

**Transcript: Creating a Culture of Transparency in the Catholic Church**  
**Webinar by Global Institute of Church Management and Program of Church Management**  
**January 14, 2021**

**Speakers:**

**Cardinal George Pell**

**Moderators:**

**Pia de Solenni, Fr. Robert Gahl**

**Pia:** Hi everyone, welcome to our series on Church transparency. Today we have Cardinal Pell with us. We're joined by Fr. Robert Gahl also, and we will get started in just a moment. It's exciting to me — I think this is one of our most challenging topics in the entire webinar series. This particular episode is called “Creating a Culture of Transparency in the Catholic Church.” Those of us that are very familiar with the Catholic Church know that, in fact, this is a challenge, but we can rise to the challenge.

So, I'd like to welcome you to our webinar today on behalf of the Global Institute of Church Management and the Program of Church Management in Rome. I want to give a special thank you to the EWTN Vatican Bureau in Rome. They have been a phenomenal support, and they are supporting Cardinal Pell in Rome. Fr. Bob also joins us from Rome.

Before we start, I want to mention that there's going to be a QR code on the screen when Cardinal Pell speaks, and that QR code ties to a survey that we're doing about Catholic leadership, and we encourage you to take it. It's anonymous, and there's a point where you can check if you want us to follow up with you and let you know the results. I also encourage you to share it with your friends and have others take it. If you have a group that you're part of, by all means share it with them. We will be sending it out immediately after the webinar, so if you have a problem downloading it, don't worry. You will still be able to do the survey, and it will be done right after.

I also want to remind you that our next webinar is on Thursday, February 11th at 4 p.m. Rome time, 7 a.m. Pacific time, and 10 a.m. Eastern time. This topic will be “Financial Transparency for the Diocese,” and as we know, this is a challenge for dioceses throughout the world. There are different cultural, legal, and financial standards and expectations. We have confirmed two of our panelists: one is Jim Lundholm-Eads from Leadership Round Table, and the second will be Fr. Cristian Mendoza of the Program of Church Management in Rome. We have a very special third guest that we're working to confirm, so I can't yet give you that, but we'll post that as soon as it's public. In the meantime, you can sign up for those webinars on our website at [gicm.org](http://gicm.org).

To all of our participants, as you know if you've attended these webinars in the past, there's a Q&A option, and if you look at the bottom of your screen to the right there is a Q&A option. You can

load your questions in there, and we will be able to do some Q&A at the end of the initial dialogue with Fr. Bob, His Eminence, and myself.

So, without further ado, I'd like to pass it over to Fr. Bob. Fr. Bob Gahl is a professor of ethics at the University of the Holy Cross in Rome (Santa Croce), and he's also the vice chair of the Program of Church Management. And so, with that, I turn it over to you, Father.

**Fr. Bob:** Thank you very much, Pia. It's really a pleasure to be able to have Cardinal Pell with us to express his wisdom and experience regarding the challenging topic that we have today regarding transparency in the Church and really affecting a cultural change in the Church around the world. We're so grateful to His Eminence here at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, or Santa Croce. I'm located at one of our sites here in Rome—actually in a basement library that's connected to the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross.

We're so grateful to His Eminence Cardinal Pell because the Program of Church Management wouldn't exist if it were not for his prodding us. It was really an imperative, and as you know, the Cardinal is a large man, and he's tall, and he's strong. I think he's also proven himself to be filled with moral courage. That's one of the reasons why one tends to obey him when one is asked to do something.

So, it's my colleague Martin Schlag, who is the chair of the Program of Church Management, with whom Cardinal Pell spoke I think it was five years ago, but actually, you know, things have moved so quickly. Cardinal Pell envisioned this program as a way of effecting cultural change in the Catholic Church, as a way to bring in best business practices, the practices of best management style into the running of Church organizations. How to do that? With a program in Rome that would be able to offer that kind of formation to leaders in the Church from around the world — and that's our effort.

So Cardinal Pell was involved with starting even before we began the Program of Church Management. We began what we called IBLAC, the International Business Leaders Advisory Council, and this is a group of just really generous and brilliant, very, very experienced business people — many from the United States, but it's really from around the world who — gave us advice regarding how to incorporate those best business practices into the Church life. They're all committed Catholics who are really dedicated to seeing those practices effected in the Church. We appointed the Cardinal the founding president of the International Business Leaders Advisory Council, and we're very proud to have his leadership and his guidance.

We're blessed to have him now back in Rome. As you all know, it's less than a year ago that he was acquitted by the high court of Australia for all of those terrible charges that were against him, and we're so grateful, Your Eminence, for your personal struggle. It was a real example for the world and for the Church of the courage in order that the truth might win out. And in particular, as I read your *Prison Journal, Volume 1*, which came out just before Christmas, I'm struck by one of the reasons why you wanted to defend your good name, your reputation, was it wasn't just for yourself. It was for the Church, but it was also, you comment, for the sake of the victims of sexual abuse, because, as you comment, what they need most of all is also the truth regarding those terrible

crimes. And in addition to fighting for financial clarity and professionalism in the Church, you've been also promoting justice in the Church and promoting a safe environment for young people. So, with that introduction— I could say many more things, but I wanted to give you a chance to speak as soon as possible — so let me just ask, is there a connection between letting the truth shine forth and transparency in financial matters in the Church? And if so, is there a principle in the Gospel according to which we should be living transparency in Church governance affairs?

**Cardinal Pell:** That's a good question. I don't think transparency is a foundational element or issue, in this sense— We need honesty, we need efficiency, we need concepts like service and community, because if we have transparency and we let the light in on a mess, well, it's probably useful to know there is a mess. But it isn't particularly edifying, and it doesn't take us very too far forward.

Certainly, I think a concept like transparency builds on a whole set of Christian attitudes. For example, the primacy of love, the fact that we are brothers and sisters, that we're not slaves. So as brothers and sisters, we are more entitled to information than we would be in an old-world situation. We are compelled to honesty. We're compelled to justice. We're supposed to have a special concern for those who suffer the most.

I'm glad that you mentioned what I had done for the victims of pedophilia, because in 1996 we introduced in Australia both towards healing and the Melbourne response that I was directly responsible for. That's about six years before the Spotlight, before the troubles in Boston. So, we really did get going, and while it wasn't perfect, it was a substantial reform. Obviously in that area, perhaps even more than in the area of money, there is a requirement of transparency.

**Fr. Bob:** Your Eminence, you have a DPhil in Church History from the University of Oxford, and you've observed from the inside how the Vatican works. So, you also have a historical perspective with respect to Church governance from the top down — from the Vatican, to the Archdiocese of Sydney, of course, Melbourne, Caritas in Australia, and all the great work that they do throughout much of Oceania.

Pope Francis mentioned, I think while you were the Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy, in his Christmas address, he said that trying to perform an effective reform in Rome is like trying to clean the Egyptian Sphinx with a toothbrush. Could you comment what it was like being an Australian? Someone who may be used to a different kind of political system — there was a cultural divide between how the Vatican works today and how one might expect in a country like Australia? And how you were able to, and what you've learned from striving to effect such a cultural change in the Vatican?

**Cardinal Pell:** Yes. Well, I come from a new country. I come from the ends of the earth — like the Pope, but a different end of the earth. They asked him once which really was the end of the earth, and he said, “Well, we share the honor.” And it's a new country, where we're even younger than

Italy, which got going in 1870. So, you might put it into commonplace Australian language: we're "Johnny-come-latelys." The Vatican has survived for 2000 years.

There's a marvelous story that when Pope Pius VII died in captivity, Napoleon said incautiously to an Italian cleric, "Well, that's the end of the Catholic Church." And the Italian cleric said, "Look, we clergy haven't been able to destroy the Church in 1800 years. You've got no chance whatsoever!" So, the Church has been doing these things and surviving and doing them well for a long, long time. The 20th century saw two World Wars — the Church, the Vatican survived that. They saw off communism, they saw off Nazism.

So, you know you'd be totally foolish to come into Rome with all the answers. But as you said, there was a difference of culture, and economically, they were used to doing things in a much less formal way. We really required them to list what they had in their pockets in the different areas of the Vatican, and it was a very good result because we found that about \$1.3 billion which wasn't on their books.

We introduced nothing radical — just modern accounting procedures — and made them mandatory. So, it was a bit of a culture shock in some quarters when we insisted, they record on their books what they were doing with the cash, and that the cash movements also had to be recorded. There was no clear practice of preparing budgets before the financial year. We did that for the first time in Vatican history. We did it on one occasion. In Sydney, we used to, I think we reported 10 times a year. And when we had it set up so that we could check on the expenditure against the budget, I think we managed to do that during my time once. That was the first time. That was halfway through the year when we were able to check just how we were going against the expenditure.

I'm not sure really how many people knew the totality of where the Vatican was financially — probably a few did, they must have. Certainly was going okay, you know, they were paying the bills perhaps a little more effectively than they might be now with Covid.

But there was a distance to be traversed before it could be said that they were implementing modern best practice as they are doing now. It might be a little bit imperfect, but that's what they're doing.

**Fr. Bob:** Towards the end of your time as Acting Prefect when you had to go back to Australia in order to face the charges, there were a number of what seemed to be setbacks in the financial reform that Pope Francis was trying to effect in the Vatican. Of course, one of them was your departure, but there was also the removal of the general auditor of the of the Vatican City-State. More recently, there has been a flurry — really a storm — of scandalous news about things that have happened in the past, like with respect to that London real estate property, and more recently this odd news about this massive amount of money — more than a billion dollars — that seems to have been sent, or perhaps was sent by some kind of an account linked to the Vatican, perhaps to Australia.

**Cardinal Pell:** A preliminary clarification there which is good news for the Vatican, I think, in a couple of ways — the AUSTRAC Anti Money Laundering authorities in Australia made a

spectacular error of the order of two billion. So, they have just corrected that in the last couple of days and said they are now investigating some suspicious activity within a total of nine million.

I must say, I wickedly took a little bit of consolation as a Vatican employee when I learned that 2 billion wasn't money laundered during the time in which I was the Prefect for the Economy. And I also shouted and rejoiced in the misfortune of others — which is not recommended for us Christians! It became very clear that there's inefficiency not just in the Vatican, but also in the English-speaking world, where we vaunt our financial capacity and our honesty.

And since we're talking about transparency, it looks as though over the last few years, there have been massive fines in the Australian courts. It looks as though Australia, and to some extent possibly New Zealand, have been a little bit wobbly and weak in their vigilance over money laundering. That's for them to ascertain to what extent that is true, but all is not well there, and the So, present Vatican authorities were quite rightfully resistant and rather displeased by the accusation that two billion went through in that time, sponsored by an organization with an annual budget of between 300 and 350 million. So that's the initial clarification that I wanted to introduce.

**Fr. Bob:** Yes, thank you. And I think that's really significant because it's indicative of the progress, perhaps, or some progress, in the Vatican, that we've received a response to that accusation. That response helps to clear things up, and it shows that the Vatican is not hiding the financial operation. So, I mean, really the point of my question was whether or not there is — and if we're in the midst of — a paradigm shift in the Vatican brought about by Pope Francis and your efforts? To what extent do you see the pope's recent *motu proprio* just, you know, approved just before Christmas that is effecting this shift of funds from the oversight of the Secretary of State to the APSA, and that it seems like it is a way of increasing oversight and a kind of division of powers and authorities so that there is an outside observer looking after how one group is shifts making their expenditures. Do you see that as progress in the Vatican?

**Cardinal Pell:** There's no doubt that if it's implemented appropriately and well, it represents massive progress. You mentioned briefly the departure of Libero Milone, who was very efficient, a very competent and upright auditor. And I'm not sure whether you did mention the discontinuance of the external audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers. Now both of those were, I suppose, disasters. A good deal of the present troubles—especially the London troubles—they might even have been prevented, and they certainly would have been recognized earlier.

So, I had said when I was in the job that it was a secondary issue about who was controlling sections of the money, although it had to be coordinated or should have been. What was really important was that it was managed well — that money wasn't wasted, that we were getting a good return on our investments. The Secretary of State financially, by any criterion, certainly a criterion of competence, the losses on that one London property alone, they run into what might be more than one or two hundred million, certainly a hundred and fifty. I mean, that's very, very significant. The Vatican is not a big operation by world standards.

So, this decentralization with APSA depends on how faithfully and competently it's done, that it's directly under supervision and, ultimately, control, that the Secretariat for the Economy has got to have effective power to stop things when they need to be stopped. There's no point in having a Secretariat for the Economy who is just a commentator. And the Secretariat has that power.

What will be vitally important is that the Pope's plan to set up a single board of highly competent and expert people to manage the investments coming out of Covid-19, coming out of the financial pressures which we're presently experiencing. That will be absolutely vital. And that was recommended seven years ago by COSEA, the committee that Pope Francis instituted, and which does such a fine job, under the leadership of Joseph Zahra from Malta, in identifying, I think, most of the major problems and then setting out the essential elements for reform, which we were attempting to implement, and which is now being continued.

**Fr. Bob:** Many of our participants are engaged in church governance, including financial affairs in dioceses and in parishes, of course, at the local level. So, for instance, what you just mentioned regarding the general auditor and the audit done by Pricewaterhouse that was begun in the Holy See — how do you see an implementation of something similar at the local level? Would it be appropriate to promote audits of local churches and perhaps of parishes, religious congregations, and other charitable organizations run by the Church? And might that require some kind of a ramp up of the implementation of some form of audit?

**Cardinal Pell:** Well, I worked very energetically in different quarters both with the bishops in the diocese and bishops in missionary diocese to have sent out to them a recommendation that when there is a change of leadership—there's a new provincial, a new bishop come in— that an audit of some sort be performed so that the new person coming into office would have an accurate idea of just where they were financially. Now, that was lost in either mists or the shallows, I'm not quite sure but it didn't get anywhere. But I still think it's basically a good idea.

What was clear is that in different parts of the world, the situations are so fantastically different that, I mean, in many parts the parishes or the diocese couldn't afford the price of an international firm doing an audit. In some countries, they were very insistent that it would have to be a Catholic group that did the audit and, you know, a region of bishops could set up an auditing group which would have a look at the diocese or the parishes. I think that is a basic issue of transparency. I think that it's something that can be done and would be done in quite different ways, but I am still enthusiastic for the general idea, and I really encourage it.

If something is badly wrong, it's good to know about it. It can make life very difficult in the short term, but it's much better than having it going on and on and on and on, and the losses multiplying. And if things have basically gone well, then that's a reason for thanks and gratitude. I'll say this for the last time, I'm repeating myself, but I do think some form of audit is possible in nearly every situation. Whether we call it accountability, or whether we call it transparency, there are different levels of interest and education amongst the lay people wanting to know about money. I'm all in favor of audits by competent, independent people — not people who are under the thumb of the person who asked for the audit

**Fr. Bob:** Thank you, Your Eminence. One practical item that I forgot to mention at the beginning during the introduction is that there is a Q&A box at the bottom of your screen, so all of the participants can send in questions because we will, of course, have a Q&A session towards the conclusion of this webinar.

We still have about 15 minutes left of this back and forth with the Cardinal, and I just wanted to continue this idea of the reforms that Pope Francis has effected in the Holy See, especially this recent *motu proprio*. It seems from my perspective that there is not just a kind of separation of powers or checks and balances, but that there is an augmentation of what you could call “collegiality.” In fact, one of our recent webinars focused on collegiality, which is this idea that within the Church, as the same is true in civil affairs, it's better not to have one person making decisions.

But even St. Thomas Aquinas says that the best form of government would be an all-powerful monarch, so long as he's a saint. But that's unlikely, and therefore it's better to have a mixed form of government because a very bad form of government is an all-powerful monarch who's corrupt and a tyrant. Unfortunately, we have seen such terrible corruption in the Church, and certainly at the diocesan level.

So, I ask you, given your experience in the diocese as an archbishop, do you think that archbishops and bishops should be in making it, even through canonical decrees, so that their authority of jurisdiction and governance be somehow more collegial? Would you see that there are paths for them to do so also with respect to financial affairs, so they cannot make an expense, for instance, on their own, but they would have to agree to do so through a governing board of some sort, perhaps of which they are the head?

**Cardinal Pell:** Well, I'm afraid that you're talking to a monarchist. I very much believe, and the Church is certainly committed to a synodality, to *communio*. We're totally opposed to the arbitrary exercise of power. But what distinguishes us, say, from the Orthodox or the Anglican church is not only the direct capacity of the Holy Father to intervene and to do things, but also that the bishops are able to do that in their diocese. Now I'm very much in favor of that, but let me immediately place some limits.

In the United States, the Constitution is very good with the balancing of different powers. In the Church, every diocese has to have a finance council; it has to be consulted. Now, I was quite prepared, once in a blue moon, to go alone on faith and morals if I felt that I had to do so to defend the apostolic tradition. I was a servant of the tradition; I'm not just a master.

But with finance, I assured the finance council that I would never act against their majority recommendation, and I faithfully kept to that. I had some wonderful, wonderful people on that. One chap had been deputy governor of the reserve bank in Australia, another fellow, a very good friend of mine, a very successful businessman.

Another dimension, especially for big dioceses where, through hard work across many generations, they've established something of a patrimony: it is enormously important that that is not wasted, that it's not blown, that we don't have too many repetitions of the fiasco of the London property deal.

And the finance council must know what's going on. The investment committee must know what's going on. So, a bishop certainly shouldn't be rampaging ahead and making decisions of any significance without putting it through his finance committee. I think that is actually required by canon law that on some issues, the bishop has to consult his consultants. So, it is good to have appropriate procedures in place, and it's essential that the bishop, although as I said I'm in favor of monarchical bishops, that the bishop respects those procedures and follows them.

Also, the finance council, the great majority of them, should be lay people, and they should be highly competent and expert at every level from parish to diocese to archdiocese. When I got here to Rome, I was impressed by the number of wonderfully competent people who are prepared to give their services for nothing to the Church. We've got to be grateful to them and respect them and thank them.

If you've got a whole body of experts, it should be very, very rare that you don't take their advice. If once in a while you mightn't be able to, a bishop would need to have to explain in very significant, sequential detail just why he wasn't doing that. That was never my situation, and I'm certainly not the slightest bit in favor of having a finance committee on paper and never meeting. Nor am I in favor of having a finance committee which is full of people who don't understand money and often will boast that they don't understand money. These are recipes for damage and the occasional disaster.

**Fr. Bob:** Well, I'm very happy, Your Eminence, that you enunciated the principle regarding church governance that the powers are invested in the bishop, but at the same time you went beyond the canon law in relinquishing some feature of that. Because it is true, I understand, in canon law that the finance council must exist and must be consulted, but not necessarily that it must be followed. I know you didn't say that it had to be followed, but you did say that you promised that you wouldn't act directly against them, and I think that does go in the direction of collegiality. You also mentioned the involvement of lay people...

**Cardinal Pell:** It's a recognition of expertise. Now, undoubtedly, I've got marginally more expertise in faith and morals than I ever did in finance, and certainly they knew immensely more about finance than I did. The situation might not have been exactly the same in faith and morals, but I don't regret that principle I adopted of never moving against the majority, and, actually, while there were differences obviously on different things — how best to preserve the patrimony — but there were never there was never a clear and massive division on any sort of financial issue.

One of the hazards, of course, is if your finance committee doesn't understand that we're a Church, and that we're not a business. So that means that whatever else we're about, making a financial profit is not our first priority, and the care of the poor and the unfortunate, the sick, social services

— I suppose they're our first spiritual priority rather than the shareholders, or rather than the bottom line financially.

**Fr. Bob:** So, Your Eminence, my next question was going to be about clericalism and overcoming it, so I'd really better pass the mic to a lay woman who's an expert in moral theology, to Pia, who's been waiting to ask you a question.

**Pia:** So, Your Eminence, I wanted to ask you — we've been talking about transparency. How would you define it? Or what are the characteristics of transparency? Because it's a big word, but unless we break it down and talk about specifically what it is, we're not going to be able to implement it. And then I have a follow-up question after that.

**Cardinal Pell:** Yes, well, I think that transparency is almost at the end of a particular line — I touched on that. Underneath it, there's a need for honesty that's well established in the Gospel, there's a need for efficiency. We must be inspired by the concept of service. We have a fundamental theological notion of *communio* so you know we're totally opposed to despotic power; we certainly do not recognize any right to take decisions and to not explain them.

Transparency means that we let the light in on these things and, as I said, if there's a mess, it's good to know about it. I think the requirements of society change from time to time and from circumstances on what the people are interested in knowing. Now one, I think, characteristic of both Australia and the United States at the moment is, you know, there have been some very big public mishaps. The Catholic lay people are disconcerted and worried by that, and they are saying, “We need to know.” And that's got to be respected and their basic questions answered.

Now in happier times, when the things were going well, I also believe in things like an annual financial report. Now whether you put every card on the table, that's a question. But if you're reporting regularly and things are going okay, people won't be clamoring for information in a way to which they are entitled when you have some spectacular mishaps.

**Pia:** Thank you my follow-up question, Your Eminence, is the theme of this webinar. How do we begin to change this culture? We know that it goes back hundreds of years, there's the element of clericalism. I mean, are we waiting for the Vatican to change? Do we start to change wherever we can? How does this change begin to happen? Because I think for a lot of us, we're seeing the headlines — whether it's at a national level in the U.S., in Ireland, in Australia, and or we're seeing the international headlines at the Vatican — and it just seems so far out of our grasp. I mean, it just seems absolutely impossible to see how this is going to begin to change. You've given some instances of change, but can you say a little bit more? How do you change a culture, and a culture that goes back hundreds of years and that is rooted in the worst kind of clericalism?

**Cardinal Pell:** Well, that last claim is a rather large one. Look, certainly there's no theological or sociological reason why many dioceses or religious orders around the world should be waiting for the Vatican to do it. And, in fact, many, many dioceses in many parts of the world — that might be

a bit of an overstatement — would be ahead of us in the Vatican in the technical way in which they organize their finances and report on them.

My instinct is that in many well, parts of the world, financial management is not too bad. In some places, that might be different, but we need lay leaders there, Church leaders there, who do know the basics of the management of money and can ask the right questions and require the right answers.

We've made very significant progress in the Vatican. It's got to continue. I agree the Vatican should be giving a lead. Pope Francis wants that; he is struggling to do that. He's like the head of any organization — just because he decides that something should happen, it doesn't automatically follow that at will.

I've probably got an executive way of approaching things. I think you need clear policies, and you need people in key positions who understand those policies, are competent in implementing them, who will explain them, who are approachable, humanly speaking. That's the way that I think. It's certainly essential, whether it's the first way of changing a culture or not but people are sensible if they see something's working, if they see the advantages of it. The overwhelming majority of people working in the Vatican, when we explained to them what we were trying to do, they were more than happy with that. They didn't necessarily understand how to do it, and I'm sure there were a few people who were very unhappy with what we were trying to do because there is a close connection between incompetence and being robbed. If your procedures are in place and you've got competent people who know what should be happening, it's much more difficult to be robbed. And the Catholic people -- they're entitled to honesty and efficiency.

**Pia:** Thank you. My last question before I head it back over to Fr. Bob: obviously this work of Church leaders — whether they're cleric, religious or lay — it's not enough just to know the systems. Can you speak to the spiritual formation that's required, and also the time that we need to be spending on our spiritual lives? That's a very important component of the Global Institute for Church Management. We really do emphasize that the spiritual is the foundation and the core, for everything good that will flow from that. I was just wondering if you could speak to that, and I know your current book is a tantamount witness to it.

**Cardinal Pell:** Thank you. Look, it's dangerous to be working with money. I was surprised by how much I enjoyed my work. Money's a tainted thing that can fascinate clerics. I haven't met many, but I've met some clergy at different clergy meetings — the only time they ever opened their mouth was to talk about the money. I remember being very disconcerted. I was a priest for decades when somebody pointed out to me that Christ spoke more times about the dangers of money than he did about hypocrisy, so it's not the most important thing we're doing.

An interesting example: I once said at a meeting in Rimini that it was more difficult to convert a soul than to reform some aspects of the Vatican finance. The press reported me as saying exactly the opposite. I put out a correction almost immediately, but it didn't change the subsequent press reports. For the Church, money is not of first importance or of every importance, and you know we have to follow the teachings of Jesus in this, and he recommended poverty.

Now one of the Gospel texts speaks about poverty of spirit, that's probably just as difficult. Perhaps everybody is called to poverty. Not everybody is able to manage it. Of course, we've had those great intellectual struggles over the centuries, within orders that were explicitly dedicated to poverty, like the Franciscans.

And so, I was enormously surprised to find out that it was the Franciscans more than anyone else who changed the Church's teaching on usury. Money was regarded as being dead, and therefore you couldn't take a legitimate interest from it. But the Franciscans wisely recognized that money was a living thing, and they were entitled to make interest from it, which our Lord had recognized in that parable of the talents. You see the fellow who got into trouble with the parable of the talents: he didn't lose his one talent. He buried it, but he didn't make anything on it. So, our Lord in the parable of the talents knew what he was talking about there, and it is important to try to use money well.

Money is a vital and necessary servant for the leaders of the church — lay and the clerical religious — but for every one of us, it's a tyrannical master. It'll dry up our hearts. It'll distort our vision. It'll quite take us away from what the Gospel wants us to do.

**Fr. Bob:** Your Eminence, we just have a few minutes left to address some of the questions that have come in from our participants, and there's quite a few of them. Some of them indicate a lot of ecclesial experience, and one of them is actually a constellation of questions that have to do with accountability and its relationship to transparency. In particular, it's coming from donors who, you know, generous contributors to the so, Church and her activities, who are asking specifically about Peter's Pence and whether or not, and to what extent, should donors hold the Church hierarchy accountable by withdrawing their donations until they see the kind of response, that kind of transparency, that is expected of best business practices?

**Cardinal Pell:** Well, that's a very direct and crucial question. As a preliminary, I have fought for years for the principle that if the donors give money for a specific purpose, it must be used for that specific purpose.

The *Obolo di San Pietro*, the Peter's Pence, faces a gigantic challenge. It is there first of all to help the poor. It was also used to help defray the running costs of the curia. Quite some time ago, it might even have been back in the days of the fifteen Cardinals, a number of us insisted that it be included in the goals that went out to people that some of the money was being used for the running of the curia. I was never in favor of the majority of the *Obolo di san Pietro* being used to balance the books to minimize the deficit. It's always a question when you have a fund which is collected for charitable purposes — to what extent do you run it out quickly, or to what extent do you invest or hang on to part of it? Certainly, the *Obolo di San Pietro* I'd certainly never be used for speculation. I can see in the documentation that it can be used to help cover the running costs of the papacy. I fail to see just how it can or should be used for investments.

I think it's a legitimate question to the powers-that-be that are in charge of those collections simply to state clearly and briefly what it is being used for, and then to, I think, to give some sort of a report on what in fact it is used for. I think there is quite an amount of information that comes in on just where the offerings are coming from. I'm not really up to speed on how they explain what they're doing, but it's an entirely reasonable request for people to know where their money is going, what it is being used on, and for them to have a reliable belief that it's being used as it was explained that it would be.

**Fr. Bob:** Thank you, Cardinal Pell. Now we just have time for one more question, and then we'll have to conclude. Again, I'm drawing this from a number of the comments and questions made by our participants. It's related, of course, to effecting this cultural change which is such a challenge in this, the largest organization, I think, in the world, and the longest standing organization in the world.

What can be the role of formation — both in the seminary and of ongoing formation for priests and for bishops — and how do you see that the Global Institute of Church Management and other such initiatives can contribute? Because we're working with many partners, we're trying to accelerate this change, and we're very happy when there are others in the field who are also promoting this formation.

What can best be done to change the culture both in seminary formation and ongoing formation? And, really, I should mention, also the laity, because it's come up also in a number of our questions including involving women in the consultation regarding finances and Church governments. If so, how can we effect this cultural change towards greater accountability and transparency through seminary formation? First of all, I mean, is there a place for this in seminary formation? Or should it be instead more offered to priests after their ordination, after a few years of experience? And what can be done here in the field across the world for ongoing formation, including for bishops?

**Cardinal Pell:** Well, first of all, the Council for the Economy and the Vatican presides over all financial affairs. It's composed of eight Cardinals and seven lay people. I think six of the new appointees are women— all of them highly competent professionals with a great background. I'm very, very hopeful that they will be very clear-headed on the basic issues and insist that we sentimental males get our act together and just to do the right thing.

Because financially, I'm not sure the Vatican can continue for too much longer losing money the way we're losing money. And on top of that, there's a very, very real pressure as I think exists in every western country from the pension fund. Grace won't exempt us from these things.

Moving more particularly to your question, I spoke to a master's class postgraduate at the University of St. Thomas — I think it's certainly in the States, I think it's in Houston — just a few days ago, and one of the priests asked me exactly this question about seminary formation. I think there should be something on it. Now, quite a number of our seminarians in places like Australia and the United States already have significant background in business. Many of them, perhaps most of them, don't, so I think it would be useful for them to be introduced to it at some stage. The Archdiocese of Sydney is now doing that with the young priests.

I used to be tied up with the education of Catholic teachers, and in the pre-service course, the courses in psychology were the least attractive for many of them. But when they came back for some post-service courses after some years of experience, many of them found the psychology courses most attractive, and they were very just keen to do them.

There might be something in that with the priests. It might be better early on in their priesthood. After they've faced up to some of these issues, they might be more interested in them than earlier, but at some stage, I think all of them should be required to demonstrate that, like myself, they're able to see a hole in the ladder.

**Fr. Bob:** Yes, thank you again, Your Eminence. We'll need to close just a practical matter before concluding. Please, all the participants — if you can register at the Global Institute of Church Management so that you can we can keep you up to date on our activities and also remind you about the upcoming webinar, which is on February 11th: “Financial Transparency and Dioceses.” Pia already mentioned that we have an invitation out to a speaker who we're hoping can come, but we can't reveal his name yet because he hasn't confirmed. But we really pray for that.

And thanks to all the participants— a couple of the last comments that have come in are from Brazil and from Singapore, but they've really been from all over the world, and we'll be trying to follow up also with those with the questions because we have them all saved on our website.

So, in reading the first volume of your prison journal, like Pia, I was impressed by the importance of prayer and the importance of the sacramental life. In particular, I was really struck by what you mentioned about holy Communion. Sadly, you couldn't celebrate Mass at all, and you could only receive about once a week. You mentioned you couldn't receive on Christmas day, and yet you said that after receiving holy Communion, you felt that need for some time of quiet, of silence to be with our Lord. I know that we priests around the world were inspired by your courage during that time in prison, and we're really grateful for your example.

If you could conclude this session that we just had with you we really hopefully a historic for the Program of Church Management and the Global Institute of Church Management, could you conclude please with a blessing for all of us, so that we can go out and contribute to this change of culture in the Church, so that really the light of Christ might shine forth — first of all in our hearts? Thank you, Your Eminence.

**Cardinal Pell:** Well, thank you to you Pia and Fr. Bob for guiding me through this. Please God it has been a bit useful, and so that to all those who are listening — may the blessing of almighty God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit come down upon you all and continue to keep your hearts full of faith and hope and love.