**Complaint to the Vatican via the Papal Nuncio**

We hereby complain that the former Bishop of Broken Bay Diocese Bishop, Peter Comensoli and the current Administrator, Rev Dr David Ranson are in breach of a number of canons in the Code of Canon Law (“CCL”). These canons impose a responsibility upon a bishop to provide adequate instruction to children and to adult Catholics concerning the essentials of the Catholic faith so that they can practise the faith. We ask you, the Papal Nuncio, to raise these breaches with the Administrator of the Diocese of Broken Bay and ask him to cease breaching the Code. If the Administrator does not comply with this request, we ask that you pass on our complaint to the Vatican with a view to enforcing the Code. We note that a number of the breaches of the Code also involve breaches of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Catechism is also a part of the Catholic Church legislation (Appendix A Item 8).

There are a number of canons in the Code which oblige bishops and others under their direction to provide religious instruction to Catholics within his Diocese: -

*Can. 774*

*§1. Under the direction of legitimate ecclesiastical authority, solicitude for catechesis belongs to all members of the Church according to each one’s role.*

*§2. Parents above others are obliged to form their children by word and example in faith and in the practice of Christian life; sponsors and those who take the place of parents are bound by an equal obligation.*

*“Can. 776*

*By virtue of his function, a pastor is bound to take care of the catechetical formation of adults, youth, and children,……..”;*

*“Can. 777*

*Attentive to the norms established by the diocesan bishop, a pastor is to take care in a special way:*

*1/ that suitable catechesis is imparted for the celebration of the sacraments;*

*2/ that through catechetical instruction imparted for an appropriate period of time children are prepared properly for the first reception of the sacraments of Penance and the Most Holy Eucharist and for the sacrament of confirmation;*

*3/ that having received first communion, these children are enriched more fully and deeply through catechetical formation; “*

*“Can. 913*

*§1. The administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children requires that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and are able to receive the body of Christ with faith and devotion. “*

*“Can. 914*

*It is primarily the duty of parents and those who take the place of parents, as well as the duty of pastors, to take care that children who have reached the use of reason are prepared properly and, after they have made sacramental confession, are refreshed with this divine food as soon as possible**. It is for the pastor to exercise vigilance so that children who have not attained the use of reason or whom he judges are not sufficiently disposed do not approach holy communion. “*

We claim that Bishop Comensoli has not, in the past, and, the Administrator, Rev Dr David Ranson, is not now, meeting his responsibilities under these canons to provide Catholics in his diocese with instruction in the essentials of the Catholic faith needed to practise the faith. In particular, he is not providing adequate instruction: -

* to Catholic children and adults by way of catechesis in parish churches (Appendix A Item 5);
* to children by way of the sacramental programs for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist (Appendix A Item 1);
* in all of the essentials of the Catholic faith to children in Catholic and State schools (see the Textbooks used in Catholic schools, *To Know, Worship and Love*. For state school students, it is in the primary the “Walking with Jesus” workbooks and the teacher instruction books and in the lecture notes for high schools) [Appendix A Items 2 & 3);
* to prospective converts in the Church’s Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (“RCIA”) [Appendix A Item 7].

Students in Catholic schools are receiving inadequate training in regard to sin and individual and social morality according to the Ten Commandments, the existence of Hell, their obligations under the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist and the Catholic Doctrine of Justification. Students in state primary and high schools get no instruction on these issues at all. So, in effect, they are being taught a different version of our faith than Catholic school students (Appendix A Item 4).

Further, in particular, the Administrator is not providing instruction to all Catholics so that they can comply with a number of other canons which impose obligations on them

The following canons impose obligations on Catholics: -

***“Canon. 989 (1457 of Catechism)***

*After having reached the age of discretion, each member of the faithful is obliged to confess faithfully his or her grave sins at least once a year. “*

***“Canon 916 (1385, 1415 and 1457 of Catechism)***

*A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to celebrate Mass or receive the body of the Lord without previous sacramental confession unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess; in this case the person is to remember the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition which includes the resolution of confessing as soon as possible. “*

***“Canon 919 (1387 of Catechism)***

*§1. A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before holy communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine”.*

***“Canon 920 (1389 of Catechism)***

*§1. After being initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, each of the faithful is obliged to receive holy communion at least once a year.*

*§2. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season unless it is fulfilled for a just cause at another time during the year.”*

If Catholics do not know and understand these canons, they cannot practise their faith as set down in the Code of Canon Law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. If a Catholic has not received instruction in distinguishing between grave (mortal) and venial sin, he or she cannot comply with canon 989 and 916.

Under canon 914, if children are not properly instructed and unable to fulfil their obligations under Code of Canon Law, then they should not be permitted to make their first confession or receive the Sacrament of Eucharist for the first time. A Catholic must be instructed in the faith appropriately so that he or she can practise their faith to its full extent required by the Code. When children reach the age of reason, they become fully Catholics with all of the obligations which go with that.

***“canon 914***

*“….…..It is for the pastor to exercise vigilance so that children who have not attained the use of reason or whom he judges are not sufficiently disposed do not approach holy communion. “*

The obligation under canon 919 to abstain from food and drink for an hour before receiving Holy Communion is not mentioned in the in the text books used in Catholic schools and in the “Walking with Jesus” books and high school lecture notes used in State schools. It is rarely mentioned in parish churches to remind Catholics in general of this obligation (group members’ own experience is evidence of this)

The obligation under canon 916 is not mentioned in the Sacramental programs for either Reconciliation or Eucharist and the distinction between grave (mortal) and venial sins is also not explained. In the absence of instruction regarding this distinction, Catholics are unable to meet these very important obligations. If they later receive Holy Communion, having previously committed a grave (mortal) sin, then, although they are not culpable for the sin of sacrilege due to a lack of knowledge, God has been offended. A bishop or priest or anyone else charged with a responsibility to provide this instruction who has intentionally withheld it, is guilty of a serous sin by reason of paragraph 1868 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. (See also Matthew’s gospel 18:6): -

[**New International Version**](http://biblehub.com/niv/matthew/18.htm)

"If anyone causes one of these little ones--those who believe in me--to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Mark (9:41) and Luke (17:2) have similar passages on Jesus’ attitude to those placing stumbles in the path of a child who wishes to believe in God. It is significant that Jesus does not mention any mitigating circumstances which might excuse someone committing one of these offences.

***Reason for breaches of Code of Canon Law***

The reason why Bishop Comensoli, Administrator Rev Dr David Ranson, and possibly other bishops are disobeying the Code of Canon Law appears to be due to some decision of all Australian bishops made during the 1970s to drop “the salvation approach” to teaching the faith to children and to prospective converts to the faith. These changes could not have occurred without the approval and authority of the bishops. This changed approach involved de-emphasising morality and the Ten Commandments leaving only kind acts performed in accordance with the Beatitudes necessary to gain Catholics salvation. The reason seems to be the belief that too much attention was previously given to sin and not enough to kind acts.

The result of this change has been that the traditional Catholic approach to individual and social morality with equal emphasis on the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments has been de-emphasised in religious education in Catholic schools (Appendix B Submission to the Plenary Council -Attachment F) and barely mentioned at all in religious education in state schools (Appendix B “Summary of issues to Bishops Commission sent with submissions to the Plenary Council and the work booklets and lecture notes used by catechists in State schools). The Church has almost totally abandoned defending Christian morality in the public arena resulting in Christian morality rapidly losing ground in society. The sexual revolution beginning in the 1960s encountered little opposition from the Catholic Church. For example, looking at only one issue, same sex marriage has now been legislated into law.

The new social morality policy makes the individual Catholic responsible for defending Christian morality in the public arena without any adequate measure of leadership or support from the Church (See *God and Caesar*, a book by Cardinal George Pell). This policy has been a total failure as individual Catholics, including students, quite correctly see the policy as a policy designed to fail. The policy which lacks organisation, leadership and support from the Church has no chance of success. (Appendix B Submission to the Plenary Council - Attachment E)

The current assembly of bishops and the current Administrator of Broken Bay have inherited this situation. It is a little hard after about 45 years of silence on key aspects of our faith to stand up in church or anywhere else and suddenly start talking about mortal sin, Hell or receiving Holy Communion in a state of grace. That is why it is so important to bring this all out into the open so that people can be told what is going on and we can get back to Christ’s original message.

***Results of this policy***

1. The major effect has been to cause a decrease in the percentage of Catholics attending Mass in Australia and therefore of those practising their religion. (See graph of declining Mass attendance in Appendix B - Submission to the Plenary Council at Attachment K, statistics from the census Appendix F and Catholic Weekly article in 2016 at Appendix H.
2. A survey conducted within the Archdiocese of Sydney (Catholic Weekly May 2015) has shown that 95% graduates of Archdiocese Catholic schools have ceased to practise their faith by the time they reach 29 years of age (Appendix A Item 6 & Appendix B in the Submission to the Plenary Council - Attachment K showing the decline in Mass attendance)
3. Only a very small percentage of Catholics now receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during any year. In Frenchs Forest Parish, we estimate that probably only about 50 people attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation and there are probably over 600 who regularly attend Mass. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is close to becoming a dead Sacrament (personal observation).
4. Almost all of those who attend Mass receive Holy Communion, which logically leads to the conclusion that many people may be receiving Holy Communion while they are not in a state of grace. This demonstrates that most people are not aware of their obligations under Canon 916 of the Code of Canon Law and paragraphs 1385, 1415 and 1457 of the Catechism and do not know the distinction between grave (mortal) and venial sin (personal observation and logic).
5. It also means that most Catholics are not aware of Canon 989 paragraph 1457 of the Catechism which require them to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year and Canon 920 and paragraph 1389 of the Catechism which require them to receive Eucharist at least once a year and during the Easter period.
6. A straw poll made in the Frenchs Forest Parish to find out what people think about the Sacrament of Reconciliation and mortal sin revealed a variety of beliefs, among them: -

* Ordinary people do not commit mortal sin
* Sin is “Old Testament”
* Many believe that the “bar is very high” for a mortal sin to be committed. They believe that mortal sins are in the order of murder, bank robbery. Some people believe therefore that they have never committed a mortal sin.
* Some believe that you can commit as many mortal sins as you like. It is only if you totally turn your back on God that you go to Hell.
* Others believe that God is infinitely merciful and would not send anyone to Hell, despite the many parts of the gospels where Jesus says quite the complete opposite (Appendix E). The Catholic view is that God is infinitely merciful, but Catholics must accept his mercy and they do this via confession in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
* Many believe that the Church has decided that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is now optional.
* Many believe that Catholics can gain forgiveness directly from God and not bother about confession to a priest (Appendix E).
* Others believe that the Sacrament of Reconciliation and confession are now illegal.
* Most Catholics spoken to do not think that a mortal sin is committed when Mass is missed on a Sunday.

See Dr Philippa Martyr’s article of 21 July 2019 in the Catholic Weekly describing how Catholics at Plenary Council meetings were confused about what the faith is all about (Appendix R).

1. Many priests hold the belief that the whole concept of mortal sin is in doubt. This is based on the fallacy that the term, “Complete consent” in the Catechism means 100% consent and that there are degrees of consent. In fact, logic tells us that there is only “consent” and “non-consent” and there is “voluntary consent” and “involuntary consent”.   
     
   These priests argue that, where mitigating circumstances are present (internal or external pressures on a penitent), the conditions for mortal sin are not fulfilled. This theory widely held among priests has contributed significantly to the current attitudes of Catholics to sin and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
2. Many Catholics do not now accept the Catholic Doctrine of Justification. The Catholic Doctrine of Justification requires Catholics to believe in God and to carry our good works to achieve heaven. These good works include keeping the Ten Commandments and not dying with a mortal sin on your soul. The Protestant Doctrine of Justification requires only a belief in God. Religious education courses in Catholic and state schools, although they do not say so expressly, imply that all you need to do is to believe in God and carry out some kind acts. Our religious education courses and the lack of catechesis in the Church during the past 49 years has led most Catholics into heresy (see the textbooks used in Catholic schools and work books and lecture notes used in State Schools).
3. Catholic parents, since the 1970s, have sent their children in good faith to Catholic schools to have them taught the essentials of the faith, only to find that their children leave school knowing little about the faith and not practising it. Parents have never been advised by the Church that the content of religious education has been changed (if they have, where is the documentation?).   
     
   All of the essentials of faith in the Catechism are not taught to children in Catholic schools. Children in State schools are not taught about Hell, mortal sin or the Ten Commandments at all. They are not taught about their obligations under the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Parents would be astounded if they were to discover that State school students are being taught a markedly different faith to that taught in Catholic schools. They would be still be more astonished to learn that what is taught in both these school systems does not accord with that prescribed by the Catechism.

They have been misled, are continuing to be misled and cheated. They must live with the fact that their children will probably never know the faith and may not be saved.

Our group has also looked at the Sacramental programs for Reconciliation and Eucharist for the Archdioceses of Sydney and Melbourne and found that they are also deficient as those in the Broken Bay Diocese. The textbooks used in Catholic schools in these Archdioceses are the same ones used in the Broken Bay Diocese (“To *Know Worship and Love”*). We believe that this incorrect teaching is likely to be happening in all Australian dioceses and may have been happening since the 1970s (Appendices J and K).

Essentials of faith which are missing from religious education (catechesis) in the various areas are shown in spreadsheets in the attached appendices: -

Appendix I Essential of faith missing from sacramental programs

Appendix J Essential of faith missing from Catholic school religious education

Appendix K Essential of faith missing from State school religious education

Appendix L Essential of faith missing from the current Frenchs Forest Parish RCIA religious education program using “Evangelium” text book.

Appendix M Essential of faith missing from the Frenchs Forest Parish RCIA religious education program used five years ago using text book, “Exploring the Catholic Faith”.

Appendix N Essentials of faith missing in parish churches’ religious education (catechesis).

**Liability of dioceses under Australian law**

The Code of Canon Law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church are Church legislation and are therefore not directly enforceable, in themselves, in a state of Australia. However, each diocese has two entities subject to Australian civil and criminal law. According to the recent court case Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church v Ellis & Anors [2007] NSWCA 117 (24 May 2007), each diocese has a statutory property trust as well as an unincorporated association with the bishop as its head. We believe that the Code of Canon Law would be the constitution for both legal entities indicating how each diocese should be operated.

*Statutory Corporate Trusts*

Australian state governments, in the 1930s, passed legislation making Australian Catholic bishops and their diocesan consultors the trustees for all parish lands, thereby creating statutory corporate trusts. Trustees have a fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of their beneficiaries.

As you are no doubt aware, a trustee owes a fiduciary duty to the trust beneficiaries to act in the best interests of the beneficiaries, to exercise care, diligence and skill that a prudent person would exercise in managing the trust affairs. A person acting in a fiduciary capacity is held to a high standard of honesty and full disclosure in regard to the client and must not obtain a personal benefit at the expense of the client.

It could be argued that the trustees of the property trust have used these properties to teach students in Catholic schools a faith different from that in the Catechism or, at the very least, a faith lacking important essentials and that they have done this for their own benefits and purposes. In regard to parish churches, the essentials of the faith are rarely taught or not taught at all as they are required to be. In sacramental programs, the existence of hell and mortal sin are not taught leaving young Catholics unable to satisfy their obligations under the Code of Canon Law.

*The diocese as an unincorporated association of Catholics*

The diocese is otherwise an unincorporated association, headed by the bishop, and any funds collected would be held in trust for the benefit of Catholics within the diocese. As the dioceses do not publish annual accounts, it is not known which legal entity exactly holds these funds in trust.

Collected parish funds are used for teach the sacramental program and to provide catechist teaching in the State school system. As already stated, what is specified in the Catechism is not taught in its entirety and important essentials left out make it impossible for young Catholics to properly practise their faith.

In State schools, collected funds, which would be trust funds, are spent teaching a faith deficient in important essentials of faith. Mortal sin and the obligations of Catholics in the Code of Canon Law are, at no stage of their education, taught to these students for reasons only known to the bishop and other trustees. What is taught is different from that taught in Catholic schools.

It could be argued that the bishops have spent trust funds to promote their own personal beliefs, different from those specified in the Code of Canon Law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Catholics beneficiaries would expect that bishops would use their funds to promote the official teachings of the Church specified in Church legislation. It is considered that the Code of Canon Law would constitute the constitution or rules for a diocese under Australian law.

State Governments may not be interested in getting involved in the affairs of the Church, but they have created the statutory trusts and they have a responsibility to see that the trustees fulfil their fiduciary duties, particularly that of full disclosure

We are not making a complaint to the NSW government about the Broken Bay Diocese, at the moment, but we have not ruled this out for the **future.**

**Management and Leadership of the Bishops**

The results of the Catholic Church in the 50 years prior to the 1970s compared with the almost 50 years from 1970 until today were outstandingly successful. Prior to 1970, a very high percentage of Catholics practised their faith. Now only about 11 per cent practise.

In the 1970s, the bishops decided to downplay both individual and social morality in religious education. However, they did this without going through the correct processes of changing the Code of Canon Law and the Catechism. They also did not disclose to Catholics that what was being taught in our schools was not the traditional faith. Vital essentials of faith were either not taught or they were de-emphasised. Catholics believed that their children were being taught the traditional faith. They were not.

Although the failure of this change in religious education must have been obvious to the bishops from the decline in mass attendance statistics, even in the later 1970s, it took over 30 years before, the absolute failure of our school system was recognised by the bishops. When the current Archbishop of Sydney, Archbishop Fisher was teaching trainee teachers around 2000, he later told us that: -

*“….so many of the Catholic graduates we were then preparing to be teachers knew so little about their tradition, and Catholic leaders and systems seemed resigned to that. We must aspire to be better.”*

In 2008, the bishops produced new text books which provided student with more information about their faith. However, despite the fact that the downplaying of morality in what was being taught was obviously a major factor in the failure of our schools, they failed to take remedial action. They continued to be in breach of the Code of Canon Laws and to ignore what was in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and that remains the case today. We do not know why they continued in this disastrous direction, but we suppose that it is very hard to suddenly talk about mortal sin and Hell when for about 50 years you have been downplaying them.

Catholics need better leadership and management from their bishops. The first step to getting this is to require each diocese to be publish its financial statements so that we can see what moneys are being collected, which entities are holding them and how those moneys being spent. One big question is whether it is being spend in accordance with the diocesan constitution which appears to be the Code of Canon Law.

The dioceses like any other organisations needs to be accountable for their performance and to have their performances scrutinised and their lack of performance discussed and criticised. This has not happened in the past and is a reason why we are in this current mess.

In the past 50 years, no questions were asked because Catholics were not warned that anything had changed when, in fact, major changes had been made to religious education. Publication of financial statements, setting of performance targets and publication of annual performance figures with explanations for lack of performance would have raised alarm bells.

Our bishops have adopted a very low profile in recent years. They need to adopt a higher profile and show some leadership or they need to resign.

**Conclusion**

We call on the Administrator of the Broken Bay Diocese to strictly comply with the Code of Canon Law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church and to cease breaching the Code and Catechism as specified in this statement of complaint. In the event that the Administrator does not agree to do this, we ask that our complaint be referred for investigation and action to the Vatican via the Papal Nuncio.

Signed

**Appendix A**

1. The **sacramental programs** for Reconciliation and for Eucharist for Broken Bay: -
   1. do not teach children to differentiate between venial and grave (mortal sin);
   2. do not inform them about the obligation of all Catholics to receive Eucharist at least once a year during the period of Easter.
   3. do not inform them of the obligation of all Catholics to confess their grave sins at least once a year
   4. do not inform them of the requirement that they must not receive Eucharist if they have an unforgiven grave sin on their souls.
2. A perusal of the **religious education textbooks “*To Know, Worship and Love*”** reveals that, in Catholic schools: -
   1. mortal sin is not mentioned until year 5 and is only explained in any detail in year 7 when children are 13 years of age, when it will have little effect on their, by then, settled approach to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
   2. there is no mention of the obligation of all Catholics to receive Eucharist at least once a year during the period of Easter.
   3. There is no mention of obligation of all Catholics to confess their grave sins at least once a year
   4. There is no real mention of the requirement that they must not receive Eucharist if they are not in a “state of grace”, that is, when they have an unforgiven grave sin on their souls. In year 11 & 12 there is a vague reference to this requirement only.
3. A perusal of Broken Bay Diocese **catechist and student booklets** called “*Walking with Jesus*” and **high school lecture notes** reveals that, in State primary and secondary high schools: -
   1. Catechists do not teach students to differentiate between venial and grave (mortal sin) or even mention these concepts at any time during primary and secondary school;
   2. Catechists do not inform state school students in either primary or high schools about the obligation of all Catholics to receive Eucharist at least once a year during the period of Easter;
   3. Catechists do not inform state school students in either primary or high schools of the obligation of all Catholics to confess their grave sins at least once a year;
   4. Catechists do not inform students of the requirement that they must not receive Eucharist if they have an unforgiven grave sin on their souls.
4. A **comparison between the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Catholic school textbooks and the “Walking with Jesus” booklets and lecture notes used to instruct state school students** reveals that the Church is teaching a different version of the faith in state schools to that which it teaches in Catholic Schools. The faith expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church differs from that taught in both Catholic and state schools.
5. **Priests do not provide adequate catechesis** or provide adequate catechesis in their homilies and otherwise about the essentials of the Catholic faith **in parish churches**.

* Why Catholics must offer the Eucharist on Sundays under the Third Commandment.
* The difference between mortal sin and venial sin.
* The obligations to receive Eucharist and confess grave sins at least once a year.
* The need to observe the Sixth Commandment.
* The Catholic Doctrine of Justification.
* The need to fast for one hour before going to Communion.
* The requirement that Catholics must not receive Eucharist if not in a “state of grace” i.e. while having an unconfessed grave sin on their souls.
* They do not address the problem of falling confession numbers in their homilies or actively promote attendance at Reconciliation to the extent that they should.
* Prospective converts are not being appropriately instructed in the essentials of the Catholic faith under the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (“RCIA”) Programs.

1. **Archbishop Anthony Fisher in talk to religious education teachers published in the Catholic Weekly in May 2015** stated:-

“I remember a conversation with a prominent non-believing academic whose wife is Jewish and whose daughters attended a Jewish school. At the time, we were both teaching future Catholic school teachers, including RE teachers, at ACU. He told me he was mystified that children at Jewish schools emerged well versed in the theology, traditions, customs and heroes of the Jewish religion whether or not - they believed or practised Judaism – but that so many of the Catholic graduates we were then preparing to be teachers knew so little about their tradition, and Catholic leaders and systems seemed resigned to that. We must aspire to be better.”

This conversation with the Jewish academic apparently occurred was apparently about the year 2000. The bishops produced new textbooks for Catholic schools around 2008 (*To Know, Worship and Love*) which contained a great deal of information about the Catholic faith, its traditions, its prayers and its heroes. However, these textbooks still do not teach all of the essentials of faith necessary to practise the faith as it should be practised.

The Archbishop told RE teachers during his talk in May 2015 of a survey of the faith of 14,000 students from Years 5, 7, 9 and 11 in the Sydney Archdiocese just prior to the Archbishop’s talk produced some interesting but disturbing results: -

* one in five of these surveyed students attend Sunday Mass.
* 72 per cent of Australian youth who attend church as youngsters drop out as they grow older. “One social scientist describes the 18-29 age bracket in Australia as the ‘black hole of church attendance’”. When the 20% of students attending Mass now reach the age of 29 years, only 5.64% of them will still be attending Mass and so not practising their faith (28% of 20% = 5.64%).
* one in four only ever attends Mass at school.
* half of the students attend Reconciliation at least annually
* A quarter or more of the students are agnostic or disbelieve in God.
* More than a third of those surveyed don’t think or aren’t sure whether they’ve ever experienced being close to God or Christ.
* Almost half are unconvinced religion helps at the big moments in life or influences the way they live.
* Most thought there are no moral absolutes and that morality is a personal choice.

1. It is believed that the obligations set out in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (paragraphs 1385, 1387, 1389, 1415 and 1457) and in the Code of Canon Law (Canons 916, 919, 920 and 920) regarding when and how the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist should be received are not taught to those being instructed under the Church’s Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults RCIA programs (“RCIA”) in some parishes**. The problem is parishes are free to select any book to use in the instruction of catechumens seeking to become Catholics.** We notice that this is so, as well, in the Archdiocese of Sydney which borders the Broken Bay Diocese. It is therefore likely to be true, in all of the other Australian Dioceses. This can result in catechumens not being properly instructed in all of the essentials of our faith and this is happening.

The booklet currently being used in the Frenchs Forest Parish is *Evangelium* published by the Catholic Truth Society. It is quite a good booklet as it includes instruction in most of the essentials of our faith. It includes a reference to one important essential of faith. That essential is that Catholics must not receive Eucharist when they are in a state of mortal sin (Paragraphs 1385,1415,1457 of the Catechism and Canon 916 of the Code of Canon Law). It also tells catechumens they must fast for one hour before receiving Eucharist. These particular booklets have the imprimatur of a bishop. I did not see any reference to the obligations to confess serious sins once a year or to the obligation to receive Eucharist once s year during the Easter season. The parish priest at Frenchs Forest is to be commended on the selection of this booklet, despite this shortcoming.

In the publication, used in the Frenchs Forest RCIA program about five years ago, *Exploring the Catholic Faith (For inquiring adults who, in their journey of faith become attracted to Catholic Christianity)* which originated in the North Sydney Parish (a parish of the Sydney Archdiocese) many of the essentials of our faith are not taught. The obligations of Catholics in respect of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharists are not mentioned. Catechumens are not told about mortal sin and that it is a mortal sin to miss Mass on a Sunday unless there is a compelling reason for doing so. The publication is totally unsuitable for its purpose and is not authorised by a bishop. Whereas bishops require parish priests to use a particular book for instructing children in their sacramental programs, this practice is not followed in the case of RCIA, with the possibility, or even probability, that catechumens may not receive the proper instruction.

At paragraph 4-10 of the publication produced by the North Sydney Parish (mentioned above), the instruction book appears to suggest that Eucharist may be received by those with unforgiven grave sons on their souls.

*“Over the past thirty -five years, a great many scripture scholars have affirmed that Jesus enjoyed many meals with outcasts and sinners. The relative silence of critics and the number and prestige of advocates of this thesis combine to make a solid case that Jesus ate with people who were considered by most in his time to be sinners. All three of the synoptic gospels record the charge that Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. There is no record of Jesus excluding anyone from his table because of sin or scandal. The early Christian community struggled with this issue, but Jesus apparently, did not, (for the way in which Rubio helps her readers understand tension see pages (135-142 & 151-155)).*

*Jesus’ inclusive meals disturbed many of his contemporaries. Recent scholarship has emphasised that meals were central teaching moments for Jesus, intimately related to his mission and message, and possibly among the causes of his death. Clearly inclusivity was disturbing to many. As New Testament scholar Marcus Borg points out, in the ancient Near Eastern world sitting down to a meal with another person was sign of approval, and refusing to do so was mark of disrespect. Within Judaism, and more particularly within the Pharisaic sect, who are most often cast as critics of Jesus’ eating practices, table fellowship assumed an even greater importance, as it was linked to personal holiness. Thus, Jesus’ practice was disturbing because he challenged predominant ideas about the links between meals. Holiness and the identity of the Jewish people before God.*

*Barbara Taylor writes that if Jesus’ meals were held today, they might include “an abortion doctor, a child molester, an arm’s dealer, a garbage collector, a young man with AIDS, a Laotian chicken plucker, a teenage addict and an unmarried woman on welfare with five children by three different fathers”. It is highly probably that Jesus ate with the sort of people some contemporary Christian see as sinners.*

*With his actions, his parables, and his meals, Jesus invited his followers to replace concerns about moral purity with concerns about mercy, justice and compassion. It seems to justify not recognising such a significant practiced.”*

*Rubio JH 2010, Family Ethics for Christians, Georgetown University Press, Washington pp134. 135. 141.*

1. The Canon Law Apostolic Constitution SACRAE DISCIPLINAE LEGES statement of Pope St John Paul II when he announced the release to the Catholic public of the new Code in 1983, namely

*So that all may more easily be informed and have a thorough knowledge of these norms before they have juridical binding force, I declare and order that they will have the force of law beginning from the first day of Advent of this year, 1983.*

**Appendix B**

NPFCE submission to the Plenary Council dated 9 March 2018

**Appendix C**

Letter to Bishop Comensoli of 5 April 2016

**Appendix D**

Letter in response from Bishop Comensoli of 26 May 2016.

**Appendix E**

Quotes from the New Testament about Hell, mortal sin and the Sacrament of Reconciliation

**Appendix F**

Statistics of Mass attendance for the period 1947 to 2011.

**Appendix G**

Statistics for Mass attendance in the 2016 Catholic census.

**Appendix H**

Article in Catholic Weekly in 2016 which stating that only one percent of Catholics engaged in the workforce attend Mass.

**Appendix I**

Essentials missing from Sacramental Programs

**Appendix J**

Essentials of Faith missing from Catholic school religious education using textbooks titled "To Know, Worship and to Love"

**Appendix K**

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| Essentials of Faith missing from State school religious education |  |
| Using booklets "Walking with Jesus" in primary school and lectures notes for high schools | |

**Appendix L**

Essentials of Faith missing from **current** RCIA course using Book, "Evangelium"

**Appendix M**

Essentials of Faith missing from RCIA program (used in Frenchs Forest Parish five years ago) using book, "*Exploring the Catholic Faith*"

**Appendix N**

Basic Essentials of Faith in Parish churches

**Appendix O**

Email to Mr Brad Hazzard MP Member for Wakehurst regarding diocesan corporate trusts of 5 June 2019.

**Appendix P**

Acknowledgement of email by Mr Brad Hazzard MP

**Appendix Q**

The Roman Catholic Trust Property Act 1936 No 24

**Appendix R**

“A catechesis Australia needs” – Article by Dr Philippa Martyr, Catholic Weekly 21 July 2019.