



THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

SIXTH ST PAUL'S COLLEGE
SYMPOSIUM

1 December 2015

The Good Citizen and the Pope:
The Moral Implications of
Laudato Si'



Junior Common Room, St Paul's College,
University of Sydney

THE GOOD CITIZEN AND THE POPE

- PROGRAM -

The symposium will aim, first, to deal with the theological implications of *Laudato Si'*, before moving on, in the afternoon, to its broader significance for issues of citizenship and public life.

9.00-9.30: Arrival and payment

9.30-10.30: Welcome & Key-Note Address: Professor Neil Ormerod

10.30-11.00: Morning tea

11.00-1.00: Three twenty-minute papers plus discussion

1.00-2.00: Lunch in the College Hall

2.00-4.00: Two twenty-minute papers plus discussion

4.00-4.45: Afternoon tea

4.45-5.30: Book launch

5.30-6.30: The Sixth Cable Lecture (new series): Dr Tim Soutphommasane

Dinner in a nearby restaurant, for those interested.

For details see below.

OPENING ADDRESS

Professor Neil **Ormerod**,¹ “*Laudato Si’* in the Context of Catholic Social Teaching”

Synopsis: The paper will consider *Laudato Si’* as a major new contribution to Catholic Social Teaching addressed to all people of good will. It will focus on the social and political implications of the encyclical with the view to the Paris COP21 climate talks in Paris.

MORNING PAPERS

Dr Philip **Kariatlis**,² “The Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Environment”

Synopsis: Marked by a profound awareness of the environmental crisis, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, since at least the mid-1980s, has continued to draw attention to the world’s sacredness and to the urgent need for humanity’s profound change in attitude towards Creation. Seeing the world from within a sacramental framework – namely a world impregnated with God’s presence and therefore holy – the present Patriarch, His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I has issued countless declarations wherein the inherent value of all Creation has been affirmed and the mistreatment of the planet has been identified as being nothing less than sin. After briefly outlining some of the Patriarchate’s most significant initiatives in this domain, this paper will briefly survey some of the theological principles informing these and identify, at the same time, possible lessons that can be learnt for today.

Professor Vrasidas **Karalis**,³ “On Reading Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si’* and the need for a New Cataphatic Theology of Presence”

Synopsis: Pope Francis’ second encyclical stands as a unique public articulation of many underground conversations in the theological life of the Catholic Church before and after the Second Vatican. Primarily it articulates the ethics of responsibility towards the visible manifestation of God’s care for life and thus points towards a new anthropology of presence within a natural world considered itself as a theophanic manifestation. Second, through its references to St Francis of Assisi and Father Telliard de Chardin it posits the foundations for the possibility a new natural theology that will provide the ground for the convergence of science and theology, in an era of militant scientism. Finally it indicates a new relationship between religion and culture, based on a model of synergy and not of opposition.

Dr Avril **Alba**,⁴ “A Universal Stewardship Reconsidered”

Synopsis: In his encyclical *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis makes clear that his call for “environmental stewardship” is a universal one. He bases this call in the Creation stories that comprise some of the foundational texts of both the Jewish and Christian traditions. Jewish thinkers, most notably the late Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, have offered similar readings of the Creation stories yet differences remain as to the origins of the imbalances

¹ Neil **Ormerod**, is Professor of Theology at the Australian Catholic University (Strathfield campus), and was previously a mathematician.

² Philip **Kariatlis** is Academic Director and Senior Lecturer in Theology at St Andrew’s Greek Orthodox Theological College, Sydney.

³ Vrasidas **Karalis** is Sir Nicholas Laurantus Professor of Modern Greek, University of Sydney.

⁴ Avril **Alba** is lecturer in Holocaust Studies and Jewish Civilisation in the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, University of Sydney.

so clearly evident in the relationship between humanity and its environment. This session will focus on this notion of environmental stewardship, as it manifests in the encyclical and Soleveitchik's master work *Halakchic Man* and will ask where and how these two religious traditions might meet on these matters and where they may also part ways; thus questioning the universal underpinnings of the encyclical's mandate.

AFTERNOON PAPERS

Professor Paul **Babie**,⁵ "Global Warming and Global Change: The Choice We Must Make and How Religion Can Help"

Synopsis: This paper explores the way in which we exercise the choice bequeathed us by liberalism and its progeny, neoliberalism, through the lens of two specific themes which dominate early twenty-first century political and public life. The first is that of religion in modern, secular public affairs. The second focuses on the disastrous consequences for humanity of anthropogenic, or human-caused global warming, climate change or, as simply "global change". Global change presents each of us, as real flesh-and-blood people, with a choice about how we live today and how our descendants will live tomorrow. And given the enormity of that choice, our response requires us to look at all possible sources of guidance. Religion is a possible, but often at best marginalised or sidelined, and at worst ignored or dismissed source of such guidance. How can it have its voice heard? The answer resides in the nature of neoliberal choice itself, in allowing a religious voice to speak about its potential from within the marketplace of options from which we might choose. The space for cooperation is an unlikely one; few who are concerned about global change or religious unity would even consider it as a place for common ground. Yet, I argue that the place for finding this common ground for sowing the seeds of cooperation comes, paradoxically, in the cornerstone of neoliberal theory: the concept of private property. I argue in this paper that the monotheistic traditions have a lot to say about the way that choice ought to be exercised. In short, I make a case for the lessons, guidance, and wisdom offered by the monotheistic traditions for our understanding of the choice inherent in private property as applied to global change.

Professor Danielle **Celermajer**,⁶ "Post-Secular Imaginations for Social and Planetary Justice"

Synopsis: The classical liberal and republican solutions to the challenges of religious and value pluralism (as articulated by John Rawls and Jurgen Habermas, for example), entailed "bracketing" or "translating" thick and particularistic commitments from the negotiation of the principles that would regulate our shared public lives. Indeed, in the imagination of secular liberal political theory, religion, because it is thought to entail metaphysical commitments, has been seen as an impediment to our "living together". The evident invalidation of the secularisation thesis (that with modernity we would all become secular) requires a rethinking of this liberal imagination. Approached more positively, scholars looking for models and practices for pluralistic co-habitation (with humans and beyond) might well look to concepts and practices that are uniquely nourished by religious imaginations – hope, faith, humility and awe.

⁵ Paul **Babie** holds a Personal Chair and is Associate Dean of Law (Research), Associate Dean (Research) of the Faculty of the Professions, and Director of the Research Unit for the Study of Society, Law and Religion, University of Adelaide.

⁶ Danielle **Celermajer** is a professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Sydney, with specific research interests in human rights and the intersection of secular and religious normative frameworks.

BOOK LAUNCH: Dorota **Gozdecka's** *Rights, Religious Pluralism and the Recognition of Difference: Off the Scales of Justice*. Dr Gozdecka is lecturer in the College of Law, Australian National University. Her book is published by Routledge.

Synopsis: Human rights and their principles of interpretation are the leading legal paradigms of our time. Freedom of religion occupies a pivotal position in rights discourses, and the principles supporting its interpretation receive increasing attention from courts and legislative bodies. This book critically evaluates religious pluralism as an emerging legal principle arising from attempts to define the boundaries of freedom of religion. It examines religious pluralism as an underlying aspect of different human rights regimes and constitutional traditions. It is, however, the static and liberal shape religious pluralism has assumed that is taken up critically here. In order to address how difference is vulnerable to elimination, rather than recognition, the book takes up a contemporary ethics of alterity. More generally, and through its reconstruction of a more difference-friendly vision of religious pluralism, it tackles the problem of the role of rights in the era of diverse narratives of emancipation.

CLOSING ADDRESS (THE CABLE LECTURE)

Dr Tim **Soutphommasane**,⁷ “Civic Dialogue in a Multicultural Australia”

Synopsis: Debates about race and culture can often prove divisive. But is it possible to ground dialogue about such matters in multiculturalism? And what are the conditions for such dialogue?

REGISTRATION (including lunch): \$30 (\$20 concession)

Payment can be made on arrival but if possible please register beforehand so that we can assess numbers. Inquiries and registration: Alan Atkinson, St Paul's College (alan.atkinson@sydney.edu.au)

We intend to book a table for dinner at a nearby restaurant. Please say beforehand if you would like to come (cost not included in registration).

This is the Sixth St Paul's College Symposium. Most of the papers from the First will be found in a special issue of the *St Mark's Review* (no. 211, February 2010), with one additional paper in the following issue (May 2010). Most from the Second appeared in the *Review*, no. 215 (February 2011) and most from the Fourth appeared in the *Review*, no. 225 (August 2013).

For the *Review*, go to www.stmarksntc.org.au/thl/review/default.htm.



⁷ Tim **Soutphommasane** is Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission, Sydney.