U3 Module 1 Essay plan

“Impact of social factors on how people interact with religion”.

Intro:

* The nature of interaction between people and religion is multifaceted and underscored by the interplay between a myriad of social factors which have the ability to either support, hinder or obstruct the way in which people interact with religion. The most prominent social factors which influence how people interact with religion in contemporary Australian society include the growth of a materialistic culture which hinders people’s interaction with religion. The prevalence of humanistic ideals within Australian discourse that hinders how people interact with religion and finally Australia’s multicultural society, which supports people’s interactions with religion. Ultimately each of these social factors have the capacity to influence a person’s interaction with religion in positive or detrimental ways.

Body 1: how a materialistic culture hinders people’s interaction with religion.

* The cultural trend of materialism a social factor which hinders the way people interact with religion in Australia.
* Materialism is the belief in the “Primacy of material world,” as opposed to spiritual notions promoted by religion (TANed, 2018). In this way materialism dismisses the metaphysical realms that religions are often founded on such as the “existence of god and the soul.” (C. Gutburlet, 1911). As a result, those with materialistic beliefs tend to find it difficult to engage with religious concepts that involve spirituality and faith, thus hindering their ability to interact with religion.
* Materialism also “emphasises self-centredness,” (KS Mickens, 1993), a notion that conflicts with the communal nature of many world religions. Most religions promote the sentiment of helping one-another, and placing the needs of the group above your own, however a materialistic mindset encourages a more individualistic view that undermines the sense of community and togetherness promulgated by religion
* Additionally, materialism fosters a consumerist mindset, which is explicitly the prioritisation of the pursuit of material possession, wealth and immediate gratification over spiritual and religious endeavours. Consequently this makes religious practices and beliefs such as acts of “charity, prayer, solidarity,” appear redundant to those with materialistic mindsets. (TANed, 2018)
* Thus it can be said that a materialistic culture hinders how people interact with religion through its promotion of ideologies such as self-centredness and consumerism. In addition to cultural aspects, there are also political social factors which can hinder interaction with religion

Body 2: how secularism hinders people’s interaction with religion

* Secularism is a political ideology that hinders how people interact with religion in Australia.
* The Australian government follows a soft secular approach meaning it calls for a separation in government and religion
* Secularism believes that religious beliefs are “Epistemologically illegitimate.” (B, Kosmin)
* And that religion is a deterrent to societal development as it “invokes needless fear and guild, hindering progress, fostering social division and violence.” (N. Thompson 1998).
* Thus secularism promotes the a view on religion that makes it appear outdated, and detrimental
* People hearing this from the government are more likely decrease their own reliance on religious opinion and are more likely to treat religions such as Catholicism with a critical attitude as there is a level of distrust.
* The growing secularist ideology was demonstrated in the 2020 census where more than 38% of people identified as following no religion, a drastic increase from figures gather 4 years earlier where the figure was 25%.
* Thus it is seen that secularism hinders how people interact with religion in Australia, however it must also be noted that not all social factor hinder peoples interactions with religion, in fact many social factors actually support.

Body 3: How multiculturalism supports peoples interactions with religion

* Multi-culturalism is a social factor that supports peoples interactions with religion in Australia.
* Multiculturalism refers to the acceptance and promotion of a myriad of cultural and religious traditions within a single society.
* This started getting promoted within Australia after the abolishment of the White Australia policy in 1973
* Since then, Australia has seen huge influx of immigrants from various cultures, in 2020 “29.8 % of the [Australian] population was born overseas.” (ABS, 2020)
* Among these immigrant “40.7% of them were affiliated with non-Christian religions.”
* Multiculturalism promotes the recognition and acceptance of religious beliefs and practices within Australian society, thus fostering an environment where people can comfortably practice their religious traditions, this freedom of expression in turn enables different people to learn about different religions, thus increasing the likelihood they find a religion they resonate with, thus supporting interaction with religion.
* Also supports the establishment of religious institutions such as temples, mosques etc. The provision of religious infrastructure enables people of faith to gather in a communal space and engage in meaningful and conversation, this enriches individuals religious experiences positively
* Currently over 340 mosques, 200 Buddhist temples and 140 Hindu temples Australia wide (Australian Treasury Dept, 2011)

Conclusion

U3 Module 1 Essay Plan

Discuss how and why there are differing ways in which religion is viewed in society

Intro:

Religions are complex and multifaceted entities that exist within the public sphere, as such, there is no totalising viewpoint held in regard to religion by society. A myriad of perspectives regarding religion arise from interplay between the values and attitudes prevalent amongst the individuals that constitute a society and the actions of religions. One such perspective that has arisen from this interplay is the view that religion is a political agency. A second view is that religion isa functional agency. Finally a third view is that religion is a human invention that needs to be excluded or curtailed from society. Ultimately it can be said that there are a variety of ways in which religion is viewed in society and that these differing viewpoints arise from the complex relationship between the values and attitudes of the individual and society as well as the actions of religion.

Body 1: Religion as a political agency

One popular perspective on religion is the view that it is a political entity. This view posits that religions, whether of human origin or not, represents groups of people with shared interests, value and attitudes and thus has the ability to participate in the political sphere. For example, the CDoC believes that “The duty most consonant with our times is that of working diligently for fundamental decisions to be made in economic and political affairs.” (Gaudium et Spes #60). Hence it is clear that Catholics are called to impact the decisions made in politics. However, the secular nature of many western societies, has led to religious participation in politics to be met with “An arrogant intolerance and dismissiveness.” (N Fillipini PhD) resulting in religion being viewed in a negative light as a nuisance in the political affairs of a nation. However, in many nations, such as those in the Middle East, religion plays an acute role as a political agency. The Pew research centre conducted a survey which revealed that 97% of those they surveyed in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Palestine believe that Sharia Law (religious law) should serve as the predominant political structure in their societies. Thus it can be seen that religion can be viewed as a political agency and that this view is supported by the value and attitudes of a nation and the actions of religions in the political realm.

Body 2: Religion as a malevolent reactionary force/human invention

Religion may also be viewed as a human invention. This view postulates that religions have no basis for their beliefs and are instead creations of human origin. This is a view on religion was popularised by the philosophy of Karl Marx who described religion as “The soul of the soulless condition, an opiate of the people.” Marx argued that people turned to religion due to the exploitation and oppression they were subjected to which stimulated them to turn to mystical ideas for comfort. However, this in turn meant religion could serve a powerful ideological role for ruling over the working class, for example religion could be used to justify poor wages and working condition under the guise that suffering in the mortal realm will grant them access to the afterlife. In contemporary times, this view on religion has become more prominent due to the actions of religious leaders such as Cardinal George Pell who was convicted on “five charges of sexually assaulting two teenage boys when he was the Archbishop of Melbourne in the 1990’s” (T. Jones (2020) His actions in this instance worked to disillusion people from religion as they contradict the values and attitudes of the CDoC, additionally, the fact that this issue was brought to light thirty years after it had occurred, led people to question the true nature of the CDoC and by extension religion in general as it had caused them to “Lose trust in religions role as moral authority.” (TanED, 2021). Thus, it can be seen that religion can be viewed as a malevolent reactionary force/human invention and that this view on religion is perpetuated by the actions of religious figureheads as well as the philosophies of prominent social commentators. This negative view on religion is contrasted by more positive views also.

Body 3: Religion as a functional agency

Alternatively, religion is also viewed in a more positive light religion as a functional agency. This view on religion asserts that religions, whether they are of human origin or not, are a universal phenomenon and thus must be useful. The moral values and ethical standards promoted by many world religion underpin this positive view of religion in society. A key value held by many world religions is their belief in charity. For example, Muslims around the world follow a “Strict religious obligation in upholding Islamic pillar of Zakat.” Which is the act of donating a certain proportion of their wealthy to charity each year (D. Liberto, 2022) Similarly, members of the Jewish faith are also commanded to take part in ‘tzedakah’ which is an obligatory charitable donation that occurs on an annual basis (J. DeGroot). Charitable acts such as these help people to see that religions contribute positively to the stability of society, thus promoting the view on religion as a functional agency. Helping other is another value held dear by many religions. As a result, there exist many religious social welfare programs such as the Salvation Army. Statistics show that “14 million people are helped by the Salvation Army each year.” Through actions such as food donation, monetary aid, health services and disaster relief. (A. Rife, 2018) These actions have a positive impact on society as a whole as they promote increased health and wellbeing in society. So it can be said that religion is seen as a functional agency within society and that this view on religion is supported by the charitable actions of religious people and organisations.

Conclusion-

U3 Module 2 Essay plan

Question- How a religion uses a particular structure and/or process to address important issues

Intro:

* Throughout its history, the Roman Catholic Church, a denomination of Christianity has implemented several structures and processes to address important issues in society
* One specific structure in the CDoC is the ecumenical structure which has been utilised 21 times over the last 2000 years, most recently with the 21st ecumenical council also known as Vatican II
* Council took place between 1962 and 1965, called by John XXIII and ended under Paul VI
* Its conception was greatly influenced by the contextual paradigms of the 20th century
* The council used an ecumenical structure to support its operation
* Produced 4 constitutions, 9 decrees and 3 declarations which worked to address internal issues such as a lack of liturgical participation, and the long standing divide between christian denominations as well as the external issue of anti-semitism
* Ultimately the Church sought to implement the ecumenical structure through the Second vatican council so they could respond to issues of the time and thus ensure the relevancy of the church and the continuation of Christian dogma.

Body 1- Key Features of ecumenical structure and introduce vatican II

* An ecumenical council and its various processes enable the Catholic Church to respond to important issues
* An ecumenical council is defined as an irregular meeting of the entire episcopate in communion with the Pope
* Only the Pope has the power to commence, suspend or dissolve an ecumenical council, and his absence automatically postpones a meeting
* An ecumenical council is viewed as the highest legislative authority within the Church, and any productions are considered canon law within the laity
* There have been 21 ecumenical councils throughout history, the most recent being the Second Vatican Council (or Vatican II)
* Vatican 2 was held from 1962-1965 and resulted in the creation of 16 documents, each addressing  important issues of the time.
* These issues, both external and internal, were a result of the period of time that the council was held.

Body 2- context of why it was called

* Occurred between 1962-1965
* A period of great social upheaval
* Social climate was influenced greatly by the second world war which caused great destruction
* The world was still stunned by the horrors of the war just past and its unimaginable genocide, combined with the unexpected success of totalitarianism and communism, atheism and materialism. John XXIII knew this caused alarm, confusion and fear for many modern people.
* Pope John XXIII called the council due to such issues in an aim of “Aggiornamento” (to bring up to date) and “Ressourcement” (returning to authoritative sources)
* Through the council, he ‘opened the windows of the church’ to respond to the issues in society.

Body 3- How vatican II dealt with lack of liturgical participation

* One prominent, internal issue dealt with by vatican II was the issue of decreased liturgical participation
* This was addressed by the vatican council through the document they produced titled “Sacrosanctum Concilium.”
* The document called for extensive revision of the nature of worship within catholicism so that the laity could experience a more definitive involvement in the celebration of mass so that the practice could “Impart an ever increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful. (#1)
* The document outlined key changes:

1. Priest should face the laity when performing mass, so laity can gain better understanding of the symbolic actions of the priest
2. Enabled mass to be spoken in local dialects, thus enabling people connect more to the teachings of the bible
3. Increased breadth of biblical literature- exposes laity to more teachings
4. Enabled people to better understand the gospel and how it relates to their lives

Body 4-  Vatican II respond to anti-semitism

 How the Roman Catholic Church responded to increased levels of antisemitism in the world

-Rise in anti-semetic bad ideologies during world war two

-Entails the belittling and degrading of the jewish faith

-Went directly against word of God, “Love thy neighbour” and “God created all in the image and likeness of himself”

-Many Catholics were themselves antisemitic in Nazi Germany

- 2nd Vatican council addressed this issue with the document, Declaration on the relations of the church to non christian religions

-clearly stated “The lord shines upon all people, there beliefs matter not” - Nostra aetate

-This improved the catholic outlook upon other religions especially those of jewish faith

Unit 3 module 2 essay plan

Question- The significance of one religious event and/or issue from the past

Intro:

* Throughout history, Roman Catholic denomination of Christianity has been shaped by a number of significant religious events. One such significant event is the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II). Vatican II was a the 21st ecumenical council that was announced by Pope John XXIII in 1959 “As a means of spiritual renewal for the Church.” (Britannica, 2023) in response to the evolving social, technological, and political world climate of the 20th century.

The significance of Vatican II is epitomised through the 16 documents produced, in particular, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, which was a dogmatic constitution that called for a renewal of the sacred liturgy and mass. *Nostra Aetate*, a declaration which sought to improve Catholic relationship with non-Christian religions and called for an end to Antisemitism. Vatican II was a deeply significant event in the history of the Church due to its publication of such documents which ultimately brough aggiornomento to the Church allowing it to continue to carry out its mission of protecting and promoting the word of God.

Body 1: Context of why it was called (historical context)

* In order to understand its significance we must first understand the historical context of why it was convened
* Occurred between 1962-1965
* A period of great social upheaval
* Social climate was influenced greatly by the second world war which caused great destruction
* The world was still stunned by the horrors of the war just past and its unimaginable genocide, combined with the unexpected success of totalitarianism and communism, atheism and materialism. John XXIII knew this caused alarm, confusion and fear for many modern people.
* Pope John XXIII called the council due to such issues in an aim of “Aggiornamento” (to bring up to date) and “Ressourcement” (returning to authoritative sources)
* Through the council, he ‘opened the windows of the church’ to respond to the issues in society.

Body 2: Sacrosanctum Concilium

* Vatican II was significant for the Catholic Church as it brough significant liturgical reformation through the changes outlined in Sacrosanctum Concilium.
* Prior to Vatican II lay participation in liturgy was minimal and often laity found it difficult to connect spiritually to the words as mass was delivered in Latin and the priest would face away from the people resulting in a feeling of separation
* The council recognised that this had to change as mass is the pinnacle of Christian worship and it was most unintelligible for most people (Britannica, 2020)
* So they designed the constitution with the idea that mass should “the opportunity to assist the faithful in experiencing more deeply and richly the wisdom and love of God.” (C. Morris, 2018)
* They achieved this by:

1. Making it so that the priest faces the laity, so laity can gain a better understanding of symbolic actions of the priest
2. Allowed for mass to be spoken in local dialects so that Church goers could connect more intimately with the teachings of the Bible
3. Increased breadth of Biblical lectionary in a bid to showcase a greater range of teachings of God to people

* These changes still apply today and have wholly transformed the relationship lay people can have with god thus making Vatican II significant

Body 3: Nostra Aetate

* Vatican II was also significant for the fact that it was starting point from which the Church began to mend and form relationships with Non-Christian religions really since 1054 with the split of Christianity
* Prior to Vatican II, much of the Catholic community did not to see eye-to eye with Jews for the charge that they were ‘responsible’ for the death of Christ, this was further increased by the events of WW@ which perpetuated further antisemitic notions
* This document sought bring change by outlining how, “The Gospels spiritual love decries hatred, persecution and antisemitism at any time and by anyone.” (#4)
* The document stated “The lord shines upon all people, there beliefs matter not.”
* Overall this affirms how important Vatican II was in enabling the Church the ability to begin restoring relationships with other religions and thus be more attuned with the values of Christ

U3 Module 3 Essay Plan

“How one religious belief, teaching, ritual or practice developed over time.”

Intro:

* Religious beliefs are constantly evolving in response to pastoral concerns and the social climate of a time
* One religious belief that has developed over time is the CDoC belief in the sacrament of marriage.
* The Catholic belief of marriage finds its roots in the book of genesis where God established the sacred union between man and woman.
* Since then, the belief has evolved, guided by the influence of several historical factors, most notably the work of St Augustine of Hippo, who outlined the three-fold goodness of marriage in his dissertation “De Bono Coniugali”, The Council of Trent which established marriage as one of the seven sacrament, defined procreation as its primary purpose, made reforms to the nature of marriage celebrations. Most recently, the Second Vatican council influenced the development of marriage when it asserted that marriage is a vocation of human life.
* Ultimately, these people and historical events have helped deepen the Church’s understanding of marriage and have helped develop it in response to pastoral and societal concerns, establishing key features of marriage that ultimately define it today.

Body 1: How St Augustine of Hippo helped develop marriage

* One influential factor that has greatly influenced the development of marriage in the early church is St Augustine.
* He was a theologian, philosopher and Bishop of Hippo from 354-430 AD.
* St Augustine created a document titled “De Bono Coniugali.” Which expressed the 3 fold goodness of marriage as sacrament, fidelity and procreation.
* Essentially document suggested that marriage should be seen as a sacrament, as he saw it as a “Sacred covenant between man and woman that symbolised the union between Christ and the Church.”
* He also asserted the need for fidelity in marriage
* based on the words from Ephesians (5:31-33) which emphasizes the profound unity between man and women through the metaphor of Jesus connection to the Church
* Thus Augustine asserted that we should emulate this in marriage and remain faithful to one partner as jesus remained faithful to the church
* Finally he spoke on procreation as the primary purpose of marriage as this act reflects God’s creative power and enables the word of the Church and kingdom of God to spread forever

Body 2: How Council of Trent helped develop marriage

* A significant historical event in the history of the Catholic Church that contributed greatly to the development of the key features of marriage
* This ecumenical council ran from 1545-1563 and was called by Pope Paul III in response to challenges posed by the protestant reformation (Britannica, 2023)
* This council developed the belief of marriage as it:
* Officially consecrated it as one of the seven sacraments “truly and properly one of the seven sacrements… instituted by Christ the lord.”
* Established it as a covenant by upholding the indissolubility of marriage
* Also emphasized that for marriage to be valid, it must be overseen by a bishop and two other witnesses
* Officially affirmed that the primary purpose of marriage is procreation, and the importance of raising children in the context of a stable and loving family- paying heed to the contributions of St Augustine
* All this info from (P Reynolds, 2016)

Body 3: How Vatican II helped develop marriage

* Another historical event that contributed to the development of the sacrament of marriage as a catholic belief
* 21st ecumenical council, ran from 1962-1965, called by John XXIII and ended under Paul VI
* Developed sacrament of marriage by helping develop a fuller theology of marriage:
* Asserting that “conjugal love is sign to others of Christ’s love for the Church.” (Gaudium Et Spes)
* Recognised the need for improved pastoral care in the lives of married couples, in this way the Church recognised the challenges of married life and began to help married couples deal with- important in the context of the time.
* Also said marriage is a vocation

Conclusion

U3 Module 4 essay plan

Question- Nature of one current issue generating tension and conflict and how a religion responds to it

Intro:

* Throughout history, the Catholic Church (CC), a denomination of Christianity has responded to issues that are deemed to be detrimental to humanity and the Christian mission. Globalisation is one such issue in the contemporary world that the CC responds to as it causes tension within society. It is the paradoxical nature of globalisation combined with a lack of understanding of the issue that generates tension within society, the CC responds to the tension through the Pope who utilises his influence and the richness of catholic tradition to offer advice on how to behave in relation to the issue, and their support of awareness campaigns such as The Human Thread Campaign which aim to educate wider society on the negative ramifications of globalisation . Ultimately, the CC seeks to serve as an active proponent in addressing the tension created by globalisation as this is a way to ensure the continuation of Christian philosophy and the development of an egalitarian world.

Body 1: Nature of globalisation

* The issue of globalisation is exceedingly convoluted in its nature, as such, it has a myriad of key features. Globalisation refers to the integration of different economies, cultures, governments and political movements via the spread of the flow of financial goods, technology, information and jobs across national borders. This is enabled by a series of economic, social, political and technological changes, increasing interdependence between nations of the globe. (Hamdi, 2013). The three divisions of globalisation (political; cultural and economic) have experienced rapid growth from the 20th century, affecting all people, albeit to varying degrees and in disparate ways. Globalisation has brought about both advantages and disadvantages for the global community, but has ultimately generated a sense of tension between nations that have been invariably favoured by globalisation and those that have not. The sense of tension stems from the paradoxical nature of globalisation which foments antagonistic viewpoints on the issue based on the principle of the perceived benefits and challenges it offers. It can be said that globalisation can create tension that undermines the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and as a result, the CC has been inclined to respond.

Body 2: Respond because of CST

* The CC is an institution with immense global reach and impact, this enables it to serve as a religious institute that responds to issues that generate tension within society. The CC's response to social issues is shaped by CST which is built on the foundational pillars of 2 concepts: human dignity and common good. The tenets of globalisation can undermine the integrity of this foundation, ultimately creating a sense of tension between those favoured by globalisation and those disdained by it, this is what inclines the CC to respond. The notion of human dignity proclaims that "All Human life is intrinsically sacred and the dignity of the human person is key to the moral vision of society." (FPB,2019) At times globalisation can undermine this notion through the tendency of Multi national corporations (MNC's) to "Oppress and exploit their employees in under developed nations." (FPB, 2019) Common good is another integral constituent of CST, it was defined during Vatican II as "The sum of those conditions which allow social groups and their individual members to access their own fulfilment." (FPB, 2019) Globalisation often counters this aspect of CST due to its propensity to "Favour industrialised, developed nations over third world nation nations."(FPB, 2019) This means that while some nation experience immense benefits, other are exposed to unprecedented hardship, causing tension between the two. IN light of these point it can be concluded that the CC is inspired by the foundations of CST to actively respond to the tension generated by globalisation. Ultimately the CC seeks to inspire all people to value the dignity of man and prioritise common good over personal gain in a bid to ensure the positive development of human kind. Today, the CC responds to the tension generated by globalisation with the aid of the Pope.

Body 3:  Response through the Pope

* Pope Francis, the head of the CC utilises his authority in the public sphere and the Church's vast wisdom on social issues to respond the issue of globalisation and the tension it generates between wealthy MNC's and their over worked employees from poor nations. In his speech to the general audience in 2014, Pope Francis responded to the issue as the employees of the MNC Nestle in the still developing nations of West Africa were so overworked they had to resort to the use of child labour in factories and farms to cope with the labour demands of Nestle. The Pope reprimanded Nestle and MNC's generally stating "all this money, all of your pride, all your vanity… is exposing them [children] to forms of slavery and exploitation, as well as abuse, and maltreatment." (Vatican, 2014) Later adding that MNC's generally have birthed a "New Tyranny." One that is "Invisible and often virtual which unilaterally and relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules." (Vatican, 2014) Here Pope Francis explicitly highlights the need for MNC's to respect the dignity of their employees and view them as people rather than a means to generate income. Additionally he draws on his knowledge of Catholic tradition to remind individuals from developed nations that it is their moral obligation as citizens of the globe to castigate MNC's which fail to recognise the innate dignity of their employees. In doing so he encourages people to unite in solidarity to assist those exploited by globalisation while also prompting the evolution of a more virtuous globalisation that benefits all people in the future. This speech resulted in Nestle receiving scrutiny from media which ultimately pushed them to reduce stress on their employees and to treat them with more dignity. Thus it can be said that Pope Francis effectively utilises his influential public platform and wisdom to respond to the tension that exists as a result of MNC's undignified treatment of their employees. Not only has the Church responded to globalisation through the Pope, but they also respond by promoting education campaigns.

Body 4: Respond through education campaigns

* Education campaigns are movements which seek to educate and bring awareness to specific issues by bringing them into public conscientiousness (NSVRC, 2014). THTC is one such campaign promoted by the CC that seeks to respond to the tension generated between mistreated workers and the MNC's they work for. The campaign was created in response to the 2013 Rana Plaza Tragedy in which a textile factory in Bangladesh collapsed "Claiming the lives of 1133 people and injuring a further 2500." (The Human Thread, 2013) THTC expounds that this disaster was a result of the immense pressure that MNC's imposed onto the garment industry in Bangladesh causing factory owners to disregard critical health and safety standard in the pursuit of financial gain, however it also recognises that this pressure was only present due to increased demand for cheaper clothing from Western consumers. The campaign goes onto urge western consumer on the need for “solidarity between consumers of clothing and the people who produce them to create a more just economy and sustainable communities” (The Human Thread, 2013). Ultimately THTC seeks reduce the possibility of tragedies akin to Rana Plaza by educating western consumers on the their role as global citizens and the impact their choices can inflict on employees of MNC's in under developed nations it also forces MNC's to improve the working conditions of their employees by inviting scrutiny from the media. Thus, the Church is able to respond to the issue of globalisation through promoting education and awareness campaigns.

In retrospect, Globalisation is a phenomenon that causes tension within society. The CC, inspired by its doctrines on CST seeks to respond to the tension generated by globalisation. The Church responds through the Pope who implements his influence in the public sphere to guide sentiments on the issue and the promotion of awareness campaigns which seek to educate the masses on the negative implications of the issue. Through its teachings and advocacy efforts, the Catholic Church encourages individuals and organisations to consider the ethical implications of their actions and to work towards creating cultural, economic and political institutions that promote a more just and equitable world and the continuation of the Christian mission.

U4 module 1 essay plan

Question- Examine the interplay between the life of one significant person, their context and religion.

Intro:

* The interplay between a person’s context and religion is influential in shaping their beliefs and actions, and ultimately it manufactures their significance in the world.
* This notion holds true for St Archbishop Oscar Romero (St Romero), the politically outspoken Archbishop of San Salvador from 1977-1980
* By exploring the interplay between his personal context, in particular the assassination of his dear friend Fr Grande, the context of his times which were characterised by political repression, social inequality and economic disparities in conjunction with his strong catholic faith, we can begin to understand how these factors shaped Romero’s politically transformative journey and mission of fighting for justice for the poverty stricken El-Salvadorians who had been oppressed by the Oligarchic government of the time.
* Ultimately, this analysis of the interplay between Romero’s personal life, context and religion will highlight how and why he was compelled to transform into an ardent social activist and “Voice of the voiceless.” That has been immortalised as a significant Catholic figure and symbol for justice throughout the globe.

Body 1: Context of El-Salvador and Oscar Romero

* For the people of El-Salvador the period between the 1932 to 1980 was characterised by political repression, social inequality, and economic disparities. Since 1841, El Salvador was governed by a series of oligarchic, militaristic governments (R.A Haggerty, 2009)
* An authoritarian government which silenced its opposition through brutal force
* El Salvador’s economy was heavily reliant on coffee production, and it was the 14 families who controlled the coffee industry that ruled through a series of military dictatorships (Negroponte, 2012)
* In the 70’s, 60% of the country’s best land was owned by less than 2% of the population (Clarke, 2014)
* And 90% of El Salvadorian’s lived on minimum and 50% lived below the poverty line (Clarke, 2014)
* This concentration of wealth and class antagonism exacerbated social tensions, contributing to the rise of social and political unrest and revolutionary movements.
* The increasing sense of animosity and tension manifested itself in the El-Salvadorian civil war, an open class conflict between the left-wing guerrillas and right-wing paramilitary death squads which resulted in over “75 000 deaths of which 30 000 were estimated to be politically motivated killings.” (M Danner, 1993).
* St Romero was born in a 1917 in a large Catholic family that was very poor (no electricity or running water)
* From a young age he always wanted to be a priest and by 13 he chose to enter the seminary, partly because his family could not afford to send him to school any longer.
* Though his childhood was not marred by violence, his experiences with poverty laid the foundations of his religious identity and it also constructed a strong sense of compassion towards the poor within him.
* In 1977 he was elected as Archbishop of San Salvador (Faith in action, 2022)
* Political and social situation at the time was evolving towards a more violent path.
* In this same time, liberation theology was a prominent notion that divided the Church into two schools of thought, the progressives and the conservatives with St Romero initially adopting the latter.

Body 2: Pre-transformation

* Romero was elected as the Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador in 1970
* This appointment was not universally celebrated amongst priests. This is because though Romero ministered his people lovingly, he was unconvinced by the growing focus on social justice in the Latin American Church as he “Was suspicious of the clergy and the Christian communities of the archdiocese who worked alongside the exploited poor in rural areas.” (M Lee, 2018)
* As a result, he remained conservative, not wanting to break from tradition.
* In spite of this, he recognised that he had to take some action, despite feeling uncomfortable with taking social action that challenged political leaders (Caritas, 2019)
* Motivated by the Church’s teaching he preached that the violence and oppression in El Salvador contradicted the catholic belief that “Everyone is created in the image and likeness of God.” (Genesis 1:27)
* He also sought to educate the people on the Catholic teachings on solidarity, human dignity, and the preferential option for the poor with the hope that this would enable El Salvadorians to form a more egalitarian society.
* So, it can be seen through Romero’s actions and beliefs that he recognised a change had to be made however he was not yet prepared to take that leap, however as he continued to experience the extreme oppression and poverty of the El Salvadorians and he was appointed as Archbishop of San Salvador, he experienced an intense transformation in faith. (Caritas, 2019)

Body 3: Post-transformation

* In 1977, in a climate of growing social and political tension, Romero was appointed as Archbishop of San Salvador. His appointment was supported by the Junta government and wealthy elite who considered Romero as an ally and someone who could be trusted to offset the growing popularity of liberation theology, this belief was short lived.
* Through his appointment to Archbishop, St Romero had a transformation in his faith and realised that he had to be more active in approach to aiding the poor. This notion was cemented by the assassination of his dear friend Fr Grande who had been assassinated by the government a few short weeks after his appointment to Archbishop.
* He quickly became an outspoken critic of the ruling elite, openly criticising the fact that 60% of the land in El Salvador was owned by 2% of the population.
* He also spoke out against the class system, famously asking “By what right have we catalogued persons into classes? In the theology of human nature there is only one class: the children of God.” (M Lee, 2018)
* Moreover, he spoke out against the Guerrilla warfare perpetrated by the left.
* In a time of violence and chaos he chose the path of peace and became a ‘voice for the voiceless’
* Thus it can be seen that in his last 3 years he became a “fiery prophet. Deeply in love with his people.” (Ashley, 2005)

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U4 Module 2 essay plan

Intro:

Throughout history, religions have adopted beliefs, teachings, rituals and practices as a means to provide the adherents of a religion with the answers to their inherent desires, in particular, the human yearning for true freedom. In order to help Catholics find true freedom in their lives, the CDoC promotes pilgrimage as a religious practice that can facilitate their search for true freedom, achieving this through its ability to catalyse internal transformation within pilgrims by leading them to spiritually significant holy places and the physical experience of the pilgrimage . Thus Catholic pilgrimage acts as a way for Catholics in contemporary society to discover the true freedom offered by God.

Body 1: what is freedom from a Catholic perspective

In contemporary society there are a myriad of interpretations on the concept of freedom, from a Catholic perspective, true freedom is the liberation from the slavery of sin that can be achieved by living in accordance with God's law that was established by Jesus as the "Source and summit of true and lasting freedom on Earth." (Instruementum Laboris, 2005). Within Catholicism, there is an understanding that freedom is a gift given to people directly from God, this is demonstrated best through Jesus, who in his lifetime perfectly modelled how to live in a way that enables people to relate closely to God and thus achieve true freedom. Therefore, from a catholic perspective true freedom is not merely the ability to do ones own will, but rather it is the ability to do God's will over our own. Additionally, Catholics also believe that 'true freedom' cannot be achieved "In a flash… and that to achieve freedom is to travel a long and complex path of liberation." (Fr Arturo Sosa, 2021). Thus it can be said that Catholics believe that freedom is an intrinsic human yearning that can be fulfilled by living in accordance to God's law as modelled by Christ. Pilgrimage is a Catholic practice that enables Catholics to relate closer to Jesus and thus be liberated from the slavery of sin, achieving true freedom.

Body 2: Pilgrimage helps find freedom by inciting spiritual reflection by taking pilgrims through spiritually significant locations

The journey of a pilgrim often leads them to locations of great spiritual significance. In this way a pilgrimage is able to incite spiritual reflection in pilgrims as they cogitate on the significance of the place they are in. Though every location a pilgrim travels to has a connection to God, each location is unique in the experience it offers pilgrims to relate more closely to him, ultimately opening the door to true freedom by enabling his influence to grow in their lives. This can be seen through Via Dolorosa pilgrimage, which is a 14 station pilgrimage in Jerusalem that enables Christians to "Follow in Christ's steps from his crucifixion to his resurrection." (J.M O'Connor, 1996) In this way Christians are able to witness "God’s great love for humanity that led Christ to choose the way of suffering for our redemption." (Human perspective, 2013). Nathan Steinmeyer, a Via Dolorosa pilgrim, noted that the by, "Going where he [Christ] had gone." Allowed him to "Live out Jesus' sacrifice for humanity… and discover a new found reverence and love for God and his laws." (N Steinmeyer, 2022) Clearly it can be seen that Steinmeyer was greatly influenced by the significance of the stations in his pilgrimage which ultimately enabled him to strengthen his ability to live by God's law and thus find true freedom. So it can be said that the significance of different holy sites have the potential to aid people on their journey to freedom by enabling them to experience a deeper understanding of God's love through the example of Jesus Chris. This is further supported by the difficulty of the physical journey associated with pilgrimage.

Body 3: Pilgrimage helps frind true freedom through the difficulty of the journey

The difficulty of the physical journey associated with pilgrimage is another factor which aids people in their search for freedom as it provides pilgrims with an opportunity to put their trust in God and thus better experience his grace and will. The physical challenges of a pilgrimage are an outward expression of the inner renewal pilgrims experience as they allow God to enter their lives and assist them, this gradually enables them to experience true freedom. (Lumen Fidei, 2013). This is best seen through the Via Francigena pilgrimage in which pilgrims traverse 1000km and three countries by foot, beginning in Canterbury, England and finishing in Rome, Italy. Pilgrims often experience blisters, tendonitis, hunger, and general tiredness. (S.Cate, 2020). However, it is because of this pain that pilgrims are able "Follow Jesus Christ… and to be open to God as he lighten your burden." (Pope John Paul II, 1999). So through the pain inflicted by a pilgrimage, pilgrims are called to open their heart and draw on god's strength to help them overcome the temptation of sin in their journey and so to complete the pilgrimage. Thus it can be said that the physical journey of pilgrimage aids a person journey to true freedom by allowing them to draw on God as a source of strength to escape the temptation of sin.

In retrospect, it can be said that the Catholic practice of pilgrimage enables Catholics on their journey to discover true freedom. True freedom is bestowed upon humanity by God and can be achieved through overcoming the temptation of sin and by living in a Christ-like manner. Ultimately, pilgrimage helps individuals achieve this through the interplay of several factors, most notably its ability to incite spiritual reflection by leading pilgrims through sites of great spiritual significance and the physical journey of the pilgrimage which encourages pilgrims to draw on the strength of God and live in a Christ-like manner. Thus it is clear that Catholic pilgrimage is a practice that greatly helps Catholics in contemporary society to discover and experience true freedom as intended by God.

U4 Module 2 essay plan

Discuss the concept of freedom from a religious perspective

U4 Module 3 essay plan

Question- discuss the role religion plays in the public life of Australia or another nation.

Intro:

* Throughout history, religion has played a significant role in public life of all nations. This is true for Australia, a nation in which religion, particularly Christianity has contributed both positively and negatively to its public life since its colonisation in 1788.
* It has positively contributed to public life through its social roles in which religions such as the Catholic denomination of Christianity have established welfare services that provide aid to those most vulnerable in Australian society
* Additionally, religion has contributed in an ambiguous manner through the political role Christianity played in early Australian society
* It has also played a negative role in Australian society evidenced through the example of Christianity which perpetuated the corrosive tenet of religious supremacy in colonial Australia
* Ultimately by examining these 3 aspect, we can begin to understand how religion, particularly Christianity has been both beneficial and detrimental to public life in Australia.

Body 1: Positive Contribution through social welfare

* Since the time of colonisation, Christianity has contributed positively to the public of Australia by providing members of the public with a sense of purpose and love through the myriad of social welfare groups they have founded. One such social welfare group is The Good Samaritans, founded by the Roman Catholic denomination of Christianity in the 1800’s.
* This group original purpose was to provide food and shelter to refugee’s who had migrated into Australia during the gold rush (M. Eburn 2015)
* Today they continue to contribute positively to public life, albeit in a new way with their new mission of “Creating employment for people with disabilities.” (Goodsammy, 2023)
* This demonstrates how the Good Samaritan group has been guided by CST on human dignity to continually aid those who are often neglected in society find a sense of agency and importance in their lives.
* Another social group is St Vincent DePaul whose mission is to “Offer a hand,” to people in need whether this be through providing food, or shelter or even someone to talk to (St Vincent de Paul society, 2023).
* Thus it is evident that Christian religion has played a key role in enhancing social prosperity for all Australian citizens through the establishment of various religious social welfare groups such as the Good Samaritan group and St Vincent de Paul society which continue to provide a higher standard of living to many in Australia.

Body 2: controversial and complex contribution through its political role

* Christianity has played a complex and at times controversial role in Australian public life through its political role in the implementation of legislations in Australia.
* In the early times of colonisation, there was no separation of Church and state, as such, when the Australian constitution was conceived, Christian values on morality were imbued into legislation.
* This plays an important role in civil society as it provide order and guidance on the matters of morality in public life
* However it also cause tension in public life as it created a sense of comfortability in those who did not subscribe the Christian religion and felt as is its values were being forced upon them.
* One such legislation was the Sunday Trading Act which called for the closure of public places and businesses on Sundays in a bid to promote Church attendance. (WA Dept of Commerce, 2015)
* While this provided the benefit of a more structured life style and a greater degree of work life balance, it also caused many non-Christians to feel as if they had to abide to laws based on traditions and beliefs which they themselves did not subscribe to
* This was only abolished in 2012, highlighting the major role religion has played on public life of Australia
* Evidently, a major way religion has influenced the public life of Australia is through legislation that reflects Christian values which has been both a positive and negative contributor to public life.

Body 3: Negative through religious supremacy

* Religion has played a negative role in Australian public life by causing division and marginalisation through the notion of religious supremacy which manifested in abuse of power and disregard of other beliefs and cultures.
* Epitomised through colonisation in 1788 where Christian colonisers caused great destruction to the lives and culture of Indigenous people.
* These colonisers maintained the hegemonic belief that Christianity was the only correct religion and that those who did not subscribe to it were “savages” (A.N Patrick, 1981)
* This belief was used to justify the institutionalised genocide of the Aboriginal race and culture who’s effects have created a still present tension within Australian public life
* Additionally, in contemporary times, the rise of secularism has highlighted how religion has been used as a force of marginalisation within society
* Seen through example of same sex marriage
* Traditionally looked down upon due to it contradicting the Christian belief that “One must not lie with a man as he lies with a woman.” (Leviticus 18:22)
* Though as secularism was becoming more popular and so the views on the matter were becoming more positive
* Catholic Prime Minister Tony Abbott famously used his power to prevent legislation to legalise same sex marriage, an act that many deemed as stemming from his personal religious convictions
* Met by public outrage as the so called secular government were influenced by their religious beliefs to marginalise a group of people
* So it can be said that religion, in particular Christianity has played a major role in Australian public life by causing tension and marginalisation by imposing attitudes of religious supremacy.

Unit 4 module 4 essay plan

Question- discuss the interplay between a religion and an issue within a particular historical context

Intro:

* As time elapses, issues within society arise, challenging the beliefs and teachings of certain religions which in turn catalyses a dynamic interplay between the two. Fascism (known as Nazism) was one such imperative issue that arose in Nazi Germany between 1933-1945 that challenged the beliefs and teachings of the Roman Catholic denomination of Christianity.
* The interplay between the 2 was dynamic in nature due to almost symbiotic relationship the 2 shared
* However in order to understand the interplay, it is first important understand what fascism is and also we must analyse the historical context of the time
* From here we can see that
* Interplay is highlighted through the signing of the Reich Concordat in 1933 and the publication of Mit Brennender Sorge, an encyclical written by Pope Pius XI in 1937
* It can be said that there was a dynamic interaction between the Church and fascism in Nazi Germany as their reciprocal nature fluctuated with time

Body 1: What is fascism (Key features)

* Fascism is an extremely nationalistic, authoritarian state usually led by one person at the head of one party
* No democratic election of representatives
* No free market
* State controlled media
* Fascism requires a complete separation of religion (in this case Catholicism) from politics.
* It arose as a response to the economic, social, and political turmoil that Germany was in after WW1 and the Great Depression
* It was developed by the vision of Adolf Hitler
* In Germany the highly nationalistic middle class were shocked and frightened by the overthrowing of the monarchy in 1918 and German loss of WW1, believed they were losing power and were being humiliated on the world stage.
* This environment fostered Nazism as a growing political movement, it gained steam as it advocated for racial nationalism and made the people feel pride and power after a long time.
* Hitler become leader of Nazi party in 1920 and chancellor in 1933.
* This gave him the power to solidify fascism as the dominant political ideology.

Body 2: Interplay Reich concordat

* In 1933, German population was 60 million and was almost entirely Christian with around 20 million Catholics (Holocaust encyclopaedia)
* Interplay shaped by religious makeup of the country and rise of Nazism
* During this time, Church leaders held a range of opinions on Nazism
* Some believed it was a passing fad
* Some related to the anti-semetic beliefs of the nazi’s
* Some feared it and recognised it potentially destructive capabilities
* This prompted the Vatican to discuss a potential agreement with Hitler in which the Church would abstain from political activity in Germany in exchange for Nazi pledge that Church would not be persecuted
* Signed by Vatican secretary of state and German Vice Chancellor in 1933
* Church interplayed with fascism in Nazi Germany so that they felt “responsible before God for protecting the Church’s organisation and its functions of sanctifying teaching and governing in Germany” and they felt this was the only they could do this
* Nazi party likely also only agreed as signing the treaty would give them a powerful international platform to improve their world image and gain support of the Vatican to prevent a possible catholic revolt

Body 3: Interplay Mit Brennender Sorge

* As Hitler began to exert more control and constrictions on Germany, while still being within the conditions of the Reich concordat, the church was becoming increasingly fearful and frustrated
* This inspired Pope Pus XII to to write and publish “Mit Brennender Sorge” in this encyclical he condemned the weakness of the concordat, defended the Catholic doctrine, and encourage Catholics to reject national socialism (fascism) as it’s emphasis on race and power “falsifies the order that God has created and planned.” (#24)
* The encyclical was distributed in secret as a sermon on Palm Sunday, written in German rather than in Latin.
* When government found out, they interpreted as an act of hostility, further tightening their control and began to target catholic institutions and clergy

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U4 Module 5 essay plan

Discuss how and why a religion develops and expressed its beliefs

U4 module 5 essay plan

Discuss a current issue for a religion and how this religion interacts with this issue