

**Bishop David Cremin speech for the launch of *So You're Working for the Catholic Church* and *So You're Seeking to Renew Your Faith***

**St Mary Magdalene's Church Rose Bay NSW, 9 April 2008.**

Tony is a people person. He knows and is known by people of every strata and variety in this city and beyond. He is a great communicator, gifted story teller and.... not a bad golfer.

I am very honoured to be asked to launch these books. His is my friend and has written embarrassingly complimentary things about me.

Tonight I'm here to tell you about the books and invite you to get one or more into your hands.

This is not a big book – only 56 pages. It is A4 format.

Let me say at outset. It is a gem. A thing of extreme beauty just to look through.

I counted 25 exquisite photographs (I wish I had taken myself-being an enthusiastic shutter bug). The books also have 24 very good graphics explaining points of the story of our faith.

Scattered throughout the book are 8 small sections entitled did you know. Read these and you will win every quiz prize at the trivia nights. But there is nothing trivial about them, they are concise and packed with facts about faith, religion and bible.

There are 2 pages most useful. "Words that may require Explanation" and words like hierarchy, Canon Law, & Bishops are included. (Although how they could summarise Bishops in just 6 lines is beyond me!)

Now to get into the book. Where does it take us?

It begins with Tony on a plane. He is sitting next to a Senior Executive Young Woman who discovers he is a priest. She questions: Why a priest? Why go to Church? After all there's diminishing numbers attending church! No new nuns and brothers, and few priests.

Then came the zinger: What exactly is distinctive about the Catholic Church? The "Fasten your seat belts for landing," announcement is made so had to be quick. But other "more polished answers" kept exploding his brain over the following days, weeks, and months. Hence this book.

Who is this book intended for?

There are titles to this book:

- ‘So you’re Working for the Catholic Church’
- ‘So you’re Seeking to renew your faith’
- ‘So you’re Sending your child to a Catholic School’ due in September

To John Garratt the publisher for instigating this project is say Really well done, and congratulations.

I read myself to sleep every night. So I started to read the Table of Contents and Shock! It read like the like the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This did not look like a bed time read! I explored – did a skim, lightning read and discovered it read like a story and Tony is a great teller of stories. Here he tells in a most engaging way the greatest story every told. I discovered extracts from some of my other A Grade story tellers:-

My friend and colleague Bishop Geoff Robinson is there telling how Jesus Sang a Song. “His whole life was a Song”. I’ve heard Geoff tell it many times and always memorable. (Incidentally, the last book launch I attended was that of Geoff’s book that has been read and acclaimed around the world. Congratulations Geoff.

Another Geoff is Fr. Geoffrey Plant who again is a very good story teller.

Daniel O’Leary, Irish Priest in England, a gifted “Seanachai” (Irish Story Teller).

I love Thomas Cahill and anything and everything he writes.

Read Fr. Geoff Plants telling the story of the Movie ‘The Mission’ how a Portugese Soldier is set free from the overpowering guilt of oppressing and persecuting Guorani Indians of Paraguay. I wont spoil the story by telling the ending however.

If I tell you all the stories you won’t buy the book!

I have been told and read so often ( as you have) good evangelization has firstly to do with good listening. Or in modern language: “Beginning with where people are at.”

Tony Doherty is a master of this. Years of learning as a hospital chaplain, teaching teachers, hearing the burden of peoples human frailties in the [confessional] box.

On page 16. ‘It is the Mass that matters’. Has stories about Jim who has cancer. Joanne 38 years feeling trapped. Richard not baptized but comfortable at Mass with his wife and daughter. Peter & Barbara who are celebrating 37 years of marriage. Franciscus and Terese from Sudan speak no English and are struggling to follow the Mass.

Different starting points, hearts filled with different joys and sorrows.

The Evangelizer or Healer listens, and listens. Maybe then shares some of her/his story and introduces some of her own faith in Jesus.

At the heart of Catholic Christian faith is the rock-like belief in the possibility of healing and forgiveness.

In lovely calligraphy throughout the book are such phrases springing up like flowers to break the arid printed page.

There is a beautiful chapter on the mystery of the Grace of God. I urge you read and re-read it.

There is a beautiful page on Mary. This woman of enormous faith, chosen of all women for God's plan of love for us humans.

The late John O'Donohoe (Anamcara) sums up the Church's Justice Challenge.

“The core of faith is equated with the doing of justice... The doing of justice is not the application religious faith, but its substance. Without it, God remains unknown.”

I am pleased now to officially declare these books launched.