From the President:

Pope Francis issued his Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris laetitia*, last week. This document is the pope’s response to the synod of bishops that convened in 2014 and 2015. We who are students of theology receive a document like this with particular interest. We are interested in its content, but we also know that like any document of the Magisterium, it must be interpreted with care. In the few days since its promulgation we can hardly be expected to have plumbed its depth. But we have begun to become its interpreters.

In fact, the pope himself has given us some guidance in how to interpret it. In the opening sections he takes us back to the synod process, as if inviting us to keep this in mind as we read the document. During the 2015 synod he himself gave us some instruction on the importance of a synod in the life of the church. He spoke of a synodal church as a church which listens and which realises that “listening is more than simply hearing”. There is a “mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn”. The synod of bishops is a point of convergence of the listening process, as the bishops act as “authentic guardians, interpreters and witnesses of the faith of the whole church”. He reminded the synod fathers of something he had said as they were gathering for the 2014 synod: “For the synod Fathers we ask the Holy Spirit first of all for the gift of listening: to listen to God, so that we may hear the cry of his people; to listen to his people until we are in harmony with the will to which God calls us”. The culmination of the synod process is to listen to the Bishop of Rome, who speaks as pastor and teacher of all Christians. The synod acts *cum Petro et sub Petro* (with Peter and under Peter). This new document, *Amoris laetitia*, is the pope speaking as pastor and teacher of all Christians.

In the opening paragraphs of the document he notes that the “complexity of the issues that arose [at the synod] revealed the need for continued open discussion of a number of doctrinal, moral, spiritual, and pastoral issues” (2). In the following paragraph he makes it clear that not all discussions of doctrinal, moral and pastoral issues need to be settled by the intervention of the Magisterium. He draws our attention to the different experiences and challenges in various parts of the world – the challenges in one part of the world may not exist in another part. For this reason, “each country or region can seek solutions better suited to its culture and sensitive to its traditions and local needs” (23). But to everyone Francis offers “an invitation to mercy and pastoral discernment of those situations that fall short of what the Lord demands of us” (6).

Finally, he recommends that we read the document slowly: “I do not recommend a rushed reading of the text ... The great benefit ... will come if each part is read patiently and carefully” (7).

Thus, we have some directions for how to approach the reading of this document. I hope your reading of it bears fruit.

Fr Gerard Kelly
SECURITY

All of us have a responsibility for the security of the campus. This means being alert to what is happening around us, and particularly to the safety of the people in our vicinity. There are a few simple measures we can take to maintain the security of the campus, particularly out of office hours.

- The front door into the teaching block should be locked each evening once everyone has arrived for class. It is always easy to exit once the door has been locked: simply push the red button on the left hand side wall and then pull the door.
- If you see anyone wandering around who looks to be a stranger or looks lost, politely ask them who they are looking for. If they should not be on the campus, advise them to leave quickly.
- If you have concerns about any suspicious behaviour notify a member of staff.

From the Registrar:

This is a busy time in the Registry as we gear up for the 2016 SCD Graduation on 21 May 2016. While this date still seems some way off, the Registry needs to confirm each graduand’s record of studies and prepare the all-important academic transcripts and testamurs. In the process of doing this we sometimes find that students are seeking credit transfer from units completed at other tertiary institutions but that we have not received in the Registry the official final transcripts from these institutions. Without the official final transcripts, students are ineligible for credit transfer and thus perhaps ineligible to graduate. Please note that it is always wise to discuss your intention to take units outside the SCD with the Registry before you take them. And it is imperative that we receive your final transcript recording such studies as soon as it becomes available.

This segues nicely into my next item – so the above procedures apply – which is to make you aware of a unit being conducted by the Centre for Ecumenical Studies at Charles Sturt University and the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. There are brochures on this course, entitled ‘Looking Beyond Division’ in the student common room. This unit is being run as a five day winter intensive (20-24 June, 2016) and will be held at ACU’s North Sydney campus. If you are interested and it’s applicable to your program, please see me so that we can make arrangements for your registration.

Enjoy your week ahead.

Janelle Craig

SCD ANNUAL LECTURE

WEDNESDAY, 4 MAY, 2016

7:30PM - 9:00PM

6b/5 Talavera Rd, Macquarie Park NSW 2113

DR ALAN CADWALLADER

Cerberus bites back: A tale with three heads - the Syrophoenician woman, and her imitators

SUPPER WILL BE SERVED GRATIS

RSVP

MONDAY 2 MAY to Prof. Jim Harrison

jimh@scd.edu.au

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