
The Cathedral Coronavirus Chronicle



St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney — 6 August 2021 — Twentieth edition

“sense or census. . .”

Dear Cathedral Parishioners and friends all, The list of things we do as good citizens is extensive. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us:

“**2239** It is the *duty of citizens* to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom. The love and service of one's country follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity. Submission to legitimate authorities and service of the common good require citizens to fulfil their roles in the life of the political community”.

This is pertinent, as the present health emergency sees us having to consider,

for instance, when and why we leave our house, what we do about vaccination, and so forth. (Thanks for asking, I've had two needles).

This week we have another of those citizen duties to fulfil, the national Census. The government uses the data gathered to plan for the future, and the anonymous data is also useful for the whole community.

You can tell the Census is actually important, because some groups are now lobbying people to answer “no religion” to the question about that. Basically – and I've heard people promoting this on radio and seen it in social media - the spiel goes “If you don't go to Church regularly you really

aren't part of that religion and you should answer “No religion” to the Census question. This is twaddle, of course, but twaddle with malicious intent.

Sure, very many Catholics, say, don't practice their religion much, don't consider themselves very “devout”, don't like or agree with this or that aspect of the Church and its teaching. But still, if you ask them what religion they are, they'll still answer “Catholic”, because deep down their Catholic identity impacts their core values, how they see the world, what they think is good and worthwhile, what sort of priorities they think our society should have, and much more.

Organisations such as the

Rationalist Society of Australia, really want to mind-trick as many as possible not-very-devout Christians, to put “No religion” on their Census. Why would they bother? Why would they insult the intelligence of millions of Australians who surely are capable of making their own decisions about whether they have a religion or not?

Because they desperately want to be able to say that religion, and a religion-informed worldview and attitude to fundamental human values, are irrelevant to Australians. And so they hope it will be easier to get politicians to change laws, and society to change its moral compass, on important issues.

You only have to look at the “campaigns” presently listed on the websites of the group pushing the “No religion” answer to see what I mean. Here are some of the “campaigns” currently being run by one group:

- Prayer in Parliament: “Prayer to a ‘creator God’ has no place in a

modern Australian parliament”

- “an alliance of freethought organisations have launched a campaign against the Religious Discrimination Bill.”
- The banning religious instruction of children in public schools, and the introduction of school curriculums promoting a “different worldview.”
- “Non-religious Chaplains” in the Navy, Army and Air Force.
- Euthanasia

Clearly, such groups feel they would have more leverage on lawmakers if they can get a reduction in the number of Australians who “have” a religion on the Census list.

In fact, such groups care nothing about letting Australians decide for themselves how they want to answer the Census questions. For them, it’s just a stratagem in the war against God. And it is dangerous for many people that we would count as friends and family, who may be led to abandon their already sketchy sense of faith and hope, and think

that just because they’re not a very “good” Catholic, they don’t belong in God’s family.

We want to build people up, not strip away their inner hope! It’s our duty as citizens of Australia, it’s our duty as human beings in whom faith and reason can both flourish.

God bless,



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