

Melbourne launch of Archbishop Peter Comensoli's new book argues the value of every human being

Archbishop of Melbourne, Peter A. Comensoli's new book *In God's Image: Recognizing the Profoundly Impaired as Persons* is an important contribution to Catholic anthropology, especially in defence of persons who experience disability and who can be overlooked and misunderstood.

Australian Catholic University (ACU) Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Greg Craven will launch the book at the University's Melbourne Campus on Thursday 14 March.

Professor Craven said that Archbishop Comensoli made a robust argument in the book for the personhood of every human being, arguing that it is all too easy to overlook and marginalise those who don't fit into our category of "able-bodied" or "able-minded".

"*In God's Image* has received many generous endorsements from scholars, who have praised its contribution to contemporary Catholic theological discourse on the nature, dignity and destiny of the human being," Professor Craven said.

"The book demonstrates we have a responsibility to live alongside those with cognitive impairments as friends, in a community, and to be open to learning from them how it is we can be more perfectly human.

"The book will pave the way forward for Christian theologians working on the topic of disability and impairment."

In God's Image began as Archbishop Comensoli's doctoral thesis at the University of Edinburgh and has been developed and refined into its current form.

Archbishop Comensoli has had a long association with ACU. He has served on the advisory board of ACU's PM Glynn Institute and participated as a panelist at public events organised by the University. Archbishop Comensoli also served as Chair of the Internal Unit Review of our Faculty of Theology and Philosophy in 2015.

The Archbishop has participated in a number of student activities through our campus ministry, including presiding at graduation masses in his former role as the Bishop of Broken Bay, which neighbours Sydney and our North Sydney Campus.

Medi Ann Volpe, Lecturer in Theology and Ethics, Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University, describes the author as "turning the usual question about being in the image of God on its head".

In a review of the book, she writes, "Drawing on St. Thomas Aquinas, he argues that the profoundly cognitively impaired are in the image of God by nature. There is thus no need to prove that they bear the image of God. It is we, the 'rationally capacious,' who have the capacity to mar the image of God by conscious opposition to God's grace. Comensoli's book is a must-read for anyone interested in theology and intellectual disability."

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