in secular activities, and even have a secular profession.

Then it tries to reclaim the secular space for the laity:

But they [those in holy orders] are by reason of their particular vocation especially and professedly ordained to the sacred ministry.

But then in *Lumen Gentium* 33 even the specificity of sacred ministry is blurred:

¹⁵⁴⁸ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 124

¹⁵⁴⁹ Osborne, *Ministry*, 537

¹⁵⁵⁰ Osborne, *Ministry*, 39

Besides this apostolate which certainly pertains to all Christians, the laity can also be called in various ways to a more direct form of co-operation in the apostolate of the Hierarchy. ... Further, they have the capacity to assume from the Hierarchy certain ecclesiastical functions, which are to be performed for a spiritual purpose.

Gaudium et Spes captures this ambiguity in one sentence which seems to give and take back at the same time: "Secular duties and activities belong properly, although not exclusively, to lay people."¹⁵⁵¹ Osborne concludes that the Council documents present 'a rather fluid boundary between the ecclesiastical and the secular'.¹⁵⁵²

He points out that the weakness comes about from taking an approach of saying that the ordained have a role of priesthood-in-the-church (*in ecclesia*) and the non-ordained as having a role of priesthood-in-the-world (*in saeculum*). But the sacraments of initiation for the priesthood of all the faithful (Baptism-Confirmation-Eucharist) are initiation primarily into the Church not into the secular world.

This positioning [by the sacraments of initiation] in the Church is a positioning which involves the exercise of the *Tria Munera* of Jesus, which is to be exercised by each Christian primarily within the Church, and only secondarily within the wider secular society.¹⁵⁵³

The third line of attack may well explain the origin of the other two weaknesses. Osborne argues that there is actually no evidence in the New Testament of anyone (the apostles, the twelve) being ordained, or of them ordaining, or of Jesus instructing anyone to ordain. Ordination emerges under the influence of a Greco-Roman concept of *ordo* in which some are elevated to *ordines* and distinguished from the populace.

The meaning and use of *klerikos/ laikos* did not give rise to *ordines*; rather the incorporation of *ordines* into the church structures gave rise to the meaning and subsequent usage of *klerikos/ laikos*.¹⁵⁵⁴

Rademacher confirms the same. He lists a number of words which have come to be associated with the lay/cleric distinction but which are not used in this way in the New Testament: *archon* (ruler) is only reserved for secular or Jewish figures as is *time* ('office'); *hiereus* ('priest') is only used of Jesus or in relation to the Jewish priesthood; and *laikos* is not the term used to refer to the common people as opposed to consecrated: instead the people of God are referred to as *hagioi* ('holy').¹⁵⁵⁵

He concludes:

There is no ministry apart from a Christian mission. Christian ministry as a caste or state apart from this mission does not exist in the New Testament.¹⁵⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵¹ *Gaudium et Spes* 43

¹⁵⁵² Osborne, *Ministry*, 562

¹⁵⁵³ Osborne, *Ministry*, 539

¹⁵⁵⁴ Osborne, *Ministry*, 25-27

¹⁵⁵⁵ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 41

¹⁵⁵⁶ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 46

The course that Vatican II sets out for the lay person

I believe that Vatican II laid out a concept of 'lay person' (and the related concept of 'cleric') that was at times flawed and even inconsistent. But accepting them at face value, how have those concepts evolved since the Council?

The Decree on the Laity sets for itself a significant task, bearing in mind that this is the first time in 2,000 years that the Church has attempted this:

In this decree the Council seeks to describe the nature, character, and diversity of the lay apostolate, to state its basic principles, and to give pastoral directives for its more effective exercise.¹⁵⁵⁷

This sounds like a clear goal and one that takes seriously the presence of the laity in the Church. But curiously it is preceded by these words:

Besides, in many places where priests are very few or, in some instances, deprived of due freedom for priestly work, the Church could scarcely exist and function without the activity of the laity.¹⁵⁵⁸

There appear to be two problematic implications in this: that the lay person is always to be understood in the context of the cleric (remember the 1891 *Kirchenlexicon* reference – 'For Laity, see Clergy'?). And that while laity are necessary ('the Church could scarcely function without them'), it is only because of a lack of numbers or freedom on the part of the clergy. The implied conclusion of this sentence is that if only there were more priests, or they did not have any restrictions, then the laity would not be necessary. While later parts of the Council documents take a much more progressive view of the laity, it is worth bearing in mind this background presumption, especially since it is one that, in my experience, many priests (and indeed some lay people) still hold to today.

The document continues much more positively, and starts by situating what it is about to say about the laity in the context (following *Lumen Gentium*) of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ which includes *all* her members.

All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through all her members. For the Christian vocation by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate. No part of the structure of a living body is merely passive but has a share in the functions as well as life of the body: so, too, in the body of Christ, which is the Church...¹⁵⁵⁹

The rejection of the word 'passive' is I think significant. This new role of the laity is going to be a long way from the traditional image of the lay person (encouraged by the ordained and the un-ordained) 'to pray, pay and obey'. Each part of the Church – and so that includes lay people – has an active role to play and a responsibility to do so, for oneself and for others. The language of unity in diversity, and the imagery of the Body, are an immediate echo of the words of St Paul.¹⁵⁶⁰ Thus, the

¹⁵⁵⁷ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 1

¹⁵⁵⁸ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 1

¹⁵⁵⁹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 2

¹⁵⁶⁰ 1 Cor 12:12-27

model of *Apostolicam Actuositatem* is linked to the Early Church (and indeed to a time when there was no distinction of clergy and laity, though the Council never admits that):

Indeed, the organic union in this body and the structure of the members are so compact that the member who fails to make his proper contribution to the development of the Church must be said to be useful neither to the Church nor to himself.

In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission. Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors the duty of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in His name and power. But the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world.¹⁵⁶¹

The threefold office – priest, prophet and leader (I shall use this in preference to ‘king’) – is stressed as one that all Christians enjoy.¹⁵⁶² It is already a radical move to link the laity with words like ‘apostolate’ and ‘ministry’; it is even more radical to state (albeit in a vague way) that lay people could be termed ‘prophet’ or ‘leader’ or even ‘priest’ when these had been reserved for centuries to ordained men (and occasionally a few religious women). *Lumen Gentium* 31 had introduced this when it defined who the laity are; *Apostolicam Actuositatem* will go on to develop this theme. The attribution of these words (and most especially ‘priest’) to both the ordained and the un-ordained will prove to be one of the hardest paradoxes for the Council and the post-Conciliar Church to resolve. In *Lumen Gentium* 10, it committed itself to showing how ‘they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree’, a task that many would argue has never been adequately accomplished.

The paragraph continues by setting out one of the ways of attempting this distinction: contrasting ‘the temporal order’ from the unspoken ‘ecclesial order’:

The laity exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed to the evangelisation and sanctification of people and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel. In this way, their temporal activity openly bears witness to Christ and promotes the salvation of humankind. Since the laity, in accordance with their state of life, live in the midst of the world and its concerns, they are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardour of the spirit of Christ.¹⁵⁶³

Various commentators have pointed out the efforts made by Vatican II to balance between two perspectives: *ad intra* (looking at the Church) and *ad extra* (looking at the world).¹⁵⁶⁴ The eventual promulgation of two documents about the Church, one the *ad intra* Dogmatic Constitution and the other the *ad extra* Pastoral Constitution highlights this.¹⁵⁶⁵ Interestingly, they are the two longest documents produced by the Council and, at more than 33,000 words each, of equal length: together they represent almost 40% of the word length of the whole Council.

This Janus-faced perspective, looking in two directions at the same time, results in what O’Brien Steinfels describes as:

¹⁵⁶¹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 2

¹⁵⁶² See Appendix F for a fuller exploration of the ‘*Tria Munera*’

¹⁵⁶³ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 2

¹⁵⁶⁴ Page, John. “Denis Hurley interviewed about the Council.” *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 181

¹⁵⁶⁵ Lavin, *Vatican II*, 32

Two paradoxical developments: the turning outward of Catholics, professionally and socially, to function in a secular modern world; and their simultaneous turning inward to re-examine and renovate their religious beliefs and practices.¹⁵⁶⁶

This is true of the Church as a whole. Are the two parts of the Church – laity and clergy – involved in both parts of this? The introduction by *Apostolicam Actuositatem* of the distinction between the temporal order and the ecclesial order might suggest that there is a clear demarcation of responsibilities. But, as I have already indicated, the Council does seem to be ambiguous on how clear they want this distinction to be. Moreover, as I shall show, the experience of the Church since the Council has consistently blurred these lines.

Role of priests in the temporal order

Vatican II while defining the temporal sphere as being specific to the Apostolate of the Laity, still allows that 'those in holy orders can at times be engaged in secular activities, and even have a secular profession.'¹⁵⁶⁷ The laity are not going to have it all their own way, even in the sphere which is their natural environment. How do we balance the respective role of laity and clergy in the temporal order?

Lumen Gentium has already acknowledged the importance of people working together, recognising that the Church is not omni-competent.¹⁵⁶⁸ John XXIII, in calling a Council to respond to the needs of the world and not just the needs of the Church, opened up an unprecedentedly wide scope for the Council's documents. According to his biographer, when Paul VI was presented with a final draft of what was to become *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pope exclaimed "but it's a whole encyclopaedia!"¹⁵⁶⁹

Recognising the danger of trying to solve everything, and failing, Paul VI realised he had to limit the ambition:

He thought that sometimes people have unreasonable expectations of the Church. It should provide principles rather than solutions, direction rather than directives, leaving priest and laity free but not free floating.¹⁵⁷⁰

The same idea is stated in the Council documents:

Pastors must clearly state the principles concerning the purpose of creation and the use of temporal things and must offer the moral and spiritual aids by which the temporal order may be renewed in Christ.¹⁵⁷¹

Paul VI later expands on this model in his 1971 *Octogesima Adveniens* where there is a shift away from specific, universally-applicable solutions and instead towards principles of reflection, norms of judgment and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church. The responsibility of bishops (including presumably the Bishop of Rome) was "to teach and to interpret authentically the

¹⁵⁶⁶ O'Brien Steinfels, Margaret. "Postscript – what is to be done?" *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 129

¹⁵⁶⁷ *Lumen Gentium* 31

¹⁵⁶⁸ *Lumen Gentium* 9

¹⁵⁶⁹ Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI the First Modern Pope*, 421

¹⁵⁷⁰ Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI the First Modern Pope*, 421

¹⁵⁷¹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 7

norms of morality to be followed” but then “the laity, without waiting passively for orders and directives” could undertake the initiative for shaping the communities in which they live.¹⁵⁷²

Gregg argues that all these points remain important today.

The Church’s pastors have a responsibility to remind us of Catholic social teaching’s principles and their theological and philosophical bases. The moment, however, pastors enter into the specifics of those policy issues about which Catholics are free to disagree, there is a serious risk they will crowd out the contribution of laypeople, especially those who want to be respectful of their bishops. This does not mean that bishops cannot express their views on such subjects. It does, however, suggest that—like Pope Paul—Catholic clergy should readily acknowledge the legitimate plurality of views which Catholics can have on most policy questions.¹⁵⁷³

Many would argue that Paul VI himself undermined these principles with his three encyclicals in 1967-68 (see above) and that other popes have done so since. But leaving that to one side, this would seem to be the approach that Kearney is applying in *Diakonia* and thereafter: to analyse with objectivity the specific situation, to shed on it the light of the Gospel’s words, and to enable people to “determine, in their own conscience, the actions which they are called to share in.”¹⁵⁷⁴

Novak makes the point that the laity (because of their number, their formation and their diversity) have a competence that the clergy lack. He warns against clerics making judgements in areas where they do not have primary competence and will tend to be imperfect generalisations and out-of-touch pronouncements.

These are judgements fraught with ambiguity, contingency and doubt in which – absolutely so in the field of practice, relatively so even in the definition of middle axioms – the proper presumption is that of St Augustine: *In dubiis, libertas* – ‘In doubtful things, liberty’.¹⁵⁷⁵

There is a risk here of Karl Popper’s concept of ‘the closed society’, one that is unself-conscious and a stranger to rational planning and believes that it has all the answers. Shorter in a different context accuses the Church of this.¹⁵⁷⁶

Novak, in defence of priests, makes the point that we should not expect those in holy orders to have a focus on what is practical.

Suffice to say that the eschatology of the priestly vocation – its clear message, not only through celibacy and renunciation of the world, but also through the daily psychology induced by its duties and its vision – calls the Catholic public onto higher things, and better things, but serves less well as a guide in the practical necessities of building social institutions. Often there is a characteristic utopianism in the priestly exhortation, a

¹⁵⁷² *Octogesima Adveniens* 48

¹⁵⁷³ Gregg, Samuel. “Paul VI and the unexpected lessons of *Populorum Progressio*”. *Crisis Magazine*. <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2017/paul-vi-unexpected-lessons-populorum-progressio> (accessed 3 July 2022)

¹⁵⁷⁴ *Octogesima Adveniens* 49

¹⁵⁷⁵ Novak, “What the Laity can Teach the Church”, 70

¹⁵⁷⁶ Shorter, A. “Obstacles to Liberation in African Religious Tradition”. *Towards African Christian Liberation*. L Namwera et al (Nairobi: St Paul, 1990)

psychological tendency to be a pilgrim of the absolute – a necessary witness in the life of the Church, yet often severely damaging to the fragile tissues of social institutions.¹⁵⁷⁷

Kearney's formation as a Marist was clearly one that, through celibacy and renunciation of the world, was slanted towards a utopianism and a tendency to be a pilgrim of the absolute. Life after the Marists, made him much more aware of the need for the Church to work with 'the fragile tissues of social institutions'. He certainly felt that he would better engage in the temporal sphere as a lay person. But it should not be forgotten that +Hurley – who had triply renounced the world through religious vows, priestly ordination and episcopal consecration – was no less engaged in political matters than Kearney.¹⁵⁷⁸

How far should the Temporal Order stretch?

Vatican II assigned the temporal order (although not exclusively) to the laity. The temporal sphere is very widely defined in *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 7: 'the good things of life, the prosperity of the family, culture, economic matters, the arts and professions, the laws of the political community, international relations, ...development and progress'.

But if lay people are in the temporal order, and their apostolate is to transform the world, then is everything a lay person does in the world potentially an example of ministry? This is something that concerns Rademacher:

Some are quick to label every good deed as ministry. They tend to inflate the word to such an extent that it loses all meaning.

But he feels that this is, in part, a fear of the pendulum swinging the other way:

On the other hand, some feel they are doing ministry only when they are doing what the priest has traditionally done.¹⁵⁷⁹

He identifies a real paradox. Through Baptism a person becomes a Christian for every aspect of their lives not just the churchy ones. So the assumption is to treat everything that a Christian does (at least potentially) as Christian ministry.

Since Vatican II there has been a tendency to assume that all good acts are Christian ministry. The word 'ministry' has become so diluted as to lose all meaning. If everything is Christian ministry, what happens to discipleship and the uniqueness of Christ?...Making pizzas, selling insurance and planting corn may be important, but neither pizzas nor insurance proclaim the Gospel of Christ directly or publicly.¹⁵⁸⁰

I confess to being a little uncomfortable with the examples that Rademacher gives. 'Planting corn' is not only an essential contribution to human flourishing but also used on a number of occasions as the context for a parable of how to lead a good life. (In fact, one website says that in Scripture there

¹⁵⁷⁷ Novak, "What the Laity can Teach the Church", 53

¹⁵⁷⁸ For more on this see Appendix D: "+Hurley the political priest".

¹⁵⁷⁹ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 2

¹⁵⁸⁰ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 89

are 94 references to corn in 31 different books!).¹⁵⁸¹ While making pizza might have been chosen as an intentionally trivial example, neither Moses, Elijah nor Jesus regard the making of bread as something trivial. Furthermore, anyone who has been mis-sold insurance by an unscrupulous agent (and I imagine that there will be some Catholics among their number) would certainly have experienced their loss as failure to preach the Good News, 'directly and publicly'.

Having questioned his examples, I accept Rademacher's point that 'if everything is Christian ministry, what happens to discipleship'? Running a community-based welfare organisation founded by Kearney, my team and I have been constantly challenged to consider how we allocate our finite resources between the competing claims of Christian ministry. Rademacher does answer his own question by drawing on Thomas O'Meara's six characteristics of Christian ministry: 1) doing something 2) for the advent of the Kingdom, 3) in public, 4) on behalf of a Christian community, 5) a gift received in faith, baptism and ordination and 6) an activity with its own limits and identity within a diversity of ministerial actions.¹⁵⁸²

From my experience of working with him, and making decisions about the Denis Hurley Centre, I would imagine that Kearney would agree with most of those criteria. A good test to apply is to see if the opposite would count as a definition of not being Christian ministry:

- 1) doing something: as opposed to doing nothing and just talking, something that many Christians seem to be far too good at doing!
- 2) for the advent of the Kingdom: which ties the activity to the question of justice, perhaps using the Beatitudes or Mt 25 as a key to identifying the Kingdom
- 3) in public: I think Kearney might want to challenge this, especially in the days of the anti-Apartheid Struggle when secrecy was key to effectiveness of much ministry
- 4) on behalf of a Christian community: he would definitely want to challenge this given what has been said in Chapters 3 and 6; perhaps a better criterion for him would be to expand this to 'on behalf of a Christian community, potentially in collaboration with other Christian communities, and/or with other faith and non-faith communities'
- 5) a gift received in faith, baptism and ordination: I suspect he would want to remind every Baptised Christian of how many gifts we have all received and should be zealous about sharing
- 6) an activity with its own limits and identity within a diversity of ministerial actions: indeed, Kearney was very concerned about the need for ministry to have clear goals and outcomes and limits which is what gave funders so much confidence in him.

The role of lay people in the Ecclesial Sphere

We have discussed how Vatican II, having assigned the temporal order to the laity, then blurs this line leaving lay people unclear about how much this is their rightful place of activity. But even

¹⁵⁸¹ "Bible verses about corn" *Sarata*. <https://sarata.com/bible/verses/about/corn.html> (accessed 21 August 2022)

¹⁵⁸² Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 91

having granted lay people a specific (though not exclusive) role in the temporal sphere, and having asserted the priority of the ordained in the ecclesial sphere, Vatican II blurs these lines further.

Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. ...

Besides this apostolate, which certainly pertains to all Christians, the laity can also be called in various ways to a more direct form of co-operation in the apostolate of the Hierarchy. This was the way certain men and women assisted Paul the Apostle in the Gospel, labouring much in the Lord. Further, they have the capacity to assume from the Hierarchy certain ecclesiastical functions, which are to be performed for a spiritual purpose.

Upon all the laity, therefore, rests the noble duty of working to extend the divine plan of salvation to all people of each epoch and in every land. Consequently, may every opportunity be given them so that, according to their abilities and the needs of the times, they may zealously participate in the saving work of the Church.¹⁵⁸³

This explains the explosion since Vatican II in the roles that lay people play in the ecclesial activities of their communities: teaching catechism, serving at the altar, reading the Scripture, acting as sacristan, distributing communion both in church and in homes and hospitals, presiding at non-Eucharistic services especially funerals. This is a far cry from the 'transformation of the temporal order' and has nearly always been triggered by exactly that loss of priests that was referred to earlier in *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 2.

Of course, the motivation can also have been a positive one: to allow lay people to do everything that a lay person is not prevented from doing on account of not being ordained. But what is interesting is the impact this has had on the perception of the Apostolate of the Laity. A group of US lay people writing in the 1980s, expressed great discomfort with this move:

It is our experience that a wholesome and significant movement within the Church – the involvement of lay people in many Church ministries – has led to a devaluation of the unique ministry of lay men and women. The tendency has been to see lay ministry as involvement in some church related activity....thus, lay ministry is seen as laity's participation in work traditionally assigned to priests and sisters.¹⁵⁸⁴

This is what Marciniak criticises: not just that the Church shows no interest in the ministry of the laity in the temporal sphere but that it focuses entirely on what lay people can do in the ecclesial sphere. This, interestingly, is the area where priests and bishops feel they have superior competence and where, because governed by Canon Law and not secular law, it is the clergy who are in charge. Cynically, it could be interpreted that clergy are happy for lay people to have a ministry as long as the clergy are still the ones overseeing it. Has this really moved very far from Catholic Action when the role of the laity was merely 'to participate in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy'?

So we have a subtle but effective shift from what *Apostolicam Actuositatem* set out, to what is the common experience for most lay Catholics today. From lay people having their own apostolate supported by the clergy, to lay people having their own apostolate un-supported by the clergy, to lay people having their own apostolate ignored by the clergy, to lay people getting on with their lives

¹⁵⁸³ *Lumen Gentium* 33

¹⁵⁸⁴ Barta, Russell ed. *Challenge to the Laity*. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 21

but this not seen as an apostolate by the clergy, to lay people contributing to the apostolate of the clergy, to lay people supplementing the apostolate of the clergy in the absence of priests, to lay people conducting much of the apostolate of the clergy (but without the status, title or pay).

Marciniak sums it up as follows:

What bedevils our pastoral theology and existing practice is the mind-set that automatically expects a lay person who is deeply committed to Jesus Christ to become a para-cleric in the Church's civil service as a mini-priest or mini-sister.¹⁵⁸⁵

The earlier comments about the way in which other people confused Kearney's identity – even calling him Fr Paddy – suggest that this para-cleric role was one that he might have inadvertently occupied.

The lay person in Africa

The above exploration of the role of the laity has been based on universal comments for a universal Church. Finally, is there anything specific that can be said about the role of lay people in the Church in Africa or specifically in South Africa?

A key difference, given the demographics of clergy and laity in Africa, is that an increase in the role of the laity also was likely to mean an increase in the role of Africans. While there was a substantial representation of bishops from Africa at Vatican II (260 out of the initial 2,358), 200 of them were European missionaries who had been sent out to work in Africa. Some of course had lived there for many years, and others (like +Hurley and McCann) were of European origin but had been born in Africa. But this was still a mostly white episcopacy.¹⁵⁸⁶

It was especially true that the leadership of the Church in South Africa did not reflect Church membership. For example, it is estimated that of the 3.15 million Catholics in South Africa in 2001, 79% were black, 11% were 'coloured', <1% were 'Indian' and 9% were white (whether born in South Africa or not).¹⁵⁸⁷ And yet the profile of priests and even more so the profile of bishops at that time was disproportionately skewed towards whites.

Over the past 60 years, the clergy and the episcopacy of the SACBC has come increasingly to reflect the demographics of the flock. In some regards, perhaps because of its schools and mission stations, Catholics were ahead of other denominations. Hinchcliff comments as early as 1968: "The ordination [in the Roman Catholic church] of African clergy and bishops has been encouraged with an enthusiasm which puts the rest of South African Christendom to shame."¹⁵⁸⁸ But Isichei points out that despite the SACBC's 1957 statement on Apartheid, its seminaries were not integrated till 1979. (She also adds that the first black Catholic bishop was appointed in 1954 whereas there was no black Anglican bishop till 1960).¹⁵⁸⁹

¹⁵⁸⁵ Marciniak, "On the Condition of the Laity", 34

¹⁵⁸⁶ Denis, Philippe. "The Historical Significance of Denis Hurley's Contribution to the Second Vatican Council." *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 197

¹⁵⁸⁷ Hendriks H J. "Religion in South Africa; the 2001 Population Census Data", *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (March 2005: 121) 93

¹⁵⁸⁸ Hinchcliff, Peter. *The Church in South Africa* (London: SPCK, 1968) 98

¹⁵⁸⁹ Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: from antiquity to the present* (London: SPCK, 1995) 308

That is not to say of course that a white leadership could not represent a Church that is mostly black (after all, an exclusively male leadership represents a Church which is mostly female!). But Isichei offers us this warning from Steve Biko who was talking about white Liberals in South Africa (which could have included many of the bishops and Kearney as well):

They vacillate between two worlds, verbalising all the complaints of the blacks beautifully, while skilfully extracting what suits them from the exclusive pool of white privileges.¹⁵⁹⁰

A key factor for the role of the laity in the Church in Africa was that for much of this period, the priest (and some religious) were often among the best educated people in a local community: educated not just in ecclesial matters but temporal ones as well. It was therefore not surprising that the priest took the main role, sometimes the exclusive role, in all Church issues. For example, Mullin offers these comments from 1965, recognising the pre-eminent role of the priest but even then allowing space for lay involvement:

The priest's role in social affairs is to take the initiative in launching schemes for the common good and then leave them in the hands of laymen while always being ready to offer advice when asked. In modern Africa, it is important that every priest have at least some knowledge of social development. Certainly the spiritual apostolate comes first....¹⁵⁹¹

Priests should know about: just wages, industrial relations, trade unions, security of labour, small ownership, the right of private property, co-operatives, credit unions, housing, agricultural methods, the need for small industries in rural areas, social amenities such as recreation centres.¹⁵⁹²

Of course, over time the laity have become better educated but that did not mean that priests would cede their role of authority. So 50 years after the comment above, a Senegalese theologian points to the lack of leadership roles for laity as a reason for the failure to implement the Church's social doctrine.

The laity's resistance or indifference to bishops ...is legitimate because some of them are more competent than are the religious, they have more experience of public life.It is a problem of democracy in the Church that we are facing today, democracy which must be participative and inclusive and that requires reforms.¹⁵⁹³

One of the challenges is to ensure that the question of the laity stays high on the agenda. It is interesting to note what the themes are of a book on the post-Conciliar Church by a well-known East African theologian. Magesa lists them as collegiality, inculturation, religious life, dialogue with African religions, leadership, sexuality, the public role of the Church, and models of governance. Whilst 'laity' might be included in a few of these, it is notable that he does not make it a specific named focus.¹⁵⁹⁴

¹⁵⁹⁰ Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, 309

¹⁵⁹¹ Mullin, Joseph. *The Catholic Church in Modern Africa – a Pastoral Theology* (London: Chapman, 1965) 37

¹⁵⁹² Mullin, *The Catholic Church in Modern Africa*, 231

¹⁵⁹³ Ndiaye, A-R. "Leadership, Governance and Religion in Africa – is Religion an asset or an obstacle?". *Theological Re-imagination – conversations on Church, Religion and Society in Africa*. Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator ed. (Nairobi: Paulines, 2014) 280

¹⁵⁹⁴ Magesa, Laurenti. *The Post-Conciliar Church in Africa* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2016). It is unfortunate that the book makes no specific references to South Africa even though it was mostly completed while Magesa was travelling around South Africa with the author giving a speaker tour in 2016.

African authors also repeat the same complaint as the American authors above about the failure of the Church to support the laity in the temporal order. For example, Waliggo (from Uganda) regrets the failure to engage with the African Christian in his own milieu.

But ask him how he should behave as a politician, a trader, a business man, a husband, or a taxi driver, he will find no answer from the catechism he learnt by heart or from the instructions he continues to attend on Sundays and other special days.¹⁵⁹⁵

In South Africa itself the reality of engaging with the laity seems to have lagged behind the intention.

The formulation of the Pastoral Plan took account of two priorities which were the establishment of social justice and lay ministries. Between 1977 and 1989 consultations took place which resulted in the publication of the Pastoral Plan and its theme, “Community Serving Humanity”. However, it looks as if the laity is not fully knowledgeable on the formation of the Pastoral Plan.¹⁵⁹⁶

But outsiders have commented on what a different relationship there can be between lay people and clergy in South Africa. Ian Linden who, while at the London-based Catholic Institute for International Relations, worked closely with +Hurley and Kearney in the 1980s recalls that the role of lay people in South Africa was very different from what he had experienced in the UK:

The SACBC had an open-ness to lay analysis miles ahead of the clericalism of the British church. I recall sitting at a meeting in the SACBC with three coal miners discussing the miners’ struggle. I could not imagine that happening in England!¹⁵⁹⁷

A Belgian donor also remarked that there was a different approach in Africa. He recalls how in Europe people were surprised when Mandela appointed an Archbishop (+Tutu) to head a secular body (the Truth and Reconciliation Commission).¹⁵⁹⁸ Both these comments point to a less rigid line between lay and clergy – at least when expertise was involved – than in the European Church.

Conclusion

Given that for 2,000 years almost nothing had been said in Ecumenical Councils about lay people, it is hardly surprising that what Vatican II achieved was incomplete. There were bound to be some areas of confusion, contradiction and ambiguity. And the living out of the teaching of the Council with regard to the laity in the almost 70 years that have since passed, was bound to make things harder rather than easier.

In pointing out some of the problems with the teaching, I am not seeking to criticise so much as to explore the documents with a more open eye. Archbishop Worlock, who had been a *peritus* at the

¹⁵⁹⁵ Waliggo John-Mary. “Christianity and Liberation in Africa: Some Obstacles” *Towards African Christian Liberation*. L Namwera et al (Nairobi: St Paul, 1990) 31 (With apologies for the sexist language)

¹⁵⁹⁶ Ngcobo, Nkosinathi. “The Evangelisation of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa: Community Serving Humanity”. M.Th. dissertation (Durban: University of KwaZulu Natal, 2016) 16

¹⁵⁹⁷ Linden, Ian. Personal interview by author, 10 September 2021 via Zoom (manager at CIIR, UK-based donor)

¹⁵⁹⁸ Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author, 17 January 2022 via Zoom (manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

Council and then devoted much of his episcopacy, like +Hurley, to the empowerment of lay people, looked back on the massive task that lay ahead:

Now, as had been pointed out during the long debates leading to *Lumen Gentium*, infallibility had been given its setting. Peter had been placed among the apostles. The head had been placed upon the shoulders. But, on that brisk sunny December morning in Rome [8 Dec 1965, the closing Mass of the Council], just how much we must shoulder was not entirely clear.”¹⁵⁹⁹

¹⁵⁹⁹ Worlock, “Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II”, 239

Appendix C: Some Theological Issues in *Gaudium et Spes* that are relevant when considering Kearney

Introduction

The Vatican II document on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, is the longest Council document and among the set of four promulgated on the second-last day of the four-year-long marathon. It opens with these words:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.¹⁶⁰⁰

Whilst Christian action and Christian love should not be something new in the Church – at least one hopes – what changes with the Vatican II perspective is that the starting point for these is no longer an abstract application of Christian doctrine but rather a reflection on the concrete, what are referred to as ‘the signs of the times’. Ruggieri argues that, even though the Council documents only explicitly use the phrase four times, they implicitly reference it throughout.¹⁶⁰¹ He explains the degree to which this is new in its approach:

The main novelty of Vatican II was ...its consideration of history as related to the gospel and the Christian tradition. Whereas for the most part in the past there had been an awareness that history as experienced by human beings was ultimately of no importance for the understanding of the gospel....the major question of the Second Vatican Council was precisely this, even if the words used (pastoral nature, *aggiornamento*, signs of the times) were not immediately understood clearly by all.¹⁶⁰²

In another paper, he explains that this change is:

...the abandonment of a deductivist outlook (according to which a few principles yield conclusions valid for human activity in every age) and its replacement by an inductive mind-set that reads in and educes from facts the signs of a consistency between the gospel that is believed and proclaimed and the desires of human beings.¹⁶⁰³

The Church exists only *within* history, *within* society and *within* the common life, not only in the sense that it is surrounded by these things, but in the much more profound sense that it exists only as a symbolisation of history, society and the common life. This means that the problems the Church faces are problems of history and the common life of human beings.¹⁶⁰⁴

¹⁶⁰⁰ *Gaudium et Spes* 1

¹⁶⁰¹ Ruggieri, Giuseppe. “Faith & History”. *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 95

¹⁶⁰² Ruggieri, Giuseppe. “Towards a Hermeneutic of Vatican II”. *Concilium* (1999, 1) 3

¹⁶⁰³ Ruggieri, “Faith & History”, 97-98

¹⁶⁰⁴ Ruggieri, “Faith & History”, 104

Chapter 4 explores some of the practical and concrete ways in which Kearney – heavily influenced and inspired by +Hurley – read the signs of his times and showed the Church in South Africa how to respond *within* history.

But this focus on the concrete is not without its challenges as I would like to explore in this Appendix drawing on some of the key commentators on the documents of the Council. We cannot know which if any of these were read by Kearney himself, but the themes that they explore certainly have resonance in Kearney's life and ministry.

The importance of the 'Signs of the Times'

The novel stress on the 'signs of the times' was rapidly seen by some critics as evidence of a weakness of *Gaudium et Spes*. Thus, Ratzinger in 1975 (quoted by Faggioli):

Something of the Kennedy era pervaded the Council, something of the naive optimism of the concept of the Great Society. It was precisely the break in historical consciousness, the self-tormenting rejection of the past, that produced the concept of a Zero Hour in which everything would begin again and all those things that formerly had been done badly would now be done well.¹⁶⁰⁵

In reaction to this, those who wish to defend 'the signs of the times' are at pains to show that the concept has older roots. Thus, Faggioli mentions French Dominican Marie-Dominique Chenu who sees the signs of the times as being consistent with an actualization of Thomas Aquinas' theology:

Given that the sacred doctrine does not present itself as a system of abstract principles whose application depends on a form of mental or moral casuistry, but according to St Thomas as the Word of God developing itself within human intelligence in the act of faith, the 'signs of the times' must enter implicitly or explicitly in the discernment of the impact of the Word in the historical community of the faithful.¹⁶⁰⁶

Faggioli points out that Rahner himself has argued that the West cannot hand over a 'naked' message of Christianity without the overlay of Western philosophy but nor can it allow its Western philosophy to extend itself into a world philosophy. Faggioli thus uses this to defend this new approach:

The turning from a cosmocentric, objective philosophy of the Greeks to the anthropocentric transcendental philosophy of the moderns is perfectly Christian in principle and basically already begins with Saint Thomas.¹⁶⁰⁷

Rush, in giving some hermeneutical principles for interpreting Vatican II, makes a pleasing reference to the old papal rooms just round the corner from St Peter's Basilica where the Council met. There the Fathers would have seen the 1508 Raphael fresco of 'The School of Athens': Plato is pointing up to the world of ideals and Aristotle is pointing down to the world of concrete reality. For Rush, this is a way of seeing the two groups at the Council: Platonists vs Aristotelians; Augustinians vs Thomists;

¹⁶⁰⁵ Faggioli, Massimo. *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 2012) 73

¹⁶⁰⁶ Faggioli, *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning*, 77

¹⁶⁰⁷ Faggioli, *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning*, 81

conservatives vs progressives; naïve optimism vs dialogue with the world; Ratzinger and de Lubac vs Chenu, Congar and Rahner; *societas perfecta* vs dialogue partner with the world.

Having studied at the Angelicum in Rome, +Hurley would have been immersed in a Thomistic worldview. Though we have no evidence of Kearney's exposure to the Angelic Doctor, we do know that he, and +Hurley, were both greatly influenced by South African Dominican, Albert Nolan.

Rush summarises it thus:

The Thomist school is wanting to set the Church and world in a situation of dialogue; it sees the world in a positive light; despite evil and sin, grace abounds and will eventually overcome evil; attention to the signs of the times reveals new perspectives on God's salvific presence in the world here and now.... This is not a naïve optimism but a Christian realism urges an openness to the world as potentially revelatory.¹⁶⁰⁸

It is the focus on realism that is used to explain the importance of the 'signs of the times'. After all, if the Church is to speak credibly to the world's 'joys and hopes... griefs and anxieties' these need to be real and concrete not abstract or imagined. Thus, Rush commenting on *Gaudium et Spes* and also *Dignitatis Humanae* (promulgated on the same day):

These two documents encapsulate the Council's eventual reception of modernity and of the world as necessary dialogue partners if the Gospel was to be preached in all its relevance.Rather than naïve optimism the documents exude an attitude of newfound Christian confidence and responsibility, replacing former fear and avoidance; rather than uncritical acceptance of the society and world around it, the documents demand critical application of one single and definitive criterion: Jesus Christ and the promotion of the reign of God.¹⁶⁰⁹

Rush looks at and rejects different historical models: not essentialism ('a fixed eternal divine plan'); not providentialism ('an interventionist God mechanically manipulating humans'); not exemplarism ('models from the past that we can apply to the future'); not primitivism ('some Golden Age in the past or in the future').

Vatican II reveals the Church coming to a realization that, in response to the task given us by our God, it is up to us to work it out as we go along, with the help of the Holy Spirit. However, although it is our responsibility, it is not our work. It is the work of the Holy Spirit who is our communal memory, preventing ecclesial amnesia and igniting our creativity.¹⁶¹⁰

The signs of the times can be either positive or negative. A positive sign of the times is an indicator of something new in human history or something not before recognised as 'of God' that may be revelatory of how the reign of God is erupting in the present. A negative sign of the times is an indicator of the things that are impeding the reign of God, an indicator of what is not 'of God' and of what the Church should be resisting.¹⁶¹¹

Both are vital shades in a full depiction of the 'great tradition' and like the *chiaroscuro* of a Rembrandt painting, together they represent the living tradition in all its darkness and light, with all its pessimism and optimism, suspicion and trust: forever suspicious of what could impede the reign of God, yet never losing hope that God will certainly reign in the end-time,

¹⁶⁰⁸ Rush, Ormond. *Still Interpreting Vatican II – some Hermeneutical Principles*. (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2004) 15

¹⁶⁰⁹ Rush, *Still Interpreting Vatican II*, 17

¹⁶¹⁰ Rush, *Still Interpreting Vatican II*, 76

¹⁶¹¹ Rush, *Still Interpreting Vatican II*, 80

and firmly believing that God is active in hidden ways in the world today even in the seemingly godless, as attention to the signs of the times would verify.¹⁶¹²

With very few exceptions, we sadly do not know for certain which commentators on Vatican II were read by Kearney or influenced him. But we do know that he was inspired by Albert Nolan and this great South African Dominican uses words that parallel the challenge of having to deal with pessimism and optimism:

Africa is a land of hope and despair, a land that paradoxically gives birth to hope while it tries to destroy all hope.¹⁶¹³

Writing in 1988, Nolan warns his fellow South African Christians, like Kearney, that we will experience false hopes: that change will come from the top, that the government will have a change of heart, that the white electorate will develop a conscience, that whites will respond to the protests of township youths, that strikes will topple the regime. His argument is that all of these are hopes for change *within* the system, whereas true hope must be for a change *of the system*.¹⁶¹⁴ But he does not give up on hope even in the face of despair, quoting his German contemporary Dorothee Sölle: “Struggle is the source of hope. There is no hope without struggle.”¹⁶¹⁵

Peter Storey, a Christian leader more or less Kearney’s age, recounts in his autobiography how the Struggle forced (at least some) South African Christians to have to face up to realism:

I know that, given half a chance, we Christians lose the plot and slip into a cosy, irrelevant pietism. That is why I am grateful for the anti-Apartheid struggle. It galvanised us and called us out into relevance. The Church is only the Church when it cares more about the world than about itself and it was because we forgot about ourselves for a while that our contribution had significance.¹⁶¹⁶

Another influence on Kearney was the much younger Steve De Gruchy who quotes Reinhold Niebuhr from *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*:

Man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man’s inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.¹⁶¹⁷

It is because of this change in perspective – emerging in the years before Vatican II and then given new impetus by the Council – that (Phohlo argues) enabled a change in the attitude of the Catholic Church in South Africa towards Apartheid. He points out, for example, that the guiding vision of SACBC’s 1984 Pastoral Planning Paper “supersedes and corrects the Christian spirituality that tended to sneer at earthly values and saw earthly life merely as a period of trial, antecedent to the future life with God in eternity”. Such an approach was captured in the old prayer prescribed for the Feast

¹⁶¹² Rush, *Still Interpreting Vatican II*, 64

¹⁶¹³ Nolan, Albert. *God in South Africa*. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 139

¹⁶¹⁴ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 139

¹⁶¹⁵ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 159

¹⁶¹⁶ Storey, Peter. *I Beg to Differ – ministry amid the teargas*. (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2018) 466

¹⁶¹⁷ Haddad, Beverley. *Keeping Body and Soul Together: Reflections by Steve de Gruchy on Theology and Development*. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2015) 20

of St Francis: “Grant that, after his example, we may despise earthly things and ever find joy in partaking in the gifts of heaven”.¹⁶¹⁸

Phohlo contrasts this with a new approach:

Church history and secular history are not two histories running side by side. The history of the Church unfolds in human history not outside it. Salvation, if and when it is taking place, must be taking place in secular history.¹⁶¹⁹

Bianchi captures this succinctly:

History is the place where faith and the Church must live and recognise God to be at work.¹⁶²⁰

So *Gaudium et Spes* sets out a challenge to engage with the reality of the world – its darkness and its light. This is a motivation for Catholics like Nolan, +Hurley and Kearney; but since it is a wider response to the signs of the times, it is not surprising that Christians from other denominations respond in a similar way. Oscar Cullmann (a French Lutheran observer at Vatican II) is quoted by Pottmeyer as asking the important question of what is different about the way in which Christians respond to the world:

We as Christians may not be satisfied with simply saying the same thing that the world says – even if we say it with a special urgency. We must say it differently and say different things whenever possible, even things that the world does not like to hear or has trouble understanding....There should have been a stronger and more conscious reaction against the danger of eliminating the scandal that is part of the gospel.¹⁶²¹

The ‘scandal’ of a Gospel that sees all human beings as profoundly equal is what eventually emboldens +Hurley and his fellow bishops to speak out more and more forcefully against Apartheid. It is a theme we find expressed in the appropriately-named *Reality*; we can be quite sure that Kearney was reading this journal since he himself contributed to it in 1979 and 1980.¹⁶²² Manas Buthelezi, a Lutheran South African theologian pointed out in 1973 what happens when the Church fails to face up to the reality in front of it:

The institutional symbols of Christianity, like the Church and the ministry, are there all right but they are increasingly less of the visible incarnation of that which accounts for the uniqueness of Christianity....the Church has been turned into a living monument of a colour- and race-oriented society. To my mind, the ultimate criterion of the spread of Christianity is not how many people go to church on Sunday, but how many people allow that which is

¹⁶¹⁸ Phohlo, Abel. “The Attitude of the Catholic Church in South Africa towards Apartheid from 1984 to 1996 and its implication for Spirituality” Licentiate dissertation. (Rome: Pontificia Universitatis Gregoriana, 1998) 36

¹⁶¹⁹ Phohlo, “The Attitude of the Catholic Church in South Africa towards Apartheid ...”, 49

¹⁶²⁰ Bianchi, Enzo. “The Centrality of the Word of God”. *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 122

¹⁶²¹ Pottmeyer, Hermann J. “A new Phase in the Reception of Vatican II: Twenty Years of Interpretation of the Council”. *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 43

¹⁶²² Kearney, G Paddy. “Control in the SA Schooling System”. *Reality: a journal of liberal and radical opinion* (1979, 11:3) 9-13; Kearney, G Paddy. “Conscientious Objection – a Christian Perspective”. *Reality: a journal of liberal and radical opinion* (1980, 12:5) 9-14

unique in the Christian gospel to shape their lives as well as the spirit of their social, economic and political environment.¹⁶²³

The message of *Gaudium et Spes* is for the Church to engage with the modern world. But was it doing enough? I suspect that Kearney would have resonated with what Haughey wrote in 1977; he might have felt that the same was still true when he died more than 40 years later:

In the past 80 years, there has been a notable increase in the Church's understanding of its responsibility in the social order. At the same time there does not seem to have been a parallel increase in the concern of Christians for the social order. Justice remains pretty much as it has always been: namely one of the virtues in the galaxy of virtues. It has not moved onto centre stage or become a passion with Christians as the Church's developing self-understanding would have it be.¹⁶²⁴

William Dych (echoing *Gaudium et Spes*) maintains that this failure betrays an essential dualism that still lies at the heart of Catholic theology:

Despite the repeated insistence on being at one with the problems, griefs and anxieties of the men of this age, the Church really still feels itself to be not only *outside of*, but *above*, secular problems and concerns. This probably accounts for why the tone of so many of the texts is patronising rather than genuinely compassionate.¹⁶²⁵

As explored in Chapter 2, this tendency towards dualism also explains some of the knots that the Council Fathers tie themselves in when talking about an ecclesial order and a temporal order. The potential conflict between those two priorities for the Church prompts Dych to ask:

Does the Council give any reason why the love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbour, or why eschatological faith and hope in a new earth must not weaken but must stimulate our responsibility for this one?¹⁶²⁶

Maldonado points out that Vatican II recognised that the best way to start a reform of the Church was with a reform of the liturgy, but that after that, in practice, not much has changed:

Rather than forming a community, the faithful resemble an audience that remains somewhat detached from what the priest is doing in the sanctuary. They form, not an active involved group, but an assemblage of individuals who passively receive something – and wait for the rite to end so they can return to their lives outside the church – lives they view as utterly different from and unconnected with what goes on in the celebration.¹⁶²⁷

As was discussed in Chapter 2, one of the ways in Kearney sought to remedy this was through his involvement in and promotion of basic communities and their approach to liturgy and Scripture. Bianchi holds this up as a model of placing the Word of God at the centre:

¹⁶²³ Buthelezi, Manas. "Black Christians must liberate Whites". *Reality: a journal of liberal and radical opinion* (1973, 5:3) 4

¹⁶²⁴ Haughey, John C. "Jesus as the Justice of God". *The Faith that does Justice - examining the Christian Sources for Social Change*. John C Haughey ed. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 264

¹⁶²⁵ Dych, William. "The Dualism in the Faith of the Church". *The Faith that does Justice - examining the -Christian Sources for Social Change*. John C Haughey ed. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 58

¹⁶²⁶ Dych, "The Dualism in the Faith of the Church", 53

¹⁶²⁷ Maldonado, Luis. "Liturgy as Communal Enterprise". *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 311-312

Reading, serious study, meditation and actualisation restored to the word its prophetic power and made it able to shed light on the lives of the believers and their relationship to social reality and history.¹⁶²⁸

If revelation is historical in the full sense of the term, then theology too must be historical; it is compelled to make history and its events part of its object and, without allowing itself to be reduced to a historical science, it must positively recognise history as a hermeneutical locus for discerning, proclaiming and narrating the presence of God.¹⁶²⁹

The horizon within which the word is read is the social situation which calls for the deliverance of the oppressed and an end to every form of enslavement. ... Study of the Bible becomes a search for a way to achieve the human deliverance and advancement that was once given to Israel and the early Christian communities, and must be made a reality again today.¹⁶³⁰

In Chapter 2, the tension between the temporal order and the ecclesial order for Kearney's vocation as a Christian was resolved by a recognition of his commitment to an integrated theology in which, to quote Frank Chikane, there were 'no boundaries between secular and sacred'.¹⁶³¹ How can one articulate that integrated theology in the light of Kearney's commitment to social justice?

Integrated Theology

When introducing Diakonia in 1975 +Hurley, after reporting on the signs of the times, then turned to a classic text to motivate his audience to respond: "whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters you do to me."¹⁶³² A number of commentators have pointed out that this can be mis-read as a text that reinforces the gap between the Church and the world (or between the Christian and the poor person). Kearney's approach to an integrated theology was to try and bridge that gap.

The problem in part is one of still seeing service of Christ as something which belongs to some other world. But Donahue points out that the reason the goats are condemned is not that they did not know what was demanded but rather they did not know that those demands were to be met *in this world now*.

In the scene, it is the marginal and suffering in the world who reveal the place where the Son of Man, Lord and Judge is, as it were, hidden in the world. The parable is a warning to Christians of all ages that they must discover not only what the doing of justice is but where justice is to be located.¹⁶³³

Phohlo goes further and challenges the idea that we should love our neighbour as a way of loving Christ.

¹⁶²⁸ Bianchi, "The Centrality of the Word of God", 133

¹⁶²⁹ Bianchi, "The Centrality of the Word of God", 124

¹⁶³⁰ Bianchi, "The Centrality of the Word of God", 134

¹⁶³¹ Chikane, Frank. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2021 via Zoom. (Secretary General of SACC 1987-94).

¹⁶³² Mt 25: 31-46

¹⁶³³ Donahue, John R. "Biblical perspectives on Justice". *The Faith that does Justice - examining the -Christian Sources for Social Change*. John C Haughey ed. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 105

Genuine self-transcendence occurs when one's neighbour is loved for their own sake in their concrete situation in life. Those who are saved in Mt 25 did not intend to serve Christ; the intended to serve the poor.¹⁶³⁴

Dych supports this, invoking Bonhoeffer to reverse the Church's tendency to dualism:

Unlike some other spiritualities which would have one love one's neighbour for God's sake, or have one find Christ in one's neighbour, and where the movement is from God to man, Bonhoeffer's movement is from man to God. When the neighbour is actually loved for his own sake, that is when there is genuine love and compassion, then God is being known and loved, not as another 'object' but in the quality of the relationship and by connaturality.¹⁶³⁵

He argues that the explanation of Matthew 25 cannot be finding Christ-in-others because then those who did care for the poor would not be surprised that they are saved. He compares this to the soteriology of compassion rather than expiation, of 'dying with' rather than 'dying for'.¹⁶³⁶ His argument is that by objectifying God into another object, we create the pseudo-problem of how to put God and man back together.

It is the dualism in our theology of faith, and of hope and charity as well, that creates the necessity of putting things together that never should have been separated in the first place.¹⁶³⁷

Dych sees the statements of *Gaudium et Spes* as going some way to resolving that dualism. A bishop from Panama, who was later very influential in the implementation of the Council in Latin America, stresses the importance of overcoming this dualism. Bishop McGrath, like +Hurley, was catapulted into the episcopacy at a young age: he was made a bishop aged only 37 just before the Council opened. He comments:

The efforts directed at overcoming the separation between faith and life in our day, in the double movement of return to the sources and insertion in the world, inevitably brought about a new sort of theological-pastoral thinking, one that brought the 'Word of God' and 'secular life' much closer together.¹⁶³⁸

He describes this as characteristic of many movements of the lay apostolate. But he also worries that sometimes these lay movements can become frontier groups which then fall back on ideologies of the left and right resulting in a politicisation and a polarisation. This then leaves the most active lay movements focused on spiritual formation and ecclesial ministry (and not the temporal order) and thus a return to the previous dualism.¹⁶³⁹

¹⁶³⁴ Phohlo, "The Attitude of the Catholic Church in South Africa towards Apartheid ...", 54

¹⁶³⁵ Dych, "The Dualism in the Faith of the Church", 62

¹⁶³⁶ Dych, "The Dualism in the Faith of the Church", 64

¹⁶³⁷ Dych, "The Dualism in the Faith of the Church", 65

¹⁶³⁸ McGrath, Marcos. "Social Teaching since the Council". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 326

¹⁶³⁹ McGrath, "Social Teaching since the Council", 333

Philippe Denis refers to Joseph Cardijn and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin as +Hurley's 'often-quoted masters' who taught him that 'Christianity is by essence incarnate'.¹⁶⁴⁰ He quotes the Archbishop's words from 1960:

Like all social ills, the South African ones constitute serious obstacles to the life of the spirit and have their immediate source in human behaviour, the slowness or the failure or the refusal of men to respond to the call of God.¹⁶⁴¹

Tutu confirms this as a key part of +Hurley's worldview: he was 'inspired by a thoroughly incarnational spirituality and theological understanding' and had 'a deep awareness of the indwelling Christ and also that the Church was the Body of this Christ'.¹⁶⁴² Thus, when talking about the Pastoral Plan, 'Community serving Humanity', +Hurley describes it (according to Kearney) as covering four dimensions of *totality*: the whole message of Jesus, the whole Church (laity as well as clergy and religious), the whole human family, the whole of humanity (the person, family, society, culture, politics and economics).¹⁶⁴³ Thus, the refusal to draw lines of separation in racial politics is at one, for +Hurley, with the refusal to draw lines of separation in ecclesial politics.

Kearney's life, which did not draw hard lines between the sacred and the secular – between the action of the Church in the sanctuary and the action of the Church on the streets – is one which also refuses to support this dualism. I think that is why 'authentic' was so often the word used to describe him; moreover, this was equally by interviewees who came from a religious background and from a non-religious background.¹⁶⁴⁴

Kearney's resistance to dualism was reinforced by his study of, and later meeting with, the Mexican-based, Ivan Illich (1926-2002). In 1973, when at the University of Toledo, Kearney made him the focus of his Masters dissertation. Kearney links Illich to the French theologian Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) and to the German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945, who had coined the idea of 'religionless Christianity'):

Illich shows a similar concern to that of Maritain for the 'realisation of a Christian temporal historic ideal' in which the gospel would be translated into concrete historical and social structures. ...Christians fulfil their destiny by being fully involved in the world, and in this way only, come into contact with the saving Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Christ. Humans, says Bonhoeffer, are not saved by their participation in the institution of the Church; this is simply the community of human beings where they can become aware of their true role in the world.¹⁶⁴⁵

¹⁶⁴⁰ Denis, Philippe. *Facing the Crisis – selected texts of Archbishop D E Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1997) 7

¹⁶⁴¹ Denis, *Facing the Crisis*, 9 (Hurley, Denis. 'The social mission of the Church in South Africa', *Blackfriars*, May 1960)

¹⁶⁴² Tutu, Desmond. "Foreword". *Denis Hurley a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) x

¹⁶⁴³ Kearney, G Paddy. "Courageous and Consistent Witness". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 16

¹⁶⁴⁴ For example: Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre); Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia and Methodist Bishop); De la Croix, Berenice. Personal interview by author, 30 September and 9 October 2020 in Durban (personal friend); Thaw, Davine. Personal interview by author, 21 February 2022 in Durban (consultant to Diakonia and Denis Hurley Centre).

¹⁶⁴⁵ Kearney, G Paddy. "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", M.Ed. dissertation (University of Toledo, 1973) 8-9 (gendered language altered)

Proponents of the secularisation of Christianity have stated that all of life and reality should be considered 'religious', be potentially capable of leading man to God in contra-distinction to the classic slogan *Extra ecclesia nulla salus*.¹⁶⁴⁶

Kearney may well have been introduced to Maritain by +Hurley who admits that the French writer's *Christian humanism* 'robbed me of a Sunday afternoon rest as he brilliantly outlined the modern view of church-state relations'.¹⁶⁴⁷ We also know that Maritain was an important influence on the Council and was even chosen to receive personally the 'message to intellectuals' at the closing ceremony on 8 December 1965.¹⁶⁴⁸

Kearney's approach has strong resonances with Haughey writing in 1977 on 'Jesus as the Justice of God' (though we do not know that he read this). Haughey draws attention to the promise of the last verse of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6:33): "Seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness and these things will be added unto you." Jesus exhorts his hearers to have confidence both in God's knowledge of their needs and in the fact that he will care for them by providing the food, drink and clothing that they need.¹⁶⁴⁹ This seems to be exemplified in the simplicity with which Kearney lived his own life (as described in Chapter 2).

Haughey argues further that we must not fall into the trap of wanting to place Jesus in the model of justice that the world presents. For example, reflecting on the *Magnificat* (which would have been a key part of Kearney's Marist spirituality), Haughey points that instead of expecting divine action to take place in the socio-political reality of human affairs, we should instead expect the lowly to be exalted because the empirical reality of social power does not apply.¹⁶⁵⁰

Similarly, when the disciples ask for power and position, Jesus does not deny the importance of these but offers a different way of attaining power by being 'as one who serves'.

His Kingdom, in other words, is not going to be without power, but the purpose for which it is given, both to Jesus and his followers, is not to govern others or dominate them but to serve them.¹⁶⁵¹

Again, this resonates with the ways in which people who worked for Kearney saw him as exercising his 'power' as a leader. Similarly, Haughey argues, when Jesus says that he wants his mission to be a secret, he is not refusing power but he is refusing "to have the power crowned by the forms (religious and/or political) chosen by those who were enthusiastic about him because of the short-term, superficial effect his power had on them."¹⁶⁵²

For Kearney, engagement with the world was not just about using power for a good end; it was also about how he (and others) should exercise power and for whom they were exercising power:

Following Jesus does not take one away from the world of injustices; it takes one further into it and into those battered portions of humanity that are most needy. The needy, the victims, those unjustly treated, the marginal are like so many sacraments, so to speak,

¹⁶⁴⁶ Kearney, "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", 41

¹⁶⁴⁷ Hurley, Denis. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 2

¹⁶⁴⁸ Hurley, *Vatican II*, 159

¹⁶⁴⁹ Haughey, "Jesus as the Justice of God", 279

¹⁶⁵⁰ Haughey, "Jesus as the Justice of God", 269

¹⁶⁵¹ Haughey, "Jesus as the Justice of God", 271

¹⁶⁵² Haughey, "Jesus as the Justice of God", 273

whereby the person is touched by the righteousness of God if one chooses to be affected by 'the needs of the least of these my brethren'.¹⁶⁵³

Thus, in an integrated theology it is not that Christianity is extended to take an interest in socio-political matters, or that the struggle for justice is enhanced by having Church allies. Rather there is no distinction in the first place, what Dych calls the pseudo-problem of putting God and humans back together again.

For Kearney and for Nolan, it is no surprise that committed Christians should place themselves at the forefront of the struggle for justice:

The Struggle has a kind of religious aura about it. The celebration of hope, the experience of community, the self-sacrifice, the total commitment, the courage, the discipline and the willingness to live and to die for the struggle. These are things that we would normally associate with religion.¹⁶⁵⁴

If 'the Struggle' is a struggle for power then it is not Christian. But Nolan draws a striking parallel between the liturgical call-and-response ("*The Lord be with you.*" "*And also with you.*") and the oft-repeated call-and-response of South African activists: ("*Amandla!*" "*Ngawethu!*"). Whites are scared of *Amandla* because it sounds as if power is being taken from them. But the response says 'power is ours, yours and mine': it is power *with* and not power *over*.¹⁶⁵⁵

The role of the local church

Nolan's quote above is very specific to South Africa and this reinforces his view – and the view of the Council – that the action of the Christian in the world has to be specific to the world environment in which they find themselves. This again proves the importance of being willing to read the signs of the times.

You do not incarnate good news into a situation; good news arises out of a situation. The prophet did not 'apply' their prophetic message to their times, they had it revealed to them through the signs of the times. ... The Gospel has to be proclaimed in an actual situation, with attention to its implications for the reordering of society. A failure to accept the social implications of the gospel would be a lack of responsiveness to the gospel itself, and hence a defect of faith.¹⁶⁵⁶

Vatican II was able to speak with confidence about the role of the Church in different situations because the presence of 2,300 bishops from outside the Roman Curia meant that they brought those different situations into the Council itself.

The new catholicity of the Catholic Church represented at Vatican II was the basic fact that contributed to the early reception of Vatican II by the Council itself, that is by the bishops hailing from local churches around the world. The fact that Vatican II was the first truly

¹⁶⁵³ Haughey, "Jesus as the Justice of God", 281-282

¹⁶⁵⁴ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 160

¹⁶⁵⁵ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 164

¹⁶⁵⁶ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 27

global council is evident not only in the theology of the documents debated and approved but also in the reception of these documents.¹⁶⁵⁷

As an example of the latter, Faggioli lists diocesan, national and regional synods such as Medellin (the Latin American bishops) in 1968, Austria in 1968, Netherlands in 1970, Germany in 1972.¹⁶⁵⁸ (+Hurley's first synod in Durban was in 1968 so it is striking how early his was compared to the others).

To be honest, the global character of Vatican II is based more on who was there rather than on who actually had influence. Thus, Philippe Denis points out that of the 2,358 bishops at the first session, only 260 were from Africa (and of those only 61 were African-born). Congar estimates that by the end of the Council there were about 100 'black bishops' present (which as he points out is a radical improvement on the single one who was at Vatican I).¹⁶⁵⁹

But Hastings, who in the 1960s was an English-educated white priest working in East Africa, in reflecting on the Council mentions the fact that, even if the majority of bishops were still white missionaries, they co-operated with dignity with their local counterparts 'indeed more closely and more effectively than any other continental group.' He highlights three bishops including +Hurley.¹⁶⁶⁰

He also points out how quickly the profile of bishops changed after the Council (though less quickly in South Africa!):

Probably in no other continent did the Vatican Council coincide quite so neatly and sympathetically with a major process of secular change as in Africa.[Because of independence] black prime ministers and black archbishops appeared almost simultaneously.¹⁶⁶¹

The spirit of the Second Vatican Council may not seem, on the institutional surface, to matter so much today to the Church in Africa, twenty years after it all happened. Yet in fact it was an absolutely decisive moment in its history, not so much for the hierarchy as for the re-shaping of the grass roots community.¹⁶⁶²

Recognising that the African impact of the Council was after it was over, Denis comments:

Most observers agree that the African bishops failed to influence in any significant way the work of the Council itself. The importance of the Second Vatican Council for the African continent lies in its reception.¹⁶⁶³

¹⁶⁵⁷ Faggioli, *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning*, 3

¹⁶⁵⁸ Faggioli, *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning*, 8

¹⁶⁵⁹ Congar, Yves. "A Last Look at the Council". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 342

¹⁶⁶⁰ Hastings, Adrian. "The Council came to Africa". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 316

¹⁶⁶¹ Hastings, "The Council came to Africa", 315

¹⁶⁶² Hastings, "The Council came to Africa", 322

¹⁶⁶³ Denis, Philippe. "Archbishop Hurley's contribution to the Second Vatican Council". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 5

He also singles out +Hurley among the African bishops in this case, crediting him as being more influential than most. He was one of only six bishops from Africa elected to a conciliar commission (though six more were nominated by John XXIII, perhaps to redress the balance).¹⁶⁶⁴

Even after the Council the skew towards 'the Old World' is evident. Alberigo aims to create a definitive history of Vatican II with his monumental five-volume work involving a number of authors ('the Bologna School'). But even though he says "one of the most important characteristics of the project is its geo-cultural scope" his team of authors is made up of 12 Europeans, two North Americans and one South American: there is no African and no Asian included.¹⁶⁶⁵ Theologians can sometimes suffer from the same blind spots of which they accuse bishops!

Komonchak, citing *Lumen Gentium* 13 in support, reiterates the rediscovery by Vatican II that local churches are genuine churches and not just parts of some pre-existing whole:

The Church is not an abstract but a concrete universal; one, not in spite of, but precisely because of the variety of the local churches.¹⁶⁶⁶

(Thus, the meeting of the Latin American Church in Medellin in 1968 can act as a model for the first pan-African symposium of bishops in Kampala in 1969.)

Diversity within unity – as opposed to uniformity – is increasingly being accepted as a mark of catholicity. But this creates an expectation which, some would argue, has not always been met by Rome since the end of the Council and certainly under the two papacies from 1978 to 2013. For theologians like Nolan it creates an open-ness for genuine and rooted response. This is what Kearney was able to discover for himself, both in his work for justice but also in his ecumenical endeavours. Nolan argues that by exploring the difference between the letter and the spirit of the Gospel, we can distinguish between the 'shape' of the Gospel (which is definite and for all time) and its verbal content (which is contextual).

"The particular set of words or expressions that one may choose to use depends upon the language, culture, politics and needs of a particular time and place."¹⁶⁶⁷

Nolan would be supported in this approach by the words of John XXIII at the opening of the Council when he drew a distinction between 'the substance of the old doctrine, the *depositum fidei*' and 'the way to formulate its expression'.¹⁶⁶⁸

Nolan goes on to expand the idea saying that the Gospels we receive from the first century must be read as the expression of Jesus' time and place.

We must read the Bible and hear its stories in order to get clues, but if we want to hear the latest news about God and Jesus Christ we must read the signs of the times.

¹⁶⁶⁴ Denis, "Archbishop Hurley's contribution to the Second Vatican Council", 8. (In fact, +Hurley was the only South African bishop elected during the first period: +McCann was elected later; +Van Velsen was already included because he was a member of the Secretariat for Christian Unity.)

¹⁶⁶⁵ Alberigo, Giuseppe. "The History of Vatican II 1958-1965". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 3-4

¹⁶⁶⁶ Komonchak, Joseph A. "The Local Realization of the Church". *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 77-78

¹⁶⁶⁷ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 8

¹⁶⁶⁸ *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* 6

Nolan explains that this is different from an approach that applies the events in the past to the present; the Gospels must be good news about what God is doing *in South Africa today* even if seen in the light of what God has done in the past.¹⁶⁶⁹

Such a contextualised reading of the Gospel not only shows us what *God is doing* here and now but also what *we are called to do* here and now. Donahue quotes Jeremiah 22:16 which says that the good King Josiah is the one 'who knew Yahweh' and explains that the 'knowing of Yahweh' is equated with taking the cause of the poor and needy.

Here there is no division between *theoria* and *praxis*, between faith and the doing of justice. Justice is concrete. It combines non-exploitation of the poor and taking their cause. The doing of justice is not the application of religious faith, but its substance; without it, God remains unknown.¹⁶⁷⁰

In a lengthy exploration of the relationship between faith and justice, Dulles (not always beloved of progressives) moves faith closer to the concrete realisation of justice which must be specific to each situation:

We may conclude that there are positive links between faith, conceived as an assent to revealed doctrine, and committed action on behalf of justice. But the propositional understanding of faith, in my opinion, causes the relationship to appear more tenuous and indirect than ought to be case. The propositions of faith, which are generally statements of a highly speculative and abstract character, are difficult to translate into concrete programs of action.¹⁶⁷¹

Dulles then compares the intellectualist approach to faith (conviction), with the fiducial approach (personal trust in God), with a third approach which he calls 'performative'. He connects this with Liberation Theology (commitment). It is not that the other approaches do not require action but that people may struggle to see the connection.¹⁶⁷²

Because only a total response can be appropriate to the word of God, faith is never a matter of disembodied words; it becomes incarnate in faith and praxis. The crucifixion – the free action by which Jesus obediently goes to his death and through it to newness of life – is the word-event par excellence.¹⁶⁷³

Liberation does not foster any utopian illusions about the future. We will never, of course, fully insert the kingdom of God into historical time. But the Biblical concept of the Kingdom stimulates our creative imagination so that we find ever-new ways of provisionally realising, within history, signs and anticipations of the promised Kingdom.¹⁶⁷⁴

These ever-new ways of provisionally realising the promised Kingdom only make sense if they are specific to the situation. Dulles points out there is a potential danger with this:

¹⁶⁶⁹ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 19

¹⁶⁷⁰ Donahue, "Biblical perspectives on Justice", 76

¹⁶⁷¹ Dulles, Avery. "The Meaning of Faith considered in relation to Justice". *The Faith that does Justice - examining the Christian Sources for Social Change*. John C Haughey ed. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 11

¹⁶⁷² Dulles, "The Meaning of Faith Considered in Relation to Justice", 21

¹⁶⁷³ Dulles, "The Meaning of Faith Considered in Relation to Justice", 32

¹⁶⁷⁴ Dulles, "The Meaning of Faith Considered in Relation to Justice", 37

If this immediacy with God [which is offered by transcendental theology] is allowed to be obscured, as seems to be the case in some liberationist theologies, faith might seem to be a reaction to the historical situation rather than a response to a personal call from God.¹⁶⁷⁵

But this is not to deny the importance of the historical situation; simply to ensure that there is also a response to a personal call from God: which call also happens to a specific person in a specific historical situation.

Option for the Poor

In his essay, Dulles also cautions against idealising the poor in our attempt to show solidarity: “The poor can sin as much by envy and covetousness as the rich can by pride and avarice.”¹⁶⁷⁶ (These are in fact rather apposite words for modern-day South Africa.) The reason why Dulles felt the need for this warning is that spirit of *Gaudium et Spes* – and then subsequent documents both of the universal Church and from regional bishops’ meetings such as Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979) – established that the Church’s engagement with the world was predicated on a preferential option for the poor.

Whether this was a conclusion that Kearney reached by himself, or whether it was under the influence of +Hurley, or whether it was a response to Vatican II – or most likely all three – Kearney’s life and ministry clearly showed his commitment to this option for the poor. It was mentioned by many who were interviewed about him, but stated most explicitly by Methodist Bishop Paul Verryn whose own commitment to the poor has also been well documented.¹⁶⁷⁷ He felt he was describing a worldview that he shared with Kearney when he said:

Working with people who don’t need God is awfully boring. ... You get to the essence of where Christ is when you are with the poor. ... Knowing that you have the truth comes from the poor, comes from the incarnation. You don’t go there with a single answer. You are going to have to listen very, very carefully if you want to get answers.¹⁶⁷⁸

The ‘exposure visits’ described in Chapter 4 were a practical way in which Kearney ensured that some people at least did go and ‘listen very, very carefully’.

Influence of Liberation Theology

It was the Church in Latin America who first articulated this theological ‘option for the poor’, so it is theologians from that part of the world that will have likely influenced Kearney. For example, the Brazilian, former Franciscan Leonardo Boff:

¹⁶⁷⁵ Dulles, “The Meaning of Faith Considered in Relation to Justice”, 39

¹⁶⁷⁶ Dulles, “The Meaning of Faith Considered in Relation to Justice”, 41

¹⁶⁷⁷ Kuljian, Christa. *Sanctuary: How an Inner-city church spilled onto a sidewalk* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2013)

¹⁶⁷⁸ Verryn, Paul. Personal interview by author, 21 March 2021 in Johannesburg (Methodist Bishop)

The spirit of the Council together with its corpus of documents wrought two decisive effects here [in Latin America]. First, a Church renewal already well on its way now enjoyed official legitimation. Second, now it would be possible to implement a creative acceptance of the Council from a point of departure different from that of the Council's own conception, realisation and development: the point of departure being the viewpoint of the poor.¹⁶⁷⁹

The Salvadoran Jesuit, Jon Sobrino, is quoted by Faggioli as saying that this aspect of Vatican II is self-evident: "This will seem novel only to those failed to grasp what is new in the ecclesiology of Vatican II."¹⁶⁸⁰ The impact on Kearney's spirituality of fellow Salvadoran, the martyred Archbishop (now Saint) Oscar Romero, is mentioned for example in Chapter 5. Both the writings and the life of +Romero were a significant influence on Kearney. We know (from an article by Carmel Rickard) that +Hurley introduced the film *Romero* at the Durban International Film Festival in July 1990 and she also mentions that +Hurley had celebrated a mass on 24 March 1990 on the 10th anniversary of Romero's assassination. On that occasion, +Hurley had drawn attention to the fact that the two of them had arrived at the Gregorian University in Rome on the same day in November 1937.¹⁶⁸¹

In 1992, Kearney and Rickard travelled together to visit El Salvador and to learn more about +Romero, something that Kearney then talked about in Durban at an event in May 2015 to mark +Romero's beatification.¹⁶⁸² In September 2018, this author was able to attend the canonisation of Romero in Rome and Kearney was thrilled to receive a souvenir from the event, in what turned out to be the last weeks of his life.

Kearney was also influenced by the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, who warns against the danger of objectification of the poor. His recommended approach is one that Kearney always tried to take in his dealings with marginalised people:

The oppressed have been destroyed precisely because their situation has reduced them to things. In order to regain their humanity they must cease to be things and fight as men and women. This is a radical requirement: they cannot enter the struggle as objects in order later to become human beings.¹⁶⁸³

The Latin American educator who we know influenced Kearney greatly (as mentioned earlier) was Ivan Illich. Kearney starts his Masters dissertation by identifying himself closely with Illich's point of view:

Illich writes from a third-world perspective and this is a perspective and concern which I share.¹⁶⁸⁴

He also shares Illich's discomfort with a consumerist society:

The choice between the Promethean and Epimethean existence is a choice between a life of consumption and a life of action, between [being] rich in the ownership of things or in the freedom to use them.¹⁶⁸⁵

¹⁶⁷⁹ Boff, Leonardo. *When theology listens to the poor* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 8

¹⁶⁸⁰ Faggioli, *Vatican II - the Battle for meaning*, 55

¹⁶⁸¹ Kearney/Hurley/Press/4 (1988-2002)

¹⁶⁸² "Update May 2015", *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 26 September 2022)

¹⁶⁸³ Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin, 1996) 50

¹⁶⁸⁴ Kearney, "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", 1

¹⁶⁸⁵ Kearney, "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", 29

A succinct view on the preferential option for the poor comes from Gustavo Gutiérrez in, for example, his contribution to the edited volume cited earlier on the Reception of Vatican II.¹⁶⁸⁶ He writes that, for the Church in the developing world, the Council was ‘a summons to adulthood....a call to that Church to accept its own being and, as such and on that basis, to bear witness to the Gospel.’¹⁶⁸⁷

Though he was writing about the Church in Latin America, one can see this also applying at the time to the Church in South Africa which partly still saw itself as an extension of a European Church serving outposts of European society and fighting European battles of denominationalism; with perhaps half an eye on a role as a missionary Church as well but separately.

Gutiérrez recognised that John XXIII’s call to be attentive to the signs of the times created three openings for the Church (all of which were focuses for Kearney): to the modern world, to other Christians, and to the poor. But he feels that the Council was ‘more alert to the first two than to the third’.¹⁶⁸⁸

Gutiérrez also quotes from a radio message of John XXIII from 11 Sept 1962 in which, for the first time, the Pope uses the phrase: ‘the Church of the poor’. The Peruvian Dominican sees three important insights here:

- John XXIII is now talking about ‘under-developed’ countries not just ‘developing’: he is taking real poverty seriously and sees this not just as a reason for the Church to offer relief but as ‘a challenge to a renewal of self-knowledge’.
- The Church is in the process of becoming: thus not triumphalism but journeying towards a determined destination.
- In saying ‘the Church of all’ and ‘the Church of the poor’, John XXIII is stressing that no one is excluded and that there is a special place for the poor. “This particularism, this predilection (which obviously does not mean exclusiveness) is not opposed, in the Pope’s understanding, to universality but rather gives the latter a demanding concrete form in history.”¹⁶⁸⁹

Gutiérrez also quotes Cardinal Lecaro, Archbishop of Milan, at the first session of the Council:

If we treat this subject of winning the poor for the Gospel as just another one of the many themes that must occupy the attention of the Council, we shall not satisfy the most real and most profound exigencies of our day – indeed, we shall make it impossible for us to do so. The Church herself is in truth the theme of this Council especially insofar as she is above all the Church of the poor.¹⁶⁹⁰

Gutiérrez asks what is required of the Church if it is to be a universal sacrament of salvation in a world stamped by poverty and injustice?¹⁶⁹¹ His response, based on the 1979 meeting of the Latin

¹⁶⁸⁶ Gutiérrez, Gustavo. “The Church and the Poor: a Latin American perspective”. *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987)

¹⁶⁸⁷ Gutiérrez, Gustavo. “The Church and the Poor: a Latin American perspective”, 171

¹⁶⁸⁸ Gutiérrez, Gustavo. “The Church and the Poor: a Latin American perspective”, 175

¹⁶⁸⁹ Gutiérrez, Gustavo. “The Church and the Poor: a Latin American perspective”, 179

¹⁶⁹⁰ Gutiérrez, Gustavo. “The Church and the Poor: a Latin American perspective”, 180

¹⁶⁹¹ Gutiérrez, Gustavo. “The Church and the Poor: a Latin American perspective”, 185

American bishops in Puebla, and drawing on Vatican II, could be seen almost as a blueprint for Kearney's mission:

- To be poor with the poor, the 'way of poverty' (*Ad Gentes* 5)
- Because it is the way of serving Christ (*Ad Gentes* 8): not a social response but a theological one
- To evangelise the poor (which are words in the motto both of the OMI and Cardinal Cardijn
-)
- For the poor to be evangelisers in turn: they are the 'messianic people' (cf *Lumen Gentium* 9)
- A paschal service: liberation and life in the face of death (not just bodily but cultural, neglect, aspirational)
- Accepting death as a witness to life: "the road of commitment to the poorest and most oppressed is for many a road of imprisonment, torture, disappearance, exile and death: 'the blood of Christians is seed'."

Among South African writers, the one who is most often compared to the Liberation Theologians of Latin America is Nolan.¹⁶⁹² His 1988 *God in South Africa* sets out a vision for a Church which engages directly with the crisis of Apartheid. He explains that you cannot preach a different gospel to each side; you must preach the gospel of the poor to both sides. Nolan's vision is of the poor taking up the challenge and the rich being challenged to side with them because it is God's struggle.

The gospel we preach will not be the gospel of Jesus Christ unless it takes sides with those who are being sinned against – the poor and the oppressed. It is from that point of view that we must preach the gospel to both sides in South Africa today.¹⁶⁹³

The only way that the gospel can be, in the final analysis, good news for all is by being, in the first instance, good news for the poor. The best thing that could happen to the rich would be for them to hear and be challenged by the good news for the poor.¹⁶⁹⁴

The good news is not supposed to bring hope to the poor and challenge to the rich; it is supposed to bring hope and challenge to everyone by first of all encouraging *and* challenging the poor. The gospel is good news for the poor because salvation comes from below.¹⁶⁹⁵

As Kearney starts his work at Diakonia under +Hurley's guidance, he sees that he has an opportunity to enable the Church to speak to 'both sides' and to do so in a way that places the Church on the side of the poor.

¹⁶⁹² In fact, in 1975 Nolan attended an international Movement of Catholic Students gathering in Lima Peru and met Gutiérrez. Creamer, Terence, 'Obituary of Albert Nolan 1934-2022', *The Southern Cross* 21 October 2022 <https://www.scross.co.za/2022/10/obituary-for-fr-albert-nolan-op/> (accessed 24 October 2022)

¹⁶⁹³ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, xii

¹⁶⁹⁴ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 14

¹⁶⁹⁵ Nolan, *God in South Africa*, 196

Appendix D: +Hurley the political priest

Background

Given that Kearney was so influenced by +Hurley I would like to explore the criticisms made of the Archbishop that he was too political in his role as a priest. This is something that Kearney would have been aware of and been keen to resolve in his own mind as well sometimes being called upon to defend publicly. In his archive, he kept an article by Alan Paton jokingly entitled: 'Is Archbishop Hurley a Christian?'. Paton imagines him being berated by a checked-shirt Christian for standing outside City Hall holding a placard.¹⁶⁹⁶

Mention has already been made in Chapter 4 of +Hurley's growing awareness of social justice issues in the Church as he witnessed at first hand the rise of Fascism in Italy in the 1930s. In his biography, Kearney recalls +Hurley being in Rome when Hitler visited and the mixed views about this among the seminarians in his house.¹⁶⁹⁷ Perhaps this is one of the reasons why, when he became a bishop in 1947, +Hurley chose as his episcopal motto *Ubi Spiritus, ibi Libertas* ('Where the Spirit is there is Freedom' 2 Cor 3:17). At that stage, he was not to know that his time as a bishop would be dominated by debating freedom in relation to the Church at Vatican II, and by winning freedom for everyone in South Africa. Kearney does state, though, that it was this latter issue that specifically prompted the choice of motto.¹⁶⁹⁸

The word freedom is a theme taken up by O'Malley in reflecting on how the Council Fathers (and indeed all Christians) engage with history and politics:

What this means is that we are freed from the past. We are free to appropriate what we find helpful and to reject what we find harmful. We realise, perhaps to our dismay, that we cannot simply repeat the answers of the past, for the whole situation is different. The question is different. We are different... If we are freed from the past in the sense of not expecting it to tell us what to do, we are free to make our own decisions for the future. Indeed, we have no escape from such freedom, fraught as it is with dreadful burdens.¹⁶⁹⁹

The SACBC during +Hurley's first term as President (1952-1961) certainly demonstrated a new-found freedom. Phohlo contrasts the 1952 statement which was 'cautious, theoretical, paternalistic, uncommitted' with that in 1957 which was strong and uncompromising calling Apartheid 'intrinsically evil'.¹⁷⁰⁰

Hurley the 'Political Priest'

Speaking about +Hurley at a presentation at St Joseph's Theological Institute in Cedara in August 2005 (an institution that the Archbishop had helped found), Kearney reflects on +Hurley's long

¹⁶⁹⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Sunday Tribune*, 3 July 1982)

¹⁶⁹⁷ Kearney, G Paddy. *Guardian of the Light* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2009) 33

¹⁶⁹⁸ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 54

¹⁶⁹⁹ O'Malley, John W. *Tradition and Transition Historical Perspectives on Vatican II* (Wilmington DE: M Glazier, 1989) 76

¹⁷⁰⁰ Phohlo, Abel "The Attitude of the Catholic Church in South Africa towards Apartheid from 1984 to 1996 and its implication for Spirituality" Licentiate dissertation (Rome: Pontificia Universitatis Gregoriana, 1998) 11

journey towards social justice as his interests broadened: the protection and desegregation of Catholic schools (from 1952); the SACBC document 'Call to Conscience' (1972); the bishops' synod on 'Justice in the World' (1974); conscientious objectors/ end conscription (from 1984); the Koevoet trial (1985); the release of a detainee (1985 – though typically Kearney but does not name himself!); support for ANC members in exile; support for workers (Clermont, SARMCOL in Howick); the SACBC Pastoral Plan 'Community Serving Humanity' (1989).¹⁷⁰¹

As was said in Chapter 2 and Appendix B about Kearney, we do not see in +Hurley a hard line drawn between the temporal order and the ecclesial order: and we can only assume that this had a clear influence on Kearney's worldview as well. Donahue explicates this well:

Engagement in the quest for justice is no more 'secular' than the engagement of Yahweh in the history of his people, or the incarnation of Jesus into the world of human suffering.¹⁷⁰²

Of course, it is not only Catholic clerics who have had to ponder this question. Writing a 'theological biography' of the Lutheran Manas Buthelezi, Masondo says that his discourse was profoundly theological and yet political at the same time.

He refused to divorce the religious from the political – a style reminiscent of African religious thought, where there is no separation of the sacred from the profane.¹⁷⁰³

The words he uses could also have been used by +Hurley and Kearney. He goes on to quote Buthelezi directly:

It is as acts of Christian motivation become incarnate in the social, economic and political structures that we speak of Christian life as an everyday phenomenon. To dare to live for Christ means to have a Christian impact on these structures. It is a daring act because it involves the risk of suffering as Christ suffered as he made concrete his love for humanity.¹⁷⁰⁴

The Methodist, Peter Storey, also reflects on this in his autobiography with parallels for +Hurley and for Kearney. He recalls how in 1976 'many accused us of being political activists rather than Christians trying to be faithful'. But he had a significant model to follow in his father who was also a Methodist minister and committed himself to working (and living) with poorer black communities:

My dad used to say that all discipleship begins in theology and ends in politics. ... We were first and foremost a community where people came to discover their identity as children of God and to find purpose for their lives. The trouble was, of course, that we lived in a land where not everyone was respected as a child of God.¹⁷⁰⁵

But Storey also recognises the tension. On the one hand, he acknowledges that Latin American liberation theologians have identified with political movements but, on the other, he is especially

¹⁷⁰¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/2 "Presentation at SJTI Cedara" (August 2005)

¹⁷⁰² Donahue, John R. "Biblical perspectives on Justice". *The Faith that does Justice - examining the -Christian Sources for Social Change*. John C Haughey ed. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 109

¹⁷⁰³ Masondo, Sibusiso. "A theological biography of Manas Buthelezi". *Contested Relations*. Hanns Lessing et al eds. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2015) 377

¹⁷⁰⁴ Masondo, "A theological biography of Manas Buthelezi", 383 (quoting the words of Manas Buthelezi)

¹⁷⁰⁵ Storey, Peter. *I Beg to Differ – ministry amid the teargas*. (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2018) 210

fearful of this in South Africa given the history of the Dutch Reformed Church supporting Apartheid.¹⁷⁰⁶

Certainly, all reviews of +Hurley's life give prominence to his non-ecclesial activities. For example, to mark his 70th birthday in 1985, there are a number of articles in several papers with comments on his life and ministry. Particular mention is given to his work against Apartheid especially with the Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR) and also his political work for justice. Carmel Rickard writing in *The Southern Cross* similarly mentions these activities alongside the Pastoral Plan and a new campaign called 'Christians for Justice and Peace'. It is noteworthy that there is not a specific mention of Diakonia in these articles (even in the one by Kearney's wife): was this modesty on the part of Kearney or an attempt at that moment (so soon after Kearney's detention) to distance Hurley from Diakonia?¹⁷⁰⁷

We have +Hurley's own words on this subject, for example when being interviewed by a secular newspaper in 1989 about the launch of the pastoral plan:

It is not political but it does have political applications. We want especially to overcome all forms of discrimination.¹⁷⁰⁸

Around the same time, he is also looking back on his 50 years as a priest and comments on the label 'political priest'. He explains that he has never sought political office but there are other ways of being political such as participating in the promotion of a Christian social conscience in matters economic and cultural. He concludes: "This is essential to any priest."¹⁷⁰⁹

In a speech that he gave in Bologna in 1993, 'From Acceptance of Segregation to Rejection of Apartheid – 50 years of Christian Evolution in South Africa', Hurley is quoted by Phohlo as saying:

The abolition of Apartheid was essentially a political process that happened to be accompanied by a number of dedicated Christians.¹⁷¹⁰

While this might be read as +Hurley implying that resistance to injustice was not essentially theological, I think rather he is honouring the fact that those Christians who were involved in the Struggle were supporting a political process, even if they were theologically motivated.

In his biography of +Hurley, Kearney makes several references to this combination of politics and theology.

Flowing from this belief [that the Church should not be inward-looking] was a particular commitment to the struggle against Apartheid for which Vatican II gave him an inspiring theological foundation.¹⁷¹¹

Philippe Denis points out that +Hurley's famous 1964 Hoernlé lecture 'Apartheid: a crisis of Christian conscience' was in January 1964, between sessions of the Council.¹⁷¹² So even though the issue was

¹⁷⁰⁶ Storey, *I Beg to Differ*, 340

¹⁷⁰⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (various titles, around 9 November 1985)

¹⁷⁰⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*Daily News* 15 May 1989)

¹⁷⁰⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*The Southern Cross*, 23 July 1989)

¹⁷¹⁰ Phohlo, "The Attitude of the Catholic Church in South Africa towards Apartheid ...", 6

¹⁷¹¹ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 148

¹⁷¹² Denis, Philippe. "The Historical Significance of Denis Hurley's Contribution to the Second Vatican Council" *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 211

never debated at the Council itself, he concludes: “There is little chance that +Hurley’s subsequent involvement in the anti-Apartheid movement would have been the same if he had not taken part in the Council.”¹⁷¹³ He also points out the Archbishop’s strange silence on Apartheid during the Council debates.¹⁷¹⁴

A particular focus is the Koevoet trial of 1985 when +Hurley was charged for revealing information about the activities of the SA troops in Namibia. The media coverage, which Kearney certainly had a hand in managing, makes a point about the presence at +Hurley’s trial of overseas bishops such as Archbishop Winning from Glasgow, Bishop David Konstant from Leeds (representing Cardinal Hume), Bishop Eamon Casey from Galway, Bishop John Brennan from Australia, and Bishop Donal Lamont (who had been expelled from Zimbabwe by the UDI government). Also that there were letters of protest to President Botha from the combined American bishops (the USCCB) and also from a former US Congressman Robert Drinan (who was also a Jesuit priest); plus a letter of support to +Hurley from Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago.¹⁷¹⁵ In the end, the charges were dropped before the trial began, and so the Mass of solidarity (organised for Sunday 17 Feb 1985 at Emmanuel Cathedral) became a Mass of thanksgiving. At this Mass, +Hurley explained, in response to the accusation that he was interfering in politics, that the Church must be wherever there is suffering:

The law of love applies to all human behaviour, political as well as personal and domestic. It may be surprising to learn that politics is also subject to the law of love, but it is true. It is also true that, in its vision of itself and the social behaviour of its members, a society must try to live the justice practiced by Christ. Christian love, Christian justice, these are essential in the life of human society and that is why the gospel is political.¹⁷¹⁶

Criticism of Hurley

Although +Hurley did get support from inside the Church, he also received criticism. Daphne Goad, who worked closely with Kearney at Diakonia, recalls that not all the priests approved of Diakonia and some did not respond when she asked them why they did not support the Good Friday Service. “They thought we were a bunch of communists!”¹⁷¹⁷

Kearney reports an incident on a Sunday afternoon in August 1985 in which the Cathedral was taken over by a workers’ meeting (to try and bring calm to a volatile situation). As a result the afternoon Zulu Mass (with Fr St George) had to be cancelled. Some of the priests of the Archdiocese of Durban were outraged and so +Hurley met them (intriguingly with the atheist communist Alec Erwin also present), and the Archbishop explained why the meeting was important and that he would do the same again if necessary since it was the policy of the SACBC to make church buildings available when needed:

He asked his priests to look beyond the narrow confines of the Church’s needs and accept that in a time of crisis ‘business as usual’ might not be possible.¹⁷¹⁸

¹⁷¹³ Denis, “Archbishop Hurley’s contribution to the Second Vatican Council”, 15

¹⁷¹⁴ Denis, Philippe. “Archbishop Denis Hurley’s Strange Silence on Apartheid at Vatican II”, *Ephemerides Theologiae Lovanienses*, 89/1 (2013), 411-423

¹⁷¹⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (various titles, February 1985)

¹⁷¹⁶ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 224

¹⁷¹⁷ Goad, Daphne. Personal interview by author, 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹⁷¹⁸ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 230

There is a similar problem in Howick where Fr Larry Kaufmann had allowed the Mpophomeni strikers to use their church building – and the parish council (including people who worked in management at BTR Sarmcol) which covered both sites were strongly opposed. They told +Hurley to ‘get this meddlesome priest out of politics and stop using your church for workers’ meetings’. But +Hurley did receive representations from other members of the community such as Pastor Philip Dladla who called Hurley a father to the strikers:

He put himself firmly in the shoes of the workers and walked along with all of us.¹⁷¹⁹

Although his role in resisting communism in his native Poland was highly political, under John Paul II (as I discussed in Chapter 4), there was pressure on priests to distance themselves from direct political involvement (and indeed in 1980 he forced Robert Drinan, mentioned above, to step down from the US Congress). When +Hurley was stepping down from the SACBC Presidency (January 1987) the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Jan Mees quoted from the “Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation”, issued in April 1986 by the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith:

It is not for the pastors of the Church to intervene directly in the political construction and organisation of social life. This task forms part of the vocation of the laity acting on their own initiative with their fellow citizens.

But to draw attention to the discrepancy in how this was applied, Kearney points out that Archbishop Jan Mees had been honoured by the Paraguayan dictator Stroessner and that PW Botha had quoted the same text against the SA bishops a few months earlier. In fact, Kearney takes pleasure in the fact that Archbishop Mees leaves South Africa soon after and the acting Papal delegate, Mgr. Mario Cassari, gave great support to the bishops ‘because they live among the people and know them better than anyone else and can speak for them’.¹⁷²⁰

One of the key incidents that tested the limits of +Hurley’s comfort with the proximity of faith and politics was the Freedom March in September 1989 (cited at the beginning of Chapter 6). The press reports that +Hurley and +Michael Nuttall threatened to withdraw because of the presence of communist flags and the flag scandal dominates the coverage of the story. The *Daily News* follows this up on 19 October with a letter from Hurley in which he condemns communism as having an almost 100% record of totalitarian suppression.¹⁷²¹ In the press file that Kearney kept, there is also a handwritten note from him quoting +Michael Nuttall as saying in 2006 that +Hurley’s concern was the Pope would see the picture and be upset at seeing him near a communist flag.

Ela Gandhi supports this pointing out that +Hurley was not against sharing a march with communists – ‘after all he had a good relationship with Alec Erwin’ – but that the problem was that the SACP flag was unfurled right behind the two bishops.¹⁷²²

The danger of being dressed in communist clothes is one of which +Hurley was wary. This is explored in the introduction to the anthology of +Hurley’s letters where, it is suggested, that +Hurley would have been influenced by reports he heard while in Italy in the 1930s of the actions of communists against the Church during the Spanish Civil War. The closeness of the ANC to the South African Communist Party is one of the reasons why +Hurley did not associate himself with the ANC

¹⁷¹⁹ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 232

¹⁷²⁰ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 259

¹⁷²¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*Daily News*, 23 September 1989)

¹⁷²² Gandhi, Ela. Personal interview by author, 18 March 2021 in Durban (co-founder of Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

(whereas, for example, both Naudé and Nolan did).¹⁷²³ Kearney mentions that Minister of Justice Jimmy Kruger seriously considered banning him and that President P W Botha angrily waved his finger at him. But one KZN MPC, Brian Edwards, went so far as calling +Hurley ‘an ecclesiastical Che Guevara’.¹⁷²⁴ His niece, Mikaela York, explained that this was a description that her uncle hated, even in jest.¹⁷²⁵ But such catchy phrases do stick. For example, almost 20 years after +Hurley’s death, a recent examination of his legacy contrasts that moniker with the one that Alan Paton gave him (and that Kearney used as the title of his biography).¹⁷²⁶

Pottmeyer points out that such complexities were bound to arise when Vatican II – and especially *Gaudium et Spes* – encouraged the Church to enter into new areas, and so find themselves, literally and metaphorically, marching behind flags that they did not like:

In its legitimate effort to enter into dialogue with the modern world, the pastoral constitution occasionally overlooked the fact that such concepts as justice, progress and human dignity do not necessarily have the same meaning in the Christian and the modern understanding of them. As a result, in the ensuing period, not a few people imagined that fidelity to the Council required an unconditional solidarity with all the forces that marched behind banners that championed the attainment of a world more worthy of human beings. The danger in this outlook was that of interpreting the content of the gospel in terms of the common goal supposedly shared with others – for example, liberals or Marxists – and of reducing it to a common denominator.¹⁷²⁷

Was Hurley Political Enough?

Whilst Kearney was aware of this risk, he was also aware of the greater danger to the Church of being isolated and not engaging with those with whom it shared common purpose. In his own anthology, he includes a 1982 piece that he wrote for *Diakonia News* in which he reflects on Chief Albert Luthuli’s challenge to the Church that if it was to survive, it could not stand on the outskirts as a spectator.¹⁷²⁸ He includes a direct quotation from Luthuli:

It is utterly idle for Christians to criticise communism and Islam from a deep armchair, when communists and Moslems are concerning themselves with those involved in the conflict.¹⁷²⁹

So while +Hurley was criticised for being too political – and Kearney had to defend him – he also felt that actually he could have done more.

¹⁷²³ Denis, Philippe, Kearney, Paddy & Argall, Jane eds. *A Life in Letters – selected correspondence of Denis Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2018) 7

¹⁷²⁴ Kearney, Paddy. ‘Denis Eugene Hurley: 1915-2004’. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) xix

¹⁷²⁵ Email to the author from Mikaela York, 29 September 2021

¹⁷²⁶ Egan, Anthony. “Archbishop Denis Hurley: ‘Ecclesiastical Che Guevara’ or ‘Guardian of the Light’?,” *The Journal of Social Encounters*: (2022, 6:2) 44-57

¹⁷²⁷ Pottmeyer, Hermann J. “A new Phase in the Reception of Vatican II: Twenty Years of Interpretation of the Council”. *The Reception of Vatican II*. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua & Joseph A Komonchak eds. (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1987) 43

¹⁷²⁸ Kearney, G Paddy. *Faith in Action* (Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal Christian Council, 2017) 16 (“Luthuli’s challenge to the Church”, *Diakonia News* September 1982)

¹⁷²⁹ Luthuli, Albert. *Let my people go* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2006) 124

In an interview in 1997 marking his 50 years as a bishop, mention is made by the journalist of +Hurley's role in SAIRR and Diakonia. But +Hurley says that he regrets that he had 'not found a bite to match his bark'.

I suppose I was active in speaking out against Apartheid but I failed to get the church community involved.¹⁷³⁰

Later that year, in the Catholic Church's submission to the TRC – presumably drafted or at least endorsed by +Hurley, it says:

We recognise that more could have been done to protest the on-going and systematic violation of human rights by the state apparatus.¹⁷³¹

¹⁷³⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*Sunday Times*, 23 March 1997)

¹⁷³¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*The Southern Cross*, 7 September 1997)

Appendix E: +Hurley, Kearney and Gandhi

Early link to the Gandhi family

The most famous Indian (and Hindu) associated with Durban is, of course, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who lived there from 1893 to 1914. In fact, from his offices the young lawyer would have watched the construction of the nearby Emmanuel Cathedral which was completed in 1904.

I would like to explore in this section the influence that Gandhi and his family had on Kearney. I believe that this influence was direct because of Kearney's own links with the Gandhi family and his publicly stated interest in Gandhian ideals. But there is also an indirect influence because of the significant Gandhian influence on +Hurley. It is impossible to extricate the two or to say that one causes the other. I think it is fairer to see a virtuous circle (as in so many of Kearney's interests) in which +Hurley encourages Kearney to pursue a certain path, but that Kearney also independently is attracted and influenced by Gandhi.

The link with Gandhi is the clearest evidence of Kearney's open-ness to other faiths. But it is also important because Gandhi's approach to inter-religious dialogue is one which is later espoused by Kearney. I would argue that it is also implicit in the famous phrase in *Nostra Aetate* about 'reflect[ing] a ray of that Truth which enlightens all people'. For Gandhi, as for Vatican II – and so for +Hurley and for Kearney, inter-religious dialogue is not about trying to convince the other that you are right, nor even to develop a pragmatic tolerance: it is the desire to learn from others, starting with the humility that you do not already have all the answers.

To avoid confusion with other members of his family, I shall refer to MK Gandhi by his well-known Sanskrit honorific 'the Mahatma'; in fact, this was first used of him in South Africa and means 'the great-souled one'. Curiously, this unusual phrase actually appears in a Vatican II document talking about the importance of education:

...so that there can be produced not only men and women of refined talents, but those great-souled persons {*magni animi*} who are so desperately required by our times.¹⁷³²

It is thus – like the more common Catholic term 'saint' – not a title reserved only for a few exceptional people for us to admire from afar, but rather an aspiration that all of us could achieve. If Gandhi was the great-souled person desperately required by his age, then +Hurley and later Kearney have some claim to being among the great-souled persons desperately required by their age.

The link to the Gandhi family came early on in Kearney's journey of transformation. Having left the Marists, he spent 1971 teaching in a school for black girls just outside Durban and according to the short unattributed biography at *South African History On-line*:

...[while] at the Inanda Seminary ...[Kearney] was introduced to political activists such as Mewa Ramgobin who lived at the Gandhi Phoenix settlement north of Durban, near the

¹⁷³² *Gaudium et Spes* 31

Seminary. When his banning order was lifted, one of the first things Ramgobin did was to come to address the students.¹⁷³³

Ramgobin had married Ela Gandhi, grand-daughter of the Mahatma, and so through him Kearney met members of the Gandhi family including Ela's mother Sushila (though her father, Manilal, the Mahatma's son, who had stayed behind in Durban after his father returned to India in 1914, had died in 1956). Both Ela and her now late husband Mewa Ramgobin were actively involved in the anti-Apartheid struggle; after 1994 she served for the ANC in the first democratic Parliament. Her link with Kearney continues to this day since she is an active Patron of the DHC.

Ela made the point that Phoenix always had a tradition of interfaith collaboration.¹⁷³⁴ It is an area about 25km from the Cathedral which was demarcated by the Apartheid Government as residential for Indians only; but that meant that all kinds of South African Indians – Muslim, Hindu and Christian – found themselves living side-by-side, becoming friends and in time marrying each other.

It is striking how, throughout the interviews with people who knew Kearney, after +Hurley it was either MK Gandhi or Ela Gandhi who are cited most often as the people who influenced him. Thus, two of his fellow-Marist novices mention the influence of Gandhi,¹⁷³⁵ ¹⁷³⁶ for Paul Nadal, it was 'Gandhi who changed Kearney';¹⁷³⁷ for Anne McKay, his influencers were Ela alongside Thomas Merton, Rosemary Haughton and Albert Nolan;¹⁷³⁸ for Stephen Tully, they were Ela and Fatima Meer;¹⁷³⁹ for Loek Goemans, it was Kearney's friendship with Ela which opened him up to interfaith matters.¹⁷⁴⁰

The link with the Phoenix Settlement (a continuation of the projects that the Mahatma had started when in Durban) was especially significant in Richard Steele's link with Kearney. Steele, having served prison-time for refusing to enlist in the South African military (citing Conscientious Objection) had left the country and then returned in 1984. +Hurley wanted to demonstrate that CO's did wish to serve their country but in a non-military way and Kearney had the idea of connecting Steele with Mewa Ramgobin who was then Chair of the Phoenix Settlement Trust and wanted to establish it as a site of reflection.

Paddy had an affinity for Gandhi. He suggested me as a possible caretaker for the Phoenix site, residing in the Kasturba Bhavan [the house Manilal built in honour of his mother]. There was no real programme other than just to live there. My salary would come from Archbishop Hurley.¹⁷⁴¹

¹⁷³³ "Gerald Patrick 'Paddy' Kearney", *SA History Online*, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/gerald-patrick-kearney> (accessed 18 May 2022) (Note there are some factual errors in this biography but I have been able to confirm the Ramgobin connection with his widow, Ela).

¹⁷³⁴ Gandhi, Ela. Personal interview by author, 18 March 2021 in Durban (co-founder of Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁷³⁵ Taylor, Peter. Personal interview by author, 1 February 2021 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹⁷³⁶ Campbell, Alex. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹⁷³⁷ Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban (Catholic Monsignor, Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁷³⁸ McKay, Anne. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2021 in Durban (communications officer at Diakonia)

¹⁷³⁹ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of DHC)

¹⁷⁴⁰ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹⁷⁴¹ Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

Close collaboration with Ela Gandhi

Kearney's first encounter with Ela Gandhi was in 1973 but her banning order (1 Jan 1975 to 31 Dec 1983) made it difficult for Kearney to engage much more at the time.¹⁷⁴² But later they ended up working closely with each other on various projects housed at Diakonia.¹⁷⁴³ Later still she worked with Kearney in setting up the International Centre of Non-Violence (ICON) at Durban University of Technology (DUT, where Ela was Chancellor 2007-2012) and also the Gandhi Literary Peace Institute (which dissolved).

Their closest collaboration was the Gandhi Development Trust (GDT). During the Parliament of Religions held in Cape Town in 1999, Ela ran a discussion group about restorative justice which so impressed the Missouri-based Community of Christ Church that they gave her an award and a grant of \$26,000 which could be used to run an organisation and also to fund programmes and grants. She recalls that Diakonia was one beneficiary and, since the Phoenix Settlement Trust was already set up to run the site, she created GDT to focus on Gandhian ideals, development work, education and non-violence. Kearney was a founding Trustee of GDT when it was formally set up in 2002 and was its Chair at the time of his death in 2018. It is noticeable that almost all the other Trustees over the years (Jairam Reddy, Vasu Gounden, Kidar Ramgobin, Chiman Patel, with the exception of Siyakele Ngubane) were of Indian origin. I asked Ela to comment on this and her reply was very telling:

When you talk about it, I suddenly realise that Paddy was white.¹⁷⁴⁴

She mentioned also how integrated Kearney was in their family: that her son Kidar called him 'Uncle Paddy' and that Kearney participated in some Indian dancing at her son's wedding.

Kearney often wrote for and about GDT and this shows the degree to which he made Gandhian ideals his own. In Kearney's personal book collection on his death is a copy of *Satyagraha – a pro-peace agenda* which contains 33 papers from a 2006 DUT conference which Kearney helped organise (though sadly none of them are by Kearney!).¹⁷⁴⁵

Influence of Gandhi on +Hurley, and through +Hurley on Kearney

There was clearly a direct Gandhian influence on Kearney through his interaction with the family, his engagement with Gandhi's writings and his immersion in Gandhian ideals through ICON and GDT. But, in addition, it is clear that +Hurley was heavily influenced by the Mahatma and, because of +Hurley's influence on Kearney, we can only assume that this complemented and reinforced the Gandhian influence.

Whilst Kearney did not write specifically about the influence of the Mahatma on himself, he did write a nine-page article entitled "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop" for *Gandhi Marg*, the periodical of the Delhi-based Gandhi Peace Foundation which in 2010 produced a special edition

¹⁷⁴² "Ela Gandhi", *SA History Online*, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/ela-gandhi> (accessed 18 May 2022)

¹⁷⁴³ Gandhi, Ela. Personal interview by author, 18 March 2021 in Durban (co-founder of Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁷⁴⁴ Gandhi, Ela. Personal interview by author, 18 March 2021 in Durban (co-founder of Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁷⁴⁵ *Satyagraha – a pro-peace agenda*. (Durban: DUT, 2006)

about African contributions to non-violence and conflict transformation.¹⁷⁴⁶ Kearney in telling us how +Hurley was influenced by Gandhi is also betraying how he himself was influenced by Gandhi.

Kearney starts off with an alarmingly honest admission:

As a young white matriculant in the early 1930s, Hurley shared the typical racial prejudices of young white people of the day. He was a solid supporter of the British Empire and thought Gandhi was spoiling things by his opposition to British rule in India.¹⁷⁴⁷

Although it is unlikely that Kearney would have shared +Hurley's views on the British Empire (not least because of the passing of time), we can imagine that he was also anxious that as a young man he might have 'shared the typical racial prejudices of young white people of the day'. Kearney goes on to quote +Hurley directly:

Mahatma Gandhi appeared a troublesome person to me. Though of Irish descent I was...thoroughly steeped in the belief of the civilizing force of the British Empire, as it was taught to us at school. I resented the words and actions of a person who appeared determined to disrupt the great empire.¹⁷⁴⁸

But Kearney explains how +Hurley changed; this also gives us an insight into how Kearney himself feels he changed over the years:

Gradually, however, +Hurley's attitudes would change as he opened himself up to new ideas and admitted the inadequacies of his earlier thought. He was always a keen learner, even in old age.

+Hurley confesses that what he had read and heard about Gandhi...

...led to one of those cultural shocks we experience from time to time and which are truly gifts from God. Gandhi appeared to me now as the greatest soul the world has seen since Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century.¹⁷⁴⁹

One source that was available to be read in Durban in the late 1940s was *Indian Opinion*, a newspaper founded by Mahatma Gandhi. +Hurley admits that he came to 'know and love' its editor Manilal Gandhi (son of the Mahatma) and his daughter, Ela [who was born in 1940]. As a result of this connection, Hurley was often asked to speak or to offer prayers at protest meetings which Ela attended.

When listening to [Hurley's] prayers, I was often reminded of my grandfather who always spoke of the separation of the deed from the doer. Sometimes it was difficult to love the perpetrators of Apartheid, while hating Apartheid, but Archbishop Hurley in his simple, truthful style brought that message home very clearly. It remained in my consciousness in the dark days of Apartheid.¹⁷⁵⁰

¹⁷⁴⁶ Kearney, G Paddy. "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop". *Gandhi Marg – Quarterly of the Gandhi Peace Foundation* (2010, 31:4) 595-609

¹⁷⁴⁷ Kearney, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 595

¹⁷⁴⁸ Kearney, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 596 (+Hurley's words quoted by Kearney)

¹⁷⁴⁹ Kearney, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 596 (+Hurley's words quoted by Kearney)

¹⁷⁵⁰ Kearney, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 599 (Ela Gandhi's words quoted by Kearney)

Ela herself repeats the account of +Hurley's admiration for the Mahatma and the mutual openness to her family and their promotion of Gandhian ideals. She is one of the contributors to a book of tributes to +Hurley on the occasion of his 50th anniversary as an Archbishop.

My father Manilal and mother Sushila knew him very well and revered him deeply. I remember that they often spoke of +Hurley's English humour which was very much like that of my grandfather.¹⁷⁵¹

Spiritual influence of Gandhi

One of the clearest ways in which +Hurley could now show his admiration for the Mahatma was in delivering a Centenary Address about him at Wits University in 1969. Kearney quotes from it saying that +Hurley was most impressed that for Gandhi truth was not just to be spoken about but to be lived. As a result "the religious truth that illuminated Gandhi's mind was lived out in political activity as honestly and courageously as in any other facet of his life." In recognising Gandhi's desire to win over an opponent rather than to defeat them, +Hurley quotes the French writer Jean Guitton: "In the struggle for truth, there are no victors or vanquished, for he who is vanquished by the truth is, in truth, the victor."¹⁷⁵²

Kearney also quotes from an unpublished address of +Hurley about Gandhi's integrity that was written in 1993 when +Hurley was parish priest at the Cathedral. (The talk is included in a list of +Hurley's talks which are kept at the +Hurley Archive at St Joseph's Cedara).¹⁷⁵³

All too often the pious, even the saintly person, pursues a path of spiritual perfection that brings results merely in the field of personal holiness, albeit a personal holiness that is deeply marked by the love and service of others.[Gandhi's] was the sort of mind that saw with startling clarity that if you wanted to be true to yourself and true to the people you loved you had to put that love into practice to change political, economic and cultural factors hurting people, stifling their freedom, and impeding their growth and progress.¹⁷⁵⁴

Kearney describes how under Gandhi's influence in these last years of his ministry, +Hurley's 'enthusiasm for ecumenism became strong and broader' – by this it seems clear that Kearney is using ecumenism to include inter-religious co-operation since he goes on to quote +Hurley as saying this:

The great religions of the world will have to work together. They will be sitting at Gandhi's feet, cherishing their dearest beliefs as Gandhi cherished his, but finding common cause in the grace needed to give the world the moral guidance so necessary for its survival and development.¹⁷⁵⁵

¹⁷⁵¹ Gandhi, Ela. "An Epitome of Kindness". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 115

¹⁷⁵² Kearney, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 602

¹⁷⁵³ Denis, Philippe. *Facing the Crisis – selected texts of Archbishop D E Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1997) 266 (1993)

¹⁷⁵⁴ Kearney, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 606 (+Hurley's words quoted by Kearney)

¹⁷⁵⁵ Kearney, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 606 (+Hurley's words quoted by Kearney)

(Curiously in the article Kearney lists the aspects of the Second Vatican Council that +Hurley was keen to implement and he mentions 'ecumenism' but not inter-religious dialogue; the quote above confirms that +Hurley was including it under 'religious freedom'.¹⁷⁵⁶)

Finally, Kearney references +Hurley's attendance at the Sant'Egidio meeting in Rome in 2004, just a few days before his death, and stresses that this was not just other Christians but people of other faiths working together for peace (even though Sant'Egidio's communities are exclusively Christian).

In the Sant'Egidio gatherings, he tasted what the Church of the future might be like – a Church more in tune with the great social concerns of Mahatma Gandhi.¹⁷⁵⁷

The reference by +Hurley to the centrality of love for Gandhi resonates with comments he himself made about the centrality of love as he discovered it at Sant'Egidio.

You know, more and more I realise that love is the only thing that matters. Love makes the difference.¹⁷⁵⁸

Kearney identifies themes that were important to Gandhi and which inspired +Hurley – but they are also the ones that we see in the life of Kearney himself: humility, being open to learn, distinguishing the deed from the doer, willingness to forgive, religious truth lived out in political activity, honesty and courage, the victory of truth without vanquishing the opponent, personal holiness, love and service of others, being true to yourself, being true to the people you love, putting love into practice, changing political, economic and cultural factors, working together, finding common cause, moral guidance, the centrality of love.

Although Kearney does not refer to dualism in this reflection on Gandhi and +Hurley, I would suggest that what appeals to him, and what he is laying out for others, is a religious world view that avoids unhelpful separation. Dych comments on this in the context of *Gaudium et Spes* which he sees as going some way to resolving that dualism.

It is the dualism in our theology of faith, and of hope and charity as well, that creates the necessity of putting things together that never should have been separated in the first place.¹⁷⁵⁹

This resonates with the view expressed by French philosopher Jacques Maritain; Kearney confirms that +Hurley prepared for the Council by reading Maritain's 1936 *Humanisme intégral*¹⁷⁶⁰. It also concurs with a quotation (that Kearney uses at a DHC meeting in 2018) from a speech by +Hurley in 1981 in which he expresses his view on politics and religion in a way that shows a similarity with the Mahatma's own views:

There is a difference between political concern, which a religion must have if it wishes to be relevant to political morality, and political activism which tends to identify a religion with a political faction. When people say that the Church should not be involved in politics, our

¹⁷⁵⁶ Kearney, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 600

¹⁷⁵⁷ Kearney, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 609

¹⁷⁵⁸ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 322 (+Hurley's words quoted by Kearney)

¹⁷⁵⁹ Dych, William. "The Dualism in the Faith of the Church". *The Faith that does Justice - examining the -Christian Sources for Social Change*. John C Haughey ed. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 65

¹⁷⁶⁰ Kearney, G Paddy. *Guardian of the Light*. (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2009), 101

reply should be: in action? - I could not agree more; in political concern? - I could not agree less.¹⁷⁶¹

Kearney and Non-Violence

For his collected writings, Kearney selected a number of items that reference the Mahatma. He included a six-page life of Gandhi from *Worldwide* (the bi-monthly magazine of the Comboni order in Southern Africa) though he does not really say anything especially new about him.¹⁷⁶² There are also four more pages of articles about Gandhi – how he was too strict as a parent and whether his assassination could have been avoided.¹⁷⁶³

More interestingly, he included his own review of a book on moral conscience by Martin Prozesky who was also inspired by Gandhi.¹⁷⁶⁴

The quest for a global ethic has in fact already commenced, [Prozesky] says, nearly a century ago through Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi came to South Africa as a Hindu. Here he encountered Muslim, Christian, African, Jewish and other value systems from which he saw a new 'soul force' emerging, even in the midst of appalling racism and exploitation.¹⁷⁶⁵

Kearney also included the message he wrote for the memorial service (in December 1988) of Sushila Gandhi (Ela's mother):

I do hope [the chair at UKZN] will become a reality—helping Gandhi's life, ideals and actions to become much better known and used than they are at present. Of course, a much more important memorial would be the extent to which each of us present here today captures the vision of Gandhi and lives it out in our own situation.¹⁷⁶⁶

The Gandhi Chair at UKZN was not created but, as Kearney points out, the important test is the degree to which Durban and South Africa have lived out Gandhi's vision.

Of all the Gandhian ideals, the one that Kearney seems to have found most engaging is the principle of non-violence. Steele, mentioned above as one of the early practical links between Kearney and a Gandhian organisation, reflected:

I assume that Paddy was pacifist but he would not have espoused it publically *per se*.¹⁷⁶⁷

¹⁷⁶¹ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/6 (2018) (Quote from speech by +Hurley to the South African Council of Catholic Social Services, 16 October 1981)

¹⁷⁶² Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 77 ('Profile of Mahatma Gandhi', *Worldwide*, Feb-March 2016)

¹⁷⁶³ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 82, 85, 86

¹⁷⁶⁴ Prozesky, Martin. *Frontiers of conscience: exploring ethics in a new millennium* (Pietermaritzburg: Equinym, 2003). Prozesky himself had co-edited, a book of papers from a UKZN conference on the occasion of the Gandhi Centenary though sadly there is little reference here to Gandhi's influence from or on South African Christianity. Brown, Judith and Prozesky, Martin. *Gandhi and South Africa – Principles and Politics* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal, 1996)

¹⁷⁶⁵ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 224 (*The Southern Cross*, April 2004)

¹⁷⁶⁶ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 127 ('Message for Memorial Service', 10 December 1988)

¹⁷⁶⁷ Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

When describing Hurley's sympathy with black dock workers who were illegally striking in Durban in 1973, Kearney refers to this as 'a non-violent pathway to change' and he connects Hurley's actions to *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. He quotes +Hurley as saying:

If the strikes were an example of what blacks could achieve in a peaceful and orderly fashion, they should be welcomed enthusiastically...When the oppressed speak, it is God who speaks.¹⁷⁶⁸

In his own copy of Wallis and Hollyday's 1989 book about South Africa (at the start of a time of great violence in South Africa), Kearney has under-lined the following quotation from +Tutu and added the word 'non-violence' in the margin:

More and more I have come to understand that Gandhi and Martin [Luther King] and Jesus were right. You don't have to be judgemental about the desperation of oppressed people reaching for a gun, but I will continue to warn my people. We are in danger of losing our souls. We are jeopardising our future. We are selling out our humanity for a quick victory. We are changing the pain of today for a much deeper malady of tomorrow.

The more I see violence the more I understand the need of breaking the cycle of violence in South Africa. I am more committed to the Struggle now than ever before. I'm also more committed to non-violent action and a non-violent lifestyle, to try to preserve what is best and noble for our country.¹⁷⁶⁹

And a few pages later, Kearney has under-lined another passage, this time by Alan Boesak, and added the word 'spirituality' in the margin:

We have got to get down to the business of training as many people as possible in non-violent action and its spirituality. We must be seen as being quite prepared to take the consequences of standing up on behalf of God's people. ...It isn't my struggle, it isn't even the struggle of the people of South Africa. It's the struggle of all the people of God.¹⁷⁷⁰

Not surprisingly, when speaking at GDT events, Kearney returns to the theme of non-violence. One example among many is a speech he gave at the annual re-enactment of Gandhi's Salt March in May 2010. He talked about the need for scattered groups to come together into 'a powerful non-violent movement that will help transform our society into a place of peace based on justice'. (It is clear that, 16 years after Liberation, he did not think that it was!).

Kearney also used this opportunity to portray the Mahatma as part of a wider movement of peace-makers and so he connected 2010's 80th anniversary of the Salt March with the 50th anniversary of Luthuli receiving his Nobel Prize and the 100th anniversary of birth of Dr Monty Naicker.¹⁷⁷¹ He further reinforced this link by deciding to name the main hall at the Denis Hurley Centre the 'Gandhi-Luthuli Peace Hall', with portraits of both the local peacemakers, a tribute noticed even in the Indian media.¹⁷⁷²

¹⁷⁶⁸ Kearney, *Guardian of the Light*, 184 (+Hurley's words quoted by Kearney)

¹⁷⁶⁹ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 58, (+Tutu's words quoted by the authors)

¹⁷⁷⁰ Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 68, (Boesak's words quoted by the authors)

¹⁷⁷¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/5 "Salt March speeches"

¹⁷⁷² "Mahatma Gandhi honoured in Durban for peaceful opposition to Apartheid", *Economic Times*, 8 July 2015 <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/mahatma-gandhi-honoured-in-durban-for-peaceful-opposition-to-apartheid/articleshow/47993730.cms?from=mdr> (accessed 21 Oct 2022)

Conclusion

In a website linked to the GDT, Kearney offers his own words of tribute¹⁷⁷³:

It has been a great privilege to be associated with the Gandhi family. I have immense admiration for Mahatma Gandhi and he has made a huge impact on the philosophy of non-violence and we in Durban are very lucky to have that connection with the Gandhi legacy.

On the same page, Attorney JP Purshotam, a friend and colleague of Kearney's says:

Paddy is a living example of the passion and zeal that Gandhi demonstrated during his life for truth and justice.

Both directly and indirectly, Kearney was clearly influenced by Gandhi: he shared a similar passion to challenging injustice, to working with people of other faiths, to integrating the sacred and the secular, and to espousing the way of non-violence. These were also values that were key to +Hurley and that he in turn encouraged in Kearney.

It is noteworthy that since Kearney's death in 2018, the annual Memorial lecture in his honour is organised by the two Gandhian organisations in Durban (GDT and the Phoenix Settlement Trust). The speakers (such as Fr Michael Lapsley or Minister Pravin Gordhan) are chosen because they also promote the same ideals. The latter quoted these words from the Mahatma in his 2022 lecture and they are ones that can be applied equally to Gandhi, +Hurley and Kearney: "Judge me by my actions."¹⁷⁷⁴

We might speculate on which of +Hurley and Kearney was more influenced by the Mahatma; or at least which one was prepared to express this more boldly. The following quotation is striking because a) it shows a Catholic archbishop making a controversial interfaith claim and because b) Kearney does not quote it in his 2010 article about +Hurley and Gandhi even though he would certainly have been aware of it. Was it, perhaps, because +Hurley was going even further than Kearney felt comfortable?

Frederick Amooore was writing a short biography of +Hurley in 1997, a few years before Kearney became dedicated to this task and he describes +Hurley in May 1982 opening the 'Peace Library' in Durban inspired by Mahatma Gandhi. He quotes +Hurley as making this controversial statement about the salvation of a non-Christian:

As Christians we apologise that our effort comes so late in the day, but we pray that it may be a sign to the one whom we call Lord and Saviour, and elicit the approval of the Mahatma who, I am sure, shares the joy of everlasting life with Christ.¹⁷⁷⁵

Kearney's behaviour would suggest that he shared this sentiment; it is interesting that he did not write it, nor did he publicise the fact that +Hurley had said it.

¹⁷⁷³ Pillay, Indhramnie. "Paddy Kearney – Icon of Peace and Nonviolence". Satyagraha – in Pursuit of Truth.

<https://www.satyagraha.org.za/word/paddy-kearney-icon-of-peace-and-nonviolence/> (accessed 3 May 2022)

¹⁷⁷⁴ "Memorial Lectures", Denis Hurley Centre website <https://www.denisurleycentre.org/page/memorial-lectures> (accessed 21 Oct 2022)

¹⁷⁷⁵ Amooore, Frederick. 'Denis Hurley: his witness to love of neighbour'. *Facing the Crisis – selected texts of Archbishop D E Hurley*. Philippe Denis ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1997) 223; also: Rambharos, Shishupal. "One Human Family". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 172

Appendix F: *Tria Munera*: the threefold office

Exploring the full breadth of roles in the Vatican II Church

In Chapter 7, I explored different lenses for understanding Kearney. Having rejected the categories of ex-cleric, or lay person, I concluded with the title of Disciple. But the role of Disciple might sound too generic. If we want to clarify Disciple further, Vatican II reconnects us with the traditional threefold formula of the *Tria Munera*: three offices that Jesus plays and that all Christians through Baptisms are also called to play: Prophet, Priest and Leader.¹⁷⁷⁶

Historically, the institutional Church did not treat these as offices to be shared through Baptism but rather as signs of status to be reserved for only a few. But Kearney lived through an era in which even an institution like the Catholic Church was willing to question itself and find new forms of freedom.

Kearney's work on Ivan Illich gave him a comparison for how institutions might need to change. Looking in particular at educational institutions, Illich had a strong view on what impact they could have:

Institutions create certainties and, taken seriously, certainties deaden the heart and shackle the imagination. It is always my hope that my statements, angry or passionate, artful or innocent, will also provoke a smile and thus a new freedom even though the freedom comes at a cost.¹⁷⁷⁷

Kearney comments on this:

Illich has the courage to question the institution that was previously accepted as necessary by all shades of opinion, no matter how thoroughly they might question the internal organisation and methods.¹⁷⁷⁸

When he left the Marists, Kearney started to 'question the internal organisation and methods' of the institution that was the Church; now in the new-found freedom of working under +Hurley he would furthermore have 'the courage to question the institution'.

One way in which Vatican II was specifically willing to change was in ascribing the *Tria Munera* to all the baptised. This is a dramatic move since, for most of the past millennium, they were only applied to that tiny category of Christians who were ordained men.

Vatican II has widened this view of the *Tria Munera*. Sharing in the threefold office of Jesus is now a hallmark of the baptised-confirmed and Eucharistic Christian, not simply of the ordained or hierarchical Christian. When the bishops at Vatican II built their doctrine of Christian identity on this threefold office of Jesus, they clearly altered the older theological position that sharing in the *Tria Munera* of Jesus provided the specific identity for priests.¹⁷⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷⁶ Drawing on the Old Testament, the usual English wording of the *Tria Munera* is 'Prophet, Priest and King'. However, I will use the term 'Leader' instead of 'King' since it is a) ungendered and b) not linked to a particular form of leadership. For consistency, and to avoid confusion, I have also amended quotations from Vatican II and other writers.

¹⁷⁷⁷ Kearney, G Paddy. "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", M.Ed. dissertation (University of Toledo, 1973) 115 (Quoting Illich's words)

¹⁷⁷⁸ Kearney, "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", 130

¹⁷⁷⁹ Osborne, Kenan B. *Ministry – lay ministry in the Catholic Church, its history and theology* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist 1993) 548

Perhaps subconsciously, Kearney made a comment in his 1973 dissertation which reflects this shift:

For the child, the teacher pontificates as pastor, prophet and priest; an invisible triple crown like the papal tiara.¹⁷⁸⁰

He could be seeing the extension of the *Tria Munera* as a way of symbolically removing the power of the invisible triple crown. It is interesting that, since the Council, no Pope has ever been crowned with the triple tiara that was the mark of a Papal inauguration.

Not only is the *Tria Munera* extended from the clergy to the laity, but *Apostolicam Actuositatem* makes the clergy's ability to perform their offices dependent on the willingness of the laity to perform theirs:

As sharers in the role of Christ as priest, prophet, and leader, the laity have their work cut out for them in the life and activity of the Church. Their activity is so necessary within the Church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is often unable to achieve its full effectiveness.¹⁷⁸¹

However, as often with Vatican II documents, there is a paradox which remains unresolved. Osborne sets it out as follows:¹⁷⁸²

- a) The official teaching of Vatican II attributes the sharing in the *Tria Munera* of Jesus himself to all baptised-confirmed and eucharistic Christians;
- b) The same official teaching of Vatican II then attributes the sharing in the *Tria Munera* of Jesus himself to all the ordained ministers;
- c) The same official teaching of Vatican II then states, without any explanation, that there is an essential difference between the ordained and the non-ordained precisely in the matter of the *Tria Munera*

Osborne tries to resolve the quandary. Is it that there is a difference in the *degree* to which each group share in *Tria Munera*? But this would mean that the offices were divisible and that there is some part which is essential that the ordained have and the un-ordained do not have. Both groups are sharing in the *Tria Munera* of Jesus so which share does Jesus have? And is the discipleship of the ordained better than that of the un-ordained? Vatican II seems to deny this.

Or is there a difference in the *way* that the *Tria Munera* is shared? e.g. "All Christians share in the teaching or preaching ministry of Jesus, but only the hierarchy possess a way of teaching or preaching which is ultimately authoritative." He rejects this as implying a quantitative difference not the qualitative ('essential') difference that Vatican II states is the case.¹⁷⁸³

Vatican II does not resolve this, or even attempt to resolve it; nor do subsequent documents of the Church. But if we approach Kearney as a Disciple (and not as a lay person or an ex-cleric), the distinction between the two ways of fulfilling the offices becomes moot. So I want to leave that issue to one side and, instead, explore each one of the offices and see how Kearney committed his life to being Prophet, Priest and Leader.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Kearney, "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", 15

¹⁷⁸¹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 10

¹⁷⁸² Osborne, *Ministry*, 555

¹⁷⁸³ Osborne, *Ministry*, 548-54

Kearney as Priest

By saying this, I do not mean the ways in which people mistakenly took Kearney for an ordained priest (as described for example in Chapter 7). Rather I mean the way in which he lived out the office of priest that Vatican II extends to all the baptised.

The supreme and eternal Priest, Christ Jesus, since he wills to continue his witness and service also through the laity, vivifies them in this Spirit and increasingly urges them on to every good and perfect work.... For besides intimately linking them to His life and His mission, He also gives them a sharing in His priestly function of offering spiritual worship for the glory of God and the salvation of humankind.¹⁷⁸⁴

This description ‘of offering spiritual worship’ might suggest that the lay person acts as a priest only when in an ecclesial setting. But *Lumen Gentium* clarifies that the office is exercised through all aspects of our lives:

For all their works, prayers and apostolic endeavours, their ordinary married and family life, their daily occupations, their physical and mental relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life, if patiently borne—all these become ‘spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ’. Together with the offering of the Lord's body, they are most fittingly offered in the celebration of the Eucharist. Thus, as those everywhere who adore in holy activity, the laity consecrate the world itself to God.¹⁷⁸⁵

So the action of the laity – even if linked to the celebration of the Eucharist – is actually in consecrating the world to God. If the ordained minister exercises his priesthood through the consecration of the Eucharistic elements, the un-ordained ministers exercise their priesthood through the consecration of the world.

In the manner of the men and women who helped Paul in spreading the Gospel ... the laity with the right apostolic attitude supply what is lacking to their brethren and refresh the spirit of pastors and of the rest of the faithful Strengthened by active participation in the liturgical life of their community, they are eager to do their share of the apostolic works of that community.¹⁷⁸⁶

In paragraph 16 *Apostolicam Actuositatem* sets out various ways in which all lay persons can ‘manifest the living Christ’:

- ‘to announce Christ, explain and spread His teaching’
- ‘to collaborate as citizens of this world’ and live by ‘loftier motives of action in their family, professional, cultural, and social life’
- ‘to vivify their lives with charity and express it as best they can in their works’
- to do the above ‘through public worship and prayer’
- ‘and through penance and voluntary acceptance of the labours and hardships of life’

Interestingly, it uses the phrase ‘regardless of status’ but it is unclear what this is supposed to embrace. Using the definition of laity from *Lumen Gentium* 34, then the category already excludes those who are ordained or vowed and so the only difference in status left would be married or single. But if the definition is the one used in *Perfectae Caritatis*, then lay people includes the un-

¹⁷⁸⁴ *Lumen Gentium* 34

¹⁷⁸⁵ *Lumen Gentium* 34

¹⁷⁸⁶ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 10

ordained religious and so the difference in status would be vowed and unwowed. If lay people means *laos* (the people of God) then it includes everyone and so 'regardless of status' would mean ordained and un-ordained, vowed and unwowed, married and single. In fact, the five ways listed above could apply to ordained and un-ordained, vowed and unwowed, married and single.

The Council allows that the laity might have a role to play in 'public worship and prayer'; but it is still anxious not to blur the priestly role of the ordained and the un-ordained, and at the same time not diminish the role of the un-ordained.

[Manifesting Christ's message] is done mainly through the ministry of the Word and the sacraments, entrusted in a special way to the clergy, wherein the laity also have their very important roles to fulfil It is especially on this level that the apostolate of the laity and the pastoral ministry are mutually complementary...There are innumerable opportunities open to the laity for the exercise of their apostolate of evangelisation and sanctification.¹⁷⁸⁷

As so often when talking about the un-ordained, Vatican II promises more than it can deliver. Osborne concludes: "In order to safeguard the clerical role in the *Tria Munera* the prophetic, priestly and royal [leadership] role of the non-cleric is kept as far as possible away from the inner-ecclesiastical arena of operation."¹⁷⁸⁸

The concern would be, presumably, of moving to a more Protestant view that does not see a strong separation of an ordained priesthood. Rademacher quotes Martin Luther on this subject: while the Council Fathers might have endorsed the second part of this statement, presumably they would have been less comfortable with the first sentence:

We are all equally priests, that is to say we have the same power in respect to the word and the sacraments. However, no one may make use of this power except by the consent of the community or by the call of a superior. For what is the common property of all, no individual may arrogate to himself unless he be called.¹⁷⁸⁹

In response to a Lutheran view, the Counter-Reformation stressed the inequality of clergy and laity. Now Vatican II has the difficult task of navigating between the Scylla of equality and the Charybdis of difference:

One result of Trent's teaching on the indelible character was the continuation of the medieval ontologising approach to the priestly ministry. It emphasised *being* in the state of priesthood, rather than *doing* the ministry. This widened the gap between the ordained clergy and the non-ordained laity.¹⁷⁹⁰

Rademacher argues that the approach fails when it starts at the top and works down. He quotes Schillebeeckx:

Here the higher stage possesses to an eminent degree what the lower stage has only to a small degree and with limited power. This hierarchy, focused on the top of the church,

¹⁷⁸⁷ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 6

¹⁷⁸⁸ Osborne, *Ministry*, 563

¹⁷⁸⁹ Rademacher, William. *Lay Ministry – a theological, spiritual and pastoral handbook* (New York NY: Crossroad, 1991) 72

¹⁷⁹⁰ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 74

devalued the laity at the base of the pyramid so that they became merely the object of priestly pastoral concern.¹⁷⁹¹

He suggests an alternative approach:

Shared ministry begins not with a downward distribution of the pie of authority by ordained ministers but with the recognition and celebration of the gifts of the baptised who share all things in common including the ministry.¹⁷⁹²

So even without being involved in the consecration of the elements, un-ordained people can read the Word of God and also distribute Communion at Mass. Both of these are tasks which have in the past been carried out by ordained people and, initially at first, it was seen as exceptional for lay people to do this (for example, only when an ordained person was not available). Thus, lay people distributing communion have been termed 'Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist'. But Rademacher gives us a different way of thinking about this:

Often what is 'extraordinary' from the viewpoint of law is 'ordinary' from the viewpoint of theology and pastoral practice. Eventually it also becomes 'ordinary' from the viewpoint of law.¹⁷⁹³

That is precisely what has happened in terms of reading and distributing communion.

Nicholas Lash pointed this out in 1976 when he anticipated that the patterns of the Church's worship are a better guide to the Church's self-understanding than 'the theoretical accounts of what it supposes itself to be doing':

The shift in Catholic liturgical practice in recent decades has brought about, or is bringing about, a corresponding shift in the manner in which, pre-reflexively and informally, authority in the Church is experienced and understood.¹⁷⁹⁴

Although Kearney would have engaged in both these tasks, in Catholic parishes and also in private services, I do not think that this is the best way of understanding his exercising of the priestly office. We need to look beyond what is done inside a church and instead at what the Church does in the world. Kearney's work at Diakonia would certainly resonate with these words of Rosemary Ruether (quoted by O'Brien Steinfels):

The fundamental ministry of the Church is not the ordained ministry. It is the ministry of the people, the mission of the Church to the world. The particular ministries of pastoring, teaching and celebrating exist only to nurture and promote the ministry of the people.¹⁷⁹⁵

Instead, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* stresses the action of the Church beyond the Eucharist:

In her very early days, the holy Church added the *agape* to the Eucharistic supper and thus showed itself to be wholly united around Christ by the bond of charity. ...For this reason, pity

¹⁷⁹¹ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 75

¹⁷⁹² Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 170

¹⁷⁹³ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 168

¹⁷⁹⁴ Lash, Nicholas. *Voice of Authority*. (London: Sheed & Ward, 1976) 53

¹⁷⁹⁵ O'Brien Steinfels, Margaret. "Postscript – what is to be done?". *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 134

for the needy and the sick and works of charity and mutual aid intended to relieve human needs of every kind are held in highest honour by the Church.¹⁷⁹⁶

It is by his many works of service to those in need – both directly and, more importantly, enabling others to serve those in need – that Kearney is best remembered. This is how he can be said to have consecrated the world to Christ. Hastings provides a useful way of seeing this service not as an alternative to worship but rather inextricably linked with it.

[The Church's] mission is at once preaching the word (*kerygma*) and temporal service (*diakonia*), two things considered as constituting the 'form' and 'matter' of the sacrament which the Church is. *Kerygma* is the message, an interpretation, essentially ineffective when it has nothing to interpret. The matter for interpretation is the church's *diakonia* – service, development, secular liberation. Together, and only together, do they constitute the sacrament of salvation.¹⁷⁹⁷

Apostolicam Actuositatem makes it clear that such charitable enterprises are just the start of a spectrum. First of all, it calls on people to: 'reach out to all persons and all needs ...food and drink, clothing, housing, medicine, employment, education... wherever people lack the facilities necessary for living a truly human life or are afflicted with serious distress or illness or suffer exile or imprisonment'.¹⁷⁹⁸ The role of *Diakonia* was, in fact, not to provide these services but to enable and encourage member Churches and their congregants to do so. With the Denis Hurley Centre, Kearney moved into the role of directly providing these services.

But in both situations he was also conscious of the further challenge of *Apostolicam Actuositatem*: not just *that* you help others but *how* you help others:

...it is altogether necessary that one should consider in one's neighbour the image of God in which he has been created, and also Christ the Lord to Whom is really offered whatever is given to a needy person. It is imperative also that the freedom and dignity of the person being helped be respected with the utmost consideration, that the purity of one's charitable intentions be not stained by seeking one's own advantage or by striving for domination, and especially that the demands of justice be satisfied lest the giving of what is due in justice be represented as the offering of a charitable gift.¹⁷⁹⁹

When the local mosque decided to partner with the Denis Hurley Centre feeding scheme (as described in Chapter 6) the comment was made that they were 'surprised at how well the Christians treated the homeless'.¹⁸⁰⁰

Moreover, in both these organisations and in his other work of advocacy, Kearney was cognisant of two aspects in the final part of the paragraph – empowerment and co-operation:

¹⁷⁹⁶ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 8

¹⁷⁹⁷ Hastings, Adrian. *Mission and Ministry* (London: Sheed & Ward Stagbooks, 1971) 47

¹⁷⁹⁸ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 8

¹⁷⁹⁹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 8

¹⁸⁰⁰ Mahomed, AV. Personal interview by author, 15 September 2020 in Durban (Chair of Jumma Masjid Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

Not only the effects but also the causes of these ills must be removed and the help be given in such a way that the recipients may gradually be freed from dependence on outsiders and become self-sufficient....In so doing, they should co-operate with all people of good will.¹⁸⁰¹

So Kearney demonstrated his commitment to 'sanctifying the world' through charitable acts: delivered directly and indirectly, and in ways that are consistent with the dignity of the poor, that drive towards empowerment and are based on co-operation. It is also worth noting that Kearney's work of consecrating the world was also through his personal generosity towards those in need. Examples were cited in a number of interviews but there were almost certainly many more that went un-noticed because of Kearney's personal modesty and his attachment to Marist simplicity. Whilst Kearney would never seek recognition for what he did, he would certainly resonate with these words from Hastings:

If a man is economically well established and sees others in need and yet refuses to share his affluence effectively with them, it is impossible that he be a Christian. He may be a priest or a member of a religious order but he is not a Christian.¹⁸⁰²

Not only was this a standard that Kearney set himself, it was also a challenge that he laid before others. Mxolisi Nyuswa recalls the words that Kearney shared with UKZN graduates when he received his honorary doctorate in 2009:

As you are going out to your community, you are there with a Bachelors or a Masters, but you must not carry that on your head. Take this degree as something that belongs to the community. Don't be a nuisance to the community. Be of use to the community – even to the old gogo who cannot read. Be someone who can guide or coach a local boy or girl so that they can achieve the same as you.¹⁸⁰³

There is an echo here of something that Kearney mentioned in his 1973 dissertation. He cited Illich's view that education, and especially tertiary education, is a regressive taxation because so few people benefit from it. Illich felt that this was especially true because most of those who received a tertiary education:

...do not see this opportunity as a means of future possible service to their poorer fellow citizens but rather in terms of personal advantage. Rising per capita instructional costs increase the value of the people in his or her own eyes and on the market.¹⁸⁰⁴

Kearney was never one who sought to increase his value either 'in his own eyes and on the market'.

Nyuswa felt that Kearney understood better than anyone else the role of the Church and the role of the Church leader. If that sometimes meant he was confused with being a priest, it was because he exemplified what a good priest should be.

Paddy lived what is expected of Christians and what is expected of those in leadership positions. That is why he was often confused with being a priest. In deep rural areas he was able to share people's experiences. His speeches were in very simple English. Talked about

¹⁸⁰¹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 8

¹⁸⁰² Hastings, *Mission and Ministry*, 52

¹⁸⁰³ Nyuswa, Mxolisi. Personal interview by author, 5 May 2022 via Zoom (Head of KwaZulu Regional Christian Council)

¹⁸⁰⁴ Kearney, "Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich's *Deschooling Society*", 91

the ministry of simplicity. He did not try to use difficult words to make his speech inaccessible to others.

Nyuswa was a lay Christian leader who saw Kearney working usually in Christian settings. Gouden, a Hindu who saw him in inter-faith situations, has something similar to say: “Paddy was always in the middle of the mix unlike other Church leaders. That is why he was effective.”¹⁸⁰⁵

Moreover, if Kearney did sometimes allow people to confuse him with being a priest, it was not for his benefit but for theirs. De la Croix explains:

There were women at the Cathedral who put him on a pedestal, approaching him a bit like a priest. But he would not burst their bubble. He let people go along with the myth – not to serve his ego but because it helps them. His self-image did not matter to him.¹⁸⁰⁶

Verryn, who is a Methodist Minister with an international reputation for courage and priestly devotion, is not afraid to use the term priest of Kearney.

Paddy was a priest in every sense and in the correct sense of the word. His was a profound dedication to the poorest of the poor. He was courageous, not cowed by danger. He opened up spaces for people to engage, spaces most people would avoid. He was the consummate servant – nothing that he was too important for; no one he was not prepared to engage with.¹⁸⁰⁷

Kearney as Prophet

Just as the office of Priest was extended by Vatican II to include all the baptised, so was the office of Prophet. The Conciliar documents speak in poetic words about this office:

Christ, the great Prophet, who proclaimed the Kingdom of His Father both by the testimony of His life and the power of His words, continually fulfils His prophetic office until the complete manifestation of glory. He does this not only through the hierarchy who teach in His name and with His authority, but also through the laity whom He made His witnesses and to whom He gave understanding of the faith (*sensu fidei*) and an attractiveness in speech so that the power of the Gospel might shine forth in their daily social and family life.

Let them not hide this hope in the depths of their hearts, but even in the program of their secular life let them express it by a continual conversion and by wrestling ‘against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness’.¹⁸⁰⁸

Throwing himself for 20 years into the Struggle against Apartheid, and then for the next quarter of a century into the fight against indifference and poverty, Kearney showed himself to be courageous in ‘wrestling against the world-rulers of this darkness’ – through his work at Diakonia and the Denis Hurley Centre, as well as other organisations such as the International Centre for Non-Violence (ICON) and the Gandhi Development Trust (GDT).

¹⁸⁰⁵ Gouden, Vasu. Personal interview by author, 18 February 2022 in Durban (Executive Director of Accord)

¹⁸⁰⁶ De la Croix, Berenice. Personal interview by author, 30 September and 9 October 2020 in Durban (personal friend)

¹⁸⁰⁷ Verryn, Paul. Personal interview by author, 21 March 2021 in Johannesburg (Methodist Bishop)

¹⁸⁰⁸ *Lumen Gentium* 35

Many examples could be given but here are a few from Kearney's own press archive. One shows a photo of Kearney, alongside +Hurley as Chair of the Durban Council of Churches and Rubin Philip, then the parish priest of Wentworth. They are at a church meeting in Clairwood to resist it being closed as a residential site and turned into an industrial area. This is an unusual photograph because it shows Kearney alongside the religious leaders rather than in the background. Present are also two other lay people: a representative from the SACC and the chair of the Residents Association.¹⁸⁰⁹

Kearney was involved in a host of campaigns throughout his time at Diakonia many of them ones where he was taking an unpopular stand and drawing attention to issues that others would prefer to keep hidden. What is more, his approach to prophecy was not just to be a wailing lonely John the Baptist, but to engage others to be part of these campaigns.

For example, he has kept in his archive a long article from a secular paper in Durban reporting on the 1982 Archdiocese of Durban synod. (The article makes the point that it is the only diocese in South Africa to hold a synod and among the few in the world to do so and also stresses the interracial mix of the group.) Though the article is not in his name, the tone suggests that Kearney greatly influenced its content. It explains that the Synod voted a motion of support for the SACC 'for its prophetic work', calling on the SACBC to sign up, and also condemned detention without trial and the mixed marriage act. It also says that the Synod must not only make statements to send to government ministers but also resolve to set up education programs to raise awareness about these issues.¹⁸¹⁰

After Vatican II, inspired by what Paul VI called the 'encyclopaedia of issues'¹⁸¹¹ in *Gaudium et Spes*, the Church is not afraid to express opinions about areas of injustice – and Kearney is not afraid to encourage Church leaders to do so. Bishop Dowling, a cousin of +Hurley and a man well-known for his prophetic stand in protecting people from AIDS, describes well the role of religious leaders:

My primary role is to discern what God seems to be saying in all the situations in which God seems to be absent and in which the Church maybe *is* absent in terms of its presence and ministry.¹⁸¹²

Kearney encourages religious leaders to do this and, as a prophetic Church not just speak out against others but also address its own issues of injustice. To quote from a famous Vatican II commentator:

The Church, it is made clear, is in the modern world, not above it, not below it, not for it, not against it. Therefore, like everybody else in the world, the Church must assume its share of responsibility for the well-being of the world, not simply denounce what it finds wrong.¹⁸¹³

Donahue explains that the test of justice in the Old Testament is being in good relationship with the Covenant and that the prophets continually need to remind Israel that they have forgotten the covenant when they fail to show concern for the poor and oppressed.

¹⁸⁰⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/3 "1981-1987" (*The Leader*, 13 May 1983; *The Southern Cross*, 29 May 1983)

¹⁸¹⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/3 "1981-1987" (*Daily News*, 27 May 1982)

¹⁸¹¹ Hebblethwaite, Peter. *Paul VI the First Modern Pope* (New York NY: Paulist Press, 1993) 421

¹⁸¹² Dowling, Kevin. "Bishops as Theologians: Listening, Discerning and Dialogue". *The Church we want – African Catholics look to Vatican III*. Agbonkhanmeghe Orobator ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016) 10

¹⁸¹³ O'Malley, John W. *What happened at Vatican II?* (Cambridge MA: Harvard, 2010) 297

The prophet is one who is called not only to speak on behalf of Yahweh but one who speaks on behalf of those who have no voice.¹⁸¹⁴

Kearney could be the voice; but to be effective as a prophet, Kearney needed people to be willing to hear that voice. The Hudsons felt that he did this very effectively.

Paddy had the dreams and he would take people along with him; facilitating them all the way. Some prophets talked about injustices in a way that just drove people into their laagers; but Paddy had a way of luring them out. He had a quieter way of doing things.¹⁸¹⁵

Goemans contrasts Kearney with someone whose strategy was not as effective:

Some people were just not successful at bringing people the message even if it was a message they wanted to hear. I remember that Dan Berrigan [American Jesuit peace activist] was staying with us at the Grail for Holy Week in 1964. By the end we could not wait for him to leave – I had had enough of feeling guilty!¹⁸¹⁶

De Haas points out that this was one of the reasons why the mainline churches were losing members in the 1980s and 1990s. “Whites were flocking to evangelical churches as a way of avoiding the justice issues – it was all part of the millenarian movements.”¹⁸¹⁷

One of the aspects of Church injustice of which Kearney was aware – and which he drew to the attention of others through his immersion programmes – was the differential in the way that black, brown and white ministers within the same denomination were housed and paid, thus replicating within the Church the inequities of Apartheid.¹⁸¹⁸ Another example (mentioned in Chapter 7) was his willingness to challenge the Archdiocese of Cape Town for its treatment of the WAACSA organisation.

In his work as prophet, Kearney was influenced and encouraged by a number of other people of faith, lay and ordained. One specific example is Steve De Gruchy, a theologian and a Congregational minister who was much younger than Kearney (and died at the tragically young age of 48). In various of his works De Gruchy drew attention – as Kearney would have appreciated – to the need to turn words into actions.

For example, he takes Karl Marx’s quote about philosophers and applies it to theologians: “they have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.”¹⁸¹⁹ In another place, he cites a speech of Julius Nyerere (founding President of Tanzania and a Catholic) in which he argues that the Church must become actively involved in rebellion against unjust economic organisations and social structures if it is to remain relevant and in order to show God's love for human beings. If it does not do this “the Church will die and - humanly speaking - deserves to die because it will then serve no

¹⁸¹⁴ Donahue, John R. “Biblical perspectives on Justice”. *The Faith that does Justice - examining the -Christian Sources for Social Change*. John C Haughey ed. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 74

¹⁸¹⁵ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Pinetown (Methodist Bishop & wife)

¹⁸¹⁶ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹⁸¹⁷ de Haas, Mary. Personal interview by author, 30 September 2020 in Durban (fellow activist and mother-in-law to Kearney’s niece)

¹⁸¹⁸ Snyman, Deon. Personal interview by author, 6 January 2021 in Malmesbury (Dutch Reformed Church Dominee and Co-worker at Diakonia)

¹⁸¹⁹ De Gruchy, Steve. “Integrating Mission and Development: Ten Theological Theses”. *International Congregational Journal* (2005: 5(1)) 32

purpose comprehensible to modern man.”¹⁸²⁰ And he also points out that in the creation accounts ‘being’ is always linked to ‘doing’: “the affirmation of human identity being made in God's image is coupled with the vocation of being a responsible actor in the created world.”¹⁸²¹

One of the formative experiences on Kearney’s interest in prophecy is Ivan Illich. Not only was Illich the focus of his Master’s dissertation but, when at the University of Toledo in 1973, Kearney was able to visit Illich and study with him in Mexico.¹⁸²² In a later interview, Kearney explained his interest in the subject and how Illich used his role as a facilitator for American missionaries to influence which ones were able to come:

The Church was sending people to Latin America at that time saying that there was danger of communism taking over in Latin America and was sending missionaries down there to prevent that. Illich was saying that these people, who were coming from America to Latin America, were really bringing all the wrong values and he would make it his task to prevent as many of them as possible. He was supposed to be encouraging them and he made it his task to prevent them getting there. He kind of sifted out [the ones who were coming] and just a few who really understood what was happening in Latin America were allowed to go there.¹⁸²³

This points to a strategy where the prophet – rather than shouting out loud – instead deftly uses the opportunities they have to achieve their desired goal. In a similar way, Di Oliver comments on how skilful Kearney was at using events to the advantage of spreading the right sort of information: trying to inform people who did not want to be informed.

He was so plausible and that helped him to gain entry into various forums on the strength of appearing to be moderate. He said radical things but always with a gentle voice. I don’t know if he did this consciously or if he was just living his commitment.¹⁸²⁴

+Nuttall also feels that Kearney used his reputation for being quiet and humble to his advantage in order to be a prophet:

Paddy was self-deprecating. That meant he could be a challenging voice but not strident. His was a reasoned voice – firm in his convictions. He was a man of amazing courage, a quiet leader. He got people to listen without having to shout from the rooftops.¹⁸²⁵

Another Anglican bishop and close co-worker, +Phillip, stresses Kearney’s ability to be self-effacing but also to speak Truth to Power:¹⁸²⁶

Paddy sharpened my thinking on social theology; Catholics have a far elevated understanding of the Church compared to rest of Christendom. Chairing the Diakonia Council was among the best experience of meetings that I attended since there was such a

¹⁸²⁰ Haddad, Beverley. *Keeping Body and Soul Together: Reflections by Steve de Gruchy on Theology and Development* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2015) 67

¹⁸²¹ Haddad, *Keeping Body and Soul Together*, 70

¹⁸²² Kearney, “Towards a Critical Analysis of Ivan D Illich’s *Deschooling Society*”

¹⁸²³ Houston, Gregory. “Interview with Paddy Kearney”. *Unsung Heroes and Heroines of the Liberation Struggle* (Cape Town: Human Science Research Council, 2013) 5

¹⁸²⁴ Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹⁸²⁵ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

¹⁸²⁶ This, in fact, is the title that Kearney chose for the abridged paperback version of his biography of +Hurley: Kearney, G Paddy. *Truth to Power* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2012)

sense of unity, shared values and common purpose. Paddy was able to create that through who he was and through his leadership.

But it was not necessarily in the meetings themselves; he was very good at working behind the scenes. Paddy did not stand up on a soapbox to preach but it was evident that his faith informed his social involvement; there was no doubt. That is why Church leaders felt so comfortable with him. He could raise some very sharp issues. This was a great quality to have: people listened to him. His strength was not in shouting; it was in his argument which was always soundly theological.¹⁸²⁷

And a onetime Methodist bishop, also in his day Chair of the Diakonia Council, remembered another example of Kearney being willing to stand as a prophet:

It was a Good Friday service and we were resisting the imposition on silencing orders on so many people who were resisting Apartheid. It was Paddy's decision to have everyone in the march wearing gags. It was a brave move and it was never questioned by anyone – perhaps because of Paddy's humility. He was always a strong witness.¹⁸²⁸

For Kearney, Diakonia was not just a place to raise issues of justice but also to model what he saw as a just way of behaving. Yeats recalls why Kearney was not initially keen on leading Diakonia.

Another director was planned but that fell through and so Kearney was the reluctant Director. He was aware of a possible tension between the black Church leaders and the white Church leaders. Diakonia was one of the few places at the time where activist black people could show leadership. He did not want another white person in charge.¹⁸²⁹

But then having taken on the role, Kearney's very first appointment was of a black woman, Liz Mkame, followed by a number of women thereafter, of all colours. One of those women commented on his prophetic role at Diakonia and in particular his decision, radical at the time, to introduce a completely flat salary structure.

At Diakonia in those early days, because of Paddy, there was absolute equality between all staff members on salary and everything else. For example, even the driver was entitled to claim a six-month sabbatical [after six years' service]. There was also absolute egalitarianism in staff meetings. Every Monday, everyone gathered and shared what they were doing, including the cleaner and the driver.¹⁸³⁰

The flat salary policy did not last too many years as Kearney realised it had an impact on attracting good people to the organisation. His successor commented on why she felt it worked:

The flat salaries were a very Paddy thing. I don't think that it was the money that was the issue; it was about the cause. But it did not feel like he was imposing his own values on the organisation. We were comfortable with it and it resonated with who we were. There was at first no resistance. But I wonder if it would have worked with someone other than Paddy.

¹⁸²⁷ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁸²⁸ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Pinetown (Methodist Bishop and wife)

¹⁸²⁹ Yeats, Charles. Personal interview by the author, 18 May 2022 via Zoom (Conscientious Objector)

¹⁸³⁰ McKay, Anne. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2021 in Durban (communications officer at Diakonia)

Later on [when he did start introducing differences in salary] he then made sure that the gap between the director and others was not great.¹⁸³¹

Though he did not try this strategy at the Denis Hurley Centre, he certainly set up the organisation with below-market salaries. Moreover, although he worked for it almost like a full-time job, Kearney never took any salary or even expenses for himself. He was also keen to do what could be done to further narrow the gap on salaries. For example in 2018 he compliments the Board's strategy to increase the lower tier of salaries by 8% and the rest by 6% (which was inflation).¹⁸³²

Another Diakonia staff member at the time commented on the consonance between Kearney's policies and his way of living:

Was Paddy middle class? I suppose he was. He was well-educated, articulate, well-travelled, refined. But his lifestyle was not middle-class: he lived simply. There was no flashiness, no materialism.¹⁸³³

The example was given in Chapter 2 of how Kearney (and his then wife Rickard) made a point of travelling many miles to a coloured parish to show solidarity with the people there, instead of attending the Cathedral which would have been his natural parish at the time. Cardinal Napier (who has family in Wentworth and would probably have seen Kearney there when he was a young priest) reflected how many years later Kearney again used his presence in a community as a prophetic act of solidarity.

For the last 10 years the Cathedral has become an almost entirely black community. I notice how Paddy stayed as the lone white in the Cathedral structures – for him it was a form of quiet protest.¹⁸³⁴

One of the marks of Kearney's office as prophet was consistency. He stood up against the injustice of the Apartheid regime but was also not afraid to speak out against injustices perpetrated by the new democratic Governments. The themes of the Good Friday marches every year – during Apartheid and in the years after Apartheid – always pointedly drew attention to an important area of justice.¹⁸³⁵

Nyuswa recalls a particular occasion in recent years:

When Zuma became President in 2009, there were so many things that Paddy did not agree with (e.g. accusations of rape and corruption). He made his point very clearly in informal gatherings e.g. before the start of a meeting. Paddy would speak against such practices without naming a person.

He would say: 'We need a Government that is for the people and is aware of the lives of the people. We do not need a leader who has been selfish and focused on himself and his

¹⁸³¹ Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu. Personal interview by author, 26 May 2022 in Durban (Kearney's successor as Director of Diakonia and sometime Patron of Denis Hurley Centre). Incidentally, this was not a policy that she continued in her time in charge of Diakonia.

¹⁸³² SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/6 "2018"

¹⁸³³ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 Oct 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest and co-worker at Diakonia)

¹⁸³⁴ Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

¹⁸³⁵ Diakonia. *Pilgrimage of Hope* (Durban: Diakonia, 2009)

family.’ But he would not name the leader. However, I don’t recall him openly challenging the people who continued to vote for such leaders.¹⁸³⁶

Kearney never spoke of himself as a prophet. But in a speech he gave in 1987, he did talk about Hebrew prophets (Amos, Isaiah and Micah). He uses a number of Scriptural quotes ending with these famous words:

What is good has been explained to you, this is what the Lord requires of you, only this: to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6: 8)

Kearney said that this quote made it clear that God is actually worshipped and honoured by deeds of justice rather than simply by prayer and worship. He compared the three Hebrew prophets to three modern-day prophets; his Catholic audience must have been surprised that alongside Archbishop Romero he added a Jew (Abraham Heschel) and an Anglican (Bishop Colenso). Kearney explained that the Micah passage had been the choice of Bishop John William Colenso when in March 1879 he preached on the special day of ‘Humiliation and Prayer’ after the great disaster of Isandlwana, where many colonists had died at the hands of Zulus.

Colenso said how the colonists and British government had in fact neither done justly, nor loved mercy, nor walked humbly with their God, in terms of the way they treated Zulus.¹⁸³⁷

Kearney saw himself in a line of prophets, willing to speak truth to power, that went back through Catholic history, through South African history and to the Jewish roots of the Scripture.

Kearney as Leader

The third of the three offices of Christ that are the inheritance of all Christians by their baptism is the one that I am terming ‘leader’ instead of ‘king’. In fact, this is distinction which is easier in English than in the language of the Council. In an article soon after Vatican II, +Hurley points out the advantage of the word ‘leader’ in English which has no equivalent in Latin and recalls how he had to contort himself in the Council to render the idea in Latin.¹⁸³⁸

Apostolicam Actuositatem stresses the importance of (Catholic) Christians being willing to take on positions of leadership in society.

In loyalty to their country and in faithful fulfilment of their civic obligations, Catholics should feel themselves obliged to promote the true common good. ...Catholics skilled in public affairs, and adequately enlightened in faith and Christian doctrine, should not refuse to administer public affairs since by doing this in a worthy manner they can both further the common good and at the same time prepare the way for the Gospel.¹⁸³⁹

But Nolan reminds us: “The values of the kingdom are different from, and opposed to, the values of this world.”¹⁸⁴⁰ This is something that Kearney would have imbued from his exposure to the

¹⁸³⁶ Nyuswa, Mxolisi. Personal interview by author, 5 May 2022 via Zoom (Head of KwaZulu Regional Christian Council)

¹⁸³⁷ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 33-7 (“What does the Lord require of us?”, address to St Mary’s Catholic Church, Pietermaritzburg, 1987)

¹⁸³⁸ Denis, *Facing the Crisis*, 101 (Hurley, Denis. ‘The Bishop at Prayer in his Church’, *Concilium*, February 1970)

¹⁸³⁹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 14

¹⁸⁴⁰ Nolan, Albert. *Jesus before Christianity* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1976) 60

Gospels, his experience of seeing +Hurley as a leader, and his formation as a ‘Little Brother of Mary’. His friend and colleague +Nuttall was also unafraid to voice this counter-cultural view of leadership, even when speaking at Michaelhouse (in 1982), the most elite Anglican school in Natal: “What really matters? Not success in your career or acquiring money or status but was I a good husband/father?”¹⁸⁴¹

This is the model of servant leadership, originally coined by Greenleaf in 1970 and now fashionably talked about in business schools, with its roots firmly in the life of Jesus and his early followers.¹⁸⁴² This was the natural model of Kearney, reinforced by the fact that his first organisation, Diakonia, was designed to offer servant leadership to the Church leaders who were its members. As +Nuttall recalls:

Paddy demonstrated the charism of sound administration (see 1 Corinthians 12), thorough and well-considered without fail, always willing to support church leaders in this way.¹⁸⁴³

Servant leadership is the description of his style instinctively given by Davine Thaw who is herself a consultant in organisational development and who assisted Kearney both at Diakonia and the Denis Hurley Centre.

I recall being with him at a ‘Directors’ lunch’: we were all new at the game of being leaders and not sure how to do it. Paddy saw himself as a leader but as a servant leader. His religious foundations were very powerful; his desire to fight injustice was very clear. There is a Lewinian model in which you create the vision and work backwards. But the problem with that is you are always in deficit and so always unhappy. Paddy’s approach was more Confucian – work in the present.

This sometimes looked as if you were making it up as you went along! But that was not the case. He was not a self-belittler; not a self-doubter. He was very good at working in the present – he did not necessarily have a clear end goal in mind.¹⁸⁴⁴

I hope that it is appropriate at this point for the author to share a personal recollection of how I first encountered Kearney’s style of leadership. In fact, there is an interesting contrast between the way in which I was recruited to the two different jobs I have held in South Africa. The first (which was when I first met Kearney) was as Director of the Jesuit Institute in Johannesburg for which I was recruited by the then Regional Superior of the Jesuits in South Africa who had also been Provincial Superior of the British Jesuits when I was a member of that Province. (The joke that is made among Jesuits is that the term ‘Superior’ is supposed to be a noun but that most Jesuits who hold the office treat it as an adjective. David Smolira was no exception.) He approached me as a CEO might approach someone he wants to recruit: he explained that he had done his research, that there had been a logical process, that he felt that I was the ideal candidate for a variety of specific tangible reasons and that he was making me an offer.

Kearney’s approach a few years later was very different. He did not contact me: I seemed just to bump into him in Durban. He mentioned a few things about the Denis Hurley Centre and hinted that someone else thought I might be appropriate as Director. When I initially turned down the role, he

¹⁸⁴¹ Nuttall, Michael. *A Personal Anthology* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2015) 83

¹⁸⁴² Between 2010 and 2015, this author as head of the Jesuit Institute, regularly led leadership development courses at elite business schools in South Africa and the United States and a theme that participants were often interested in was servant leadership. e.g. Greenleaf, Robert K. *The Servant as Leader* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2002)

¹⁸⁴³ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

¹⁸⁴⁴ Thaw, Davine. Personal interview by author, 21 February 2022 in Durban (consultant to Diakonia and DHC)

did not chase me but left me for a few months. He then hinted at it again. When I said that I would be willing to consider it, to my surprise he made me apply for the job and put me through a competitive interview process. Strangely, the less insistent he was on me getting the job, the more determined I was to do so.

When I asked him about this after he appointed me, he explained that his strategy was that I should do it because I wanted to, not because he wanted me to. “But did you want me to?” I asked. “Yes of course I did.” “And what if I had said no? Was there a plan B?” “No, there was no Plan B. I always knew that you would say yes.”¹⁸⁴⁵

This quiet confidence – without arrogance, without insistence, with complete authenticity was (I later discovered) how Kearney made sure that he achieved the outcome he desired. I have since learnt that there is a term for this in Durban among the many people whom Kearney persuaded to do things that he wanted them to do and that they also eventually decided they wanted to do: “You’ve been Paddied!”. Thaw explains this:

No one would ever turn Paddy down: because we trusted him and because you felt you had been chosen. It was a function of his authenticity. His orientation to the poor was completely authentic.¹⁸⁴⁶

When the small pedestrianised street outside the Denis Hurley Centre was named in his memory in 2019, it was decided that it should not be called a Lane or a Mall but ‘Paddy Kearney Way’ – “because Paddy always got his own way!”¹⁸⁴⁷

Evidence of this quiet form of leadership was already visible to those who knew him when he was a Marist.

Paddy was very firm in his opinions. Even though he was not involved in any sporting activities, this did not make him any less liked or less trusted. He was too strong a character – he always had an opinion. You could not help but notice him. But he did not try to dominate. He was strong but not argumentative.¹⁸⁴⁸

Paddy was – to use a New Testament image - leaven in the bread. He was always influencing. He was a very caring person: sincere, gentle, unassuming, generous, smiling, soft spoken, intense, great humour. And he was also extremely well organised!¹⁸⁴⁹

Those who saw him in his days at Diakonia and supporting the End Conscription Campaign, also describe this quiet but effective form of leading without dominating.

In many ways, Paddy was an unlikely leader. On face value at least, he was such an apparent contradiction: small framed, slightly stooped, physically timid, wearing nondescript clothes, and taking up little space and energy. His physicality masked an enormous personality,

¹⁸⁴⁵ Author’s personal recollection of a conversation around March 2015.

¹⁸⁴⁶ Thaw, Davine. Personal interview by author, 21 February 2022 in Durban (consultant to Diakonia and DHC)

¹⁸⁴⁷ “Update November 2019” *Denis Hurley Centre website* <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 7 September 2022)

¹⁸⁴⁸ McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹⁸⁴⁹ Campbell, Alex. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 via Zoom (former Oblate priest)

subtle tenacity, a brilliant mind and enviable strategic prowess. He lowered his voice to make himself heard. And people listened.¹⁸⁵⁰

Paddy liked to be in control but was not controlling. He insisted on equality in the workplace which was very unusual in those days. Diakonia led the way in what companies should look like. Everyone was given a say even if your idea was not used.¹⁸⁵¹

Paddy never tried to manipulate – he would suggest and he would propose. His general self was never hegemonic or dictatorial or authoritarian. His was a model of shepherd leadership – watching from behind, nudging the direction.¹⁸⁵²

Paddy was always in the background – he let the leaders take on the profile. Paddy was often not mentioned in the press afterwards but everyone knew he was behind it all.¹⁸⁵³

You know, people hardly noticed Paddy. +Hurley was larger than life, he looked like he was the driver of the organisation. The genius of Paddy was the way he knew strategically how to use the church leaders.¹⁸⁵⁴

Paddy saw himself as serving; not putting himself in the forefront saying ‘I am the leader’. He did speak with authority but he also stepped back to allow others to take a lead.¹⁸⁵⁵

There is a mythology that people are longing for ‘the good father’ and perhaps Mandela and +Hurley have been that for some. But Paddy did not want to take on that role. He wanted to be the good leader not the good father, and he got a quiet joy from that. He did not need to be the person on the stage – but he did need to be the person who set up the stage and cleared things away afterwards.¹⁸⁵⁶

Paddy was always a facilitator, an enhancer, a generator. He was never the ring master, never bossing people around. He is a great example of how we should all live; we need to divest ourselves of our interfering egos.¹⁸⁵⁷

The lack of ego was evident in his reluctance to accept honours (and the embarrassment of his Papal medal was discussed in Chapter 7). When rooms were being named after people at the Denis Hurley Centre he was insistent that nothing should be named after him; the street-naming referred to above was only possible posthumously. In a similar way, Joseph recalls that when he retired from Diakonia (after 28 years as Director!) they wanted to name something after him and his reply was “When you are naming a toilet, name it after me.”¹⁸⁵⁸

His leadership style was also focused on getting the best out of those who worked for him and alongside him.

¹⁸⁵⁰ Thompson, Illa: 28 September 2022 in Durban (member of End Conscription Campaign, PR consultant to Diakonia and Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁸⁵¹ Joseph, Hester. Personal interview by author, 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹⁸⁵² Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

¹⁸⁵³ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Pinetown (Methodist Bishop & wife)

¹⁸⁵⁴ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia and Methodist Bishop)

¹⁸⁵⁵ Hemson, Crispin. Personal interview by author, 10 March 2021 in Durban (Director of ICON at DUT)

¹⁸⁵⁶ McKay, Anne. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2021 in Durban (communications officer at Diakonia)

¹⁸⁵⁷ Argall, Jane. Personal interview by author, 8 October 2020 in Durban (librarian at Diakonia; co-editor of book of +Hurley’s letters)

¹⁸⁵⁸ Joseph, Hester. Personal interview by author, 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

People recognised his commitment; he was hard on himself and so that gave him permission to be hard on other people. He had high expectations of you but was gentle with people while he challenged them. He was always trying to get people involved but did not come across as uncaring; he was always kind.¹⁸⁵⁹

As a boss Paddy was very supportive and nurturing, keen to see people grow and develop. He was not full of himself; he was humble and approachable, always accessible.¹⁸⁶⁰

You could not refer to him as ‘the boss’ or ‘Mr Kearney’. I found that very strange at first.¹⁸⁶¹

His style of working with people was to be gentle but still make demands. Paddy expected people to work as hard as he worked and got most people to follow him. He would almost embarrass you into action. I also recall him at disciplinary meetings – he would give people a chance to redeem themselves but when he needed to take action he would be clear especially if it involved fraud. But he was always extremely fair.¹⁸⁶²

This final comment above is from Costas Criticos who worked with Kearney on two major infrastructure projects: re-organising the home of Diakonia and then creating the Denis Hurley Centre. He was at pains to stress that even if gentle and modest, Kearney was not indecisive and knew when he had to make hard decisions.

Initially Kearney was not responsible for the building in which it was a tenant: the Ecumenical Centre had its own Board. There were inefficiencies in how it was run but these had been papered over by the centre’s anti-Apartheid credentials. Then money started drying up in early 90s and the Ecumenical Centre got into debt and tenants (including Diakonia) considered abandoning the Centre and moving out. Paddy was not afraid to tackle this and we worked together so that he could take charge of the Ecumenical Centre (now called the Diakonia Centre): Diakonia became the employer of the staff to run it.¹⁸⁶³

There are many other examples cited by interviewees of Kearney being fair but decisive in resolving a problem. I want to add two examples that I witnessed myself which, for balance, provide some counter-examples. They are both tests of what happened when Kearney’s personal generosity and kindness came into conflict with making a fair decision for the organisation. Recognising that exercising ministry sometimes is in a context of sinfulness, we might agree with at least part of a famous quote from Charles Journet “The Church, which is not without its sinners, is nevertheless without sin.”¹⁸⁶⁴

My first example involved a case of fraud which (as Criticos mentioned above) was something that Kearney was always anxious to address. Early on in the life of the Denis Hurley Centre, I started hearing rumours that a staff member, who was involved in collecting and distributing goods for the homeless, was personally benefiting from some of the donations. It was a relatively easy task to monitor several of his activities, find clear evidence of theft, call in a lawyer to conduct a disciplinary and fire the individual. Kearney was completely supportive of this process. But it was interesting that the rumours of these misdemeanours actually dated back to before the Denis Hurley Centre

¹⁸⁵⁹ Moore, Anne. Personal interview by author, 17 Oct 2020 in Johannesburg GP (member of The Grail)

¹⁸⁶⁰ Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu. Personal interview by author, 26 May 2022 in Durban (Kearney’s successor as Director of Diakonia and sometime Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹⁸⁶¹ Franks, Vanessa. Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Durban (secretary of Kearney at Diakonia)

¹⁸⁶² Criticos, Costas. Personal interview by author, 4 September 2021 via Zoom (building consultant to Diakonia and DHC)

¹⁸⁶³ Criticos, Costas. Personal interview by author, 4 September 2021 via Zoom (building consultant to Diakonia and DHC)

¹⁸⁶⁴ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 103

was created and when the project was part of the Cathedral parish. Even though they were aware of the rumours, neither Kearney (nor Fr Stephen Tully, Administrator at the Cathedral) had investigated them further, perhaps for fear of what they might find.

After the individual was fired, a number of people in the parish came and congratulated me on taking action: "We all knew that Ismail had been stealing for years," they said. When I asked why nothing had been done about it, the reply was: "Oh, we didn't want to ruin his reputation." I do not know that this was Kearney's attitude – he was keen to act when the evidence was found; however, he had not been keen to look for the evidence.

The other example was also the result of actions before the Denis Hurley Centre was formalised and involved a staff member who had misrepresented his qualifications for his role and was not technically able to do most of the things expected of him. Rather than end the employment relationship, Kearney initially insisted on creating a new lesser role, though at the same salary, and employing someone else to do the tasks that this employee could not do. The individual then became very sick and was allowed to claim sick leave for much longer than was his statutory right as well as expecting *ex gratia* payments for various interventions.

In the end, it became clear that he would not be able to return to work, and that even if he could, the role created for him was not really justified. But Kearney was repeatedly reluctant to make the difficult decision to terminate employment. He wanted to be kind to the individual. But he did not see that he was being unfair on other employees (who were paid less and were doing jobs that really mattered) and indeed unfair on beneficiaries (since the money spent supporting this employee was not available to be used for other services). In the end, Kearney supported the Board's decision to end the employment, though reluctantly. It is indicative of Kearney's kindness, but perhaps also a failure to appreciate boundaries, that he continued to support the individual from his personal resources.

Part of the tension in the above stories was that both the individuals concerned were refugees and so part of the communities that the Denis Hurley Centre was designed to help. It is an easy trap to fall into to help someone by enabling them rather than holding them accountable. They were also both prominent members of the Cathedral parish. One of the tests of Kearney's leadership that I witnessed was his ability to navigate the emergence of the Denis Hurley Centre from the Cathedral parish.

In a pre-Vatican II era, this would simply have required negotiation with the omnipotent (if not omniscient) parish priest. But (as South African bishop, +Lobinger recalls) whereas in the past it was always the clergy that led the communities today the laity is part of the leadership of Church ministries.¹⁸⁶⁵

Present-day communities consist of the laity that has a voice and is not afraid to give opinions on the issues it is faced with. There is more empowerment of the laity. The communities or parishes are led by Parish Pastoral Councils (PPC) and Parish Finance Committees (PFC) or Councils. The laity has taken a lot of responsibility in terms of serving humanity according to Lobinger.¹⁸⁶⁶

Kearney himself was part of those structures, serving as a member of the PPC of Emmanuel Cathedral for many years (and at one stage as Chair). He was thus well-placed to work with the then PPC in fostering the initial service projects that would be incorporated into the Denis Hurley Centre

¹⁸⁶⁵ Ngcobo, Nkosinathi. "The Evangelisation of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa: Community Serving Humanity". M.Th. dissertation (Durban: University of KwaZulu Natal, 2016) 53

¹⁸⁶⁶ Ngcobo, "The Evangelisation of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa", 47

and also to oversee the replacement of the old Parish Centre with the Denis Hurley Centre. Whilst technically both these buildings eventually belong to the Archdiocese of Durban, the appearance was that the Parish Centre belonged to the parish which then created confusion about whether the Denis Hurley Centre also did.

As the years went by, new members were elected to the PPC who had not been part of the original discussions and questioned the situation that had resulted. With great care, fairness, but also decisiveness, Kearney prepared a paper to address some of the misconceptions among the new PPC members about the links between the Denis Hurley Centre and the Parish.¹⁸⁶⁷ It is interesting that in this, Kearney does not disguise the fact that the original intention (parish projects overseen by a parish-dominated board) was outgrown both by the needs of the area but also the scale of the fundraising. He shows that it was with the agreement of all sides (including the Archdiocese of Durban) that the Denis Hurley Centre building and projects would be governed by an independent Trust, separate from the Parish and the Archdiocese, though with suitable representation from both and recognition of a special link to both organisations.

One of Kearney's diplomatic ways of resolving any further tensions was to create a series of 'Dialogue Meetings' that would bring together key players from both the Parish and the Denis Hurley Centre. There were four significant techniques he used in making these effective: a) people were invited to attend, but that meant that if they did not, they could not complain; b) a common goal was articulated from the beginning 'working in partnership for shared use of the Centre'; c) everyone would have a chance to voice their opinion; d) it was made clear what was already fixed and so not open for renegotiation.

Kearney had an ability as a leader to see the way through to a solution and present it, usually, in a way that was bought into by all sides. This mostly worked but sometimes it did not. Part of his skill as a leader was to recognise which battles were worth fighting and when to admit defeat – or at least a temporary truce. Let me give one example of such a strategic retreat from my own experience of him.

The setting up of the Denis Hurley Centre (as explained above) meant that certain existing outreach projects came under its management. Kearney commissioned Douglas Ross, a well-regarded local doctor, to conduct a review of the projects and Ross recommended that they be absorbed into the DHC since this would strengthen them in relation to governance and finances. This did happen for those that had been set up by the Cathedral parish. But there was one project, the Refugee Pastoral Care (RPC) service of the Archdiocese of Durban, that refused to become part of the Denis Hurley Centre structures even though it would operate from the building. Ross' report contained an ominous comment in relation to RPC that it was 'doing well financially but needs a lot of attention to good governance'.¹⁸⁶⁸

This turned out to be a premonition since Kearney's archives contain a detailed memo four years later about RPC. The concerns are listed: poor accountability for the R3M spent in the previous four years after the death of the founder; little fundraising since then; little prospect of new money; salaries continuing to be paid; no strategy to deal with the funding crisis; and lack of oversight since another priest left. Kearney had added "long before that" in the margin.

Kearney's concerns are not just about good governance or the plight of those refugees RPC is supposed to serve, but also the reputation of the Denis Hurley Centre: "we are conscious that any

¹⁸⁶⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/6 "2017" (Crucial steps in the development of the Denis Hurley Centre and its relationship to the Emmanuel Cathedral Parish)

¹⁸⁶⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/3 "2014"

failure on the part of RPC will reflect not only on the Archdiocese of Durban but more specifically on the Denis Hurley Centre.”

Kearney (with this author) submitted a report to the Chancellor of the Archdiocese and later (when one was appointed) to the Vicar-General. But no action was taken. When in the director’s report a comment is made that the Archdiocese of Durban continue to defend the mismanagement of RPC, Kearney comments: “they don’t see it as mismanagement”.¹⁸⁶⁹ It was clear that Kearney did; but he also recognised what battles he was and was not able to influence as a leader.

Kearney’s theology as a leader can be summed up in these words of Nolan

Service is the key. Power should be used to serve people, to protect them, to save them and give them freedom....In South Africa today we call it people’s power – power that is shared by all, for the benefit of all, and as a service to all. The Bible calls it God’s power.¹⁸⁷⁰

These words are both optimistic and generous. Many who appeared to believe in this vision have since become leaders but have reverted to a much more traditional model of leadership. Nolan himself mentions Boesak’s distinction between ‘power over others’ and ‘power with others’: but his book predates the fall from grace of Boesak and others for whom power (and money) became too tempting.

Kearney as Teacher

I want to consider one other title because it is one which has a strong Gospel foundation: in fact, the only title that is ascribed to Jesus in public is *Rebbe* (teacher). Kearney as a Teacher is certainly defensible – he initially held this title at secondary level (as a Marist and after leaving the Marists) and then at tertiary level. Moreover, even when he was not formally operating as a teacher, his interaction with many people was as a kind of informal teacher.

This also ties in with the Vatican II commitment to support the laity in their apostolate:

The formation for the apostolate presupposes a certain human and well-rounded formation adapted to the natural abilities and conditions of each lay person. ...Since formation for the apostolate cannot consist in merely theoretical instruction, from the beginning of their formation the laity should gradually and prudently learn how to view, judge and do all things in the light of faith as well as to develop and improve themselves along with others through doing, thereby entering into active service to the Church.¹⁸⁷¹

Since the works of charity and mercy express the most striking testimony of the Christian life, apostolic formation should lead also to the performance of these works so that the faithful may learn from childhood how to have compassion for their brethren and to be generous in helping those in need.¹⁸⁷²

Most lay people would be astonished to hear that the Church was supposed to be providing such formation (except perhaps for children); and most parish priests and bishops would have little idea

¹⁸⁶⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/6 “2018”

¹⁸⁷⁰ Nolan, Albert. *God in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) 112

¹⁸⁷¹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 29

¹⁸⁷² *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 31

of how to provide it. Marciniak criticises the clergy for completely abandoning the temporal order and only taking an interest in lay people when they stray back into the ecclesial.

As lay people we have been wooed for our money and our time – toasted if we gave, roasted if we did not. We have been assigned the seats of honour if called to a Church vocation. But what of our worldly vocation as lawyers or labourers, journalists or factory workers, teachers or typists, home-makers or government workers? The work to which God has called us has been depreciated in everyday practice. Conspicuously, the Church's priorities go elsewhere.¹⁸⁷³

As if this is some comfort, he argues that this is true in other denominations as well. He quotes *Christianity and Real Life* by a Lutheran writer, William Diehl, who bemoans the lack of support, skills training, ethical guidance, request for accountability or even interest that his Church has taken in his 30 years in a steel company:

I must conclude that my Church really doesn't have the least interest in whether or how I minister in my daily work.¹⁸⁷⁴

Marciniak points out that this is quite out of keeping with the New Testament in which, he says, you can count mention of 40 different jobs. "If the four evangelists can use ordinary occupations to tell the Christian story, so can those who draft pastoral letters."¹⁸⁷⁵

There are some secular jobs where the Church has made an important contribution through training and nurturing – perhaps not coincidentally roles like nurses and teachers where historically women religious played a large part. But even that has waned in recent decades. Given the promise of Vatican II, and the general failure of the Church in most aspects of training, it is therefore reassuring to see that Kearney (at Diakonia and beyond) saw training as a key part of his ministry. That of course also reflects his background as a teacher – the role he played when a Marist and in the years immediately after he left the Marists.

Many of those people who worked with him commented spontaneously on the teaching and nurturing role that he played for them.

From the Diakonia period, Anne McKay commented "Paddy loved to develop people; he had huge patience and care."¹⁸⁷⁶ Daphne Goad added: "Paddy fostered us without us being aware of it. He gave me opportunities that people of colour would not have had."¹⁸⁷⁷ She particularly cited the system whereby anyone who had completed six years gained a six-month sabbatical (regardless of how junior they might be in the organisation) pointing out that this was usually four months of work-related development and two-months of personal rejuvenation. Andrew Warmback describes Diakonia as 'a community, a movement, a theology'. "It was a place of learning, a place of mobilisations, of welcome, of acceptance."¹⁸⁷⁸ Deon Snyman, who was part of Diakonia towards the end of Kearney's time, recalls that every day a little hand-written letter would be placed by him in

¹⁸⁷³ Marciniak, Ed. "On the Condition of the Laity". *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 30

¹⁸⁷⁴ Marciniak, "On the Condition of the Laity", 34-35

¹⁸⁷⁵ Marciniak, "On the Condition of the Laity", 37

¹⁸⁷⁶ McKay, Anne. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2021 in Durban (communications officer at Diakonia)

¹⁸⁷⁷ Goad, Daphne. Personal interview by author, 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹⁸⁷⁸ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 Oct 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest and co-worker at Diakonia)

each person's post box. "He was the ideal example of a catalyst: unassuming but very strategic. The great thing is that even though Paddy was so gifted, no one ever felt threatened by him."¹⁸⁷⁹

One of the best examples of Kearney's commitment to formation was his relationship as a mentor to someone with whom he met every month for two hours from 2004 for 6 years. Kearney was commissioned by the KZNCC to assist the regional ecumenical structures to become independent and Mxolisi Nyuswa was building up KRCC (the one in rural Zululand). What struck Nyuswa was that the process was driven not by Kearney as the mentor but by him as the mentee. Thus, although other individuals were offered the same support, it was only he who really took advantage of it and gave it the necessary commitment. Nyuswa felt by the end: "He loves me genuinely as a person."¹⁸⁸⁰ Nyuswa is quoted above as recalling what Kearney said when he received his Honorary Doctorate; Nyuswa was especially honoured that he was chosen (along with one of Kearney's brothers) to be one of the two guests at the occasion.

While recognising the value of Kearney's work in forming individuals, a senior priest from Cape Town and fellow Struggle activist reflected on the general failure of the Church to educate the post-1994 generation. Peter-John Pearson commented: "It is just too simplistic to say that the ANC or Zuma are bad. Our failure is that we have not provided the nurseries for political education – we are also responsible for people not speaking up for democracy. Why did we not put in the energy for civic education?"¹⁸⁸¹

De la Croix, a friend of Kearney who is also involved in mentoring, felt that one of the reasons Kearney was so committed to this was that he loved seeing the underdog succeed. "He was so good at building self-esteem, at giving people work to help them is that is what they needed."¹⁸⁸²

One of the questions that was asked of each interviewee was if there was any book or author that they recall Kearney recommending to them. It is somewhat surprising that very few people could cite something: after all, Kearney was very well read and his own library demonstrated that he appreciated the value of books in promoting ideas. The fact that he seemingly did not regularly promote specific books would, however, support the idea that his teaching style was non-prescriptive: he was not trying to impose an idea or someone but rather help them to find their own way. An example of this was suggested in Chapter 5 in the context of the C.O./ ECC movement.

The only book that was mentioned more than once, curiously, was a populist self-help book by Eckhart Tolle – a man with a mediaeval name but a very modern marketing machine.¹⁸⁸³ To my mind, the book is a curious mix of pop psychology, new age spirituality, pick-and-mix eastern mysticism and repackaged aphorisms: 'the truth that is within you', 'the joy of being', 'nothing exists outside the now', 'all problems are illusions of the mind'. But the author talks about the contribution the book has made to the transformation of the human consciousness and the impact on millions of readers.¹⁸⁸⁴ Perhaps Kearney felt the same; perhaps he just felt that any book that helped people to see that they could take control of their own lives – rather than expecting enlightenment to be delivered to them by someone else – had value.

¹⁸⁷⁹ Snyman, Deon. Personal interview by author, 6 January 2021 in Malmesbury (Dutch Reformed Church Dominee and Co-worker at Diakonia)

¹⁸⁸⁰ Nyuswa, Mxolisi. Personal interview by author, 5 May 2022 via Zoom (Head of KwaZulu Regional Christian Council)

¹⁸⁸¹ Pearson, Peter-John. Personal interview by author, 12 April 2021 in Cape Town (Head of Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office)

¹⁸⁸² De la Croix, Berenice. Personal interview by author, 30 September and 9 October 2020 in Durban (personal friend)

¹⁸⁸³ Tolle, Eckhart. *The Power of Now*. (London: Hodder Mobius, 1999)

¹⁸⁸⁴ Tolle, *The Power of Now*, xi

The best example of Kearney's commitment to formation comes from the words of someone who knew him very well and for all her life. Sarah Kearney is the daughter of his older brother Jack Kearney and feels keenly how she was nurtured by her uncle. She recalls how much she idolised him from a young age: "I remember so vividly his long hair and his long beard, and being convinced he was the living embodiment of a person so alike to Jesus himself, that perhaps he was Jesus returned." Over the years, he helped her in many ways and often engaged her to help him at home with various tasks (including the preparation of his personal archive for which this author is indebted):

I sensed he had faith in me. I sensed he had no doubt I would complete the task. I felt a profound sense of calm and love wash over me....and so it was that, from being a vegetable, my brain came back to life and my cognitive skills were reignited....

This story encapsulates how one person's profound faith and abiding love transformed a person relegated to the dustbin by academia and revived a brain. The power of love and faith were manifested in the most profound way. I am sure and have no doubt that this kind of character of Paddy's must have impacted on many other people's lives and I think it is testimony to the fact that an individual can wield enormous power. Not worldly power but spiritual power.¹⁸⁸⁵

Conclusion

The *Tria Munera* provides a useful way of unpacking the different offices to which the Christian disciple is called. It is an especially relevant lens when looking at the post-Conciliar Church since Vatican II was intentionally attempting to revive the offices of 'Priest, Prophet and Leader' and ensure that they were available to all baptised Christians.

I hope that I have shown that – whether consciously or not – Kearney in his various ministries attempted to live out these three offices. I also have added a fourth office – perhaps not one that all Christians are called to but one which Jesus certainly exercised and that Kearney fulfilled formally and informally – that of Teacher.

From the comments of those who knew him best and worked with him (including the author's own experiences of Kearney), it is clear that he lived out all these offices in ways that were creative, sensitive, committed and authentic. Of course, he did not always get things right, but even then he was able to admit when he was wrong and learn from his mistakes.

Vatican II, and the commentaries afterwards, still struggle to articulate how the three offices can be enjoyed by all the Baptised but exercised by the ordained (and possibly the religious) in a different way. But looking at Kearney's life it is clear that his commitment to these offices (and that of teacher) are evident throughout his life – 'regardless of status' – and this for me further reinforces the authenticity with which he lived them: they were not roles that he performed or jobs that he was given but rather – gifts bestowed on him (and on all of us) through Baptism: gifts that are then to be placed at the service of others.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Kearney, Sarah. Personal interview by author, 17 September 2020 (niece of Kearney)