



THE MIX



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The Human Face

Personal reflection by John Menadue 3

Essay

Words and how they shape our lives 4

The Bible

Stories of the desires of the divine & human hearts 6

The Tradition

Self-knowledge a central theme 6

Recommended Reading

Mandela, mysticism & politics 8

Bulletin Board

What good things are happening? 8

Editorial

In 1994 a small group of Catholics gathered in Sydney to discuss their role in the Church and the world. A variety of factors brought us together. One seemed to be of particular significance - a strong desire to be part of a Church that is good news for our world.

It seemed to us that many are feeling frustrated in their attempts to participate effectively in the life of the Church. Many have stopped trying to participate. None of us particularly wants to leave the Church. We cherish its tradition. We also share both a **faith** in the Incarnation & God's promise to dwell with us, and a **concern** that the Church play the lifegiving role in society which is its

privilege and responsibility. The Church's effectiveness as a sign of God's love and goodness seems to be diminishing at this time - a development we cannot simply blame on a 'materialistic world'. With the Second Vatican Council we acknowledge that "believers themselves bear some responsibility (for this situation)" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 19).

We share Pope Paul VI's perception that "**we live in the Church at a privileged moment of the Spirit**" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 75). We want to listen intelligently to the signs of the times and respond generously to the call of the Spirit, to participate in the life and mission of the Church as Christian faithful, accepting both the rights and

responsibilities that come with our baptism. We want the spirit and vision of the Second Vatican Council to flourish in our day so that the Church can be a sign of hope in a world that cries out for such a sign.

The times in which we find ourselves see us all facing questions and issues that demand the most serious attention. **No responsible adult can stand by and leave the necessary debate and decision to others.** We all must, to the best of our abilities and opportunities, join with the Church in her struggle to find new expressions of the Gospel at this time.

We are mindful of the temptations of
(continued on page 2)

This journal is one of the works of the Sydney based group Catalyst for Renewal.

These are the founding members:

Marie Biddle R.S.J., Marie Byrne, Marea Donovan, Geraldine Doogue, Kate Englebrecht, Michael Kelly S.J., Robyn Lawson, Stephanie Long, Chris McGillion, John Menadue, Tony Neylan, Josephine Scarf, Martin Teulan, Ruth van Herk, Michael Whelan, S.M.

The following is its mission statement:

We are believers who are attempting to establish a forum for conversation within the Catholic Church of Australia.

Our aim is to prompt open exchanges among the community of believers, mindful of

the diversity of expression of faith in contemporary Australia.

This springs explicitly from the spirit of Pope John XXIII and Vatican II:

"Let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is unsettled, and charity in any case" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.92).

This journal is published eight times each year, April to November.

It is sent to all Friends of Catalyst for Renewal.

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The Four Arrows & the Cross symbolise diversity giving rise to communion in and through the Paschal Mystery. Those who are diverse by nature & culture, in and through Christ find lifegiving unity.

perfectionism, of expecting more of the Church and her human representatives and structures than is realistic. **Our desire is to work with and in the institutional Church, freely, honestly and compassionately.** We desire to be part of that growing energy within the Church that is inspired by and subject to the Spirit of Christ. That Spirit is revealed in and through the actual institution and the historical-cultural circumstances of the tradition and the issues and questions of our own day.

A guiding image for any such endeavour has to be the Paschal Mystery. Like her Founder, the Church lives the death and resurrection mystery in every age. The Church - along with each of the Christian faithful - must submit willingly to the dying that alone can bring life. If we evade the death we will not know the resurrection. In Him, with Him, and through Him, we pass over from death to life. Apart from Him we are nothing (cf. Jn. 15:5).

In this spirit we named our group Catalyst for Renewal. As can be seen from our mission statement (see left), we have a simple intention. We will do what we can to develop forums of conversation. In those forums we will encourage adults who share our concerns and intentions to engage in lively debate, to listen respectfully and intelligently to each other, to learn from that experience and thus participate more effectively in the renewal of both Church and society.

Our first forum for conversation was Spirituality in the Pub. In 1995 we had six evenings at the Bellevue Hotel in Paddington. There, over a glass of ale, wine or water, participants were able to listen to experts in various fields and share in lively discussions.

Topics & speakers were as follows: "Conscience: A Modern Context" with Fr. Michael Whelan, S.M. & Geraldine Doogue; "Euthanasia: What Does It Mean To Play God?" with Dr. Bernadette Tobin (Dir., John Plunket Ethics Centre) & Sr. Margaret Spencer (Our Lady's Nurses of the Poor); "Consumerism: Can Australia move beyond it?" with Fr. John Usher (Dir. Centacare, Sydney) & Geoffrey Cousins (Head of Optus); "IVF Technologies: The Challenge of Science" with Fr. Gerry Gleeson

(Philosopher, Catholic Institute of Sydney) & Prof. Robert Jansen (Dir. Sydney IVF Clinic); "The Ethics of Modern Wealth Creation" with Robert Fitzgerald (Head, ACOSS) & Nick Greiner (Former Premier, Business Consultant); "A Conscience in Transition: Experiences of Joining the Catholic Church" with Kate Englebrecht (Former President MOW, High School Teacher) & John Menadue (Dir. Research Institute for Asia & the Pacific, Sydney University).

There will be eight more of these SIP evenings, at the same hotel, during 1996. They will be on the first Wednesdays of each month, March to October. The formal proceedings begin at 7.30pm sharp and stop on the dot of 9pm. Participants can begin and end the evening with a meal at the restaurant in the hotel. (It is a good idea to make reservations on 363.2293.) For further information on these evenings of SIP, contact Michael Whelan on 816 3614.

A similar set of evenings is to be held in the Pymble Hotel. These will be on the last Wednesdays of each month, April to July. For further information contact Marie Byrne on 869 8101 or Robyn Lawson on 876 6139.

This journal is another forum for conversation. We hope you will find it variously stimulating, enlightening and supportive of your own faith journey. Write to us and tell us of your experience, thoughts and questions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Become part of the conversation. We are the decisions we make. The shape of the Church in future generations will be determined as much by our decisions - or lack of them - as it will be determined by the Holy Spirit.

Those choices we make might demand much of us. They might in fact cost us everything. So be it. Our Paschal Lord is the example. Let us make the choices thoughtfully, freely & generously in the spirit of abandonment to the Eternal Mystery.

Like Jesus, our desire is to do the will of the One who sent us (cf. Jn. 4:34). We can be at peace then with the outcome. "For us there is only the trying, the rest is not our business" (T. S. Eliot).

What future do we want? What choices shall we make? What sort of Church shall we pass on to the next generations? □

The Human Face

John Menadue AO

MY NAME IS JOHN MENADUE. For most of my life I was a Methodist; for the last twelve years I have been a member of the Catholic Church. The institutional change was incidental to the faith journey; the faith journey is much more important to me. I have received nourishment in that journey from both my Methodist upbringing and most recently from my reception into the Catholic Church. I value both of them very much.

The journey of faith has been in finding myself, my identity, and relating myself to the Source of life. As St. Augustine put it: 'You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find rest in you.'

I have not found my identity in success, I have not found it in power, I have not found it in being particularly relevant. Self-knowledge and the gift of grace, in my experience, has not been found in success but in adversity, not in strength but in weakness. In my journey I believe I have been closest to the truth when I have felt the weakest - when in fact I have been humble. "Blessed are the poor in spirit". I know from my own experience that that is real. When I have been weak and vulnerable I have been open to the Spirit.

The son of a Methodist minister, I lived 20 years in the manse. As a Catholic today I often feel even more Methodist than I ever was. It has enriched my life and I appreciate where I came from and the upbringing and experience that went with it - no gambling and no alcohol, five times a day on Sunday for Prayer Meetings, Sunday School, Church and Christian Endeavour. It was rigorous and disciplined. At the time I resented it, but in retrospect I value that upbringing.

There was one advantage I had in being Methodist. I had some friends who promoted me to work for Gough Whitlam and one of the attributes they claimed on my behalf - I did not claim it and Gough certainly did not know about it - was that I was not a Catholic. The sectarianism in the ALP was very bitter in the 1960's.

My move to join the Catholic Church was not quick or dramatic. The awakening of change was when I was working in Japan and, subsequently, when my first wife was very sick and later died. The awakening was a slow process. Probably the seeds were with me in my very childhood.

A turning point in my joining the Catholic Church was the Eucharist and an experience I had in Japan with Fr. Tony Glynn. On my first daughter's wedding day Tony Glynn invited me to

come with him while he celebrated Mass. I thought I was going as a bystander but it did not turn out that way. I had a great sense then of the double grace of the Sacrifice and the Incarnation - that it was not just something spoken about in the Scriptures but it actually took place in the hands of the priest. The Eucharist remains with me today as the most central factor in my continuing life in the Catholic Church.

I was increasingly attracted to and inspired by the lives of the Saints. They gave me encouragement. Problems, difficulties and doubts that I had seemed to be shared even by the Saints in varying degrees and in different ways.

I also appreciated the importance of Tradition within the Catholic Church - something that Methodists were not particularly aware of. Through Tradition, interpreted by the Church, God continues to be revealed. The Church is not static and, for that reason, prayerful discernment and loyal dissent is necessary if that Tradition is to be renewed, year by year. Otherwise the Church will atrophy.

These are just some of the aspects that have characterised my faith journey to this point. I could also speak, for example, of the universality and apostolic nature of the Catholic Church, its ability to evoke a sense of awe and mystery and my personal respect and love for Pope John XXIII. I do not however regard myself as a "convert". I value the traditions from which I came and the wonderful Christians - including my sister - within the Uniting Church (formerly the Methodist Church). Joining the Catholic Church was an important part of the journey which I was on and continue to this day. Both Methodism and Catholicism have enriched and nourished me variously during my life. □



Letters

Welcome to The Mix. I look forward to reading a journal of substance and depth which promises a valuable contribution to a vital conversation about new models of Church.

Ms Caroline Jones AO

I commend you on taking the initiative of producing a journal that should well be 'part of the growing energy within the Church that is inspired by, and subject to, the Spirit of Christ'. Such a form of communication will be welcomed by all those who want to take an active part in the life of the Church of the future. This forum should provide opportunities for free, intelligent and challenging exchange among all those who are genuinely searching for honest dialogue and truth.

Sr. Helen Clarke RSC, National President, Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.

It is with interest & a sense of some hope that I read the first edition of The Mix & learnt of the beginnings of the *Catalyst for Renewal* project. In a part of the Church which variously lacks direction and focus, confidence & passion, this project offers some opportunity for concerned people to have an outlet for their aspirations as people of faith. In a time when the people's right to a voice in the Church's life has been officially recognised, and then seemingly is not heard in a number of 'high places' with any kind of humility or honesty, this project will give people a chance to be heard in an intelligent, compassionate and insightful forum. I congratulate the authors of the whole project and look forward to participating in it.

Kevin Bates SM, Director, Aquinas Academy, Sydney.

I enjoyed reading The Mix. Hope the venture goes well.

Ms Janice Raggio, Principal of Sancta Sophia College, University of Sydney.

I think the present copy of The Mix is excellent and contains the dimensions I and others have previously discussed.

(continued on page 7)

Essay - Words and how they shape our lives

Michael Whelan SM

In 1990 an Australian newspaper reported the dismay of nurses in several Perth teaching hospitals when they were instructed to use new words to describe the condition of a patient. Thus pain became "an alteration in comfort state", obesity "alteration in body size secondary to excessive dietary intake over calorific needs" and bed sore "lack of skin integrity".

This rather ludicrous example, by default, reminds us of something quite profound about human words. They are supposed to connect people, to enable relationships to be concretised.

**‘Consider
the power of
the truthful
word
spoken in love’**

And when we remember that relationships lie at the very heart of our humanity, the importance of words - language, speech, conversation, dialogue etc. - can hardly be over-estimated.

Consider the place of words in daily living. Words - actually spoken or signed - can be used to heal or hurt, to connect with or evade someone, to open up the truth or obfuscate it, to foster silence or keep it at bay.

Withholding words can be similarly powerful. We have all known the effects of a moody silence, a refusal to discuss something important or the cutting glance that replaces words.

Words are formed by us and form us. They reveal our very beings - even when our intent is to hide in or behind those words. The ancient Greeks defined humans as those who reveal their true natures through the word. This echoes our belief that we are made in the image and likeness of God who is similarly revealed through the Word.

Consider the destructive power of the deceiving word and the malicious word, the mocking word and the sarcastic word, the fatuous word and the smarmy word. Perhaps nothing is as destructive to the cause of Christ as the vacuous word from the pulpit. And the more articulate the preacher is in delivering that vacuous word, the greater the harm that is done to Christ's cause.

On the other hand, consider the power of the truthful word spoken in love, the poetic word that exposes beauty, the wise word that cuts through illusions, the heartfelt word that eases personal pain, the word spoken out of silence that carries with it intimations of something much bigger than any of us. How energising it is in fact to hear the word that truly bears good news!

The Irish have a wonderful invocation that implies profound respect for the human word:

*These things are of God:
The merciful word,
The singing word, and
The good word.
May the power of these
Three holy things be on all
The men and women of Erin
Forevermore.*

One of the most precious things in life is human conversation. Good conversation is a sign of maturity, a sign that people have grown beyond mere egotism and self-preoccupation. It requires self-transcendence.

**‘They were astonished
at his teaching
for his word
was with
authority’**

Good conversation is to be distinguished from useful conversation or entertaining conversation, though both of these may also be good conversation.

Good conversation presupposes an ability to relinquish control and submit to a bigger reality present in and through the subject under discussion. Each party to a good conversation submits to the process, focusing on what is present in-between them.

There is no winning or losing here, no scoring points. There is therefore no need for defensiveness, dogmatism or aggression. There is a willingness to both speak one's mind honestly and thoughtfully and listen respectfully and keenly to the other.

Good conversations may be lighthearted or intense, long or short, with those we know intimately or with those we have just met. In every case what makes the conversation good is the ability of the parties to self-transcend, let go, and focus on the

subject at hand. Good conversationalists are thereby able to meet beyond themselves, in the in-between space which is owned by neither yet belongs to both.

For most of us, sadly enough, such conversations are a rarity. Some people may have never experienced such a conversation. Given the significance of conversation - signed or verbalised - in expressing and fostering relationships, enabling us to know and care for and about each other, we relinquish the ideal at our peril.

**‘Words are
formed by us
and form us.
They reveal
our very
beings**

In this context we could ask some practical questions concerning our experiences of conversation or lack of it:

How many marriages fail to reach their full potential, or dissolve, because one or both of the parties will not - or cannot? - engage in good conversation?

· How many religious communities become little more than boarding houses or places of serious tension because the members are unwilling or unable to engage in good conversation?

· How many friendships fail to develop simply because the ingredient of good conversation is lacking?

· How many people are lonely because they have no one with whom they can engage in good conversation?

· How many males in our society are capable of good conversation - conversation that is more than merely useful or entertaining?

What is to become of our efforts for renewal in the Church if we are unable to engage each other in good conversation?

Pope Paul VI has spoken a challenging word in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*:

"We are well aware that modern man is sated by talk; he is often obviously tired of listening and, what is worse, impervious to words. We are also aware that many psychologists and sociologists express the view that modern man has passed beyond the civilization of the word, which is now ineffective and

useless, and that today he lives in the civilization of the image. These facts should certainly impel us to employ, for the purpose of transmitting the Gospel message, the modern means which this civilization has produced. ... The fatigue produced these days by so much empty talk and the relevance of many other forms of communication must not however diminish the permanent power of the word, or cause a loss of confidence in it. The word remains ever relevant" (n.42).

God and the Word of God are one. We cannot say that of ourselves. Seldom are we and the words we speak even close to being one. Those people who are more or less at one with their speech are powerful people. The more dislocated we are from our words, the less human authority we have.

The Gospel reference is pertinent: "They were astonished at his teaching for his word was with authority" (Lk. 4:32 - RSV; cf. also Mt. 7:28, 13:54 & 22:33; Mk. 11:18; Jn. 7:46).

People listen more willingly to witnesses than to those who are not at one with what they say (cf. Evangelii Nuntiandi, n.41). When the true witness speaks, the word is revealing of something much bigger. "Human speech is determined not only by truth but also by goodness: in goodness speech returns to its origin" (Max Picard, The World of Silence, Gateway Editions, 1952, 36).

The word is sacramental. It points beyond itself. It points to the source of all words - the Eternal Mystery, the Origin of Goodness.

**'One of the tasks
of the saint
is to renew language,
to sing a new song'**

Such human words - even when not expressly "religious" - are sacramental. They not only allow the parties to the conversation to move into a depth of intimacy with each other, they also invite those parties to intimacy with the bigger reality - the Real beyond the real, the Eternal Mystery.

The sacramental potential of words remains forever hidden unless we redeem our language. Words reveal their origins. Words will reveal the Real when the speaker seeks the Real relentlessly, they will speak of the Eternal Mystery when the speaker is an intimate of that Mystery, they will communicate love when the speaker desires love above all things.

Perhaps we suppress the sacramental quality of words - and thus

thwart the redemption of language - precisely because words are sacramental. We do not want them revealing anything more than we can absolutely control. We want to avoid the truth beyond our words, where language leads if we are willing to listen and follow. In our anxiety and fear we recoil from the power of language and our true vocation as beings who form and are formed by words.

Evasion of the power of language is an evasion of the call to be who we are. Such evasion is also at once a promotion of alienation and a failure to take one of the most practicable and effective avenues of reconciliation available to us all.

**'Pentecost
is the symbol for
the restoration of
communion.
In the Spirit
the uniting and healing
word
can be spoken'**

The American Catholic writer, Walker Percy, writes of our need to address this problem. Percy says that we must redeem language, restore its value and validity in human relationships. This is especially the case with religious language:

"Yet another reason for reticence in matters religious has to do with the infirmity of language itself. Language is a living organism and, as such, is subject to certain organic ailments. In this case it is the exhaustion and decrepitude of words themselves, an infirmity that has nothing to do with the truth or falsity of the sentences they form. The words of religion tend to wear out and get stored in the attic. The word 'religion' itself has a certain unction about it, to say nothing of 'born again', 'salvation', 'Jesus', even though it is begging the question to assume therefore that these words do not have valid referents. And it doesn't help that when religious words are used publicly, at least Christian words, they are often expropriated by some of the worst rogues around, the TV preachers. So decrepit and so abused is the language of the Judeo-Christian religions that it takes an effort to salvage them, the very words, from the husks and barnacles of meaning which have encrusted them over the centuries. Or else words can become slick as coins worn thin by usage and so devalued. One of the tasks of the saint is to renew a new song" ("Why Are You A Catholic?" in P. Samway, ed., Walker Percy: Singposts in a Strange Land, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1991, p.306).

The story of the Tower of Babel (cf. Gen. 11:1-9) is a story of the human condition. It recalls a time of unity, when "the whole earth had one language". Egotism and pride come to the fore and divide people so they can no longer understand each other. Instead of human speech expressing a word that unites, it gives forth in babble that divides. Human beings are at odds with themselves and their world and their words show this tragedy.

The confusion of language is a symbol of the alienation we all know only too well - from God, self, others and the world.

Pentecost is the symbol for the restoration of communion. In the Spirit the uniting and healing word can be spoken. Human nature is liberated, brought home to itself and this is pre-eminently revealed in the use of words.

Central to the Christian story is the twofold reality that, in and through Christ, we have every reason to hope for the ultimate integrity and at-onement of all that is, and we have every responsibility to work for that.

**'Good conversationalists
are able to meet
beyond themselves,
in the in-between space
which is owned by neither
yet belongs to both'**

Human conversation is as good a place as any to start. The willingness to engage one another in good conversation is itself a sign of hope. The willingness to transcend the attack-defend, win-lose approach to public debate and conversation that is endemic to our culture might be the beginnings of a whole new stream of energy and life in the Church and society. Consider any forum of society - would it not be vastly improved by at least the sincere endeavour to engage others in good conversation, no matter how briefly? □

(Michael Whelan SM, formerly Principal of Catholic Theological Union at Hunters Hill, is Secretary to Catalyst for Renewal. He is also Director of Theological Programs for Australian Catholics Network, the developing Catholic cable TV channel.)

"Let us not be afraid of debate or dissent - let us encourage it. For if we should ever abandon these basic American traditions in the name of fighting Communism, what would it profit us to win the whole world when we have lost our soul?" (John F. Kennedy, address to the National Civil Liberties Conference, April 16, 1959, Washington DC.)

Words for a Pilgrim People

"The Church ... is at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, and incessantly pursues the path of penance and renewal" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), n.8).

"By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all humankind" (Op. cit., n.1).

"The holy People of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office. It spreads abroad a living witness to Him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise, the tribute of lips which give honor to His name (cf. Heb. 13:15). The body of the faithful as a whole, anointed as they are by the Holy One (cf. Jn. 2:20, 27), cannot err in matters of belief. Thanks to a supernatural sense of the faith which characterises the People as a whole, it manifests this unerring quality when, 'from the bishops down to the last member of the laity', it shows universal agreement in matters of faith and morals" (Op. cit., n.12).

"Devotedly meditating on (Mary) and contemplating her in the light of the Word made flesh, the Church with reverence enters more intimately into the supreme mystery of the Incarnation and becomes ever increasingly like her spouse" (Op. cit., n.65).

"Too late have I loved you, O Beauty so ancient and so new, too late have I loved you! Behold, you were within me while I was outside: it was there that I sought you, and, a deformed creature, rushed headlong upon these things of beauty which you have made. You were with me but I was not with you. They kept me far from you, those fair things which, if they were not in you, would not exist at all. You have called to me, and have cried out, and have shattered my deafness. You have blazed forth with light, and have shone upon me, and you have put my blindness to flight! You have sent forth fragrance, and I have drawn in my breath, and I pant after you. I have tasted you, and I hunger and thirst after you. You have touched me, and I have burned for your peace" (St. Augustine, Confessions, Bk. X, 27(38)).

"O God you are my God, I pine for you; my heart thirsts for you; my body longs for you, as a land parched, dreary & waterless" (Psalm 63:1 - NJB)

The Bible

The bible is a library. The books of that library represent a wide range of literary styles, cultural settings, historical moments, political contexts. The literature of this library puts before the reader people, events & things religious & secular, beautifully poetic & boringly legalistic, inspiring & scandalous, heart warming & harsh, factual & fictitious, straightforward & obtuse. It is in other words expressive of human existence.

These books tell of the human story, the love & the hate, the peace & the anguish, the finding & the losing, the hellos & goodbyes, the triumphs & the tragedies that dot everyone's path. In this they tell of the ultimate longing that besets the cosmos: the longing for intimate communion, of God for us and us for God. In the end, is there any other story? The bible is our story.

The bible is a human word. It is also God's Word. It is as if God says: "Listen to your own words! Listen to your lives, your history, your struggle for meaning and you will hear me speaking! I have entered your conversation - I am with you!"

Simone Weil has written "that God and humanity are like two lovers who have missed their rendezvous. Each is there before the time but each at a different place, and they wait, and wait, and wait". We can wait in the bible. That waiting is more a matter of the heart than the head. Love always is.

Suggested Reading: *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Geoffrey Chapman, 1990 - probably the best single volume reference on the bible, hardback but very expensive (\$100+); E. Charpentier's, *How to Read the Old Testament* and *How to Read the New Testament*, SCM Press, 1982 - concise summaries, easy to read, good feel for the bible, paperbacks (c.\$30 each); L. Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament* and the companion by P. Perkins, *Reading the New Testament*, Paulist Press, 1984 & 1988; excellent scholarship, comprehensive, paperbacks (c.\$25 each). M. Whelan, *Living Strings: An Introduction to Biblical Spirituality*, E. J. Dwyer, 1994 - overview of themes, good practical guidance for individuals & groups, paperback (c.\$18).

The Tradition

Inscribed over the entrance to the Temple of Apollo in ancient Greece was the maxim: "Know thyself!" Self-knowledge prevents hubris. In the Chinese tradition Laotse says: "He who knows others is learned. He who knows himself is wise".

St. Augustine (354-430) knew the centrality of this same call to self-knowledge: "Why is it necessary for the soul to know itself? I suppose that it may consider itself and live according to its nature." St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) likewise writes: I don't know if this has been explained well. Knowing ourselves is something so important that I wouldn't want any relaxation ever in this regard, however high you may have climbed into the heavens" (*Interior Castle*, I, 2, 9). Contemporary author Anne Morrow Lindbergh observes: "When one is a stranger to oneself then one is estranged from others too" (*Gift from the Sea*).

This knowledge is experiential - it is visceral rather than abstract. It comes to those who know how to wait, even as they work diligently. This knowledge is an experience of grace rather than conquest. It leads us away from self-absorption and narcissism, the products of internal bondage and insecurity.

Under grace we come to know that we are made in the image and likeness of God, that we are fallen, that we are redeemed in Christ. The fruit of this knowledge is intimacy - with God, oneself, other people and the world in which we find ourselves. It develops a radar for the True & the Real. We are able more easily to name what is happening and minimise destructive game playing and pretense. Truth liberates!

Psalm 27 sets a good context for the pursuit of self-knowledge: "To live in the house of Yahweh all the days of my life". I am mindful that my days are lived "in the house of Yahweh", in the Presence of the Eternal Mystery. In that presence I foster a gentle self-accompaniment. I disown nothing. I evade nothing. I endeavour to face whatever emerges in my interactions with people, events and things.

Suggested Reading: E. Gendlin, *Focusing*, Bantam, 1989 - simple, respectful and highly useful guide to listening, pb (c.\$10); A. Squire, *Asking the Fathers*, Christian Classics, 1993 - rich, readable introduction to the tradition (cf. Chs.1-3), pb (c.\$20); St. Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle* - suggest "The First Dwelling Places"; Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Twelve Steps of Humility & Pride* - Part 1, Chs. 1-6; J. Finley, *Merton's Palace of Nowhere: A Search for God Through Awareness of the True Self*, Ave Maria Press, 1978 - a good presentation of the thought of one of this centuries great prophets (c. \$12).

News in Brief

Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, Archbishop of Milan, preached at an ecumenical service in St. Anne's (Church of Ireland) Belfast on January 23rd. This is one of several ecumenical gatherings of which he was part while visiting Northern Ireland. Cardinal Martini will be visiting Australia later this year.

• **Archbishop Derek Worlock of Liverpool (England) died of lung cancer on February 8th, just four days after his 76th birthday.** He was made a Companion of Honour in the New Year's Honours List. The Order of the Companions of Honour is limited to 65 members. Archbishop Worlock was a significant participant in the Second Vatican Council. He was very involved in promoting ecumenism and the role of the laity in the Church. Together with the Anglican bishop of Liverpool, he founded the Michaelmas Group, a regular gathering of top local businessmen and heads of industry, to achieve partnerships with lasting social benefits for the wider community. A naturally shy man, Archbishop Worlock has been renowned for the big mindedness and generosity he brought to pastoral leadership within the archdiocese.

• **A Christian cable TV channel which would extend throughout Britain should go to air by October.** The channel, which has the support and involvement of a number of different churches, including the Catholic Church, will attempt to promote Christian values. Its target audience will be the 50% of the population who believe in God but do not attend any church. The number of cable TV viewers in Britain is expected to expand from its current 4 million to 18 million by the year 2000.

• **The Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) has proposed new norms for interreligious dialogue.** The proposals came out of a joint Hindu-Catholic seminar held in New Delhi in October 1995. The FABC proposals focus on acceptance of religious differences & joint efforts for human development, justice & peace & the environment. The FABC rejected the model of dialogue that intends to convert the other to one's own religion, referring to it as dishonest and unethical. It stresses that believers of all religions are co-pilgrims.

• **Fr. Juan Luis Segundo, Uruguayan Jesuit, died of a heart attack on January 17th in Montevideo.** Segundo is perhaps best known internationally as a liberation theologian. "Our notion of

God" he wrote in *Our Idea of God* "must never cease to retravel the road which runs from atheism to faith". He believed the idolatry of possessions presented a much greater threat than atheism. In his own country he was actively involved in working with the poor & the formation of base communities. He was 71 years old.

• **The Maryknoll Missioners of New York have challenged the policies of major corporations with whom they hold investments.** Those corporations include tobacco giant RJR Nabisco Holdings and Pepsico Inc. Maryknoll is asking corporations to consider "the social bottom line - caring for people" as well as the "financial bottom line". In particular, Maryknoll has submitted a resolution to stock holders of RJR which calls on the company to split its food and tobacco divisions. They have also asked Pepsico to stop doing business in Myanmar; W.R. Grace, Johnson & Johnson, WMX Technologies and Allied Signal to change wage policies and environmental conditions for workers overseas; J.P. Morgan to stop lending money for harmful community economic development projects in poor countries; Loews Corp. to stop selling tobacco products to young people. Maryknoll is a minor stock holder in these companies.

• **A dedicated Catholic cable TV channel has received approval in principle from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.** The relevant minute of December 1st, 1995 begins: "The Conference welcomes news of the initiative of a group of priests, religious and lay Catholics in seeking to take advantage of the opportunity available to the Church at this stage in the development of television technology. The introduction of Cable Television in Australia may provide great opportunities for proclaiming the Gospel and for promoting Catholic values and traditions."

• **The Sisters of St. Joseph (North Sydney) have elected a new congregational leader - Sr. Giovanni Farquer RSJ.** Sr. Mary Cresp of South Australia is the outgoing congregational leader. Also elected was a new leadership team to assist Sr. Giovanni. Cardinal Clancy led a Eucharistic liturgy in the Mount Street Chapel - resting place of Blessed Mary MacKillop - on January 15th to mark the handing over of leadership.

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Letters (continued from page 3)

Congratulations on The Mix initiative and thank you for the opportunity to respond. A Parish Priest friend of mine likes to make a distinction between the Official Church and the Living Church. So often the bureaucratic word can dull, deaden and disillusion. The vitality of your new journal, however, the breadth of its topics, the personal touch of story-tellers, like John Menadue, promise much for the future. I would hope that it can entice everyone around Australia, the movers and shakers in our parishes, the influential fringe-dwellers, to write about their own grass roots efforts in renewal and keep the ferment stirring. Chief Rabbi Jonathsan Sacks has said that, in this time of much social instability, our young people need more than ever a sense of 'rootedness in a living tradition'. All of us need to hear the sound of eternity in the midst of change. May The Mix continue to help us in this regard.

Christopher Gleeson SJ, Headmaster, St Ignatius College, Riverview.

The best Christian thought arises from quality Christian experiences. I am delighted that some Sydney Christians have taken the initiative to marry thought and experience in this promising new journal. May it be the catalyst that we all need.

Professor Francis J. Moloney, SDB, AM, FAHA, Professor of Theology, Australian Catholic University.

The title is a true description of its varied content. I particularly enjoyed the essay on 'Words and how they shape our lives'. Congratulations! The article by John Menadue gave a personal dimension.

Dr. Ann Bye, Prince of Wales Hospital & University of New South Wales

The Gospels teach us that, if we have a problem, the best way to solve it is to go out and help someone with a far bigger problem. And if the Church itself has problems, it will only solve them by reaching out to the whole world. I admire this spirit in The Mix, for it seeks to renew by reaching out to others. I wish it every success.

Most Rev. Geoffrey Robinson, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Sydney

Recommended Reading

• **Long Walk to Freedom**, by Nelson Mandela (Abacus, 1994/95), paperback, 768 pp with photographs & index. RRP \$16.95. A meticulous, factual detailing of Mandela's life, this book glows with dignity, energy and hope. There is no evasion of harsh truths, nor is there an idolization of a man who could easily give birth to many idolatrous myths. Despite or perhaps because the story is told with such detachment, this book is powerful in its portrayal of human nastiness and forgiveness, destruction and healing, hatred and love. Destined to be a true classic.

• **The Roots of Christian Mysticism: Text and Commentary**, by Olivier Clement (New City Press, 1995) trans. from the 1982 original French text by Theodore Berkeley and Jeremy Hummerstone, paperback, 380pp. Clement uses extensive textual material from the Fathers to develop themes under three main headings: "Understanding the Mystery", "Initiation for Warfare" and "Approaches to Contemplation". He is not at all embarrassed at the thought of Christianity

as an essentially mystical religion. How else can we understand our relationship with God in Christ? This is a good reference book for anyone interested in approaching Christian spirituality at some depth. Not for the faint of heart or those who have grown too used to the superficiality of much of the popular writing over the last twenty years or more.

• **The Soul of Politics**, by Jim Wallis (Orbis Books, 1994) with Foreword by Garry Wills and Preface by Cornel West; hardcover, 275pp. with index. Wallis was born into a devout family of Plymouth Bretheren, after attending Michigan State Univeristy, he went on to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, to do his seminary training. There he began the now famous *Sojourners* magazine. Wallis' concern for the foundational Gospel values, his constant recognition of the poor and his insight and courage are all present in this book. In his introduction Wallis begins with a sobering observation: "The world isn't working.

Things are unraveling and most of we know it." He argues that we are suffering an "illness of the spirit" which calls for both a change of heart and mind if we are to promote the social, economic and cultural renewal we urgently need. This is a hopefilled, wise and challenging book.

• "Bruised Reeds and the Mystery of the Church" by Enda McDonagh (*The Furrow*, 46:10, '95, 543-553). McDonagh uses the Irish context to reflect on the Church as mystery. He suggests the image of "the bruised reed" (Isaiah 42:3) evokes the sense of mystery. Faced with death, crisis, failure, sin, the person and the institution may have a unique if dark graced path to understanding and living the true nature of Church. McDonagh notes that the God who saves "comes always by way of the cross". This essay is as subtle as it is rich, offering both insight and wisdom. The style is poetic, the content is unmistakably Catholic.

Bulletin Board

• **Spirituality in the Pub (SIP)** is a forum which offers a convivial environment for invigorating conversation. Over a glass of wine or beer or whatever, matters of significance are discussed. Everyone welcome. No charge. Just turn up. SIP is held at the **Bellevue Hotel Paddington** on the **first Wednesdays of the months**

March to October (*Info: Michael on (02) 816 3614*) and at the **Pymble Hotel** on the **last Wednesdays of the months. April to July** (*Info: Marie on (02) 869 8101*). It starts on the dot of 7.30pm & finishes on the dot of 9pm.

• **The Come & See Network** (Melbourne) to provide support for those who

recognise the need for change in the Church (*Info: Marianne on (03) 9878 6768*).

• **Australian Christian Meditation Community** to communicate and nurture meditation as taught by John Main for the unity of all (*Info: Richard on (02) 810 2448*).

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Post to: Fr. Michael Whelan, SM, PO Box 139, Gladesville, NSW 2111 (Tel: 02 816 3614)