

Chapter 7: Kearney's identity as a Catholic

You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church. ... I will give you the gates of the kingdom: whatever you bind on earth, will be considered bound in heaven. (Mt 16:18-19)

Introduction

There are some who hold to a narrow, triumphalist view of the Church – *extra ecclesiam, nulla salus* – which they validate through the Petrine primacy seemingly promised in the Scripture quotation above. This is a model which sees Catholic authority as flowing from a hierarchical view of the Church. On this approach, Kearney's life could be interpreted as a progressive diluting of his Catholic identity. For example, Chapter 2 explored how Kearney rejected life as a vowed member of a Catholic religious order and instead chose to live most of his life as a lay person. Chapter 4 examined his work fighting injustice, which meant that he was focused on decidedly temporal rather than ecclesial issues (and also often allying himself with activists from outside the Church). I have also looked at how he worked closely with Christians who were not Catholics (Chapter 3), and drew closer and closer to people of faith who were not Christian (Chapter 6). However, I want to argue that these various moves, instead of making him less Catholic, actually made him more Catholic and more in tune with the vision of the Catholic Church laid out by Vatican II.

The Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church says this about the 'Catholic faithful':

The bonds which bind people to the Church in a visible way are profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical government and communion. They are not saved, however, who, though part of the body of the Church, do not persevere in charity. They remain indeed in the bosom of the Church, but, as it were, only in a 'bodily' manner and not 'in his heart'. All the Church's children should remember that their exalted status is to be attributed not to their own merits but to the special grace of Christ.¹²⁰⁵

By this test, Kearney was clearly Catholic, visibly bound to the Church through 'profession of faith, sacraments, ecclesiastical government and communion'. Moreover, his undoubted commitment to charity means that he can certainly be described as being 'in the bosom of the Church' not only bodily but in his heart.

I want to introduce from the start the two images that illustrate this chapter both of which are ones that *seem* to stress Catholic identity. A few months before his death, Kearney received a *Bene Merenti* medal and the press delighted in calling this 'a Papal stamp of approval'. They showed the loyal son of the Church receiving the award from the then Archbishop of Durban who, as the only Cardinal-electoral at the time south of Dar-es-Salaam, was effectively the highest ranking Catholic for thousands of miles.¹²⁰⁶ A clear image of Kearney clasped to the bosom of Holy Mother Church.

¹²⁰⁵ *Lumen Gentium* 14

¹²⁰⁶ "Papal 'stamp of approval' a mark of Paddy's life", *Sunday Tribune*, 22 April 2018, <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/sunday-tribune-south-africa/20180422/281891593875669> (accessed 21 September 2022)

I want to place this alongside another image, later that same year from his funeral, which I think shows a much more subtle view of Kearney's relationship with the Church.¹²⁰⁷ It initially looks like the funeral of a high-ranking Catholic cleric, a Requiem Mass in a cathedral presided over by that same Cardinal-Archbishop who processed in with dozens of robed priests. That is already unusual since this was the funeral of a lay man who held no official title in this most hierarchically-stratified of institutions. Looking below the surface one sees that this was attended not just by Catholic colleagues and friends, but by Government leaders, and by dozens of leaders (male and female) of other Christian denominations and other faiths. Present were three Anglican bishops: one of whom (+Nuttall) gave the eulogy and who, a few years later, would also preach at Archbishop Desmond Tutu's funeral. This was certainly not ghetto Catholicism.

In this chapter, I want to explore Kearney's identity as a Catholic, one firmly located in his specific social, political and ecclesial situation. But before exploring his relationship with the institutional Church and its priests and bishops, I would like to look first at his relationship with one bishop in particular, Archbishop Denis Hurley.

It might seem odd to start with the particular rather than the general. But we should remember that for Kearney (and many of his Catholic contemporaries), Denis Hurley was not just part of the face of the Church, he was *the* face of the Church. He dominated the Archdiocese of Durban and the wider SACBC area from his consecration as bishop in March 1947 (when Kearney was 4 years old) until his death in 2004. Some might argue that the Catholic Church in South Africa still operates under his shadow (or his halo) almost 20 years after his death.¹²⁰⁸

+Hurley's attitude toward the laity

To understand the relationship between +Hurley and Kearney, we need to start by considering +Hurley's wider role in the Church and also his relationship with other members of the laity.

South Africa is not a predominately Catholic country; it is at the very tip of a Continent that is often overlooked; and Durban is not even its capital city. Yet, the Archbishop of Durban was a significant player in the world Church. This was true before the Council even started – +Hurley being included by leading theologians Congar and Chenu as one of the key 16 bishops that will ensure that it is 'a truly ecumenical event'.¹²⁰⁹ It remained true afterwards, especially in the English-speaking Church, with +Hurley chairing the International Commission for English in the Liturgy (ICEL) and so bringing together bishops from 26 different conference areas.¹²¹⁰ Osborne argues that bishops from outside of Europe and North America were 'key to the emergence and shape of the Vatican II understanding

¹²⁰⁷ "Church leaders, refugees and homeless honour Paddy Kearney at funeral", *The Post*, 2 December 2018 <https://www.iol.co.za/the-post/news/church-leaders-refugees-and-homeless-honour-paddy-kearney-at-funeral-18351996> (accessed 18 August 2022)

¹²⁰⁸ The author recalls a humorous comment from the late Bishop Barry Wood, who was a fellow Oblate with +Hurley. On the occasion of the Archbishop's birth centenary in 2015, the Denis Hurley Centre gifted to all the Catholic bishops in the SACBC area a stole made from a specially commissioned *shweshwe* fabric that incorporated the face of +Hurley. +Wood joked: "I see that even after his death we still have Hurley hanging round our necks!"

¹²⁰⁹ Denis, Philippe. "Archbishop Hurley's contribution to the Second Vatican Council". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 15

¹²¹⁰ "Conferences of Bishops", *ICEL website* <http://www.icelweb.org/conf.htm> (accessed 21 September 2022)

of the church'.¹²¹¹ Although Osborne does not specifically mention +Hurley, he would certainly qualify for this accolade.

Thus, Kearney's relationship with +Hurley is not just a relationship with his local ordinary (and with his employer) but, through +Hurley, a relationship with the global Church as it seeks to live out Vatican II.

Even before the Council +Hurley is including the laity among his list of priorities. In his Vatican II memoirs, +Hurley lists the five theological points that he proposed as considerations to the Central Preparatory Commission and they included 'the laity and its participation in the priesthood and mission of Christ with special attention to Catholic Action'.¹²¹² It is typical of the time that +Hurley still ties the laity to Catholic Action – and thus lay people participating in the Apostolate of the bishop!. Derek Worlock – whose biography Kearney later reviewed – was a *peritus* for the English bishops at the Council. He confirms that the general view of the apostolate of the laity, stemming from the recognition by Pope Pius XI of Catholic Action was that:

...almost all lay activity worth its salt had to be carried out by direct mandate from the bishop and within rigidly structured diocesan frameworks.....they were recognised as 'auxiliaries of the hierarchy' but that was as far as it went.¹²¹³

So even if still tied to Catholic Action, +Hurley did at least include laity among his 'Top 5'. He was conscious, however, that among the bishops at the Council there were varying levels of comfort with lay people:

Some in the ranks of the bishops feared that their special priesthood was threatened by too much emphasis on the priesthood of the laity. They seem to have visions of the laity invading the sanctuary, possibly crowding in behind the married deacons. Despite these misgivings, the accent throughout the week [discussing the document on the laity] was generally positive and it would have gladdened the hearts of the laity the world over to hear what their bishops thought of them, how highly they were regarded, what trust and faith the bishops felt must be placed in them, what freedom, responsibility and initiative they must be given.¹²¹⁴

In fact, before the Council +Hurley was already appointing lay people to roles traditionally held by priests: he had his first lay secretary, Magdalen Cooney, as early as 1962.¹²¹⁵ Bear in mind that, even today, one of the Catholic archbishops in South Africa still has a priest as his secretary; this reinforces the view that was widespread at least until the 1980s that a bishop could only trust as his secretary a fellow priest (and one bound to him by obedience).

In future years, his commitment to the laity, even within Church structures, becomes even clearer. McCrindle (who like Kearney had also been a Marist) recalls how +Hurley had wanted to appoint Marist Brother Jude Pieterse as Secretary General of the SACBC (a position up to then usually held by a priest) and that he had to get special permission from Rome because Br Jude was canonically a lay

¹²¹¹ Osborne, Kenan. *Ministry – lay ministry in the Catholic Church, its history and theology* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist 1993) 525

¹²¹² Hurley, Denis. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) 8

¹²¹³ Worlock, Derek J H. "Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II". *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there*. Alberic Stacpoole ed. (London: G Chapman, 1986) 240

¹²¹⁴ Hurley, *Vatican II*, 48

¹²¹⁵ Denis, Philippe, Kearney, Paddy & Argall, Jane eds. *A Life in Letters – selected correspondence of Denis Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2018) v

man, since he was a vowed brother. (He also feels that Br Jude greatly influenced +Hurley on the issue of defending unsegregated Catholic schools.)¹²¹⁶

Magdelan Cooney and Jude Pieterse are referenced among +Hurley's letters and that same book, as well as containing correspondence with family and members of the clergy, also contains a significant number of letters to lay people whom +Hurley regarded as friends and/or as co-workers. Again, this would be unusual for most bishops. Moreover, the tone of these letters is friendly, open and as one who is addressing a peer not a subject. They bring to mind St Augustine's famous mantra: "With you I am a Christian; for you I am a bishop."¹²¹⁷ A letter from as early as 1961 shows that +Hurley trusts lay people and also sees them as enjoying a flexibility that clergy might not.

Dear Clifford

I was delighted to receive your letter of the 16th May, and to revel in its forthright expression of opinion.

I sympathise with you very much in your desire that much should be done to bring the Catholic Church into closer contact with the separated brethren all around us, and I am glad that, as a lay Catholic, you are looking out for opportunities in this regard.

I suppose you should have my formal permission to attend meetings of the National Christian Council in Durban because the Catholic Church cannot officially associate itself with that body. ... Next year I hope to have someone in the ranks of the clergy in Durban who would be able to play a much more active part in ecumenical contacts.¹²¹⁸

In another letter, he is also not afraid to criticise his fellow clergy to some of his Oblate brothers:

I met an Irish Monsignor yesterday at a reception given by the Irish Ambassador and he happily informed me that he thought 80 or 90 per cent of the Irish, clerical and lay were against the vernacular. ...I just can't understand how much the clergy can be out of touch.¹²¹⁹

In 1967, he writes to his sister about a visit to Sant'Egidio which will influence him (and Kearney and the Archdiocese of Durban) for years to come:

Tomorrow, Sunday, I am going on a motor trip to a place near Florence, where there is a very fine Catholic movement of lay people. It will be interesting to experience its atmosphere and methods. I should be able to pick up some useful tips for our own Christian Renewal movement.¹²²⁰

In another decade and another European country, he writes again to his sister about good examples of lay participation:

¹²¹⁶ McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹²¹⁷ This quote is frequently attributed, even if the original source is hard to pin down. For example, fellow SACBC bishop, José Luis Ponce de Leon quotes it on his diocesan website: <http://www.dioceseofmanzini.org/2021/10/28/not-so-among-you/> (accessed 4 September 2022)

¹²¹⁸ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 142-3 (Letter to Clifford de Gersigny, from Durban, 1 June 1961, typewritten)

¹²¹⁹ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 185 (Letter to Eric Bouille and Geoff de Gersigny, from Rome, 21 September 1964, typewritten)

¹²²⁰ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 221 (DH to Eileen Hurley, from Rome, 25 November 1967, handwritten)

The body that invited me here represents the conscience of the Belgian Church in matters of justice and development and collaborates with the Belgian Justice and Peace Commission. I am deeply impressed by the great number of full-time lay people involved in this work. ... The highly educated, motivated and involved laity with whom I have been hob-nobbing is a great sign of hope for the future of the church and of humanity.¹²²¹

The key mechanism that +Hurley uses to bring clergy and laity together in the Archdiocese of Durban is a series of diocesan consultations and synods (reference to the first of which was made by Kearney at the start of his renewed journey as a layman). +Hurley writes to explain what the approach is:

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is part of a more complex system of consultation involving, besides the Pastoral Council itself, the Diocesan Synod and Diocesan Commissions. ... The Synod elects the lay and religious members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the clerical, religious and lay members of the Commissions. ... The machinery of election is somewhat complicated to ensure representatives not only of these three categories, but also of the four racial groups – African, Coloured, European and Indian. ... I would strongly recommend that a National Pastoral Council be established by bringing together representatives of Diocesan Pastoral Councils established in whatever way the Ordinaries judge suitable.¹²²²

In the short biography that Kearney wrote to accompany +Hurley's Vatican II memoirs, he particularly drew attention to the structures of consultation that were introduced:

Back in South Africa after the Council, +Hurley promoted its vision with great enthusiasm in his own archdiocese and throughout the country: fostering a new system of religious education for young people, developing an innovative, experience-based system of seminary formation for priests, making public worship more understandable and participatory, drawing lay people into structures of consultation and decision-making.¹²²³

It is interesting that Kearney mentions alongside the laity, +Hurley's focus on the formation of priests (to which +Hurley made a 'crucial' contribution at Vatican II).¹²²⁴ +Hurley's published papers include an address he gave to religious and trainee priests at Cedara in 1993 about the Council. There are comments about the way in which Vatican II changed perspectives about bishops, priests and religious. Yet there is nothing at all about changes in the understanding of the laity. It is almost as if the role of the laity is only important to lay people but not to clergy.¹²²⁵

This, perhaps, is an uncharacteristic omission. Langefeld shows that in the 1989 Pastoral Plan (heavily influenced by +Hurley) the role of clergy in changing the position of lay people is highlighted:

Clergy and also religious have inherited a system that has placed unnecessary distinctions between them and their sisters and brothers in Christ. The initiative in overcoming these

¹²²¹ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 302-3 (DH to Eileen Hurley and May Cameron, from Namur, Belgium, 29 February 1980, handwritten)

¹²²² Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 228 (Letter to Mark Collier, from Durban, 3 February 1969, typewritten)

¹²²³ Kearney, Paddy. 'Denis Eugene Hurley: 1915-2004'. *Vatican II: Keeping the Dream Alive*. Denis Hurley. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005) xvii

¹²²⁴ Denis, "Archbishop Hurley's contribution to the Second Vatican Council", 5

¹²²⁵ Denis, *Facing the Crisis*, 187 ('The Second Vatican Council', lecture given by +Hurley at St Joseph's Cedara, 1993)

distinctions must come from the clergy themselves. Unlike secular leaders they must not dominate but serve God's people.¹²²⁶

Ngcobo provides a useful retrospective view on the mechanisms +Hurley put in place:

When it comes to laity involvement, diocesan pastoral councils were established with a view to be represented in the Commission of the Lay Apostolate. The *Lumen Gentium* document played a vital role in this regard. Thus, parishes too were encouraged to have pastoral councils. Some dioceses since have had diocesan synods which interact with the laity and which consider ideas and suggestions that reach them from the dioceses.

For example, in the archdiocese of Durban this kind of synod takes place every five years and during the session the theme that will be central in the next five years is introduced after consultation with the laity. Preparations for the synods are in the hands of both laity and clergy. The synods assist bishops in their various territories when they wish to consult experts among the laity in different diocesan structures.¹²²⁷

+Napier, as the successor Archbishop of Durban, had the task to continue these diocesan structures; he remarked on his predecessor's approach to the laity (without commenting on his own):

+Hurley was a promoter of the role of lay people in the Church – the Renew team was mostly lay people; Diakonia was mostly lay people.¹²²⁸

Another good example of +Hurley treating clergy and lay people as equals comes from this early letter to his fellow Vatican II protagonist, Cardinal Suenens:

Thank you for arranging to have those reprints of your interview sent to me. Actually, we practiced a little piracy here about two months ago. We made copies of the interview for all the priests of the Archdiocese of Durban and for a lay association of graduates, so your views are pretty well known here.¹²²⁹

Similarly, when writing about his stand for conscientious objection, he is pleased to have support from both clergy and laity:

Fifty-seven priests of the Archdiocese of Durban...wrote a splendid letter in defence of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference and myself in particular. ...More recently another fine letter came out signed by quite a few prominent lay people of the Archdiocese.¹²³⁰

In fact, in another letter to the same family members, he goes further and reiterates that it is the lay and not the clergy who have a particular vocation to the transformation of the temporal order:

¹²²⁶ Langefeld, Chris. "The Reception of Vatican II in South Africa". *Bulletin for Contextual Theology* (1997, 4:1) 44

¹²²⁷ Ngcobo, Nkosinathi. "The Evangelisation of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa: Community Serving Humanity". M.Th. dissertation (Durban: University of KwaZulu Natal, 2016) 4. (In recent years, synods in the Archdiocese of Durban have been more honoured in the breach than in the observance.)

¹²²⁸ Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

¹²²⁹ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 237 (Letter to Cardinal Léon Joseph Suenens, from Durban, 22 July 1969)

¹²³⁰ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 282 (DH to Bobbie and Jerry Hurley, from Durban, 29 April 1977, typewritten)

In the course of his address at the opening of the plenary session he [the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Josef Mees] used these words: ‘The Church very wisely forbids active participation of its clergy in politics and leaves this work to lay people who have been formed in the doctrine of the Catholic faith’ (sounds as if the clergy have not been formed in that doctrine!).¹²³¹

But we must be careful not to see +Hurley’s relationship with the laity through rose-tinted spectacles. If he is to allow the laity to express their opinions, he will discover that they do not always agree with him! Robert Blair Kaiser, who frequently hosted +Hurley and other bishops for dinner during Vatican II, recalls +Hurley reflecting on the impact of promoting lay people in the archdiocese:

I knew that’s what I should be doing but I was unprepared for the frank opinions I was getting from one and all. I’d thought everyone was pretty happy with what I’d been doing in Durban but I soon learned I had a long way to go before I could serve the people in a way that they wanted to be served. Ultimately, I swallowed my pride and let the people take charge of their own Church. But, many a night I went to bed with a stomach ache.¹²³²

Kearney’s relationship with +Hurley

So +Hurley clearly showed an open-ness towards the laity that was not typical of most bishops of his generation, even if sometimes that left him challenged. What of the particular relationship between him and the lay man Kearney?

Many of those interviewed commented on the closeness of the relationship between +Hurley and Kearney. Anne McKay captures it in this quotation from JRR Tolkien: “All I wanted was a captain worth fighting for.”¹²³³

For Kearney, +Hurley was that captain, and he fought for him throughout his 28 years at Diakonia (which he left the year that +Hurley died) and then for the remaining years of his own life, promoting the legacy of +Hurley through books and lectures and eventually the creation of the Denis Hurley Centre. +Hurley had clearly provided for Kearney what the Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern in the early 1980s had feared was lacking in the Church:

Where are the priests sufficiently self-assured in their own identity and faith that they can devote themselves to energising lay leaders committed to reforming the structures of society?¹²³⁴

An insight into Kearney’s own view of the relationship comes from an article he wrote in 1997 to celebrate +Hurley’s Golden Jubilee. It is a lengthy piece with Kearney taking, for the first time, the role of the official biographer. Some things here are especially relevant: involvement of the laity and +Hurley’s desire to encourage their participation with regular diocesan synods, guidelines for lay

¹²³¹ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 369 (DH to Bobbie and Jerry Hurley, from Durban, 1 April 1987, typewritten)

¹²³² Blair Kaiser, Robert. “Understanding the implications of Pope John’s *aggiornamento*”. *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 47

¹²³³ McKay, Anne. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2021 in Durban (Communications Officer at Diakonia)

¹²³⁴ Barta, Russell ed. *Challenge to the Laity* (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 20

involvement and formation for the laity; also justifying his role as a 'political priest' coming from his firm conviction for justice which influenced the whole of his life.¹²³⁵ Kearney jokingly says that Hurley is not spending enough time on his memoirs because he is still too focused on the present and the future. The sign-off is interesting: "Paddy Kearney, a friend of Archbishop Hurley, is Director of Diakonia Council of Churches".¹²³⁶

Kearney himself was involved (with Denis and Argall) in the selection of the letters for publication cited above. As they explain in the foreword, the editors ended up choosing 251 letters out of the 5,000 they reviewed.¹²³⁷ There are remarkably few letters addressed to Kearney selected for the book (perhaps because Kearney did not put them forwards) but Kearney did keep some in his personal archive. There are two that provide some more insight into their relationship and +Hurley's wider relationship with the laity.

One is a letter from 1998 in which +Hurley thanks Kearney for the lines he had quoted from the scholar Alcuin of York to Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (+Hurley has clipped a biography of Alcuin to the letter). The letter suggests great familiarity and ease of conversation between the two – even if still formal. Perhaps they are implying a comparison between their own relationship and the 8th century friendship between these two ecclesiastics.¹²³⁸

Another is a letter to Kearney in 2003, a year before the Archbishop's death and when they are already working together on memoirs/ biography. This suggests that they did not see each other so often since +Hurley refers to replying to a letter from two months before (though in this period +Hurley was away in Pretoria and Italy). Kearney had clearly asked +Hurley to clarify some issues, such as the name of his school in Newcastle (there had been mergers since then), and also who took over from him as the youngest bishop in the world (prompting a jokey reminiscence from Hurley about cricket, involving two archbishops).¹²³⁹

Both these letters suggest a high degree of intimacy and friendliness between them, although Hurley also shows this in many other letters he wrote to regular correspondents. At the same time, he ends his letters to Kearney with a signature (typed and written) as '+Denis Hurley OMI' so no there is informality there. (This is in contrast to letters to his family which are signed off as 'Denis'; to his friends Marly and Petal signed as '+Denis'; however, letters to another friend Sr Genevieve are also signed off as '+Denis Hurley OMI', the same as in the letters to Kearney).¹²⁴⁰

So, unlike many bishops of his day (and since), it seems that +Hurley had comfortable and relaxed relationships with a number of lay people; Kearney was one of these but by no means the closest. Theirs was a working relationship that developed into a friendship (as per Kearney's sign-off in the article quoted above) but conscious that they were still separated by age and ecclesial status.

How do those who frequently observed the two men working together characterise their relationship? And what does this tell us about Kearney's identity as a Catholic lay person? Some

¹²³⁵ For more on this see Appendix D: "+Hurley the political priest"

¹²³⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) "Hurley's Golden Jubilee" (*The Southern Cross*, 16 March 97)

¹²³⁷ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 8

¹²³⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/ Letters/3 "Hurley Letters 1991-2004" (Letter from +Hurley to Kearney, 27 March 98); It looks though as if either +Hurley or Kearney was mistaken here since Anselm was Archbishop of Canterbury almost three centuries after Alcuin was operating in York! They may have inadvertently linked Alcuin's letter to a more famous later Archbishop whereas in fact it was addressed to the less memorable Æthelhard: the illustration of friendship between a scholar and an archbishop still holds.

¹²³⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/ Letters/3 "Hurley Letters 1991-2004" (Letter from +Hurley to Kearney, 9 April 2003)

¹²⁴⁰ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, examples: 279, 294, 372, 491

quotations from those who worked with both of them, at Diakonia and beyond, are enlightening. They commented on the strength of the relationship and also speculate on how reciprocal it was. Both Moore and Keane also commented on the fact that they had similar backgrounds and that this helped as the foundation for the trust.

There was a wonderful relationship between +Hurley and Paddy. So much mutual admiration. Paddy was the Archbishop's go-to man.¹²⁴¹

Paddy idolised +Hurley; he would always defer to him as 'Your Grace'.¹²⁴²

Paddy admired the Archbishop greatly but I wouldn't say he was in awe.¹²⁴³

+Hurley was his guru on the hill. Paddy wanted to fulfil the pathway that +Hurley set him on and carry his vision further. I wonder, if Hurley had not given him this job, would Kearney have been such a radical?¹²⁴⁴

Paddy always got huge support from +Hurley.¹²⁴⁵

Their relationship was hugely mutually respectful; they knew what they could expect of each other. The strongest bond was their Catholicism, both of them believing that the institution to which they belonged needed to be moved. But Paddy was not the junior partner. +Hurley would always do what Paddy wanted him to do; and Paddy was happy to be two steps behind. He was happy for the Church leadership to be the face of the work – both he and Peter Kerchhoff [at PACSA] were happy to do all the work behind the scenes, writing the minutes.¹²⁴⁶

Paddy was always supportive of anything that +Hurley did. For example, Paddy was not fazed by the criticisms of Hurley (such as that he was funding terrorists); instead this galvanised him. I think that it was Paddy who radicalised +Hurley about what was going on – the influence was more that way round. After all, Paddy was on the ground: he was able to introduce people to the Arch. It was Paddy who helped +Hurley to take a stance with the C.O. movement and who organised the Good Friday marches.¹²⁴⁷

Paddy had a great relationship with +Hurley because of their shared involvement in the Struggle and in the Church. They could understand each other and found each other very easy to work with.¹²⁴⁸

+Hurley was Paddy's role model, they both felt an empathy for those who were out of grace with the establishment. +Hurley knew he could trust Kearney to keep confidences. I suspect that without +Hurley, Kearney's life would have been quite bland.¹²⁴⁹

¹²⁴¹ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

¹²⁴² Joseph, Hester. Personal interview by author, 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹²⁴³ Goad, Daphne. Personal interview by author, 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹²⁴⁴ Cormick, Dina. Personal interview by author, 21 December 2020 in Durban (freelance designer at Diakonia)

¹²⁴⁵ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Pinetown (Methodist Bishop & wife)

¹²⁴⁶ Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹²⁴⁷ Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

¹²⁴⁸ Moore, Anne. Personal interview by author, 17 Oct 2020 in Johannesburg GP (member of The Grail)

¹²⁴⁹ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

Paddy was always very close to +Hurley and implemented what he wanted. He was the right arm of +Hurley. Paddy was more traditional at the beginning than the Archbishop. He was challenged by +Hurley but he accepted the challenge and exceeded it.... Paddy was a little afraid of +Hurley's freedom inside the Church and outside. He never criticised the Archbishop's position on anything; he was a real ambassador for him. The foundation of the Denis Hurley Centre was confirmation of Paddy's admiration for +Hurley but it had to be 'faith in action'.¹²⁵⁰

Paddy was motivated by what +Hurley stood for – in fact it was inspiration not just motivation.¹²⁵¹

+Hurley led from the front so he was a role model for Paddy who admired him tremendously. He admired the fact that he was not afraid to be there at the barricades. +Hurley did what his conscience required.¹²⁵²

It was clear that the Arch had Paddy's back and used his convening power (as First among Equals) to mobilise the other religious leaders. But it was only later that I realised how central Paddy also was to +Hurley.¹²⁵³

Longer quotations are worth citing from people who had a privileged view of this most unusual relationship. Kearney's Deputy Director at Diakonia (and later successor) commented:

I often watched the interaction between Paddy and +Hurley: he was his blue-eyed boy; it was a beautiful relationship. It was good foresight of +Hurley to identify Paddy and he, in turn, remained true to the vision of +Hurley.... Paddy was an extraordinary person who was re-energised by his work and his desire to see an alternative society; everyone's quality of life being improved for the better. But it was also because it was about a person he admired: the person who was his role model.... Paddy resigned the year that +Hurley died: I would not be surprised if +Hurley's death was a trigger for his resignation.¹²⁵⁴

Two Anglican bishops, who worked with +Hurley and Kearney during the Diakonia days, also have a good perspective:

It was +Hurley who had the greatest influence on Paddy above all others. They shared a passion for welding Church and theology with the socio-political situation. It was a mutual relationship of dependence and influence.... Sometimes it was +Hurley who was following Paddy; sometimes vice versa. But bear in mind that Paddy was his own person – he was never 'a yes man'. They were very much egging each other on. And then so was I with Paddy: there were times when I was more radical, and times when he was.¹²⁵⁵

¹²⁵⁰ Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author, 17 January 2022 via Zoom (Manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

¹²⁵¹ Duval, Sydney. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (Catholic activist and journalist)

¹²⁵² de Haas, Mary. Personal interview by author, 30 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow activist and mother-in-law to Kearney's niece)

¹²⁵³ Graham, Paul. Personal interview by author, 13 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Methodist Youth Worker)

¹²⁵⁴ Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu. Personal interview by author, 26 May 2022 in Durban (Kearney's successor as Director of Diakonia and sometime Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹²⁵⁵ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

Paddy's relationship with +Hurley was close and profoundly respectful.¹²⁵⁶

The fullest insights into the relationship come from those who worked most closely with +Hurley: first of all, the woman who was his personal secretary for many years and so the lay person who would have seen them together more than anyone else:

There were times when the Archbishop said "I can't take any calls" but then Paddy would phone and he would not take 'no' for an answer and he normally won. The Arch never refused to take his call – Paddy was special. ...But I don't think they were friends (even though +Hurley had many friends). Paddy was driven by +Hurley, by his devotion to him. It made him want to live up to +Hurley's standards. It was as if +Hurley was looking for Kearney – and may be vice versa. It was an unbreakable bond which lasted for years, even after +Hurley's death. They made a formidable pair....

Diakonia was very important for +Hurley since he knew he could not have got a similar result by just working through the SACBC. With Diakonia, he could ensure it went in the right direction. And Paddy put +Hurley in touch with people he would not have access to before. Paddy was a lightning conductor for all sorts of people.¹²⁵⁷

Paul Nadal was Vicar-General to +Hurley from 1984 to 1994 and so the priest who would have seen them together more than anyone else:

I like to think that +Hurley had two blue-eyed boys: Paddy and myself! But +Hurley got something different from Paddy than what he got from me. I think that +Hurley was never a radical in theology or in anything else. He was rather a moderate leaning to the left. But Paddy was sometimes a radical. In fact, sometimes +Hurley would have to calm him down and tell him 'you have overstepped the mark'. What changed +Hurley was his exposure to Cardinal Cardijn's model of "See, Judge, Act."

+Hurley appreciated people who were willing to speak out. Fr Vogt (who was a contemporary of +Hurley) criticised me once for the way that I spoke to the Archbishop so I went to apologise. +Hurley said to me: "I wish more priests would speak to me like you do; you're not afraid to say: 'that's nonsense'." He told me that he knew I would speak the truth even if it killed us – but added that not everyone can take the truth.

Paddy had the same strength of mind though he still always addressed him as 'Your Grace'; he did not have the same familiarity. I never got the impression that Paddy was held back by being a lay person. I certainly never had reason to believe that +Hurley treated Paddy differently because he was not a priest.

Paddy was certainly kept going by his devotion to +Hurley: it was akin to hero worship. The relationship between them was intense. It seemed to me that Paddy was dedicated to two things: to +Hurley and to Jesus Christ and I don't know in which order!

Both of these have commented on Kearney's devotion to +Hurley. It was a devotion that they also shared and they both went on to work with Kearney on the Denis Hurley Centre, Matthias as

¹²⁵⁶ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

¹²⁵⁷ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (Secretary to +Hurley and Secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

Secretary to the Trust and Nadal as a Patron, Trustee and fundraiser. Others involved in the Denis Hurley Centre, support the same view of the closeness of the relationship.

Paddy was certainly driven by his devotion to Denis Hurley. He held him in such high regard as his mentor and role model.¹²⁵⁸

Once writing the biographies was over, it was the Denis Hurley Centre that gave Paddy purpose.¹²⁵⁹

Tully further recalls an incident (in the late 1990s) when he was with Kearney and +Hurley phoned. He was struck by how much +Hurley was still dependent on Kearney's opinion. Tully went on to comment – as a priest reflecting on other priests – that Paul Nadal and Pierre Lavoipierre (a contemporary of Nadal) saw Kearney as 'the silent hero' of the Archdiocese of Durban. However, they were also wary because sometimes Kearney was rocking the boat so they supported him but from a distance. They knew, nevertheless, that Kearney was doing it for the priests of the Archdiocese.

Also reflecting on the relationship, after +Hurley's death, Argall who worked with Kearney and Denis on the collection of letters commented:

Paddy was not defensive of +Hurley. For example, he did not want to suppress the early letters of +Hurley that showed racist language but rather wanted to demonstrate that he had an unfolding consciousness.¹²⁶⁰ It is also noticeable that, in the biography, Paddy included descriptions of some of +Hurley's failed projects.¹²⁶¹

A final comment from +Hurley's successor as Archbishop of Durban:

Paddy was +Hurley's front runner; he kept him informed, advised him on strategy, told him who to look forward to dealing with. Certainly, +Hurley was Paddy's hero and he was motivated by his admiration. But they were not like 'disciple and master' with +Hurley telling Paddy what to do. In fact +Hurley depended on Kearney for information and to understand the possibilities of action.¹²⁶²

So overall, we have a consistent picture of a relationship that is deep, that endures over many decades, and is based a high degree of mutual trust: that is unusual enough in the Church, even more so between an archbishop and a lay man. The relationship certainly developed as Kearney grew more confident and as +Hurley (with advancing years) came to rely more and more on the younger man. What is remarkable is that – for fear of treating either man with hagiographical deference – it is hard to find examples of tension despite them working closely together for over 30 years. What is more, it is far from clear in which direction the influence was stronger: some saying that +Hurley influenced Kearney, some saying that Kearney influenced +Hurley, and some concluding that the influence (and the admiration) went in both directions. This is in contrast to the

¹²⁵⁸ Criticos, Costas. Personal interview by author, 4 September 2021 via Zoom (Building consultant to both Diakonia and Denis Hurley Centre)

¹²⁵⁹ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

¹²⁶⁰ For more on this see Appendix A: "Kearney's racial identity"

¹²⁶¹ Argall, Jane. Personal interview by author, 8 October 2020 in Durban (Librarian at Diakonia and Co-editor of book of +Hurley's letters)

¹²⁶² Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

idea of a 'Father / Son relationship' (which is the term used by two, but only two, of the interviewees, Goad and Goemans).

Both +Hurley and Kearney were keen – in the spirit of Vatican II – to build bridges between the Catholic community and other Christians (fulfilling *Unitatis Redintegratio*), people of other faiths (*Nostra Aetate*) and indeed the wider world (*Gaudium et Spes*). But one had been ordained deacon, priest and bishop and lived for over 70 years under religious vows; and the other 'a mere lay man'. It is interesting that there is no sign that their relationship was influenced in any way by this difference in canonical status. This seems to reflect +Hurley's generally positive attitude towards the laity, Kearney's generally respectful attitude towards the clergy, and the new space for a relationship based on 'the common matrix of priesthood' that *Apostolicam Actuositatem* has allowed.

Kearney's relationship with the Catholic Hierarchy

Exploring Kearney's relationship with +Hurley was, I believe, an important precursor to exploring his wider relationship with the Catholic Church and its hierarchy. After all, Kearney had to deal with bishops other than +Hurley, and also with many clergy. He was also aware that +Hurley did not always concur with the Vatican's approach on certain issues. How willing was Kearney to speak out against the Church? And, when he did so, was he going further than +Hurley did?

This relationship matters especially because *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, whilst affirming the distinct and honourable role of lay people in the Church, is also keen to show them as integrated into the wider Church:

...the lay apostolate ...should be incorporated into the apostolate of the whole Church according to a right system of relationships. Indeed, union with those whom the Holy Spirit has assigned to rule His Church is an essential element of the Christian apostolate. This is most fitting since a particular activity in the Church requires harmony and apostolic co-operation on the part of both branches of the clergy, the religious, and the laity.¹²⁶³

There is a reading of this that suggests that co-operation is something expected of all members of the Church – which means bishops co-operating with priests and the laity; the laity co-operating with bishops and priests; and priests co-operating with both. But, in other places, it is clear that this would be a generous reading and that a hierarchical structure is still assumed: one in which co-operation is expected from the lower tiers towards those higher up the pyramid, but not necessarily the other way round. So how did Kearney live this out as someone clear about his lay identity but also aware that he was in a hierarchical Church?

Yeats, who went on to become an Anglican priest and so comes from a denomination with a tradition of 'loyal dissent', saw Kearney as very faithfully Catholic but with a freedom to act:

Paddy had an informed commitment to his work. His period of formation with the Marist Brothers meant that he had a clear understanding of what Christianity required of him. He saw himself as part of a worldwide Catholic Church engaged in social justice. ... But Paddy

¹²⁶³ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 23

was not a priest. He is a person worth remembering – because he was a lay person. This enabled him to live in a certain way that a priest would not.¹²⁶⁴

At the start of his ministry, Kearney often found himself out of tune with the hierarchy in the Church in Southern Africa. Nolan points out that Kearney was frequently disappointed that the SACBC did not speak out against Apartheid as much as they should have.¹²⁶⁵ But, of course, in this he was entirely in tune with his local bishop +Hurley who over the decades won over his fellow SACBC members until they provided a more united and assertive front in their opposition to Apartheid.

What is more interesting to explore is the degree to which Kearney used his freedom as a lay person to disagree with bishops (including +Hurley's successor) or even with teachings coming from Rome. Peter-John Pearson, a very senior Catholic priest in South Africa, who rose to be Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Cape Town but who, to the surprise of many, was never made a bishop, commented on this:

Paddy never said anything public on controversial issues in the Church. But then neither have I. I was told by many people, and I imagine Paddy was too: "We need your voice in the struggle; don't give people ammunition to silence you." Was this a tactical move on Paddy's part? I assume so; he was not bound by obedience [unlike a priest or religious]. I think that he came to a conclusion about where his energies were best placed to be maximised. After all, most of his high profile years were through the papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI when dissent was not encouraged. Paddy made choices on the issues that he felt should be promoted.¹²⁶⁶

Often it is women in the Church who are best placed to dissent, or to comment on dissent, since they are the least likely to aspire to positions of power. Aitken, a member of the Grail described him as: "Respectful of Church but motivational – not confrontational".¹²⁶⁷ Keane describes Kearney as having 'a conventional relationship with Roman Catholic Church' pointing out that he did not speak out against the Church on any matters.

Paddy would have been loyal and that kept him out of trouble. I am sure that he agreed with +Hurley's comment: 'All we did at Vatican II on liturgy has been wasted' but Paddy just kept silent: that was his sign of disapproval.¹²⁶⁸

The views of Cormick are especially interesting since she was also an ex-religious and spoke out publicly in South Africa for the ordination of women.

Paddy admired the Church. He did not want to rock the boat too much.

I remember that I was once asked to do some work for the Church at the Koinonia Centre but Bishop Barry vetoed my being employed. Paddy did not try to overturn this: his loyalty to the Church was too great. His view seemed to be: that's just the way it is.

¹²⁶⁴ Yeats, Charles. Personal interview by the author, 18 May 2022 via Zoom (Conscientious Objector assisted by +Hurley and Kearney)

¹²⁶⁵ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 18 Oct 2020 in Boksburg GP (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

¹²⁶⁶ Pearson, Peter-John. Personal interview by author, 12 April 2021 in Cape Town (Head of Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office)

¹²⁶⁷ Aitken, Marilyn. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (member of The Grail)

¹²⁶⁸ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

It is interesting that he frequently questioned the human rights of the country but not human rights within the Church. He felt he could challenge political things but not the Church. But then neither did +Hurley. He certainly did not stir things up as much as he could have. I asked +Hurley about this once and I remember him saying to me: “You have no idea what happens when you get to Rome – your voice means nothing.”¹²⁶⁹

Argall comments that, though Kearney was aware that the Church was not a perfect institution, he did not express his frustrations about it publicly. But she gave a specific example of how he might show his views in other ways. When he and Rickard were living in Cambridge MA in 1991, they did not attend the local Catholic chaplaincy at Harvard but instead travelled downtown to worship at St Pauls, a church known for its welcome for the poor and dispossessed but also the existence of a thriving gay community.¹²⁷⁰

Kearney’s friend from later years, Berenice De la Croix, admitted that she was willing to challenge Kearney by raising some difficult church issues.

Paddy tended to sit on the fence – he was not defensive but also was not always critical. He said that you have to understand the full picture. For example, he would say that [Pope] Francis is doing the best he can. I guess he had such loyalty to the Church after so many years. I think he agreed with +Hurley [in opposing Vatican policy] on women priests and contraception. So if he had spoken out on those he would not be going any further than +Hurley did. But I don’t recall him voicing a liberal position on any of the usual ‘litmus test’ issues: gay rights, abortion, clerical celibacy.

I assumed he would be a progressive but he did not voice positions. Perhaps he did not want to do things that would alienate support. I think he did not see it as his mission to move the Church [on everything] but rather to have a tangible impact where he could make a difference. He had other fish to fry. He would always avoid rocking the boat as he grew older. When he received that medal from the Pope it seemed to me that it confirmed him as part of the system but I don’t think he sold his soul to the system.¹²⁷¹

The medal referred to is the *Bene Merenti* mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.¹²⁷² It is given in the name of the Pope to Catholics who have shown long and loyal service (originally, it was a military medal for members of the Papal army). Priscilla McKay comments that Kearney was uncomfortable about the award since there were many more deserving people.¹²⁷³ His niece adds that Kearney was embarrassed by it and it was never on display.¹²⁷⁴

In fact, we have one direct comment from Kearney himself about the award since he refers to it in a speech honouring him (in a different context) in May 2018. He talks about the award as being special, not because it came from the Pope, but because it starts with a recommendation from the local parish and from the diocese.¹²⁷⁵ This clearly fits with his own modesty, as discussed before.

¹²⁶⁹ Cormick, Dina. Personal interview by author, 21 December 2020 in Durban (freelance designer at Diakonia)

¹²⁷⁰ Argall, Jane. Personal interview by author, 8 October 2020 in Durban (Librarian at Diakonia and Co-editor of book of +Hurley’s letters)

¹²⁷¹ De la Croix, Berenice. Personal interview by author, 30 September and 9 October 2020 in Durban (Personal friend)

¹²⁷² “Paddy honoured with Papal Medal” *Emmanuel Cathedral website* undated. <https://emmanuelcathedral.org.za/paddy-honoured-with-papal-medal/> (accessed 5 September 2022)

¹²⁷³ McKay, Priscilla. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow Catholic activist)

¹²⁷⁴ de Haas, Ursula. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Niece of Kearney)

¹²⁷⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/8 “Interfaith” (Speech by Kearney May 2018)

But it also allows him to position the award as honouring his loyalty to the local people (the parish and the diocese) rather than loyalty to an institution or to a distant Pope, whoever he might be.

Briard, who represented the official aid agency of the French-speaking Belgian bishops, commented:

Paddy never spoke of his frustrations with the Church even while Napier was Arch. He simply appreciated the support he received from CIDSE [the Catholic European funding network] and the Protestant funders. I know that +Hurley was disappointed by Napier's approach as being too Roman – but Paddy never mentioned that. He was traditional in his approach to the hierarchy.

But he did once say to me that South Africa is a microcosm of the world: with the best and the worst. On the positive side he would cite collaboration with the laity, the role of women, the power of the Church; and on the other side, all the bad stuff.¹²⁷⁶

The views of people who knew Kearney well, and are at one remove from the Roman Catholic system, are useful in this regard. +Nuttall, an Anglican bishop, commented:

Paddy had an unshakeable devotion as a worshipping Catholic. This remained true even when he saw a shift away from the open windows of Vatican II and the closing of windows by John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Certainly, +Hurley was distressed to see how his own work on liturgy was being undermined. Paddy had an unshakeable devotion to the well-being of the Church – it was the paradox of him being open and yet also having a deep attachment.¹²⁷⁷

This comment of +Nuttall about Kearney mirrors closely a comment made about +Hurley by a Catholic priest who was not afraid to court controversy. One could imagine the same words that Fr Mkhathswa applied to +Hurley being used to describe Kearney:

Whilst he has ruffled many a feather in the Catholic Church, he has also been a very loyal son of the Church. He hobnobbed with the academics, the progressive students and the elite. But as soon as they challenged the doctrines or practices of the Church, he would leap to the defence and authority of the Church.¹²⁷⁸

Verryn, a former Methodist bishop, shared some of the same frustrations but also understood why Kearney might keep silent.

He didn't talk to me about Catholic issues. But that is because the Church is a family: and that means as a member of a family I can gossip but you can't. I think he shared my view that the Church enables integrity and also enables hypocrisy. The Scriptures warn us of the presence of Pharisees in the very heart of the Church.¹²⁷⁹

¹²⁷⁶ Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author, 17 January 2022 via Zoom (Manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

¹²⁷⁷ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

¹²⁷⁸ Mkhathswa, Smangaliso. "That man, Hurley". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 100

¹²⁷⁹ Verryn, Paul. Personal interview by author, 21 March 2021 in Johannesburg (Methodist Minister)

The relationship that Kearney fostered with +Hurley's successor as Archbishop of Durban from 1992 is one useful test of his loyalty to the Church. First of all, what did +Napier himself have to say about Kearney?

Paddy could be very stubborn – but he was not stubborn for the sake of being stubborn; he was stubborn on a principle. I remember him at the meetings at Diakonia of the KZN Church Leaders Group [Kearney remained as secretary even after he had left the role as Director of Diakonia]. Paddy was open to all the church leaders; he was always at their service, to advise them. The CLG worked because it was an informal body: there was no fixed membership, no constitution; it was like a Ministers' Fraternal. It was designed to be free to enable dialogue and draw in even the extremes....

I recall Paddy talking about the Church and it was clear that he knew his Catholic Social Teaching. When he was Chair of the PPC at the Cathedral he was always very active. He would say 'I think the Church should do x' – the implication being that the Church was not taking something seriously – but he said it in a gentle way, never screaming and shouting, always logical and persistent. He was usually asking others to do something that he was already doing himself.

He raised with me the issue of opening the process for the canonisation of +Hurley. I replied that the bishop should respond to the people, you have to let the laity take the lead. You need the devotion of ordinary people in order to get a miracle. Paddy was agitated that I was not enthusiastically supporting the +Hurley cause.¹²⁸⁰

When asked to comment on Kearney's relationship with the Church, a number of interviewees returned to the subject of his views on Cardinal Napier. In some ways, this is a fair comparison: Kearney was clearly very loyal to +Hurley: if this loyalty was to the office of archbishop rather than to the person of +Hurley, it would then presumably carry over in a similar way to +Hurley's successor to the see of Durban.

Snyman, a Dutch Reformed Church Dominee, was someone with whom Kearney seems to have shared some of his frustrations with the Church.

There was a lot of pain around Napier succeeding +Hurley. It was especially hard for Paddy that Napier became Cardinal [in 2001, 3 years before +Hurley's death] since he did not represent +Hurley values. One of the examples was the way in which Napier would always be going on about abortion as if it was the only issue.¹²⁸¹

Duval, who worked closely with successive Archbishops of Cape Town, commented:

One of Paddy's abiding concerns was for Archbishop Hurley's successor and then (later) +Napier's successor. He called regularly to share news of possible successors. We shared a lot at the Hurley requiem at Kings Park Stadium and interment in Emmanuel Cathedral. He

¹²⁸⁰ Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

¹²⁸¹ Snyman, Deon. Personal interview by author, 6 January 2021 in Malmesbury (Dutch Reformed Church Dominee and Co-worker at Diakonia). (In fact, Napier who presided at Kearney's funeral on 1 December 2018, used that occasion to talk about abortion and tried to link the subject to Kearney even though there is no evidence of Kearney ever speaking or writing on this subject.)

also had some choice words for certain members of the hierarchy. It seemed to me that a critical part of our friendship enabled him to let off private steam in my company.

He wasn't blinded by the Church. He was aware of it, warts and all. But it did not stop him for one moment in his work or his faith. Nor did it hold him back when speaking about particular people in the Church. I would share with him to give him a broader understanding of the Church that I was also serving.¹²⁸²

+Hurley's secretary also commented about the Archdiocese under his successor:

Paddy and I were both disappointed at the fact that no one at the Chancery seemed to be focused on +Hurley's funeral when he died. In fact, the Archdiocese of Durban which had been a vibrant diocese, a hive of activity, was reduced to rubble in a short space of time. I think that is why it was Paddy's intentional strategy to have some distance between the Denis Hurley Centre and the Archdiocese. Plus Napier was not as ecumenical as +Hurley.¹²⁸³

Priscilla McKay referred to Kearney's frustrations with +Hurley's successor:

Paddy did not like the rigidity of the Cardinal or his unapproachability. He didn't feel that the Cardinal had the personality to embrace all. Paddy found it disappointing that there wasn't the same warm outreach onto the communities. But the contrast was not just with +Hurley but also with +Barry [Wood, +Napier's auxiliary bishop].¹²⁸⁴

How then did Kearney work with the Cardinal who, as Archbishop of Durban had a key role to play ecumenically and whom Kearney would later need to endorse the creation of the Denis Hurley Centre? Nadal, who stepped down as Vicar-General soon after +Napier took over, explained it thus:

Paddy did not want to rub the Cardinal up the wrong way. So he toed the line. He did not want to be too controversial. I think that it was the ecumenical motivation initially that was key.¹²⁸⁵

Tully was appointed by +Napier in 2002 as Administrator (or Dean) of the Cathedral – a key position in any diocese but all the more so since he was taking over from +Hurley in this role. He would therefore also be one of the driving forces in the creation of the Denis Hurley Centre since it emerged from existing Cathedral projects.

We spoke about how to get things done in the face of the Cardinal since we knew he was not a progressive. For example, we were careful about how we presented things to him. Zuma [when he was President] wanted to visit the Cathedral and lay flowers at +Hurley's grave. We knew the Cardinal would be opposed to this. But we presented this as a useful opportunity for him to speak to Zuma and also stressed that he needed to be seen to be a-political.

¹²⁸² Duval, Sydney. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (Catholic activist and journalist)

¹²⁸³ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (Secretary to +Hurley and Secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

¹²⁸⁴ McKay, Priscilla. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow Catholic activist)

¹²⁸⁵ Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban (Catholic Monsignor, Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

We were very tactical in our approach to Cardinal. We needed help from political people for the Denis Hurley Centre and Paddy knew them and knew how difficult it was to motivate the Cardinal. From the beginning we made it clear to the Cardinal that we were not asking him for money. But we wanted to get him in the pictures. We knew how well red comes out in photographs.

But by making the Denis Hurley Centre a separate Trust it meant that the Archdiocese of Durban could not get its hands on the money that was raised. Paddy was instrumental in wording the documents so that it starts as an Archdiocese of Durban project but then becomes independent. He argued to the Cardinal that this would protect the AoD from any possible legal backlash. Moreover, it would make him look good and would not cost him anything. I don't think the Cardinal realised what he was signing up for.¹²⁸⁶

One of the fullest reflections on this relationship came from Larry Kaufmann, a Redemptorist priest who has had his own tensions with the Cardinal. They are not the subject of this chapter but are worth bearing in mind when hearing his comments.

Paddy was of course concerned about who would succeed +Hurley and he cringed and cried when he heard it would be +Napier. His conservatism was already apparent at that stage [+Napier had been bishop of the neighbouring diocese of Kokstad since 1980]. In his role in the SACBC theological advisory commissions, he had already shown his conservative positions on marriage and sexuality. I recall that +Hurley responded humbly to the news. And Paddy's reply was: 'I have decided I have to work with him. I am not working for the Cardinal; I am working for the people and the memory of +Hurley.'

Paddy had many frustrations with the Church. One was certainly about the issue of the way that women in the church were treated (which is not necessarily the issue of women's ordination). And of course he was opposed to the new translation of the Mass because of his loyalty to +Hurley and the feeling that the work of ICEL was going down the tubes. But Paddy handled it diplomatically and courageously even in the Hurley biography.

Paddy was 100% behind me on the stance I took on same-sex civil partnerships [when Kaufmann was teaching at the Unilever Centre for Ethics at UKZN]: that it was not for the Church to impose its moral systems on secular legislation. But +Napier interpreted it as support for homosexuality and I lost my faculties [permission to operate as a priest in the Archdiocese of Durban] over this issue.

He and I agreed that when we disagree with the Church we don't have to be exiles from the Church; it is our baptismal dignity; that is what gives us our prophetic and teaching authority. We have a right to stay; we don't need the permission of the bishop. This was not a cop out; it was just a way of learning to work the system and work within the system.

For Paddy to be a Catholic was a matter of faith; he believed in that community of discipleship unequivocally. The focus he felt should be on orthopraxis [doing the right thing]

¹²⁸⁶ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

not orthodoxy [teaching the right thing]. This was not just pragmatism; it was an issue of faith, a conviction.¹²⁸⁷

Kaufmann cites, in defence of this position, Hans Küng who had been a *peritus* at Vatican II (alongside fellow rising German theologian, Joseph Ratzinger). Küng had been stripped of his license to teach as a Catholic professor in 1979; nevertheless, he was invited to stay as a personal guest of +Hurley in his flat on Gordon Road in the mid-1980s. It is interesting that Kearney later reads and reviews for *The Southern Cross* Küng's extensive two volumes of memoirs (1600 pages!). Moreover, these reviews are among the ones Kearney chose to be included in his own selected writings.¹²⁸⁸

In fact, these reviews of Küng's biography are part of a pattern in Kearney's later writings. He wrote at least 47 reviews of biographies which he kept in his archive in a special file.¹²⁸⁹ 38 of these are also reproduced in his published collection of writing (cited above) plus there are 9 in the file that are not in the book. What is striking is that almost all the biographies are of champions of the progressive wing of the Church: people not afraid to speak their minds, people marginalized within the Church, people committed to social justice.

A few are about non-Catholics: three South Africans whom Kearney would have known (Charles Yeats, +Trevor Huddleston and +Michael Nuttall) and two more he would not have (Luther and the Dalai Lama). But all of the rest are Catholics. As well as Küng (mentioned above) there are progressive bishops (+Raymond Hunthausen, +Rembert Weakland, +Francis Arinze and +Basil Hume, twice!); controversial Jesuits (the Berrigan brothers, Jacques Dupuis, Fernando Cardenal); a controversial Dominican (Timothy Radcliffe), and two women (Elizabeth Johnson and Dorothy Day). The exceptions to these are the books about John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Robert Mugabe who might be seen as among those who did the marginalizing!

Another unnamed file seems to give insight into Kearney's preoccupations with the Church.¹²⁹⁰ Although these are articles by other people, what Kearney chose to photocopy or print or cut out and keep could be indicative of his own views. The 26 articles provide an interesting insight into his pre-occupations: 7 are about Church hierarchy and 5 about the role of women; there are 3 about the Church in Asia, and 2 each on Liberation Theology and liturgy; one each on the role of the laity, clerical abuse, church building, South Africa, abortion, ecumenism and Catholic Social Teaching. The tenor of the articles is also interesting: my analysis is that while two are conservative in tone and seven are neutral, the majority (17/26) are progressive in their approach.

Particularly interesting examples include:

- a piece controversially entitled 'The body of Christ has AIDS' (William McKinley in *National Catholic Reporter*, September 2000)
- a piece by a Mexican Carmelite writing that there is a culture of violence in the church resulting from centralisation and patriarchal authoritarianism (Camilo Macisa in *The Tablet*, November 2003)

¹²⁸⁷ Kaufmann, Larry. Personal interview by author, 12 Oct 2020 in Durban (Redemptorist priest and activist)

¹²⁸⁸ Kearney, G Paddy. *Faith in Action* (Pietermaritzburg: KwaZulu Natal Christian Council, 2017) 238 ("Review of *My struggle for freedom*", *The Southern Cross*, 4-10 August 2004); 255 ("Review of *Disputed truth*", *The Southern Cross*, 27 May-2 June 2009)

¹²⁸⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/6 "Book Reviews"

¹²⁹⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/7 "Church Issues"

- an account of 4,000 lay people meeting in the USA, reaffirming their intention to build up the Church through change from within (*National Catholic Reporter*, August 2004)
- Paul Vallely's lecture in which he describes Francis' attempt to reinvigorate the Synod of Bishops (*The Tablet*, November 2015)
- Cardinal Walter Kasper article 'Mercy is the medicine to heal the wounds of the church' (*The Tablet*, November 2015)

Kearney's file also has copies in English and Zulu (clearly printed for circulation) of Francis' notorious address to the senior Roman curia from December 2014 which talks about the diseases afflicting the Vatican.¹²⁹¹

The views of the editor of *The Southern Cross* (for which many of these reviews were written) are enlightening:

I don't think Paddy was ever unorthodox; he was critical and he appealed to the teaching authority of the Church in voicing positions which the weak and the stupid might interpret as being unorthodox.¹²⁹²

He contrasts this with the approach taken by Kearney's late brother, Jack Kearney, who often used the letters page to express controversial opinions.¹²⁹³ Simmermacher argues that (Paddy) Kearney may have had controversial opinions but expressed them 'with clever care'. The specific example he gives is a review of a book about Archbishop Hunthausen. "He basically lets the book, and the quotes he uses, reflect his views", says Simmermacher, as Kearney retells the story of how +Hunthausen was marginalised under the papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI for his awkward views on social issues. Kearney then appears to vindicate +Hunthausen from two different directions in the final paragraph:

But Cardinal Ratzinger also praised Hunthausen for 'implementing the renewal envisioned by the Council, including lay participation, the creation of consultative bodies, and applying the Gospel to world issues'. This is an important book for all who are interested in the 'unfinished business of Vatican II'. One will inevitably speculate whether Hunthausen would have had a different fate in the papacy of Francis.¹²⁹⁴

In exploring the relationship that Kearney had with the Catholic Church, we have considered the personal relationships he had with +Hurley and +Napier. They were clearly very different personalities and, inevitably, Kearney had a very different relationship with each of them. Since they were both Archbishops of Durban, the cooling in the relationship might be seen as indicative of a lack of loyalty to the office of archbishop. But that is potentially unfair: it is clear that Kearney's commitment to +Hurley was much more than that usually extended by a lay Catholic to their bishop. So a lower level of commitment to +Napier is quite possible without it necessarily signalling a lack of loyalty to the office. And, after all, since Kearney was not a priest operating in the Archdiocese of

¹²⁹¹ "The Roman Curia and the Body of Christ", *Vatican website*, 22 December 2014:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141222_curia-romana.html (accessed 5 September 2022)

¹²⁹² Simmermacher, Günther. Email to the author, 17 March 2021

¹²⁹³ 'Such sexism in Mass Readings', *The Southern Cross*, 23 September 2009: <https://www.scross.co.za/2009/09/such-sexism-in-mass-reading/> (accessed 5 September 2022)

¹²⁹⁴ Kearney, Faith in Action, 279 ("Review of A still and quiet conscience", *The Southern Cross*, 15-21 February 2017)

Durban, he had no obligation under Church law to swear ‘obedience’ to the ordinary; rather respect for his teaching authority would be sufficient.

There is little evidence that Kearney showed lack of respect for the teaching authority of his local bishop (whoever he might be) or even of the magisterium of the Church. His studied refusal to speak or write a publicly dissenting opinion on controversial subjects suggests a high degree of loyalty, or at least a pragmatism that could be taken for loyalty. But Kearney also remained loyal to his profession as a teacher and so used opportunities that he did have (such as book reviews) to draw attention to wider voices in the Church and – by implication of his tone of voice – indicate an open-ness toward fuller discussion.

Kearney’s relationship with clergy

As well as maintaining a co-operative relationship with the institutional Church and its bishops, to achieve what he wanted for Diakonia and for the Denis Hurley Centre, Kearney also needed to build and maintain good relations with individual clergy. This seems to be something that he did very successfully, even if he did not always agree with them, nor they with him.

Vatican II seems to make it clear that it is union with Christ which is the key to ministry of lay people:

Since Christ, sent by the Father, is the source and origin of the whole apostolate of the Church, the success of the lay apostolate depends upon the laity’s living union with Christ, in keeping with the Lord’s words, ‘He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing’ (John 15:5).¹²⁹⁵

However, in the paragraph before, the hierarchical Church has peered out from behind the common matrix: it is stressed that it is the role of the clergy to test what lay people are doing:

This should be done by the laity in communion with their brothers in Christ, especially with their pastors who must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts not to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold for what is good.¹²⁹⁶

A principle is thereby enshrined that almost all lay Catholics have experienced over the years: that the apostolate of the laity, especially at parish level, is dependent on the approval or at least toleration of the local cleric, who might be educated, well-informed, unprejudiced and open-minded, but might not be.

+Hurley talks positively – if slyly – about the role of the priest as being the bishop’s hands and feet, his eyes, ears and voice.

We all know that in the reading of pastoral letters whether the bishop’s words sound like the trumpet of an archangel or like a list from a telephone directory depend completely on the priest.¹²⁹⁷

¹²⁹⁵ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 4

¹²⁹⁶ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 3

¹²⁹⁷ Hurley, *Vatican II*, 46

In his interview, Apelgren recalls an incident involving the youth group at the Wentworth Catholic parish in the early 1970s which would mean the recently laicised Kearney seeing this dilemma at first hand:

The youth group was running a programme on different types of leadership and, alongside Jesus as a role model, we also talked about Mandela and Mohamed. Fr Carey kicked the group out of the parish hall [it is unclear if his objection was political or Christological] and he was backed by the parish council. Paddy did support the youth group but he did not verbalise it at the PPC. However, afterwards he did support the creation of a new organisation involving the same people.¹²⁹⁸

This seems to be an early example of Kearney being diplomatic in navigating the waters of clerical authority. Various interviewees attested to this – sometimes, from the context, they are referring just to Catholic clergy; sometimes to ministers from other Christian denominations as well:

Paddy showed respect for the clerical state but not necessarily for individual clergy.¹²⁹⁹

I always saw him as Church figure. Paddy had great respect for the clergy.¹³⁰⁰

All of the other Trustees [of the Ecumenical Centre] were priests; if Paddy had a problem with one of them, he would not challenge them in the open.¹³⁰¹

Kearney as lay man was not intimidated in the slightest by the clergy. He always came across as profoundly respectful of them and so got respect from them in return.¹³⁰²

Sometimes it seems that Kearney was able to develop good relations with clergy because they respected him as a lay person. But sometimes it seems that it was because his appearance and his personal history blurred the usually clear distinction between the two groups.

Church people were in awe of Paddy: his church involvement was part of why he did what he did. Because he came from that background, he was comfortable with clergy – steeped in that clerical culture. He was on a par with them – in fact sometimes they deferred to him.¹³⁰³

Clergy often forget that Paddy is not clergy.¹³⁰⁴

By contrast, +Hurley's secretary feels that some clergy in the Archdiocese of Durban were keenly aware that Kearney was a lay person:

¹²⁹⁸ Apelgren, Eric. Personal interview by author, 6 October 2020 in Durban (Volunteer at Diakonia and local Government official)

¹²⁹⁹ Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Personal friend and involved in Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace)

¹³⁰⁰ Goad, Daphne. Personal interview by author, 29 October 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³⁰¹ Cason, Fred and Marylyn. Personal interview by author, 21 January 2022 via Zoom (co-workers at Diakonia)

¹³⁰² Kaufmann, Larry. Personal interview by author, 12 Oct 2020 in Durban (Redemptorist priest and activist)

¹³⁰³ Joseph, Hester. Personal interview by author, 17 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³⁰⁴ Pearson, Peter-John. Personal interview by author, 12 April 2021 in Cape Town (Head of Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office)

The clergy realised and some members were very irritated. Paddy was in the inner circle – and they wondered how he got to such favoured status in such a short period of time. This caused resentment. It was felt that Paddy got preferential treatment from the Arch.¹³⁰⁵

This is reinforced by comments from Tim Smith who, for part of the 1980s, was a Jesuit priest operating in the Archdiocese of Durban:

There were plenty of clergy who were uncomfortable with +Hurley generally. They would not have spoken out against +Hurley or against Paddy but said things behind the scenes. There was certainly discomfort from some at Paddy being a lay person and an ex-religious. But it was also that for quite a few of the clergy it was Diakonia itself that was the problem. The clear exception to this was [Mgr.] Paul Nadal. He was always a great supporter of Paddy. There was no tension between them perhaps because they were complete opposites. They were a highly complementary pair.¹³⁰⁶

However, this comment is contradicted by Tully, who unlike Smith was a priest of the Archdiocese of Durban and worked closely with Kearney and +Hurley though in later years.

I never experienced priests feeling resentment towards Paddy that he was so close to +Hurley. Paddy was able to mix easily with priests and bishops. He was aware that priests can be prickly and territorial and so he would not push himself.¹³⁰⁷

Campbell, a former priest, says that Kearney's attitude towards the clergy was more than just deference or respect. He had known Kearney when he was an Oblate priest in Durban until he left South Africa and the priesthood in 1977. He was reunited with Kearney in 2009 when he came to Ottawa to do research for the Hurley biography at the Oblate university there. Campbell describes Kearney as showing great compassion towards priests and religious, particularly with regard to the indignity of laicisation (which Campbell had experienced) though Kearney never spoke about why he himself had left the Marists. In particular, Campbell recalls Kearney expressing great anxiety for Stephen Tully who was experiencing some problems: "Paddy was very delicate but concerned."¹³⁰⁸

The insights of co-workers from outside Catholic circles are also useful since other denominations have a different attitude towards clergy. Former Methodist Bishop Norman Hudson commented:

At Diakonia Paddy was always hugely respected even if he was the only non-priest in the room because he was usually the prime mover. Of course, Protestants were more accepting of lay leadership anyway. I did notice that Paddy was very good at stepping back and letting the Church leaders speak – perhaps that was his Catholicism talking! But also helped that he had a certain gentleness while still being a strong leader.¹³⁰⁹

¹³⁰⁵ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (Secretary to +Hurley and Secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

¹³⁰⁶ Smith, Tim. Personal interview by author, 2 September 2021 via Zoom (former Jesuit Regional Superior)

¹³⁰⁷ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³⁰⁸ Campbell, Alex. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 via Zoom (former Oblate priest)

¹³⁰⁹ Hudson, Norman and Estelle. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Pinetown (Methodist Bishop and wife)

Warmback, an Anglican priest who also worked at Diakonia, points out that Diakonia made use of protection and patronage from Church leaders to give respectability to the organisation.

So there was an in-built clericalism because 'Church leaders' always meant the top of each tree which means the bishops and moderators. Of course, occasionally, there were a few women for example from the Quakers or the Mennonites.¹³¹⁰

Di Oliver, an Anglican lay woman, admits that she was daunted by the clerics.

Was Paddy? Not at all. He was just seen to be the mover and shaker just like Peter Kerchhoff [the Anglican non-priest who ran PACSA]. In fact, the clergy loved having them around; they knew how to help them [the Church leaders] to be what they needed to be.¹³¹¹

It seems that a large part of Kearney's success with clergy is that he made them look good while he usually took the back seat. Kearney would often draft statements, negotiate with the Church leaders until they could all agree and then all sign it. (It was only in exceptional circumstances that Kearney signed the letter on behalf of the Church leaders as happened for example in an open letter sent to Minister Adrian Vlok in 1989.)¹³¹²

While Kearney always treated priests with appropriate respect, he did not feel the need to defer to a priest just because he was a priest. The author recalls a conflict between the Denis Hurley Centre Trust and Refugee Pastoral Care (a project of the Archdiocese of Durban based in the Denis Hurley Centre building). A new priest had been posted by his religious order to oversee the project. For whatever reason – because he was Nigerian, because he was a Spiritan or because of his personality – he seemed to expect that Kearney *as a lay person* would defer to him *as the priest* (and assumed that this was the natural order of things). The conflict came to a head when Cardinal Napier was asked to intervene and it was clear to the author (who was present in the meeting) that Fr Vitalis expected the Cardinal to side with him because he was a priest, and against Kearney and the author who were lay people.

With all the modesty and gentleness for which he was famous, but also the fearlessness and tenacity for which he was also famous, Kearney held his ground in the discussion. One of the issues was that Fr Vitalis was affronted that an Anglican priest had been asked to lead a prayer at the Denis Hurley Centre when there were Catholic priests in the room – the implication being that an Anglican priest would only be 'second best'. Kearney explained the tradition of ecumenism and collaboration of +Hurley; Fr Vitalis looked with horror to the Cardinal for support and the Cardinal replied: "Fr Vitalis that is how we do things here in the Archdiocese of Durban."

And then at the end of the meeting, when it was time for a closing prayer, the Cardinal made a point of asking Prof Geoff Harris – not only not a priest and not a Catholic, but a Quaker – to lead the prayer. Kearney simply smiled, though he confessed to the author afterwards that he was pleased that Fr Vitalis had 'not been allowed to play the clerical card'.¹³¹³

The appearance of Kearney as perfectly composed and confident, as the single lay person in a room surrounded by archbishops, bishops and moderators might have been true on the surface. We have at least one record from Kearney's own journal which shows that sometimes, below the surface, he

¹³¹⁰ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 Oct 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest and co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³¹¹ Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³¹² SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002). "Letter from Kearney" (*The Southern Cross*, 28 May 1989)

¹³¹³ Recollection of the author, Meeting held in Durban, September 2017

could be intimidated. The extract comes from an encounter between Kearney and +Francis George whom he is interviewing in Chicago for research for the +Hurley biography.¹³¹⁴ It is interesting because it shows that, even if intimidated, Kearney is not afraid to judge the truthfulness of a Cardinal; and it gives an insight into something that Kearney probably saw frequently: the rather un-Christian rivalry between different Church leaders.

I was anxious about how the George interview would go, whether I would be totally overawed and intimidated, or whether he would be angry about some of my questions and hector me about sources of information. And it was quite intimidating to arrive there 30 minutes before the interview and have time to take in the impressive corporate surroundings right in downtown Chicago. ...

What surprised me is that he didn't balk at any questions, though his nostrils flared for one of the more threatening questions. My overall impression was that he was either lying in some of his responses or his memory was not very good. ...

The sting was at the end, just as he was escorting me to the door and stopped for a moment to tell me something I was not to report, namely that when he had suggested Hurley to the Superior General at a General Chapter it was [Fr Albert] Danker [from South Africa] who had strongly urged him not to do so because Hurley was too domineering and no Oblate Provincials of the Natal Province had been able to get on with him. He really enjoyed telling me that story which put DH in a bad light but through the words of Danker rather than his own.

I was sorry that I didn't ask him who had prompted John Paul II to praise Hurley so strongly in the Oblate General Chapter (in the early 80s when Hurley was SACBC President). Was it George himself?¹³¹⁵

This rather unedifying story suggests that members of the ministerial priesthood are not always working together to build up the Church, let alone working with the members of the common priesthood of the people. And yet that is exactly what Vatican II enjoins the Church to do:

Bishops, pastors of parishes, and other priests of both branches of the clergy should keep in mind that the right and duty to exercise this apostolate is common to all the faithful, both clergy and laity, and that the laity also have their own roles in building up the Church. For this reason, they should work fraternally with the laity in and for the Church and take special care of the lay persons in these apostolic works.¹³¹⁶

One area where Kearney was willing to challenge the Church in a more public way was the failure of bishops and priests to listen to the laity; this seems to have become a more pressing concern of Kearney's in later years. One of the reasons for this was the emergence of an organisation of lay Catholics called 'We Are All Church South Africa' (or WAACSA). Founded in 2010, this was originally inspired by a US organisation 'We Are Church' although in 2019 WAACSA disaffiliated from IMWAC (the International Movement).¹³¹⁷

¹³¹⁴ +George was also an Oblate, though 22 years +Hurley's junior, and as one of the few Oblate Cardinals at the time would have been an important figure for Kearney to get on side.

¹³¹⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 "Morning Pages: May-July 2005" (21 June 2005, Chicago)

¹³¹⁶ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 25

¹³¹⁷ 'History', *We Are All Church* website. <https://www.weareallchurch.co.za/history/> (accessed 5 September 2022)

WAACSA encouraged lay people (and religious and clergy) to come together to discuss various controversial Church subjects, to the annoyance of some members of the hierarchy. There was not a branch in Durban, but there is some hint in Kearney's archive that he was asked to establish one but declined.¹³¹⁸ Kearney did attend meetings of the WAACSA branch in Johannesburg (which was convened by his friend Doug Irvine); Di Oliver also recalls Kearney making a point of going to WAACSA events when visiting Cape Town. "I would get a knowing look from Paddy on some of these issues. But I am not sure that he ever spoke out publicly."¹³¹⁹ Mary Gardner recalls her husband Colin (who died in 2013) being a member of WAACSA but that Kearney was not.¹³²⁰

In an address Kearney gave to the Annual Conference of the Catholic Theological Society of Southern Africa (CTSSA) in September 2012, under the title 'Denis Hurley OMI: keeping alive the dream of Vatican II', he refers to WAACSA:

A more difficult path lies ahead for WAACSA (We are all Church: South Africa) which is more directly challenging in its stance, pushing the boundaries. We can only hope that they will be successful in their dialogue with the bishops—about a number of issues which are currently taboo.¹³²¹

Then, a few months before his death in 2018, Kearney again mentions the organisation. This is in a major article in *Worldwide*, the Comboni magazine, for an edition celebrating 200 years of the Church in South Africa. Entitled "Looking into the Future" it gives an insight into Kearney's concerns for the Church at this point in his life.¹³²² He starts talking about the value of a non-racist culture and also returns to the question of women being treated as second-class citizens in the Church and the value of consulting the faithful. He ends on 'the neuralgic issue called WAACSA' calling them 'intelligent people and adult Catholics who are sincerely grappling with their faith'. He ends by quoting Hurley's motto 'Where the Spirit is there is Freedom' and also the John Henry Newman principle of *sensus fidelium*. "Surely this is the sort of Church we will need as we enter the third century of Catholic involvement in South Africa."

It is a mark of Kearney's concern about the status of the organisation that he, very uncharacteristically, made a public challenge to a cleric on the subject of WAACSA. This was in fact only two weeks before his death (in November 2018) when fellow-activist and friend, Fr Peter-John Pearson, came to Durban to give the annual Justice & Peace lecture in honour of +Hurley. Since Pearson was also at the time Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Cape Town, in the Q&A after the lecture, Kearney challenged him to defend the Archbishop of Cape Town's repeated refusal to allow WAACSA to meet on property owned by the Archdiocese. The response, as Kearney expected, was a fudge, suspecting that Pearson was also uncomfortable with the decision but could not say so in public. What was unusual was that Kearney was using this subject to draw a firm line between himself and a close friend; and that this move would force clergy on one side of the line but allow laity to stay on the other.¹³²³

Despite 60 years of trying to erase or soften or at least redraw this dividing line, there is one way in which it remains part of Catholic culture and that is the use of titles. Every person on the clergy side

¹³¹⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/A/7 "Church Issues"

¹³¹⁹ Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³²⁰ Mary Gardner, Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Pietermaritzburg (Widow of Chair of Christian Institute)

¹³²¹ Kearney, *Faith in Action*, 190 ("Denis Hurley OMI: keeping alive the dream of Vatican II", Address to CTSSA, 10 September 2012)

¹³²² Kearney, G Paddy. "Looking into the Future". *Worldwide* (2018, 28:5)

¹³²³ Personal memory of the author who attended the meeting: Holy Trinity Church, Durban on 10 November 2018.

of the line – whether or not it includes vowed religious – is defined by the use of a title before their name: Bishop, Fr, Br, Sr and many more besides.

From the time of the Reformation, there has been a movement against the most widespread of these titles ‘Father’ citing Jesus’ injunction in Mt 23:9. Ending the use of the more elevated titles is being called for by Hélder Câmara, the icon of Liberation Theology in Brazil, as early as 1971:

Let us take the initiative in abolishing our personal titles of Eminence, Beatitude, Excellency; let us reject the folly of considering ourselves nobles, and renounce our coats of arms and our devices as these seem to be things of no importance. How much all this separates us from our clergy and from our faithful! It separates us from our century which is already adopting a different way of life. It separates us above all from the workers and the poor.¹³²⁴

Câmara’s bold proposal never seems to have found much support. But at least some of the more submissive ways in which Catholics acted towards their bishops soon went out of fashion. Stacpoole shares a jokey story that the first thought of the English bishops meeting in 1966 to discuss the implementation of the Council was how to persuade the laity not to kiss their episcopal rings.¹³²⁵

It is interesting then that Kearney, according to Vorster (who after all is a Methodist), was ‘very respectful of clergy always using their titles which endeared him to them’.¹³²⁶ He particularly recalls that Kearney always addressed +Hurley as ‘Your Grace’.¹³²⁷ This was confirmed by many others including +Hurley’s secretary.¹³²⁸ Goemans also confirms this and saw it as a direct contradiction of their own custom: “That was interesting because we at the Grail had decided not to use the term.”¹³²⁹ When talking about +Hurley, Tully recalls that Kearney would be less formal and refer to ‘the Arch’. He would also call Tully ‘Stephen’ and not ‘Fr Stephen’ in private, though reverting to the title when in public.¹³³⁰

The one area of movement that we do find is recounted by the former Anglican bishop: “Eventually, after first finding it impossible, Paddy moved from calling me ‘Bishop Michael’ to ‘Michael’, which pleased me.”¹³³¹

In summary, in Kearney’s engagements with clergy – Catholic and non-Catholic – he remains almost always publicly respectful: using titles, acknowledging precedence, not challenging people in a way that might embarrass them. This certainly helped him to build and maintain good working relationships with the many clergy on whom his work depended. It also seems to have prevented him from being as forthright as he might have liked to be in publicly backing various causes. Was this evidence of a lack of confidence on his part of his status as a lay person, enjoying the priesthood of all the faithful?

¹³²⁴ Câmara, Hélder. *Race against Time* (translated from French) (London: Sheed & Ward, 1971) 62

¹³²⁵ Stacpoole, Alberic. *Vatican II Revisited: by those who were there* (London: G Chapman, 1986) 2

¹³²⁶ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia and Methodist Bishop)

¹³²⁷ This follows the English custom that regards an archbishop as being on a par with a duke in terms of nobility.

¹³²⁸ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (Secretary to +Hurley and Secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

¹³²⁹ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹³³⁰ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³³¹ Nuttall, Michael. Personal interview by author, 23 September 2020 in Howick (Emeritus Bishop of Natal)

Perhaps we need to turn to someone completely outside the Church networks, Richard Steele, to have a more objective view of Kearney's relationship with the Church and with the clergy:

Paddy was effectively captured by the system and conditioned in a way that he could not undo. Even if intellectually and intrinsically he would have perceived the contradictions, Paddy was always within the institution, he was always within the framework of Catholicism. So he pushed at the obvious doors: he was not afraid to challenge the Church on injustice and race; but he did not challenge on other issues. ... I think this was also linked to his symbiotic relationship with Hurley. This gave him a sense of purpose and so he reserved use of the +Hurley name to serve a real need.¹³³²

Working with clergy on Social Justice

In Chapter 2 and Appendix B, I explore the role for the laity set out by Vatican II and the focus of their apostolate being 'the temporal sphere'. But the same Council documents also allow for the clergy to operate in this sphere and for lay people to operate in the ecclesial sphere. That resulted in lay people often doing what priests and religious used to do; and priests and religious doing what lay people used to do. As part of the earlier cited collection of papers about lay people in the Church in the United States in the 1980s, O'Brien Steinfelds explains that this situation is especially created in the area of social justice:

The crisis of meaning and the turning inward have perhaps been more personally difficult and disorienting for religious and clergy. As a result, thousands have abandoned their religious vocation and, not infrequently, left the Church as well. For others, attention to peace and justice, urban renewal or community organising has offered a respite from the tensions of intra-Church problems.¹³³³

Following a similar train of thought, Barta points out that the irony is that clericalism returns, but from an unlikely direction:

These [activist] priests and religious have sought to impose their own agendas for the world upon the laity. Indeed if, in the past, the Church had suffered from a tendency to clericalisation on the right, it may now face the threat of a revived clericalism – on the left.¹³³⁴

It would be one of the great ironies of history if the era of Vatican II which opened the windows of the Church to the world were to close with a Church turned in on herself.¹³³⁵

Barta and O'Brien Steinfelds were writing from an American perspective, and forty years ago when there was a sufficient superfluity of priests that they could get involved in secular matters. These days, with each priest running multiple parishes, and most religious aged 70 plus, it is unlikely that that would happen. But the attitude that it betrays is one that is still potentially a risk.

¹³³² Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

¹³³³ O'Brien Steinfelds, Margaret. "Postscript – what is to be done?". *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 132

¹³³⁴ Barta, *Challenge to the Laity*, 22

¹³³⁵ Barta, *Challenge to the Laity*, 25

When at Diakonia, Kearney found himself as a lay man running an organisation whose board was, predominately, made up of ordained ministers. Inevitably, the ones who most wanted to represent their denominations and serve on the board were likely to be just those activist priests (and pastors) most tempted 'to impose their own agendas for the world upon the laity'. Moreover, first among those would have been +Hurley, the Chair of Diakonia and Kearney's patron. The deftness with which Kearney handled this is one of the marks of success of Diakonia.

Various co-workers commented on Kearney's ability to navigate between the competing agendas of the board members, while also staying focused on what he believed to be the right path for the organisation. At the same time, those activist priests and pastors who joined the staff of Diakonia – and there were several over the years including one retired archbishop – learnt under Kearney's gentle but firm guidance that this was not a place in which clericalism was tolerated. For Kearney, what mattered most were the compassion in your heart and the brains in your head, not what collar you wore around your neck.

There were in the Catholic world a number of priests who were very involved in anti-Apartheid activism (and there was earlier mention of Fr Smangalis Mkhathshwa who later held senior political office in the post-1994 Government while remaining a priest). But Egan points out that a good number also felt that, in the 1960s, they had to leave the clergy in order to work for justice. Notable examples are Fr Colin Collins, who had been Secretary General of the SACBC in the late 50s/60s and the national chaplain of National Catholic Federation of Students but who left the priesthood in 1969; and a Franciscan priest who worked very closely with +Hurley, Fr Cosmas Desmond.¹³³⁶

Kearney knew that he needed priests and bishops speaking for Diakonia – to give authority not just within the Church but also within wider South African society – and that he could work well with them. Mike Vorster, a Methodist minister, later a bishop, who worked closely with Kearney at Diakonia reflected on Kearney's way of working.

Whereas PACSA [in Pietermaritzburg] was more of a group of church activists, Diakonia was working with the churches, changing the churches, always on behalf of the churches. ... Paddy knew who were the movers and shakers, they were not necessarily the leaders. But he also knew you had to have legitimate church leaders who can engage in public spaces. There needed to be consistency for the public face of the church. He used the Patrons [listing the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian leaders] as an umbrella for Diakonia but Paddy did all the leg work.¹³³⁷

This public political role for religious leaders came under pressures from two very different directions.

On the one hand, the Nationalist Government proposed legislation in 1988 called 'The Promotion of Orderly Internal Politics Bill'. A long letter, signed by +Hurley, the other Catholic archbishops and a few other bishops appeared entitled 'Bishops speaking for Justice is not meddling in Politics'. It voices opposition to the legislation, which it sees as allowing the government 'to decide arbitrarily which good works should be done in this country'. Kearney was conscious that this was legislation that would have affected Diakonia.¹³³⁸

¹³³⁶ Egan, Anthony. Personal interview by author, 16 October 2020 via Zoom (Jesuit priest and theologian)

¹³³⁷ Vorster, Mike. Personal interview by author, 16 March 2021 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia and Methodist Bishop)

¹³³⁸ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002). "'Bishops speaking for Justice is not meddling in Politics'" (*The Southern Cross*, 27 March 1988)

On the other hand, Catholic clergy were under pressure from the Vatican, under John Paul II who was very wary of 'political priests'. Kearney's archive contains an article (in a secular paper) which describes how +Hurley at the bishops' plenary asked the Apostolic Delegate to clarify the Pope's stance on political activity.¹³³⁹ This is followed by the vindication of +Hurley on the front page of the Catholic newspaper: "No Papal ban on bishops in politics says Hurley!"¹³⁴⁰

When +Hurley celebrated his 50 years as a priest, there is a long interview with him in which he comments on the label 'political priest'. He explains that he has never sought political office but there are other ways of being political such as participating in the promotion of a Christian social conscience in matters economic and cultural. He stresses: "This is essential to any priest."¹³⁴¹ For more on this see Appendix D: "+Hurley the political priest".

Whereas in some situations the involvement of priests and bishops 'in the temporal order' has stifled the scope of lay people, Kearney's experience was very different and much of the credit for that must lie with the personality of +Hurley. Let me quote again the question asked by Barta, the answer to which could have specifically been +Hurley:

Where are the priests sufficiently self-assured in their own identity and faith that they can devote themselves to energising lay leaders committed to reforming the structures of society?¹³⁴²

Goldie shows that such fears were being voiced even at the time of the Council, quoting from a 1964 book by a French layman Michel Carrouges *Le Laïcat: mythe et réalité* ("The laity: myth and reality"):

The laity are glorified in the theological stratosphere and raised to the dignity of a myth, as a new panacea, while an old clerical instinct is just as surely blocking the path of a new laity. The clergy are torn between contradictory desires. They would like to have 'adult lay people', capable of unreserved dedication; but at the same time they dread such laypeople, for they would have to discuss with them adult to adult.¹³⁴³

There is an echo here of the complaint voiced by +Hurley over dinner with Robert Blair Kaiser about what happens when adult lay people actually voice their opinions.

Diakonia – because it was overseen by a Council whose members were, or were appointed by, Church leaders – had an in-built tendency to clerical governance. Interestingly, when Kearney created the Denis Hurley Centre many years later, only one priest is guaranteed a role as a Board Member out of 12 (even if others have been selected on their merits); and there are no clergy at all among the management team.¹³⁴⁴ One of that team saw this as a particular strategy by Kearney:

He was very uncomfortable with priests being in charge; Paddy wanted lay people to take a role.¹³⁴⁵

¹³³⁹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*Daily News*, 23 January 87)

¹³⁴⁰ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/3 (1981-1987) (*The Southern Cross*, 15 February 1987)

¹³⁴¹ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/4 (1988-2002) (*The Southern Cross*, 23 July 89)

¹³⁴² Barta, *Challenge to the Laity*, 20

¹³⁴³ Goldie, Rosemary. "Lay, Laity, Laicity: a bibliographical survey of three decades". *Elements for a Theology of the Laity. The Laity Today – bulletin of the Pontifical Council for the Laity* (1979, 26) 128

¹³⁴⁴ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/1 "2009"

¹³⁴⁵ Ntamubano, Jean-Marie. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2022 in Durban (Manager of Denis Hurley Centre)

This sometimes led to tensions between the lay-led Denis Hurley Centre and the cleric-led Cathedral parish from which it had emerged. Kearney's notes from a meeting in October 2010 include this comment:

Several concerns were expressed at the most recent meeting of the PPC [Parish Pastoral Council]: that the Denis Hurley Centre is becoming too separate from the parish, that its fundraising activities are not really engaging with the isiZulu speakers; that the DHC brand is overwhelming the cathedral brand; as well as some feedback from the priest that the DHC seems to have taken over the Cathedral.¹³⁴⁶

In fact, the priest from the Cathedral who helped Kearney set up the Denis Hurley Centre would often comment (referring to this author) on how wonderful it was that a *lay person* was running the organisation. Whilst intending to be affirming of the laity, the comment is highly problematic as if a) this was unusual, b) it was only by special dispensation of the Church and c) that the clerical/lay status of the individual was even a relevant criterion as opposed to their professional skills. Kearney would simply smile at the author when this comment was made as if to say: 'even the most enlightened priest still cannot resist being clerical!'¹³⁴⁷

The exploration above about Kearney's relationship with the clergy is based on the pragmatic recognition that he was working with people with clerical titles and clerical status. This takes for granted that the clergy/ lay distinction is one that is operative (though leaving to one side whether it is valid or useful). Appendix B (on the Apostolate of the Laity) explores this question in some detail pointing out some of the ambiguities and inconsistencies both in the Council documents and in the later practice of the Church. But those categories remain stubbornly to the fore in Catholic circles. So, to understand Kearney's relationship with the Church we should try and look at it through the clergy/lay paradigm.

Kearney as an ex-cleric

I want to start by looking at Kearney as an 'ex-cleric'. As explained in Chapter 2, even though he was never ordained (or planning to be ordained), Kearney's experience with the Marist Brothers functionally separated him from the laity for 10 years of his life.¹³⁴⁸ Though 'ex-cleric' might seem an odd category to some outside the Catholic world, inside it is not uncommon.¹³⁴⁹

¹³⁴⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/1 "2010"

¹³⁴⁷ Author's own recollection from around mid 2015.

¹³⁴⁸ Appendix B from P. 366 explores in more detail the question of the categories of 'lay' and 'cleric'. It explains that while there is a distinction *de jure* (which places religious brothers on the lay side of the divide), there is also a *de facto* distinction (which places brothers on the clerical side of the divide because their way of life). Examples are given of the way in which Vatican II documents themselves are inconsistent about this.

¹³⁴⁹ It is in fact a category in which I often find myself placed, having spent six years as a Jesuit (though not a priest) and then having worked very publicly for the Jesuits as a lay man. It seemed that for other people (Jesuits and lay people) to understand me, they had to see me as somewhere between a Jesuit and a lay person. Moreover, this was not uncommon among former Jesuits. We would sometimes joke that after we stopped putting SJ after our names we should replace it with XJ! In fact, when I worked for the UK Catholic development charity CAFOD, my boss was a former priest and my team included several other former priests, seminarians, monks and nuns. We were lay people – but an unusual group of lay people!

After the Marists, Kearney was working a lay person with a broad variety of people: some lay, some religious, many of them clergy (from a range of denominations and faith traditions). Did it matter to him or to them that he had once not been a lay person?

On the one hand, many of them did not realise that he had ever been in religious life. Joan Kerchhoff, whose late husband Peter was a very close collaborator of Kearney, does not recall being aware that Kearney had been a Marist brother.¹³⁵⁰ Vanessa Franks, who was his secretary at Diakonia for a number of years, simply asked: “Didn’t he study some theology?” She recalls that when, as often happened, people called him Fr Kearney, he would just laugh (but clearly never explained to her the source of the confusion.¹³⁵¹ +Hurley’s successor as Archbishop of Durban says that it was from other people that he found out that Kearney had been a Marist.¹³⁵² Kearney’s successor as Director of Diakonia says that she was conscious that Kearney was a lay person and that he earned a lot of respect from religious leaders because of this and that he did not worry much about it. But, she added, he never talked about having been a Marist.¹³⁵³ A senior cleric in Cape Town who knew Kearney for many years admitted that for a long time he did not even know that Kearney had been a religious.¹³⁵⁴

Colleen Irvine also said that Kearney never talked about having been a Marist (even though he regularly had dinner with the Irvines and Br Mario Colussi). She thought it noteworthy that, despite knowing him for many decades, Kearney had never talked about his faith with her or even what he thought of as his place in the world. This was especially interesting since she was aware that there were a number of former-religious, including ex-Marists, like Tim Dunne, Mike Murphy and John Morrison whom she and Doug knew and who were all involved in the Justice & Peace movement.

The only person close to Kearney who had any recollection of him talking about his life as a religious was Fr Stephen Tully with whom he worked to found the Denis Hurley Centre: “Paddy shared a few stories about the Marists; it was clear that he enjoyed his time there.”¹³⁵⁵

Nevertheless, many were confused about what Kearney’s status was. In fact, on his death, two major news channels instinctively referred to him as ‘Father Paddy Kearney’.¹³⁵⁶ Even someone very close to him, but by her own admission not involved in Church matters, seemed confused about what claim Kearney could make on the Church. De la Croix, who was a close companion in Kearney’s final years, assumed that when he grew old ‘the church would keep an eye on him’ or he would ‘retire to somewhere like Sabon House’ [the retirement home for Oblates, where +Hurley had spent his final years].¹³⁵⁷

¹³⁵⁰ Kerchhoff, Joan. Personal interview by author, 6 April 2022 in Pietermaritzburg (widow of head of PACSA)

¹³⁵¹ Franks, Vanessa. Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Durban. (Secretary of Kearney at Diakonia)

¹³⁵² Napier, Wilfrid. Personal interview by author, 28 September 2020 in Durban. (Cardinal Archbishop of Durban)

¹³⁵³ Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu. Personal interview by author, 26 May 2022 in Durban. (Kearney’s successor as Director of Diakonia and sometime Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³⁵⁴ Pearson, Peter-John. Personal interview by author, 12 April 2021 in Cape Town. (Head of Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office)

¹³⁵⁵ Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban. (Catholic priest and co-founder of the Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³⁵⁶ “Anti-Apartheid icon Father Gerald Patrick Kearney has died” *News 24*, 23 November 2018.

<https://www.news24.com/News24/anti-apartheid-icon-father-gerald-patrick-kearney-has-died-20181123> (accessed 20 August 2022); “Anti-Apartheid activist Father Paddy Kearney remembered” *SABC TV News*, 30 November 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sbw-iJnr1M> (accessed 20 August 2022)

¹³⁵⁷ De la Croix, Berenice. Personal interview by author, 30 September and 9 October 2020 in Durban (Personal friend)

For some people, Kearney's identity is not clear-cut and that is an advantage. His Belgian donor and friend, Briard, said of him:

His identity as a lay person is interesting. Of course, he was a lay person but in his own approach he continued to draw on his previous religious formation. He was between the two states. In his commitment as an activist, he was very much in the world; for Europeans it was surprising to see someone from a religious background in a secular role.¹³⁵⁸

Anglican priest and co-worker, Warmback, also hints at this undefined middle space:

Paddy never spoke about his past. People knew he had been a Marist but he did not mention it. He also never mentioned being on the Cathedral PPC. And he never asserted being a lay person. He occupied a kind of liminal space in which he respected the clergy and made use of them. But he was not bought into the machinery of the Church which can be self-serving and self-protecting and consuming of people.¹³⁵⁹

A Muslim couple who knew Kearney over many years also hint at this mixed identity:

Now I think of him as a priest – but he was just one of us.¹³⁶⁰

And even more intriguingly, Priscilla McKay who knew the whole Kearney family well, recalls that his younger brother Brian at one of the memorials said to her 'The Church stole our brother': a reference presumably not just to his time as a Marist but his whole life.¹³⁶¹

As has been mentioned earlier, Kearney was by no means alone in being someone in the early 1970s who had left religious life. Colin Collins and Cosmas Desmond both left, complaining that the Church was taking too long to change. A footnote in the book of +Hurley's letters comments:

When he left the priesthood, DH wrote the following to an Australian correspondent by the name of B. Peters on 23 January 1973 : "Father Cosmas did not receive all the support he should have from his own Church because in carrying out the task to which he felt he was called, he stepped somewhat outside the groove of the ordinary clerical approach to such questions. However, he did a wonderful job in exposing the tragic conditions of those condemned to resettlement and in giving Christian witness to his own zeal for justice and compassion."¹³⁶²

Many of those who left, like Kearney, not only stayed involved in the work of the Church but also stayed close to the spiritual traditions that had nurtured them. Writing in his 'Morning Pages' (his daily private journal) in June 2005, while staying at the seminary outside Milwaukee, Kearney confides:

¹³⁵⁸ Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author, 17 January 2022 via Zoom (Manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

¹³⁵⁹ Warmback, Andrew. Personal interview by author, 21 Oct 2020 in Durban (Anglican priest and co-worker at Diakonia)

¹³⁶⁰ Coovadia, Jerry and Hamad, Zubie. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 in Durban (Struggle activists and husband and wife doctors)

¹³⁶¹ McKay, Priscilla. Personal interview by author, 18 September 2020 in Durban (Fellow Catholic activist)

¹³⁶² Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 255-6 (Footnote)

I was pleased to be there and moved by several of the songs. Felt so much at home in this religious atmosphere. It seemed to me at this moment that I could easily fit into such a community and that was a very moving feeling for me.

Mention was made earlier of the fact that, on his death, some of the media referred to Kearney as 'Fr Paddy'. Similarly, in his own archive there is a letter from September 2012 in which the Irish ambassador confirms R0.5M towards the construction of the Denis Hurley Centre and addresses this to Fr Paddy Kearney.¹³⁶³ Kearney's mentee, Nyuswa, was aware of these confusions and often experienced the same since he was also a lay man working closely with a number of clergy:

If called a priest, Paddy would react with a smile and would not deny it. If that was the impression that people had, it was not worth arguing. If that was easier for them then that was OK rather than trying to explain that he was an ordinary man.¹³⁶⁴

But this misconception was not without its foundations. One of his closest friends, Goemans, who unlike other Grail members only knew him after he left the Marists, commented at length:

Basically he had a vocation. If the Marists had been more forthright, he would have stayed. His later life indicated that he never gave up that commitment. He almost made me feel guilty when I took a day off – even after a full day in the sun on a Sunday.

My picture of Paddy is of someone very spiritual. More than once – while he was living with Carmel – I went to his house and saw a Breviary lying on the coffee table.¹³⁶⁵ There was a spiritual rhythm to his life. And in his final years, he loved reconnecting with Mario and Jude [Br Mario Colussi and Br Jude Pieterse, both Marists].¹³⁶⁶

McCrindle suggests that such personal links might have been hard. He explains that Marist records do not report who left; it has to be deduced from the absence of names that used to appear.

Marists found it difficult to relate to Marists who left. I think that ex-sisters were more likely to keep in touch than ex-brothers. For a long time, Paddy did not keep in touch with other Marist Brothers after he left¹³⁶⁷

Of course, Kearney was never ordained, so he does not fall under that definition of 'cleric'; but his vows did remove him from society and it is on that basis that he might be seen as an ex-cleric. This sense of Kearney being outside of society was felt by +Hurley's secretary who later did lots of work for him, transcribing the interviews he conducted for his +Hurley biography.

I remember when my husband got ill. Paddy had little understanding of what other pressures there were in my life. This was typical of the Church failure to understand ordinary people. It seems to me that people who work for the church must not be married

¹³⁶³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/2 "2012"

¹³⁶⁴ Nyuswa, Mxolisi. Personal interview by author, 5 May 2022 via Zoom (Head of KwaZulu Regional Christian Council)

¹³⁶⁵ The Breviary is a single volume book containing the Office of the Hours. Although this might occasionally be used by lay people (and indeed Vatican II encouraged it), this form of regular prayer is primarily associated with priests (who are required to say it) and religious (who are expected to).

¹³⁶⁶ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹³⁶⁷ McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Fellow Marist novice/ brother)

or even have a dog. Maybe Paddy fell into the trap that clergy fall into of not understanding that people have a real life.¹³⁶⁸

A confusion of status can happen when lay people like Kearney take up a role in the ecclesial sphere. (This is explored in more detail in Appendix B.) Marciniak sums up the problem as follows:

What bedevils our pastoral theology and existing practice is the mind-set that automatically expects a lay person who is deeply committed to Jesus Christ to become a para-cleric in the Church's civil service as a mini-priest or mini-sister.¹³⁶⁹

More vividly, Worlock quotes the Tablet's Rome correspondent as saying that the lay man had emerged from Vatican II as a 'kind of bowler-hatted monk'.¹³⁷⁰ Expressing a similar anxiety, he also quotes Pope John Paul II (addressing the Swiss bishops in 1984) who warns against the danger of 'the clericalisation of the laity and the laicisation of the clergy'.¹³⁷¹

Writing much earlier, Goldie explores this idea of the unusual position of lay people like Kearney who work for the Church (who may or may not have had some religious formation themselves). She mentions that a debate arose in the 1950s about full-time Catholic Actionists or Church-workers and whether they could be authentic laypeople or only 'clericalised' laity?¹³⁷² She attributes to Karl Rahner the claim that 'non-ordained members of the faithful who work full time in the apostolate, pass by that very fact into the ranks of the clergy.

Full-time leaders of Catholic Action and the staff of our works for Christian education and propaganda, while not sharing in the power of Order, would however share in the power of jurisdiction and would become clergy without a cassock. Lay people could therefore be apostles in the full sense, but on the condition that they gave up their lay status.¹³⁷³

Interestingly, this analysis is based on two problematic assumptions: that to be 'an apostle in the full sense' you could not be an authentic lay person; and that someone could give up their lay status without taking on another status. But, as was discussed earlier, there is no initiation rite to stop being lay; there are only rites to become ordained or vowed.

This passage seems to be pre-occupied with the idea of the status of the person rather than their actions. But in a later passage, Goldie also uses the model of seeing someone in terms of their actions rather than status. For example, she refers to the possibility that under certain circumstances, when the community is deprived of an ordained minister, a non-ordained leader of the community can act as an extraordinary minister of the sacrament of the Eucharist.¹³⁷⁴ 'Act as' suggests that the focus is on 'ministry' as a temporary characteristic in place while the service is being provided, not on 'minister' a permanent change in status.

Osborne provides an insight into this focus on ministry not minister.¹³⁷⁵ He makes the point that the origin of a cleric in the post-Apostolic age was someone called out from the community, not as a

¹³⁶⁸ Matthias, Julie. Personal interview by author, 20 November 2020 in Durban (Secretary to +Hurley and Secretary to Denis Hurley Centre Trust)

¹³⁶⁹ Marciniak, Ed. "On the Condition of the Laity". *Challenge to the Laity*. Russell Barta ed. (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1980) 34

¹³⁷⁰ Worlock, "Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II", 249

¹³⁷¹ Worlock, "Toil in the Lord: the Laity in Vatican II", 252

¹³⁷² Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 110

¹³⁷³ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 117

¹³⁷⁴ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 138 (Goldie was writing in 1979 by which time the idea of lay men *and* women in parishes being formally commissioned to be 'Lay Ministers of the Eucharist' was gaining in popularity.)

¹³⁷⁵ Appendix B from P. 370 explores in more detail whether the category of 'lay' is even a useful one.

permanent separation but rather a functional one during a liturgical celebration: the one who is leading is separated from those who are following: "The specific distinction originates on the basis of a pastoral situation and not on the basis of any formalised dogmatic stance."¹³⁷⁶

Kearney makes a comment in his 'Morning Pages' from 2005 which suggests a sympathy with this understanding of ministry, even in the context of the Eucharist:

Went to Mass with Mildred [Neville, formerly of CIIR] at the local parish church with Fr Willy. I noticed again how gently submissive he is, giving Communion from the cup, with two women giving the hosts; and after Communion it was a woman who put the ciboria away in the tabernacle and locked the tabernacle, generally a role reserved to the priestly caste or Deacons etc.¹³⁷⁷

Could Kearney be a priest without realising it?

But usually the term minister (or cleric or priest or deacon) is one which is conferred through a ceremony (a laying on of hands, or a commissioning, or ordination) presided over by a religious leader with the authority to do so. Recall that when Kerchhoff and Aitchison became Anglican deacons, their work in helping the poor exempted them from the formal training but not from the formal ceremony. There might, however, be a way of seeing Kearney as 'ordained' without the need for such a ceremony and it also comes from an ancient source. Rademacher has identified that in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus of Rome (from about 215 CE) there is evidence that ordination can be deemed to have come about by virtue of the experience of persecution.

If a confessor has been in chains for the name of the Lord, hands are not imposed on him for the diaconate or the presbyterate; for he has the honour of the presbyterate by the fact of his confession.¹³⁷⁸

During the time of the early Christians, a 'confessor' was a person who had been arrested, persecuted and, through all his trials, confessed his faith but was not killed. That would be a fair description of Kearney's own experience in the 1980s! Confessor was in fact the usual Latin translation for the Greek word martyr which also at its roots refers to giving witness but as it is used in English definitely does imply that the witnessing ends in death.

It is entertaining to consider the idea that Kearney (and others) might qualify for the status of being clerics without needing to be ordained. But this still assumes that there is a useful distinction to be drawn between the cleric and the non-cleric.¹³⁷⁹

Osborne again challenges this. He lists 15 titles for 'ministers' used in the New Testament and wonders how the term cleric might be applied. He suggests that there are three possible positions:

- 1) that all are 'clerics', in which case that means teachers as well as deacons
- 2) that none are 'clerics' in which case *episkopoi* (bishops) are not clerics either

¹³⁷⁶ Osborne, *Ministry*, 21

¹³⁷⁷ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/D/1 "Morning Pages: May-July 2005" (30 May 2005, London)

¹³⁷⁸ Rademacher, William. *Lay Ministry – a theological, spiritual and pastoral handbook* (New York NY: Crossroad, 1991) 53

¹³⁷⁹ See also Appendix B: Vatican II and the Laity.

- 3) that there is a selective process by which some ministers are clerics and some are not; but he points out that there is no criterion within the New Testament which would justify this

This problem occurs because, he reminds us: “In all of these New Testament passages, *kleros* is never used for either a minister or a ministry.”¹³⁸⁰

By taking us back to the New Testament, Osborne is drawing attention to the fact that the distinction between lay and cleric is not scriptural but rather one that emerges and hardens over time in the life of the Church. One of the key triggers is the issue of celibacy. This starts with the influence of Origen c.250 CE (and then Augustine c.400) in promoting celibacy. Origen argues that celibate Christians could give themselves more intensely to others and they would, already in this life, be moving toward an invisible angelic world and union with Christ.¹³⁸¹ If this language sounds archaic recall that this is what Kearney was being taught as a Marist novice in 1960 (and is also what I was taught as a Jesuit novice in 2001!).

The idea of celibacy as a characteristic of ministry then becomes further reinforced, Osborne shows, at 500 year intervals: through the growth of the monastic movements in the second half of the first millennium; the imposition of mandatory celibacy on priests in the West after the Great Schism; and the decision of Reformers to dispense with celibacy (thus prompting the Counter-Reformation to strengthen it further).

Celibacy, for Roman Catholics, thus becomes the traditional way of defining those who are called for ministry.¹³⁸² Vatican II tries (in part) to change this but has 1500 years of tradition to overcome – recall, for example, the grudging way in which *Lumen Gentium* conceded that permanent deacons *could* be married but clearly prefers that they are not. Osborne sets out the challenge clearly:

Religious life needed to be re-evaluated from top to bottom, and those who were hanging on to the ‘traditional’ and the ‘tried’ found themselves often hanging onto a form of religious life which had no contemporary meaning. The criterion should not have been what had always been traditional in a given community, but rather what is the very meaning of Gospel discipleship.¹³⁸³

Osborne argues further that one of the reasons why popes continued to see lay people in an inferior and secondary way was not just the bias towards celibacy but also the effect of the American and French revolutions. This period broke the previous understanding of the relationship between Church and State and, as a result, coloured the Church’s approach to the non-clerical world. It could be argued that the New Testament actually supported the radical view of equality that these Revolutions promoted. But this would not help since using loyalty to the New Testament as the primary criterion was seen as Protestant; and instead loyalty to the pope is what served as the fundamental criterion of discipleship:

¹³⁸⁰ Osborne, *Ministry*, 17

¹³⁸¹ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 63

¹³⁸² To the shock of many Catholics this is, of course, not the whole picture. Not only are Orthodox priests married, but so are Eastern Rite ‘Greek Catholic’ priests; in recent years there has also been the appearance of married priests, even in the West, because of the dispensation granted to Anglican clergy who have converted.

¹³⁸³ Osborne, *Ministry*, 514

The aspiration of the two revolutions, American and French, for the dignity, freedom and equality of all human beings did not find a welcoming home in the church leadership of the Roman Catholic Church.¹³⁸⁴

We can I think conclude that Kearney would have been very uncomfortable with being seen as an ex-cleric, a semi-cleric or a clericalised lay person. The very notion of cleric, as one who is separated from and elevated above the *laos* (the people of God) is one that he does little to support and much to challenge. Whilst it might have been an obsession of other people in the Church – lay people and clergy – it does not seem to be one that he shared.

Kearney as a lay person

If we accept the duality of clergy/lay, then the alternative is for Kearney to be seen as a lay person. After all, when asked why writing about Kearney would be worthwhile, a number of interviewees specifically drew attention to the fact that he was a lay person. For example:

He was a model lay person.¹³⁸⁵

He is a person worth remembering – because he was a lay person.¹³⁸⁶

Paddy was a lay man of the late 20th century; it is important to see what that meant.¹³⁸⁷

Church history has been as negligent as Vatican documents in failing to mention lay people (unless they are emperors or kings); their lives are almost never the focus of any research. Since Kearney was a lay person working in Church circles in the period after Vatican II, exploring his life through this lens might be valuable.

But there are various problems with this category – that it is unclear, that it is negative, that it should apply to everyone – and these have already been discussed in Appendix B and Chapter 2. Is there a positive way in which Kearney can be categorised as a lay person?

Osborne has a proposal. He points out that the traditional view (what he calls Gratian's view) divides the whole Church into either the cleric or the lay. But he then proposes an alternative *schema* which he calls the 'vocation view': this sees the whole Church as the 'people of God' and within that small segments which would include 'cleric', 'lay' and 'other vocations'. The implication is that 'lay' is not a leftover category but a specific vocation to which some, but not all, non-clerics are called. A lay vocation would thus be intentional and it might be one chosen by someone, like Kearney, who has previously had a vowed vocation, though not necessarily. This would tie in with the idea of specific vocations – to the married life, to youth. Osborne defines vocation as requiring both *communio* and *mission*.

¹³⁸⁴ Osborne, *Ministry*, 515

¹³⁸⁵ Criticos, Costas. Personal interview by author, 4 September 2021 via Zoom. (Building consultant to both Diakonia and Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³⁸⁶ Yeats, Charles. Personal interview by the author, 18 May 2022 via Zoom. (Conscientious Objector)

¹³⁸⁷ Campbell, Alex. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 via Zoom. (former Oblate priest)

Lay ministry, in this approach, is an ecclesial entity, with its own grace-given vocation, with its own role within a *communio* and with its own *missio*, which is ecclesial, even though it involves an extra-ecclesial ministry and mission as well.¹³⁸⁸

Such an approach does not dispense with the categories of ‘cleric’ or ‘lay’ but reimagines them in a more positive way. Interestingly, the main positive way in which Kearney’s vocation has been described by those who knew him was not as ‘cleric’ or ‘lay person’ but as ‘teacher’.¹³⁸⁹ In a profile of Kearney written for a Hindu website around 2010 and with his co-operation, it is interesting that mention is made that he taught at St David’s but there is no mention of the Marists.¹³⁹⁰ This prioritisation of ‘teacher’ over ‘Marist’ was confirmed by several interviewees:

Paddy did not want to be a priest. He wanted to be a teacher. I also loved teaching – I went to a Marist school and I also, for a while, wanted to be a Marist Brother. But I knew that it was a hard life. My mother said to me: if you want to give yourself to God, become a priest and that is what I did. But Paddy became a brother and teacher.¹³⁹¹

Why did I join the Marists? Because I was at a Marist school and I always wanted to teach. I compare myself with Paddy – he could have become an Oblate or a diocesan priest but he chose to be a brother. He was dogged. Is doggedness a trait of the Marists? I think so. It is also a trait of being a good teacher. Paddy was a good teacher. Remember that Champagnat [the founder of the Marists] only became a priest because of the French revolution. He was also a teacher at heart.¹³⁹²

Why did Kearney want to be a brother and not a priest? He did not talk about it. I think he liked teaching. The main teaching orders in South Africa were of brothers [Christian Brothers, Marist Brothers] and not of priests [Jesuits, Salesians]. He liked teaching, he liked the boys. He did not talk much about his faith. He just loved the Church.¹³⁹³

‘Teacher’ (as Osborne pointed out above) is one of the 15 ministries specifically mentioned in the New Testament. Of course, the majority of Catholic teachers these days are lay people, and when there were larger congregations of religious, it was sisters and brothers who were usually the teachers (and thus also canonically lay people). But as Ceruti mentioned above, there are also Catholic priests who are teachers. So how would they fit into this schema? Rademacher has a suggestion:

Clergy and laity need to be defined in terms of their ministry function not their place. For example, when a priest is teaching in a school is that a priestly ministry and if so why is the lay person teaching not involved in the same ministry? The ministry is the function of teaching.¹³⁹⁴

¹³⁸⁸ Osborne, *Ministry*, 599-600

¹³⁸⁹ Appendix F: ‘Tria Munera’ explores the office of teacher alongside the traditional threefold offices of priest, prophet and leader.

¹³⁹⁰ Pillay, Indhrannie. “Paddy Kearney – Icon of Peace and Nonviolence”. *Satyagraha – in Pursuit of Truth*. <https://www.satyagraha.org.za/word/paddy-kearney-icon-of-peace-and-nonviolence/> (accessed 3 May 2022)

¹³⁹¹ Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban (Catholic Monsignor, Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

¹³⁹² McCrindle, Tim. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Fellow Marist novice/ brother)

¹³⁹³ Ceruti, Ines. Personal interview by author, 8 April 2019 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹³⁹⁴ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 129

Had Kearney remained a teacher then we could settle on that as his ministry. But although he was always teaching, he performed a number of other functions as well. In fact, the scale of the planned Diakonia project is one that even surprised someone like Albert Nolan:

I had a great admiration for Paddy. The idea that he started Diakonia and succeeded. I didn't think that anyone could do that and particularly not a lay person. To be both a Christian and to work for Justice just sounded too ambitious!¹³⁹⁵

If Nolan was surprised that a lay person could achieve this, some of those who worked closely with Kearney felt that it was his lay status that helped make it possible.

He was conscious that he was lay and that it was important to remain lay; lay leadership was important to him. It meant that he was outside of clerical structures.¹³⁹⁶

I think he must have made a conscious decision to not be a member of the clergy.¹³⁹⁷

Because Paddy was a lay person, he did not come with the trappings of Catholicism. But I can't remember him discussing his lay status.¹³⁹⁸

A longer reflection comes from +Phillip. Though ordained (as priest and bishop), he is outside the Roman Catholic structures inhabited by Kearney and so can offer a wider perspective. Particularly noteworthy is his final comment, not one that one would expect a Catholic bishop to say about a lay person:

Paddy was not ordained. I suspect that something of a personal decision. It might even have been political – his commitment to the liberation enterprise was so deep. He was always a measured person. I didn't get the sense that he wanted to be anything else than a lay person. He accepted and I think even celebrated the fact that he was a lay person. I reflect on why I became a priest – to empower me and equip me to be salt in the world; I wanted to try and make a difference. For Kearney, being part of the Church was enough.

I have to admit that, being a priest, I feel somewhat restricted; I don't have the freedom to say and do things. But even if he had been ordained, Paddy need not have felt restricted because +Hurley was radical in so many ways; Kearney was a gentle radical – but always in a gentle pastoral way. He was close to being my confessor; I could bare my soul to him; he was a good listener.¹³⁹⁹

+Phillip within his Anglican jurisdiction promoted lay people; it was certainly something that Vatican II enjoined on the Catholic bishops.

¹³⁹⁵ Nolan, Albert. Personal interview by author, 18 Oct 2020 in Boksburg GP (Dominican priest and liberation theologian)

¹³⁹⁶ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹³⁹⁷ Argall, Jane. Personal interview by author, 8 October 2020 in Durban (Librarian at Diakonia and Co-editor of book of +Hurley's letters)

¹³⁹⁸ Graham, Paul. Personal interview by author, 13 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Methodist Youth Worker)

¹³⁹⁹ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

The hierarchy should promote the apostolate of the laity, provide it with spiritual principles and support, direct the conduct of this apostolate to the common good of the Church, and attend to the preservation of doctrine and order.¹⁴⁰⁰

It is, however, unfortunate that the specified end goal is not the salvation of the world or growth in holiness (which are, in other places, presented as the purpose of the Church) but rather ‘the preservation of doctrine and order’. It seems that again, in trying to say something positive and progressive, the Council Fathers are trapped by their own heritage and baggage.

There is something of the same feel when they try to provide a model for lay people. Recall that the defining characteristic of lay people (and the lay apostolate) is that they are *not* separated from the world. It is, thus, curious that the model given is of a lay woman who for 2,000 years (and in particular in the 110 years preceding Vatican II), successive popes have been trying to separate as much as possible from ordinary human beings:

The perfect example of this type of spiritual and apostolic life is the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles, who while leading the life common to all here on earth, one filled with family concerns and labours, was always intimately united with her Son and in an entirely unique way cooperated in the work of the Saviour.¹⁴⁰¹

When a Marist, Kearney’s formation would have included much devotion to Mary.¹⁴⁰² I doubt, however, that he would have seen her as the most useful exemplar of the lay apostolate.

Leaving aside the model of Mary, it is still tempting to see Kearney’s relationship with the Church through the lens of him being ‘a lay person’. This can be presented in a positive way as +Nuttall does:

He seemed to me to thrive as a lay person, having made the difficult decision to leave the Marist Brothers after a professed membership of some ten years. This act of courage and conviction made him, surely, a convinced layman, not a nominal one. His subsequent work in important lay roles (university lecturer, director of Diakonia, founder and director of the Denis Hurley Centre) demonstrated this truth.¹⁴⁰³

But I fear that this still does Kearney a dis-service: it assumes a dualism that he did not espouse, a clericalism that he negotiated but did not promote, and an ecclesiology that does not honour ‘the common matrix’ of all believers. For all of the attempts over the past 60 years to bring the laity out from under the shadow of the clergy, it still remains a leftover category; moreover, it is one that is defined by the very people who are not part of that category. We may have moved a little way from the 1891 reference that Goldie found (“For ‘Laity’, see ‘Clergy’”) but perhaps not that far.¹⁴⁰⁴

The fact that the question of the role of lay people is unresolved is for Joan Chittister not surprising since it is one of a wider set of unresolved issues, which she challenges the Church to face:

¹⁴⁰⁰ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 24

¹⁴⁰¹ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 4

¹⁴⁰² “Update February 2019”, *Denis Hurley Centre*, <http://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/hurley-centre-newsletters> (accessed 21 September 2022)

¹⁴⁰³ Nuttall, Michael. Email to the author, 8 October 2020

¹⁴⁰⁴ Goldie, “Lay, Laity, Laicity”, 123

The limiting definition of the seven sacraments, the restriction on lay participation in the church, the loss of the scriptural meaning of ministry, the clericalisation of the church, the effects of sexism on sacramentality, an inadequate understanding of the nature of the Christian call: are all stones across the door of the tomb that block the resurrection of the Church to the fullness of life.¹⁴⁰⁵

She is challenging here the hard line which exists in the Church between lay and non-lay, and suggests that this is in turn tied in with many other concepts. It is interesting to note that as a vowed religious woman (a Benedictine) she would be seen by many in the Church as being on the non-lay side of that line; but as a woman and one who has spoken publicly about the ordination of women, she would be seen by others (and especially ordained clergy) as being on the lay side of the line.

Kearney's view of the role of laity and clergy was strongly driven by Roman Catholic tradition. But his close collaboration with other Christian denominations would have exposed him to other models: ones in which there were married clergy, women clergy, un-ordained ministers, and indeed ecclesial models which are not founded on drawing hard lines between categories of disciples at all.

Rademacher makes a comparison, especially relevant given Kearney's commitment to ecumenism, between our failure to find a truly collaborative model ecumenically and our failure to find partnership in ministry within each denomination.

We might begin the process by following Paul who called all his fellow labourers *synergoi* 'energy sharers' 'ministry partners'. The director of religious education, the parish secretary and the SVDP workers could help the cause along by calling their pastors, their bishops and the neighbouring Protestant ministers 'Partners in the ministry of Christ'.¹⁴⁰⁶

Kearney as a disciple

I would therefore like to argue that we have a much simpler way of characterising Kearney and one towards which he would have instinctively warmed. It does not tie him to a canonical status of lay person; nor does it try to map a journey from lay to cleric to ex-cleric. Instead, it sees him throughout his whole life as a *synergos* 'an energy sharer', 'a ministry partner' or most simply 'a disciple'.

It has already been mentioned that the very categories of cleric and lay are not used in the New Testament Church and it seems the concepts were unknown to Christ and to the first disciples. In analysing how the category emerges in the early Church – and what it actually means – Faivre starts with a chapter amusingly called: "The wonderful time when there was neither Clergy nor Laity!". I should like to reimagine Kearney as living in 'that wonderful time'.¹⁴⁰⁷

In taking this approach, I am drawing on Osborne who suggests that there are three points of departure for the study of the role of the lay person in the Church: the first starts from the emergence of a group of people who are set apart; the second follows strictly the Roman Catholic

¹⁴⁰⁵ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, viii

¹⁴⁰⁶ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 187

¹⁴⁰⁷ Faivre, Alexandre. *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 1990) 3-14

Code of Canon law; and the third starts from the scriptural usage or rather non-usage of the terms 'clergy' and 'lay'.¹⁴⁰⁸

The first approach would overly stress Kearney's relationship with the Church as an ex-cleric; the second would put too much weight on the canonical category of 'lay person' with all the weaknesses that that involves. I prefer instead the third which, returning to the New Testament Church, places the focus on each of the Baptised equally, without concern about status or title.

Osborne in his 600+ pages about 'Lay Ministry' reaches this conclusion:

As Jesus once said: 'The one who sees me, sees God as well.' Discipleship of Jesus means: Anyone who see a credible disciple of Jesus sees Jesus as well, which can only mean that one begins to see in such an encounter the contours of a credible God.¹⁴⁰⁹

Without using these exact words, various people who knew Kearney well have described an encounter with him as an 'encounter with the contours of a credible God': Catholics like Hester Joseph or Sarah Kearney; other Christians like Paul Verryn and Frank Chikane; people of other faiths like Ela Gandhi and AV Mohamed.

Osborne points out that throughout the New Testament (in the Gospels, in Acts, in the Johannine writings, in the Pauline corpus, in the additional epistles) there is much instruction on how to be a disciple. By contrast, there is only a small amount of instruction on how to be a Christian leader and, even when leadership is referenced, there is no suggestion that discipleship for leaders is different from discipleship for followers.

The New Testament as such is much more a manual of discipleship for all Christians than a manual for discipleship written in an exclusive way for Christian leaders.

Discipleship, as found in the New Testament, is the point of departure for an investigation of the lay person in the Church, for only if Christian lay men and women exist in a community that fosters such discipleship do we even have an *ekklesia*. Without Jesus, of course, there is no Church; but without disciples of this same Jesus, we also have no Church.¹⁴¹⁰

This lens of 'disciple', working alongside other disciples, makes it easier to understand Kearney's role in various aspects of his life. Thus, when he is a teacher, he is not sometimes a vowed religious and later a lay man: he is a disciple who exercises his discipleship through teaching. When he is Director of Diakonia, he is not a lay person working for an archbishop (or the Deacon of Diakonia) but a disciple called to a ministry of challenging injustice. When he is Chair of the Gandhi Development Trust, he is not a Christian working with Hindus, he is a disciple who exercises his discipleship through good administration with people of other faiths. And when he sets up the Denis Hurley Centre, he is not an ex-Marist working with a priest and an ex-Jesuit, but one of a group of disciples called to provide discipleship to assist the poor.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Osborne, *Ministry*, 8-10

¹⁴⁰⁹ Osborne, *Ministry*, 609

¹⁴¹⁰ Osborne, *Ministry*, 109-110

Osborne argues: “All Christians are equal at this foundational and most sacred level of discipleship.” He further points out that equality and commonality is not just about ordination but also gender and ethnicity.¹⁴¹¹

Briard also saw equality of discipleship as something that for Kearney would bring down all barriers: “No Apartheid in the Church – no separation between bishops and priests; between clergy and lay. Paddy was a concretisation of this thinking.”¹⁴¹²

There is an interesting example of this from the early days of Diakonia, in Kearney’s files: a report of a meeting when he was invited to address the SACBC plenary in Pretoria. As well as a host of bishops, also attending are a number of people who are not bishops – some priests, some lay people; some men, some women; some white, some black. All are there as disciples and the statement that they make (demanding citizenship and human rights for all who live in South Africa) shows the commitment to equality that is the essence of discipleship.

We affirm that in this we are on the side of the oppressed, and as we have committed ourselves to working within our Church for a clearer expression of solidarity with the poor and the deprived, so we commit ourselves equally to working for peace through justice in fraternal collaboration with all other Churches, agencies and persons dedicated to this cause.¹⁴¹³

Both Kearney and +Hurley knew that such equality in the Church would be a long time in coming. As early as 1967, +Hurley wrote about a meeting of lay people in which he saw that equality of discipleship would not be recognised overnight:

The Congress of the Lay Apostolate finished yesterday with a three-hour speak-feast. Most of the members of the Synod attended it. After an hour and a half, however, one or two busy cardinals got up to go out, and twenty or thirty others followed them. It was too bad! Especially as a young American had just given his impressions of the Congress and had told us in surly tones that youth couldn’t wait for the establishment to catch up. It looked like a protest of cardinals, or a strike called by the hierarchy against the laity...

The whole emphasis in the Lay Congress was on the Christian’s duty in the world. At this rate, Catholics are really going to be a force to be reckoned with in the not too distant future. However, there were some warnings not to go too fast; a very lovely one from a Protestant observer and a very witty one from a Spanish delegate, who pointed out that when Peter and John raced to the tomb on Easter Sunday, John got there first but waited for Peter who finally did arrive too!¹⁴¹⁴

Sometimes in his life as a disciple, Kearney was Peter, sometimes he was John and sometimes he was observing the two. There is an interesting juxtaposition of papers in his archives about the Denis Hurley Centre from the first year of its operations (2015). He is, in two different places, writing about the arrival of this author as Director and the departure of Stephen Tully as

¹⁴¹¹ Osborne, *Ministry*, 541

¹⁴¹² Briard, Jacques. Personal interview by author, 17 January 2022 via Zoom (Manager at *Entraide et Fraternité*, Belgium-based donor)

¹⁴¹³ SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/H/Press/2 (1969-1980) “SACBC Plenary” (*The Southern Cross*, 2 January 1977)

¹⁴¹⁴ Denis, Kearney, & Argall, *A Life in Letters*, 218-9 (DH to Eileen Hurley, from Rome, 19 October 1967, typewritten)

Administrator of the Cathedral. What is interesting in his descriptions is that his focus is on the proven ministries of the individuals not their status.

[Raymond Perrier] is a skilled, energetic and imaginative person who did an excellent job in reviving interest in Vatican II all over SA. I am impressed by his fundraising experience with CAFOD, the time spent in tough situations in Uganda and the marketing experience in New York. He also had a tonk at becoming an SJ some years ago.¹⁴¹⁵

The departure of Fr Stephen is a huge challenge for us. He has been an important presence in this parish for the past 14 years and in the Denis Hurley Centre project for the past 7 years. It was his vision that made this possible and the trustees passed a unanimous resolution of thanks to him for all he has done for this project. During all of that time he literally 'walked the talk' and we are all immensely grateful to him and very sad that he is no longer with us.¹⁴¹⁶

Kearney is not interested in drawing lines between his co-workers to separate them based on status; nor is he interested in drawing such lines in his own life. The only differences worth highlighting are practical and pastoral ones. In this, he is following the same line as Goldie:

If 'lay person' is a pastoral concept, there are as many lay vocations as there are lay people. There are as many different ways of assuming secularity as there are different lay (or rather Christian) vocations. Orders and Marriage are the only factors which establish clear vocational divisions among the baptized. For the rest, there is no break in continuity between the different vocations, except in a practical and pastoral sense.¹⁴¹⁷

This understanding of lay returns us to the radical idea of the people of God, to which all are called at Baptism, and is a category that someone does not leave even if they are ordained or take religious vows. The lack of an adult ceremony, like ordination or solemn vows, might make this vocation less apparent but that does not mean that it is not true and fundamental.

Even if the 'ordinations' of baptism and confirmation happen when the candidates are too young to understand their responsibilities, they continue to call the recipients to the ongoing fulfilment of the responsibilities of the various stages of their adult vocation.¹⁴¹⁸

The people who worked closely with Kearney over many decades saw in him someone who progressed through 'various stages of his adult vocation', constantly seeking new ways in which to be a disciple.

Goemans has been ambivalent about Kearney's status, noting that he talked a bit about why he left the Marists, seemed to still live a life of Marist simplicity, and never discussed his lay status. But her conclusion tends towards the clear but demanding concept of discipleship:

¹⁴¹⁵ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/4 "2015"

¹⁴¹⁶ SJTI Archive: BIO- 11/W/3/Minutes/4 "2015" (Comment to the PPC, August 2015)

¹⁴¹⁷ Goldie, "Lay, Laity, Laicity", 131

¹⁴¹⁸ Rademacher, *Lay Ministry*, 174

My sense is that he felt that it was just important to be involved in the Church. We the people of God have this work to do and we are in a partnership.¹⁴¹⁹

His secretary, Franks, makes a similar point but without using ecclesial language:

Paddy could have been wealthy with a fancy car. He did not have to do all this sacrifice. But he chose not to make money and he never spoke about why. He loved his work and was passionate about making a difference.¹⁴²⁰

Irvine, who was there when +Hurley first approached Kearney, saw the Archbishop's role as significant in Kearney's call to discipleship:

+Hurley saw in Paddy the potential and his willingness to make that his career. Without that Paddy would have been a professor: safe, prosperous, respectable.¹⁴²¹

Nicholson, who saw Kearney at his lowest when he was detained without trial, recognises that this discipleship is one that has no natural end:

Why did Paddy carry on? Later he saw that liberation had not been achieved. There was still lots to do. Perhaps he realised that immediately in 1994. Plus he did not have any other interests. What would he have done? He would not have wanted to join the establishment the way that some activist clergy did.¹⁴²²

One of those activist clergy who did join the establishment was Chikane (who was a Cabinet Minister from 1999 to 2009). His comment on Kearney's role is simple and yet laudatory:

Paddy remained Church. He was not a priest but a servant of God; you don't need to be a priest to be a servant; his life demonstrated much more. Paddy remained a servant of the people; a servant of the Church, an expression of what the Church should be in community. He worked with the community; he did not translate himself into a political activist. In that regard he was unique. He was God's servant – there to serve the people.¹⁴²³

+Phillip uses similar language. When he stepped down from Diakonia in 2004, Kearney had been recommended by +Phillip for a job at the SACC (where Chikane had been). +Phillip explains that he had to tell Kearney that the answer was 'no' because he would be of greater value where he was in Durban. "Paddy desired nothing more than to serve the people: if I had to give him a title it would be 'a servant of the people'."¹⁴²⁴

Keane is in perhaps the best positions to give an overview of his life, having observed him for 52 years.

¹⁴¹⁹ Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

¹⁴²⁰ Franks, Vanessa. Personal interview by author, 2 October 2020 in Durban (Secretary of Kearney at Diakonia)

¹⁴²¹ Irvine, Doug. Personal interview by author, 12 October 2020 in Johannesburg (Personal friend and involved in Archdiocese of Durban Justice & Peace)

¹⁴²² Nicholson, Chris. Personal interview by author, 1 September 2021 in Durban (Lawyer during detention appeal)

¹⁴²³ Chikane, Frank. Personal interview by author, 14 September 2021 via Zoom (Secretary General of SACC 1987-94)

¹⁴²⁴ Phillip, Rubin. Personal interview by author, 25 May 2022 in Durban (Emeritus Bishop of Natal; Patron and sometime Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

I see Paddy's life as a progressive involvement. I have known people who stayed on the same track and were always unhappy. There were parts of him that changed and parts that did not. Throughout the whole story he remains a white middle-class South African: I have known many priests and sisters who tried to lose themselves – but unsuccessfully. We can't give up our core identity. But new layers have come on according to his situation. He died happy because he was fulfilled. The strength that went before maintained the chain but there was a new focus each time. It was a process of concatenation. Each chapter was a new story.¹⁴²⁵

Put more simply another friend of many years summed him up:

A Christian to be admired because he lived his faith in every possible way.¹⁴²⁶

¹⁴²⁵ Keane, Marie-Henry. Personal interview by author, 16 September 2021 via Zoom (Dominican sister and co-worker)

¹⁴²⁶ Oliver, Di. Personal interview by author, 5 January 2021 in Cape Town (co-worker at Diakonia)