The Public Role of Bishops: Matthew Beovich, the ALP Split and the Vietnam War

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What impact should Catholic bishops have on public life? The 1917 Code of Canon Law offered little guidance and members of the Australian hierarchy developed markedly different styles. Not long after becoming Archbishop of Melbourne in 1917, Daniel Mannix expressed the view that his predominantly working-class flock ‘looked for leadership and guidance not only as regards purely spiritual matters, but also as regards their temporal interests and wellbeing’.1 Like an Irish tribal leader, until his death in 1963 Mannix did not shy away from political controversies. He has, as a result, been extolled for his ‘outspoken fearlessness’ and condemned as a divisive demagogue.2 James Duhig developed a more conciliatory style as archbishop of Brisbane from 1917 to 1965. A patriotic Australian and fervent royalist, Duhig exemplified the rising social status of Catholics when, in 1959, he became the first Catholic bishop in Australia to receive a knighthood.3 This paper is concerned with a member of the next generation of bishops, Mathew

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1. From a transcript of a speech Mannix gave to students at the Urban College of Propaganda Fide in Rome on 10 April 1921. One of the students was Matthew Beovich. He kept it in his diary which is now in the Adelaide Catholic Archdiocesan Archives (ACAA). All archival material referred to in this paper can be found in the ACAA. At the request of the archivist no box numbers will be given as the archives are being reorganized.


Beovich, archbishop of Adelaide from 1939 to 1971. It will focus on his response to the 1954-55 split in the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Vietnam War.

The Split

It is well known that the Split was triggered by federal ALP leader H.V. Evatt’s denunciation on 5 October 1954 of the secretive anti-communist organisation led by B.A. Santamaria. In the absence of Santamaria’s patron, Mannix, Beovich was one of Santamaria’s key supporters at the meeting of the Australian hierarchy in 1945 which endorsed the Catholic Social Studies Movement (the Movement). After Evatt’s attack, the ALP national conference in March 1955 withdrew its endorsement of the Industrial Groups through which the Movement had operated. In a speech at the opening of a Catholic school a few days later, Beovich commended the ‘stalwart men and women’ who had, through the Industrial Groups, fought to free unions from communist control. He concluded: ‘I give the warning ... that if the Industrial Groups are destroyed throughout Australia, the Communists will be the only gainers’. The following month he signed the pastoral letter which was issued by the Australian hierarchy. Titled ‘On the Menace of Communism’, it praised ‘the courageous campaign’ which had ‘saved our civil and religious freedoms ... when they were in grave peril’. Many years later, when asked to explain the Joint Pastoral, Beovich commented that given their previous support for the Movement, the bishops could hardly disown it: ‘the Movement has been in existence, you’ve been helping it, you’re not going to drop it like a hot potato.’

Beovich’s commitment to the Movement did not, however, extend to the reconstructed organisation which became known in 1956 as the Catholic

4. Matthew Beovich was born in Melbourne on 1 April 1896. His father was a Croatian migrant, his mother of Irish descent. He was ordained to the priesthood in Rome on 23 December 1922. He returned to Melbourne in 1923 and worked largely in the field of Catholic education until he was ordained Archbishop of Adelaide on 7 April 1940. He retired in 1971 and died on 24 October 1981.


Social Movement and evolved in 1957 into the National Civic Council (NCC). Beovich declined to approve these supposedly new organisations. He also refused to support the offspring of the Split, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP). In his memoirs, Santamaria attributes this apparent about face to left-wing politicians threatening Beovich with a sectarian backlash. South Australian ALP powerbroker Clyde Cameron claims he warned Beovich this would be the case. In a recent article, Malcolm Saunders and Neil Lloyd conclude that Beovich was forced into disavowing the Movement by the need to protect ‘not only the foothold the Catholic Church had established in South Australia but the enviable reputation the state had enjoyed for religious harmony’.

Beovich certainly cultivated good relations with the state’s civic leaders and the heads of other Christian churches. After he was installed as Archbishop of Adelaide in April 1940, Mannix paid tribute to the ‘quiet, tactful’ way he had operated as Director of Catholic Education in Melbourne:

I express my appreciation of him for doing things which I could not possibly accomplish myself. He has a way of making friends all around him, and I do not think he made any enemies. I may have made some friends, but I have made many enemies. You can understand how much I feel the loss of Dr Beovich.

Nevertheless, Beovich also firmly defended the interests of his church when he felt it necessary. For example, during the Second World War he protested so vigorously at the requisitioning of Catholic school buildings for military use that the army backed off. He also held a public rally to decry the bombing of his beloved Rome by Allied forces in 1944, and does not seem to have been perturbed by the predictable sectarian reaction. Four more factors, therefore, need to be taken into account when assessing his refusal to support the NCC and DLP.

First, in 1945 Beovich supported an organisation designed primarily to combat communist infiltration of the trade union movement. This was a real concern in 1945 as members of the Communist Party of Australia were leading

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13. Southern Cross, 12 April 1940.
14. For Duhig’s very different approach, and opposition to Beovich’s attempt to get the Australian hierarchy to make a united protest, see Boland, Duhig, 302.
15. For the rally, see Advertiser, 10 April 1944 and Southern Cross, 14 April 1944. Duhig, on the other hand, blamed the Italian government for not making Rome an ‘open city’ and accepted that the Allies had tried to avoid bombing Rome’s historic sites. See Boland, Duhig, 306-8.
a number of the nation's largest industrial unions. The subsequent decline in their influence was at least partly due to the Movement.16 While Beovich believed that the Movement played a valuable role, he reflected in 1957 that it had been a mistake for it to follow so closely the communist technique of secret infiltration — Santamaria preferred to call it 'permeation' — and to develop what Santamaria described in 1945 as 'a national organisation as strongly disciplined as the Communist Party'; in other words, one controlled from a national headquarters with a high degree of obedience expected from members.17

By the 1950s Beovich realised what he should have foreseen in 1945, that a logical consequence of success in the industrial sphere would be involvement in the ALP. Although Santamaria always denied that he aspired to dominate the ALP, on 11 December 1952, after the party's victory in the Victorian state election, he wrote to Mannix that 'the Social Studies Movement should within a period of five to six years be able to completely transform the leadership of the Labor Movement, and to introduce into Federal and State spheres large numbers of members who ... should be able to implement a Christian social programme.'18 Significantly, a week later Beovich noted in his diary that he had received 'disturbing news' about the Movement becoming too party political: 'It may be so & I have feared this. Will need careful watching'.19 In line with some of the best contemporary Catholic political thinking, on a number of occasions he reiterated that while the Church was entitled to speak out on matters of faith and morals, Catholics should participate in party politics as individuals and not as representatives of the Church.20 Moreover, even when he encouraged Catholics to become involved in trade unions, he insisted that the most effective weapons against communism were spiritual ones: prayer and penance.21

Yet at this time Beovich still held Santamaria in high esteem. He reported in his diary on 21 December 1953 that he had had a conversation with the new apostolic delegate, Romolo Carboni. He had extolled the work of the

16. Robert Murray downplays the significance of both the ALP Industrial Groups and the Movement's influence within the Groups, *The Split*, 18. So does Gerard Henderson in *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, 101-2. Ross Fitzgerald reaches a different conclusion: he maintains that 'the Industrial Groups were the only source of consistent resistance to the Communist Party's strategy to gain control of the union movement, and Santamaria and the Movement were the intellectual force behind the Groups', *The Pope's Battalions*, 289.

17. In 1957 Beovich jotted down a list of 'mistakes of the Movement' on the back of a used envelope. He was probably preparing the points which he intended to make at a meeting of the Australian hierarchy.


19. Diary, 18 December 1952.

20. This is evident in his annual lectures to the Newman Institute. Transcripts for 1953 and 1954 are in the ACAA. The 1956 lecture was reported in the *Southern Cross*, 25 May 1956. Beovich had opened the Institute in Adelaide in 1948 'to equip Catholic men and women with a knowledge of industrial and economic problems based on the social teachings of the Catholic Church'. See *Southern Cross*, 16 April 1948.

21. See, for example, *Southern Cross*, 22 September 1944 and 11 May 1951 (addresses to the Catholic Railway Workers' Association).
Movement and described Bob Santamaria as ‘the best Catholic layman in Australia’. At some later date, after Carboni had become an admirer of Santamaria and was publicly backing his contention that the Movement was an independent lay organisation, Beovich went back to his comment of 21 December and wrote in the margin of his diary: ‘mea culpa’.

The second factor to be considered is that Beovich assumed that the Movement was a Church organisation for which the bishops were ultimately responsible. In a report to the bishops before they met to discuss the Movement in 1945, Santamaria stated that ‘the Movement within a particular diocese is in all things subject to the will of the Ordinary and it exists only by his permission’. At the meeting Beovich seconded the motion that it ‘be controlled, both in policy and finance, by a special committee of bishops’. This consisted of Mannix, Gilroy of Sydney, and James O’Collins of Ballarat. Such control never amounted to much, because Gilroy did not attend meetings and Mannix and O’Collins were very close to Santamaria, but the finance provided was considerable. The quota for the Adelaide archdiocese in 1955 was almost £1000.

Accepting his share of the responsibility for an organisation which he helped fund, Beovich tried before and after Evatt’s attack to rein in the Movement’s political activities. For example, the minutes of the meeting of the hierarchy on 17-19 April 1951 record that:

The Archbishop of Adelaide said that in setting up the movement the Hierarchy had done a most important service to the Church and Australia by offering a very effective counter to the heresy of atheistic communism. It was essential, however, that great care be taken lest the Church and the Hierarchy be involved in purely party politics. The meeting agreed that this could be achieved and that the movement could be properly directed by frequent meetings of the ‘Committee to control the Industrial Movement’.

That did not happen.

There is a document in the Adelaide Archdiocesan Archives which was sent from the Movement’s national headquarters in Melbourne to the state office in Adelaide on 13 May 1953. It refers to a decision taken at a Movement meeting in January 1953 to mention the issue of ‘our acting in the political field’ in the Movement’s annual report to the hierarchy ‘in a manner which would appear to be incidental to the main report, but which would nevertheless raise the point at issue for determination’. Subsequently the national executive, in consultation with the sympathetic Bishop O’Collins, decided that it would be ‘bad tactics’ to raise the matter for discussion – it would be better to assume that such political action was valid. The outcome was ‘most satisfactory’. The bishops’ ‘most cordial’ reception of the report

22. For the 1945 meeting, see Duncan, Crusade or Conspiracy?, 82-3.
23. It is one of the Movement’s internal communications which was once deemed so secret that it was cut in half and each half posted to a separate address to lessen the risk of a complete document falling into communist hands.
represented 'a unanimous vote of confidence in the show' (i.e. the Movement). The only concern which was expressed was over 'the use which some of our members and organisers make of the authority which the chiefs [i.e. the bishops] have reposed in us as a major weapon in spreading the work of the organisation, and, more important, of securing adherence to its policies [sic]'. Accordingly, it had now been ruled that:

A. We are entitled to invoke the will and authority of the chiefs as the basis for the existence of our organisation. (However, we should not invoke the authority of the chiefs too promiscuously even in this regard, using it only when it's a matter of real necessity).

B. We are not entitled to invoke the authority of the chiefs as a method of enforcing compliance with every detail of policy which we adopt as an organisation. The chiefs are strongly behind our organisation and give a general support to the major lines of policy which it adopts. They cannot be expected, however, to be held responsible for every small item of policy and do not wish to be quoted as backing every item of policy we adopt.

Clearly it was important for the Movement to be able to claim episcopal authorisation.  

At the annual meeting of the hierarchy in April 1955 it was agreed that a new committee should be established to control the Movement. This duly met in May 1955, but reached a stalemate as Mannix, the chairman, would not allow each state the right to adopt its own policies or veto decisions of the Movement's national executive, and he frustrated the attempt to reconsider the Movement's mandate by refusing to call another meeting that year. On 20 March 1956 Gilroy took over the presider's chair, and four days later Beovich was pleased to receive the committee's decision that the Movement should confine its activities to the industrial field and education, not politics. When he received the national executive's response — that the Movement was essentially a lay organisation and therefore free to enter the political sphere — he jotted in the margin of the letter, 'No. The bishops are closely bound up with the Movement. They finance it in great part and gave it a specific

24. As Edmund Campion recalls: 'In the Catholic imaginative world the authority of the bishops was underpinned by Christ; to deny one was to deny the other; to disobey one was to disobey the other. Thus obedience to the authority of the bishops was not a mere notional assent, it bit deep into the emotions. Those who spoke with the authority of the bishops could count on a flow-on from this obduent psychology ... Catholic critics of the organisation were told that their criticism made them disloyal to the church, at odds with “the mind of the hierarchy”, almost like traitors in wartime'. See Campion, 'A Question of Loyalties', 10.

25. For a summary of the bishops' response, see 'The Social Studies Movement, Sydney, Australia, October 1956', 17-8. This was the submission prepared for the pope and Vatican officials by the bishops who had become opposed to the Melbourne-based Movement in 1956.

27. Reply of Members of the National Executive to Members of the Episcopal Committee on the Catholic Social Studies Movement, 24 March 1956.
mandate. They can hardly escape some responsibility’. 27

On 18 July 1956 Santamaria and other members of the Movement’s national executive tendered their resignations to the bishops to take effect from 31 August 1956. They were not out of a job for long. On 1 September 1956 the Catholic Social Movement came into existence as a national lay organization. On 5 September 1956 Santamaria assured Beovich that the new version of the Movement would not establish a branch in the Adelaide archdiocese without his permission. 28 Soon afterwards, Beovich found that two of the three local Movement officials, Brian Nash and Cyril Naughton, had, as Santamaria later admitted, ‘stayed with the national body’. 29 The third, Ted Farrell, did not, he remained one of Beovich’s closest advisers. Beovich was annoyed and deprived Nash and Naughton of the diocesan support they had previously enjoyed. As a result, the Catholic Social Movement ‘achieved very little’ in Adelaide. 30 Nash and Naughton did, however, join the new anti-communist party which was formed in South Australia in November 1955, although the driving force behind it was a small group of Catholic lawyers led by David O’Sullivan and Frank Moran. It later linked up with the break-away labour parties interstate and became known as the Democratic Labor Party. 31

The third factor to be borne in mind when considering Beovich’s response to the ALP Split is that he regarded the DLP as ‘the closest approach to a confessional party one could imagine’. 32 He was overseas from May to November 1955 and did not discover until the day after he returned home that the new party was being formed. He reacted swiftly, making it clear that Catholic electors were free to vote according to their conscience for any party but the Communist Party, and that no political party could claim the support of the Church. He stressed this during a private interview with David O’Sullivan, at a meeting of the Movement executive, at a meeting of the Catholic businessmen’s society, the Knights of the Southern Cross, and at a clergy conference. 33 At the clergy conference he insisted that priests were not to give out any voting instructions from the pulpit. Most seem to have complied. The editor of the Southern Cross, Patrick Kelly, obediently curbed the exuberant anti-communist campaign he had been waging in the diocesan paper, and no longer accepted advertisements from political parties.

In 1957 Beovich welcomed instructions from the Vatican which advised against the creation of a confessional political party in Australia or the

30. Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, 119.
32. Diary, 2 April 1958.
33. Diary, 12 November 1955; 25 November 1955. See also Little, 16-17. She interviewed Beovich in 1968.
Movement assuming a political role. In his diary he deplored the strong support which the DLP continued to receive from sympathetic bishops and priests in Victoria. When Mannix intervened in the 1958 federal election campaign, asserting that ‘every Communist and every Communist sympathizer in Australia wants a victory for the Evatt Party’, Beovich issued a statement reiterating that Catholics could vote for any party but the Communist Party. His refusal to back the DLP is undoubtedly one of the main reasons why it had little electoral success in South Australia. In Senate elections, it never surpassed the 8.7 per cent of the vote it attained in December 1955, and that it was as high as that in 1955 can be attributed at least in part to the momentum which had built up during Beovich’s absence overseas, before he returned to apply the brakes. Although DLP preferences occasionally played a significant role, in federal elections from 1955 to 1974 the South Australian result was the lowest or second-lowest for the party in Australia, and the state branch never won a parliamentary seat.

Saunders and Lloyd state that ‘the relatively small proportion of Catholics in South Australia and the refusal of the archbishop of Adelaide to support the NCC and DLP do much to explain why the state branch of the Labor Party did not split in two in the mid-1950s’. However, they also acknowledge the relatively healthy state of the local ALP branch, and point out that memories of the bitter schism in the 1930s, and a realistic hope of winning government in the not-too-distant future, encouraged members to stay in the ALP. That brings us to the fourth factor which should be taken into account when analyzing Beovich’s reaction to the Split: his conviction that Catholics should remain within the ALP. He realized that there was no internal crisis in the South Australian branch of the party comparable to that in Victoria. He accepted the legitimacy of the old Victorian executive, disbanded by federal intervention in 1955, and he therefore believed that there was some justification for the schism in that state. Yet in Australia generally, and particularly in South Australia (where according to the 1954 census Catholics made up only 16 per cent of the population), he thought that a strong, moderate ALP offered a better bulwark against communism than a predominantly Catholic political party could ever hope to achieve.

For most of his life Beovich looked on the ALP as the party most in tune

34. Diary, 3 September 1957; Beovich to Gilroy, 3 September 1957. In January 1958, at the next meeting of the hierarchy, Beovich moved the motion which pledged that the ‘authoritative directives’ from Cardinal Pumasoni-Biondi would be implemented.
36. Advertiser, 22 November 1958. For the 1958 election campaign, see Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, 136 ff. and Duncan, Crusade or Conspiracy? 353-58.
40. Beovich to Romolo Carboni, 9 October 1956. Carboni, the apostolic delegate, had asked for a ‘personal, confidential and secret’ report on the Movement controversy.
with the Church’s social justice teaching. In 1949 he mused in his diary that it was his ‘strong opinion so far as party politics is concerned: the Church does not take sides, but she assumes a benevolent neutrality to that side which is most concerned with the workers and the poor, and the less privileged of the citizens’.41 He exercised such ‘benevolent neutrality’ well before the Split when he entered the debate over the federal Labor government’s bank nationalization policy in 1947. In response to attacks on the policy by several Catholic critics, he pointed out that Pope Pius XII had accepted that in certain circumstances nationalisation could be in the interests of the common good.42 The following year, amidst heated controversy over the meaning of socialisation in Labor’s policy platform, Beovich affirmed that a Catholic could, in conscience, subscribe to the Labor platform.43 When the Movement publication Newsweekly criticized Labor politicians for campaigning for a ‘no’ vote in the 1951 referendum to ban the Communist Party, Beovich refused to direct Catholics how to respond.44 His Labor sympathies were typical of many Catholics of his generation. There were a number of Catholics in the state branch of the Labor party, but none in the Liberal and Country League government. Beovich, however, was not blindly partisan. He enjoyed a cordial relationship with Premier Thomas Playford, and the fact that a Catholic lawyer was pre-selected for a winnable Liberal seat in 1953 has been attributed to his influence.45

Overall, it is impossible to determine the extent of Beovich’s influence on South Australian politics. One can only speculate on what could have happened had he supported the NCC and DLP. However, his response surely helped ensure that the majority of South Australians did not experience the level of bitterness and hatred which wrecked the Church and the ALP in other states. Worse than the upsurge in sectarianism were the rifts which opened up within Catholic churches and parishes. Thomas Boland’s description of the ‘unparalleled bitterness’ which marred the 1957 election campaign in Queensland could equally apply to elections held in Victoria from 1955

41. Diary, 9 November 1949.
42. Sunday Mail, 13 September 1947. In a letter on 4 November 1947 in response to a draft statement, Beovich advised Gilroy against issuing a ‘panicky and drastic’ condemnation of nationalisation. See Duncan, Crusade or Conspiracy?, 115-6.
43. Advertiser, 12 October 1948.
45. Reg Wilson, former general secretary of the LCL, told Playford’s biographer that the premier came into his office one day in 1951 or 1952 and said: ‘Reg, I’ve had an approach from Archbishop Beovich. He says it’s time the Government recognized the influence and support the party gets from Catholics. He wants to see their numerical strength better reflected in the Parliament, in the Cabinet and in the Courts. I think he’s right, Reg. I think he’s right, and I think you’d better have a look at how we can pre-select some good man. You could start with that lawyer chap, Leo Travers.’ Travers duly became the first Catholic LCL member of Parliament in 1953, and a judge of the Supreme Court in 1962. See Stewart Cockburn, Playford: Benevolent Despot (Adelaide: Axiom, 1991), 223; David Hilliard, ‘Religion in Playford’s South Australia’, in Bernard O’Neil, Judith Ralfe and Kerrie Round, ed., Playford’s South Australia: Essays on the History of South Australia, 1933–1968 (Adelaide: Association of Professional Historians, 1996), 255.
onwards: 'Catholic accused Catholic of treason and apostasy. Priests spoke in that vein in the pulpit and some of them named parishioners'.

64 Some pain was undoubtedly felt in South Australia, but not on that scale.

The Vietnam War

In the aftermath of the political controversies of the 1950s, the Australian Catholic bishops have been accused of lapsing 'into almost total silence' on the Vietnam War. In fact, that is not quite accurate. Guilford Young of Hobart issued a statement in June 1965 in which he claimed there was 'a moral right to resist [the North Vietnamese] – indeed a duty'. Arthur Fox, auxiliary bishop in Melbourne, proclaimed in August 1966: 'I have said before and I repeat it now that the Government of Australia is protecting our own country by sending troops to fight in Vietnam; this is a morally correct action'.

James O'Collins of Ballarat and Bernard Steward of Sandhurst made similar comments. When the Melbourne diocesan paper, the Advocate, protested against the federal government's decision in 1966 to send conscripts to Vietnam, Fox issued a public statement which chided the editor and supported the government.

Young, Fox, O'Collins and Stewart were all associated with the NCC, which strongly supported the war, but Gilroy, no friend of Santamaria, also backed the war effort. In response to the announcement that conscripts would go to Vietnam, Gilroy declared that 'the Government must be presumed to have acted conscientiously in the fulfillment of this obligation [of safeguarding Australia]. The common good demands that the legislative enactments of a representative Government should be respected'.

The Catholic peace group which was formed in Sydney, like its counterpart in Melbourne, received little support from the local bishops and encountered some open hostility.

In his diary Beovich used adjectives like 'ghastly' and 'atrocious' when he mentioned the war in Vietnam. He was more circumspect in public and confined himself to praying for peace. In October 1966 he energetically


49. Advocate, 4 August 1966.


54. Diary, 3 October 1966; 1 April 1968; 7 December 1968.
promoted Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Christi Mari Rosarii*. One of the least well-known of Paul’s encyclicals, it reflects the ‘tortured subtleties’ which characterized his pontificate.\(^55\) On one hand, the pope pleaded for an immediate end to hostilities (‘We cry to them in God’s name to stop ... A settlement should be reached now, even at the expense of some inconvenience or loss; for it may have to be made later in the train of bitter slaughter and involve great loss’). On the other hand, Paul declared that peace ‘must rest on justice and the liberty of mankind, and take into account the rights of individuals and communities’.\(^56\)

Santamaria objected to an editorial in the *Southern Cross* in which Robert Wilkinson noted the discrepancy between the pope’s call for a cease fire and the Allied policy of ‘reluctant but all-out fighting in Vietnam’.\(^57\) Santamaria highlighted the pope’s call for peace to rest on justice and liberty, and argued that a ceasefire would hand South Vietnam over to the Viet Cong. Whatever the merit of the respective arguments, diocesan editors were in a vulnerable position if they offended their episcopal employers. Beovich took no action against Wilkinson.\(^58\) He himself maintained Paul’s *via media*, stressing both the need for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a peace based on justice and liberty.\(^59\)

Above all, in response to the pope’s encyclical Beovich intensified prayer for peace in his diocese during the month of October 1966.\(^60\) He encouraged Catholics to pray the Rosary daily for the intention of peace, and he exhorted parishes and religious communities to organize prayer vigils. He presided at a special Mass for peace in the cathedral on 4 October 1966, the feast day of St Francis of Assisi; and he made peace the theme of the annual Eucharistic procession at the Passionist Monastery at Glen Osmond on 9 October and the Marian procession at the seminary on 30 October. It was estimated that about 10,000 took part in the latter event, ‘one of Adelaide’s biggest and most orderly peace marches’.\(^61\)

It was also in October 1966 that President Lyndon Johnson of the United States visited Australia, a public relations triumph for the Holt Coalition government. As the ALP pledged to withdraw troops from Vietnam, the

56. The encyclical was printed in the *Southern Cross*, 7 October 1966.
57. The editorial was in the *Southern Cross*, 23 September 1966 (‘Harm of Fighting Outweights Risks of Peace’). It was summarized in the *Advocate*, 29 September 1966 (‘Pope Paul and Allies Differ’). Santamaria responded on 6 October 1966 (‘Do Pope and Allies Differ? Priest-editor’s Interpretation of Encyclical Challenged’). See also *Advocate*, 13 October 1966 (‘Unilateral Cease-fire Advocated: Fr Wilkinson’s Reply to Mr Santamaria’s Article’); 20 October 1966 (letter from B.A. Santamaria re ‘Fr Wilkinson’s Proposal’); 3 November 1966 (letter from Wilkinson re ‘Cease-fire Proposal’).
58. Diary, 2 October 1966.
59. *Southern Cross*, 7 October 1966 (‘Archbishop Beovich Leads Prayer for Peace: “End War before It Is Too Late”’).
60. A circular letter from Beovich to priests and religious, dated 27 September 1966, outlined a special programme of prayer for October. It was reported in the *Southern Cross*, 30 September 1966.
November 1966 election was fought largely on the war issue, and the Coalition's resounding victory was a vindication of its foreign policy. Although Beovich never publicly disclosed how he voted, his diary reveals that he was disturbed by the election result. He was also dismayed to learn that Cardinal Spellman of New York had visited troops in Vietnam at Christmas and prayed for victory:

In fact Spellman is calling for a holy war. To the soldiers he said, 'You are fighting for God'. The Pope on the other hand sees the conflict as an impartial observer, and in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, he feels that a negotiated peace rather than military victory by either side is the way to end the war. The Pope is right (as Pope Benedict was right in 1917), but nationalism blinds people. It seems to have blinded the majority of Australians.\(^{62}\)

When the Australian Bishops' Conference met in April 1967 the bishops issued a statement which liberally quoted from the pope's encyclical of the previous year.\(^{63}\) For some opponents of the war it did not go far enough. In particular, while it called on all citizens to review the moral issues raised by the war, it gave little guidance on how this could be done.\(^{64}\) The statement was, nevertheless, sufficiently different from the rhetoric of the hawkish bishops for Max Charlesworth to speculate in an article in the *Age* on the role Beovich may have had in its production, as 'it is rumored, [he] has grave reservations both about conscription and the Vietnam War'.\(^{65}\) Unfortunately, neither the minutes of the meeting nor Beovich's diary shed any light on this, but it is probable that he was involved as he was vice president of the episcopal conference and a member of its executive body.

No one should have been left in any doubt about Beovich's opposition to the war after the Marian procession later that year: 'Will men never learn that nothing is solved in war, everything may gradually be solved in peace.' This does not, however, mean that he supported the groups which sprang up to protest against the war. At the Marian procession he addressed the question: 'In these dire circumstances, what can ordinary people do?' He answered with a typical emphasis on personal piety: 'We must escalate our prayers to God and our penance for peace.' Taking a swipe at strident elements in the anti-war movement, Beovich added: 'It is better than most anti-war rallies and demonstrations which are often anything but the mark of a peace-loving people'.\(^{66}\) Beovich was doubtless influenced by televised images of rallies interstate which were sometimes marred by violence. In Adelaide, the Campaign for Peace in Vietnam was formed in July 1967. Dominated by academics from the University of Adelaide and Flinders University, it was

63. The statement was printed in the *Southern Cross*, 14 April 1967.
64. Noone, *Disturbing the War*, 134-5.
possibly the most moderate and cautious of all the peace and anti-Vietnam war groups which made up the Australian peace movement.  

In the late sixties opposition to the war gradually grew, and the Campaign for Peace in Vietnam became part of the Vietnam Moratorium Campaign (VMC). The first VMC culminated on 8-9 May 1970 when rallies were held around Australia. About 50,000 people marched in Melbourne and 20,000 in Sydney on Friday, 8 May. In Adelaide about 1000 protesters, mainly university students, were harassed by a group of intoxicated soldiers on the evening of 8 May, but the major rally in Adelaide the following day passed peacefully. It attracted about 5000 demonstrators, including an ecumenical group known as Christians for Peace. Only a small number of anti-moratorium protesters chanted ‘Here come the Commies’. The Catholics who marched in Melbourne and Sydney on 8 May 1970 did so in spite of their bishops’ disapproval. Archbishop Knox of Melbourne issued a statement which attacked the campaign, saying ‘it could well become a threat to public order’, while a spokesman for Cardinal Gilroy in Sydney described it as ‘hardly worthy of Christian participation’. Both press statements also implied that it would be wrong to abandon the South Vietnamese. Gilroy would not even countenance a prayer vigil linked to the moratorium because he believed the campaign to be ‘of communistic inspiration’.

The annual Marian procession in Adelaide was scheduled to take place on 3 May 1970, and marshals wanted Beovich to make a similar statement to Knox and Gilroy to prevent the procession becoming associated with the moratorium. Beovich refused on the grounds that it would only inflame the situation further. When visited by supporters of the VMC, he insisted that no ‘partisan or political activity’ should take place at the Marian procession, but he offered to hold a special Mass for peace in the cathedral on the day of the rally on 9 May. With the ‘letters to the editor’ section of the Southern Cross indicating that Catholics were bitterly divided over Vietnam and the moratorium campaign, often along generational lines, this was an appropriate via media. It did not completely resolve the tension – university students handing out moratorium leaflets after the procession on 3 May were abused by some of the participants – but it stopped it escalating. Interstate, the Vietnam War coalesced with the papal encyclical on birth control, Humanae Vitae, as

68. By 1969 Morgan polls indicated that forty percent of Australians wanted the troops withdrawn. The following year it was about fifty per cent. See Donald Horne, Time of Hope: Australia 1966–72 (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1980), 59. Albinski (Politics and Foreign Policy in Australia, 133) noted that Catholic opinions on the Vietnam War were almost identical to national responses.
72. Diary, 1 May 1970.
73. Diary, 30 April 1970.
the trigger which drove about fifty men from the priesthood.\textsuperscript{74} Beovich's benign response ensured that the Archdiocese of Adelaide fared much better. No priest left over the issue. One woman wrote to the \textit{Southern Cross}: 'I was proud to be associated with the Christians for Peace group in the moratorium march. It was a heartwarming experience to be present at the Mass in the cathedral beforehand with about 200 eager and happy young people.'\textsuperscript{75}

Human motivation is a complex thing, and clearly Beovich's response to the ALP split and Vietnam War cannot be reduced to any single explanation. During two of the most divisive episodes in Australian history, he drew on principles, pragmatism, papal teaching and personal piety. He did not always get the balance right. As he himself realized with the value of hindsight, he should have expressed concern about the Movement's tactics much earlier than he did. His defence of the Industrial Groups in 1955 may have unwittingly encouraged the formation of the DLP, and then left DLP supporters feeling betrayed when they did not receive his blessing. Beovich tried so hard during the Vietnam War not to make political comments that he failed to address adequately the moral issues raised by the war. He was, nonetheless, completely sincere when he called on Catholics to pray for peace. He strongly believed in the power of prayer and in the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that prayer was the most effective response to communism and war which a Catholic could make. On the whole, Beovich was faithful to the ancient tradition that a bishop is a focus of unity in his diocese, and by avoiding the extremes of both the confrontational and conciliatory approaches, he was able to make a significant and ultimately positive contribution to South Australian public life.

\textsuperscript{74} See Ian Moffitt and Graham Williams, 'The Angry Young Men of the Church', \textit{Australian}, 19 September 1967. In an unpublished manuscript cited by Saunders ('Vietnam Moratorium Movement', 96), Williams wrote that 'an estimated fifty priests and other clergy resigned or were forced out of the church because of their peace activities'. One of the most publicized cases involved Dennis Corrigan of the Hobart diocese. When he refused to obey Archbishop Young's request that he resign as acting chairman of the Tasmanian Vietnam Moratorium Campaign, Young suspended him from priestly ministry. See Noone, \textit{Disturbing the War}, 272-3; David Hilliard, 'The Religious Crisis of the 1960s: The Experience of the Australian Churches', \textit{Journal of Religious History}, 21 (January 1997), 225.

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Southern Cross}, 22 May 1970.