

THE MIX



JOURNAL OF CATALYST FOR RENEWAL

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 2

APRIL 1997

Frank Jones

The human face 2

John Heaps

The emerging Church 3

Margaret Beazley

Women in the Church (Part Two) 3

The Bible

The transforming power of the Word 6

Suggested Reading

Thérèse of Lisieux, spirituality in Australia 8

Our Say - Dying you destroyed our death

The Christian community's year reaches a climax with the celebration of Easter/ Pentecost. Jesus destroys death by dying. This is the Paschal Mystery. The cross and the empty tomb become the great symbols of human freedom and hope. Jesus is recognised as the Christ, the Anointed of God. He is more than an example for us - He is the Way. In Him, with Him, through Him we live, we become what we are called to be. His Spirit is poured out on all flesh. That same Spirit enables us to call God our Father for that Spirit bears united witness with our spirit (cf Rom: 8:15f).

God has entered the human condition to the utter limits - even unto death. God has liberated the natural dying and rising rhythm of life. Henceforth we will always know it as a paschal rhythm. We will experience each day, with its own peculiar paschal rhythm, as a movement into greater intimacy with God in Christ. Nothing lies outside the loving and liberating embrace of God who invites us, with the Son, in the

power of the Spirit, to enter our own humanity, to travel the human path that is ours in all its uniqueness and communality.

Because of our Paschal Lord we can embrace life, evade nothing, affirm all that is authentically human. For those who are baptised into Him, nothing is merely secular or profane, everything is religious and sacred. We remain people of hope, not because we reckon we will get on top again, not because we are confident of our virtues, not because we are smart enough to solve all our problems. We are people of hope because our Redeemer lives.

A thoroughgoing Christian spirituality, centred on the Paschal Mystery, must be the basis for our response to the needs of the times. Our celebrations in this liturgical season remind us of three key elements of such a spirituality: dying to live, freedom and hope.

"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it

dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn. 12:24). The Church - like any other individual or group - must die repeatedly if it is to live. The Church (i.e. all of us) must embrace this dying in trust, confident that in Him, with Him and through Him it leads to life. Dying - whether it is literal death or the metaphorical deaths we all encounter everyday - is never pleasant, even when it comes as a relief. It always involves sadness and fear. But it is the only way to life.

The willingness to give ourselves into the hands of the living God - like Jesus on Calvary - and die to all other gods, is a source of profound freedom and hope. Many today feel caught by lifestyles and systems that make them feel impotent. They have lost any real sense of freedom and hope. This begets despondency, even despair. The Church ought to lead the way in engendering a spirit of freedom and hope in society. It can and must do this - and will *only* do this - by identifying wholeheartedly with its Paschal Lord. □

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

These are the current Members:
Marie Biddle R.S.J., Kevin Burges,
Dr Ann Bye, Marie Byrne,
Aidan Carvill SM, Marea Donovan,
Geraldine Doogue, Kate Englebrecht,
Catherine Hammond, Michael Kelly SJ,
Robyn Lawson, Stephanie Long,
Chris McGillion, Maryellen McLeay,
John Menadue, Dr Chris Needs,
Josephine Scarf, Martin Teulan,
Joanna Thyer, Ruth van Herk,
Michael Whelan, SM

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 ten times
each year, March to December.
It is sent to all Friends of
Catalyst for Renewal.
(See coupon on back page for
Friends' Application.)

The Editorial Committee is:
Fr. Michael Whelan SM
Ms. Joanna Thyer
Ms. Geraldine Doogue
Fr. Michael Kelly SJ
Ms. Kate Englebrecht

Registered by Australia Post
Publication No.255003/02125

Address correspondence to:
PO Box 139
Gladesville NSW 2111
Australia
Tel/Fax: 61 2 9816 4262



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

The Human Face

MY NAME IS FRANK JONES. I was
born in Melbourne in 1957, the
fourth child of Marge and Jack Jones' five
children.

My father was an invalid because of a
car accident. So I never knew my father as
a healthy man but as a weak man physi-
cally. But interiorly he was very strong and
gentle. My mother worked, she was the
bread winner. My father looked after us at
home. Although from time to time he was
quite ill. That was tough on me as a kid. I
always wanted a father who was just like
the other fathers.

My mother died when I was in my last
year at school and my father died when I
was in my second year at Springwood
seminary. I think I get my belief in God
from both of my parents, but particularly
from dad. He was a daily communicant
until he was no longer able to walk to
mass. He had a great devotion to Mary and
a very simple, ordinary faith. As I look
back on my life I see he had a great influ-
ence on me. He taught me that it is not so
important what you do but who you are. A
lot of people would have looked upon him
with pity. But he was a man who was
blessed because in his suffering and weak-
ness he was very close to God, very human
and loving.

That helped me a lot, as a nurse and
working with the Mapuche Indians in
Chile later, to find Christ more in broken
people than in any other avenue. It is also
related to my love of the Eucharist as a
sustaining focus in my life. Jesus is really
there for us.

My parents had a lot of financial strug-
gles. It wasn't so easy living in Canberra in
a Housing Commission area. Even as a
young fella that is quite humiliating. You
realise that the rest of your friends at
school live on a different strata. The
Christian Brothers were very kind to us -
they educated me free.

When I left school I went to the Semi-
nary at Springwood. Although I enjoyed
life there and made great friends, I had this
desire to join a religious community. So at
the end of my second year I joined a relig-
ious order. But I soon discovered that was
not the place for me.

I then went to live in Brisbane where I
was a medical orderly in Princess Alexan-
dra Hospital, working with spinal injury
patients - most of them young blokes about
my age. That and the years of nurse train-
ing that followed, was a wonderful forma-
tion for me. I made great friends and

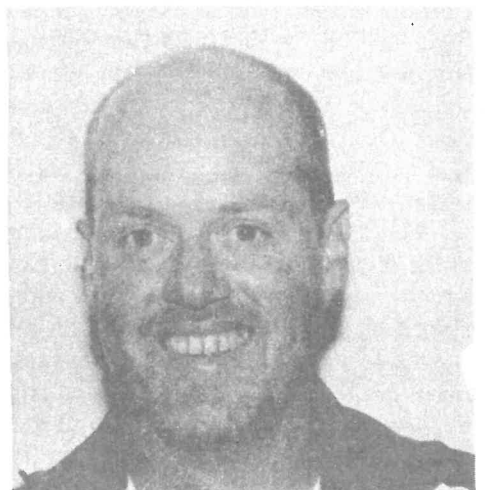
probably received most of my formation as
a person - even spiritually - through nurs-
ing. Because it is a very unselfish life and a
disciplined life. In that giving of self you
receive a lot, a deeper encounter with God.

During my time in Brisbane I also
formed a very close relationship with an
aunt of mine who was a Carmelite nun - Sr
Mary of Jesus. Her life of prayer and ordi-
nary service gave meaning to my own
thoughts of the contemplative life.

After I finished nurse training I was ac-
cepted back into the seminary for Canberra
Goulburn diocese. I was ordained in 1986.
After five years in the diocese I joined the
Columban Associates program and went to
work with the Mapuche Indians in Chile
where I've been ever since. Being on the
island with the Mapuche Indians helped
me appreciate the gift of loneliness and
silence. I appreciated their contemplative
spirit and approach to life.

You see, I still had this desire to live a
simple and poor life. I was worried that I
was getting a bit materialistic and a bit too
caught up in myself. The nicest people I've
met in my life have always been people
who have been broken. Broken people can
be very honest, not full of themselves. And
they make me be more honest about who I
am, in my weakness and faults and fail-
ings. That's where I come to meet Christ
and receive love. I know I am loved by
Him in that. There is also great freedom
and joy in it. You actually get to know
yourself and God more. It's a tremendous
privilege to share in the life story of some-
one who has been brought to their knees.

There is real value in waiting, isn't
there? Value in being patient. I appreciate
the priesthood more because I have had to
wait. I think I would have taken things a
lot more for granted. And I grew up a lot
more. When I go back to Chile I am going
to join a Cistercian community there.



Fr. Frank Jones

Your Say – The Emerging Church

by John Heaps

The following is part of the text of a talk which Bishop John Heaps gave in March 1996 as part of the Spirituality in the Pub program

When the early settlers came to this part of the world, they built houses the way houses ought to be. That's why you've got these terraces around here - that's the way houses were back in England and Ireland, Scotland and a lot of Europe. That's what a house was.

But this is a different country. They didn't think about that - they did what *ought to be*. And that's appropriate to what we are talking about here tonight: do we do something because someone tells us it is what ought to be or do we search out and find what really ought to be?

What is the Church in Australia, the Church that Christ gave us? Is it what we've got, copied from somewhere else? Or have we other dimensions to look at?

I read in the Sydney Morning Herald some time ago a letter from a man. He said that religion was one of the greatest evils in the world. I felt like writing back and saying, "Thanks for saying that. I agree with you". Religion can be a curse. I am so glad this is called Spirituality in the Pub - spirituality is never a curse. Being in touch with our spirit, with God, the Great Spirit behind and beyond all things.

In looking for the Church we're looking for spirituality. And if ever the Church means anything to us, it's got to be about being people in touch with ourselves, in touch with God and in touch with others. If the Church is not doing that it is only a facade. We don't want a facade of a Church. We want the real Church. We want to be in touch with God.

Wouldn't it have been wonderful if the people coming here to evangelise this place had said to the aboriginal people, 'You are in touch with the Spirit I want to tell you more about Him. Let's learn together'.

In a recent TV program on the Church in Ireland, they had a panel of people - priests and lay people. One of the things that touched me most was this. Cardinal Daly was asked 'where is the Church's compassion?'. The Cardinal spoke of the Church's care for the sick and suffering, saying in effect that the people are the Church.

I found this tantalising. What he was saying was this, 'Why do you criticise the Church when you're the Church'. Yes, you are the Church when it comes to works of compassion but you are not the Church when it comes to searching for answers.

The Cardinal gave stock answers. For God's sake, why can't we say: 'I'd love to do this or that but I am powerless. The power is vested in a central authority'.

This sort of thing here - Spirituality in the Pub - is just one manifestation of people wanting to be in touch with God, in touch with reality. It is an immense encouragement to me and to all of us. We must tap that wonder in the Church and that shared longing and searching.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could have a parish say of 100 people or even less, where everybody knew each other. The group could pick one of their number and ask the Bishop for ordination. When that person is unable to continue, the group would choose another. Each member of the community, including the priest, would be full time Christian and part time minister. Let us release the energy, share the responsi-

bility, call people, energising and liberating them, getting the talents and love in every place to be at the service of all.

In such a group people could know and care for each other. Nobody would be left alone in their house if they got sick. Someone would say: 'Where's Harry or Jean to day?'. From that communal basis we can move to put some energy into our cities, our country, our politics.

There is a whole social dimension of the Good News begging for attention. For example I read an article the other day about a company that has people in Asia making shoes. The chief executive of the company who lives in another part of the world makes an annual salary that is equivalent to 1500 years of wages of one of those Asian workers! When we talk about parish or Church, do we care about those sorts of things? 'Blessed are those who mourn'. Do we ever mourn about anything? Do we ever go to bed sad because of the injustices of our world and more particularly our own society?

We must be mindful of history, the big picture, the long run. Keep your eyes on what matters. Stay in touch through prayer, remember the Spirit who loves us. Prayer is letting God love us, as John of the Cross says: to have that energy from Him, to bring that energy and encouragement to others, to share it in those groups which can bring energy to the bigger picture and the bigger Church. We may in fact be in the infant Church. □

Bishop Heaps is the author of Parish Pastoral Councils: Co-responsibility and Leadership, E J Dwyer, 1993. He is working on a further book along the lines of the above address.

Essay – Women in the Church (Part Two)

by Margaret Beazley

On October 31st, 1997, we held the second Catalyst Dinner with the theme "Women in the Church". The two speakers were Geraldine Doogue and Justice Margaret Beazley. The March issue of *The Mix* carried the text of Geraldine's presentation. What follows is the text of Margaret's presentation.

I recollect my last mass - that is the last one before my somewhat return to the fold. I remember where I had come from

that morning, where I was going to. I remember the church. I remember the Gospel: Luke Chapter 18 verse 18 where the rich Jewish leader said to Jesus: "What must I do to receive eternal life". Jesus replied:

"You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not commit murder, do not steal, do not accuse anyone falsely, respect your mother and your father".

The rich man said: "Ever since I was young I have obeyed all these commandments". Jesus said:

"There is still one more thing you need to do. Sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Come then and follow me".

The rich man was deeply perturbed by this command. Jesus, on seeing this said:

"It is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle".

Jesus then spoke with others who were there at the time. And Peter said to him: "Look, we have left our homes to follow you". Jesus replied:

"Yes...and I assure you that anyone who leaves home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the Kingdom of God will receive much more in this present age and eternal life in the age to come".

I remember clearly the sermon which followed. The priest used almost the precise language of the Gospel. He exhorted us to do what Christ had said we should do. "Give up your earthly possessions and follow Jesus". I remember the many Mercedes parked outside in the church grounds on that day. I observed that there was not a single Mercedes left in the Church grounds five minutes after Mass finished. I remember my thoughts as I left the Church - the illogicality, if not the hypocrisy, of that sermon. It all seemed very hollow.

That Gospel and that sermon was the trigger which kept me away from Mass for almost 20 years. But what really caused me to move away? Undoubtedly, the years of an overenthusiastic Irish Catholic education contributed, where goodness was measured by the number of Masses one attended each week and badness by non-compliance with the rules the Church had imposed on our lives. Where, after two decades of saying Hail Mary's, I had no notion of prayer or praying.

What kept me away for so long? Fundamental disagreement with the way the Church imposed itself on my life, a way which took little account of the reality. A Church which insisted on a rule of law which was the same for me as it was for the Catholic in Africa, or South America or the Philippines - regardless of what was going on in the life of that society, regardless of what was going on in the life of the individual. A rule of law which was imposed by a group of religious bureaucrats in Rome.

My rejection of this rule of law imposed by this overarching institution is one which I have often found to be personally incongruous. Incongruous because I am, after all, a lawyer. Every day of my life I deal with the civil rule of law. In my role as a judge, I impose it on every litigant who comes before me. Indeed, in my role of a judge, I am the institution. I can justify the imposition of the law of the land, even

though I know that that law does not always deliver personal justice. Yet it is that same failing, the failure of the religious rule of law to deliver to the needs of the individual which causes me greatest difficulty in being part of the institutional Church.

Let me speak for a moment of a few of the specific matters which I reject and to then share with you the effect that has on me. The first relates to the Church's rule on divorce. Or perhaps it is its rule on marriage. The rule of the Church says that I am not properly married unless I am married in the Church and unless I am married to a person who has never married before. I except from that statement the circumstances of an annulled marriage. Such a marriage, of course, never existed as a matter of Canon law.

In the eyes of the Church I am not properly married. My husband was previously married, had 2 children, one of whom he lost at 8 weeks through cot death, and he was, of course, divorced. He is not Catholic

*I, as woman,
have a role within the church
which is defined by men.
I have a place in the church
which is not inclusive of
the full life of the Church.*

When I came to make my decisions about getting married, I had no hesitation in rejecting the notion that I should require Alan to get an annulment. I consider it extraordinary that the Church can say to an individual - you made a mistake, entered into a marriage which did not survive, for whatever reason - in the case of my husband, the untold stress and grief of the cot death - and therefore, unless you in effect renounce that marriage - you are forever deprived of the right to have an intimate relationship again. When I argued this out with a priest who is one of the leaders of the Church in Sydney, he told me that there were many levels of friendship available to people in such a situation. The Church only prohibited the one which might, in a particular case, bring the most happiness. And, of course, what that rule of the Church does, is to force celibacy upon Catholics who did not and do not choose that as their way of life. Many of us ignore all of this, of course. But my point is - the institution rules otherwise. Linked to my views about divorce is the annulment

process. My sister went through it. I shared moments of that with her. There were aspects of it which were convenient in the extreme. Which were susceptible to the same sort of tactics which are played out in a court of law.

Now for my next problem, women. We are women. I am a woman. I work in a male business - the law. I understand power as it is exercised institutionally, mostly by men. I understand acceptance within power structures. I understand that for much of my professional life men have sought to exercise power by defining my role for me. I know how to survive, deal with and assuage that power. That involves a certain amount of game playing - at least until one has been accepted fully.

I also belong to a church in which power is exercised by men. I, as woman, have a role within the church which is defined by men. I have a place in the church which is not inclusive of the full life of the Church. And in this sense I speak of me as woman, not only as the individual.

I feel aggrieved and frustrated that the institution in which I seek to work out my relationship with God, in which to be spiritual, sets its face against me in exactly the same way as do the power structures I have experienced in my professional life. And sometimes I seriously ask myself why I bother to belong.

And a third problem. I have great difficulty with prayer. What is it? It seems that the Church of old spent so much time teaching us to say our prayers that very little time was spent in assisting us to pray. I had, and still have, a particular problem with intercessional prayer. Do you remember those school excursions when we used to pray to ex St. Christopher for a safe journey. And all those prayers to St. Anthony when Sr. Ex St. Philomena lost her keys. So much of what we were taught merely breeds superstition, not prayer. I know a very devout Catholic who routinely puts lottery tickets under this little statue of Christ - the Christ dressed as a little Prince. That particular image of Christ is supposed to bring financial luck. God has got his own back in this case - this friend has never won the lottery, but there those tickets are, week after devout week.

I have tonight been somewhat strident in my criticism of this male Church. This "not me" institution. This is not however an anti male bash. The fact that I am and most of us are married puts the lie to any suggestion that it might be so. I have deep and sustaining friendships with a number of men. My experience is, however, that in

an institutional way men are not listeners and they therefore do not understand that their way is not inclusive. There is much talk in feminist theology of the need to reconstruct the symbols of our religion and of our spirituality. That is because the existing symbols are almost universally patriarchal. To the extent that they are not, they are submissive or secondary symbols. Catherine Zappone speaks of the need for inclusive liturgies "to enable each person to participate in ritualizing their individual experiences of becoming whole". Rosemary Reuther makes the same point. She says, and her language is important:

"One needs communities of nurture to guide one through death to the old symbolic order of patriarchy to rebirth into a new community of being and living. One needs not only to engage in rational theoretical discourse about the journey; one also needs deep symbols and symbolic action to guide and interpret the actual experience of the journey from sexism to liberated humanity".

This concept of journey and the allegory of darkness to birth to new life is one which finds frequent expression. It is powerful and empowering. There is an English theologian who bears the wonderful name "Carol P. Christ" who, in her work "Diving deep and resurfacing: women writers on a spiritual quest", studied the writings of Kate Chopin, Margaret Atwood, Doris Lessing and Adrienne Rich. Their works caused her to divide women's spiritual quest into four distinct stages. The first: an experience of nothingness, linked to an emptiness of some sort. This first stage, if lived through and accepted, can lead to a second stage - an awakening - which can lead to a third stage - a new insight - and then to the fourth stage - empowering women to create a new naming by which I understand her to mean a new "us defined" inclusive symbolism:

Where does this leave me? First, I consider myself as one of those Catholics who never really left. I have never felt bitter or resentful. Indeed, my difficulties with the Church as an institution really developed later - as I have experienced, learned and understood more about institutions and power. Understood more about the use of power and the abuse of power - not necessarily for any wrongful purpose, but so as to maintain structures which support the purposes of those who have the power. Indeed, Helen Garner commented in her book "The First Stone" that men seem to have this love for institutions which is alien to women. A sentiment with which I immediately identified.

Secondly, there were always two bright lights in the Church for me. One is the resurrection which I have always considered more central to the essence of Christianity than Christmas. The other is charity - the value which I have always considered to be at the heart of the practice of Christianity - and more particularly, at the heart of my concept of Catholicism.

What I have returned to is the formal expression of my Catholicism. Part of that is due to circumstance. Having decided to bring my children up as Catholics, I see it as my responsibility to share with them the culture of the Church. When they come to make their decisions about religion and God, they will do so with support not censure.

But the underlying reason why I now seek a more formal expression of my spirituality is because, for a number of years, I felt something missing in my life. The experience of emptiness identified by Carol Christ, I think what was missing was prayer.

The words which ring in my ears most profoundly are the words of Christ when he said: "When two or more of you are gathered together, there am I in the midst of you". That to me is the commencement of prayer.

Two interesting things struck me when I began to come back to Mass - the first is the sense of community one gets from being involved in a Mass. That cannot be replicated in a private spirituality. I recognised the importance of community to me and my wish to be involved in the external manifestations of my faith one day when I had sat through another dreadful sermon, in which it was indicated that there were some Catholics who could not receive the sacraments and that those persons might like to make amends or be re-educated. I wasn't about to make amends or be re-educated. But I felt a momentary sense of panic - what if I was sprung? What if I was refused communion? I felt really crushed at the prospect. Thoughts flitted through my head. Would I continue my subterfuge and simply move to another parish? Would I walk away again. Perhaps my day of reckoning will come next Sunday.

Whilst this sense of community has become fundamentally important to me, I do not propose to let it detract from my sense of indignation or my protest at the institutional inadequacies and wrongs of the church. In various aspects of my life I have private protests ... one of the private protests with the church is when I know that a pastoral or papal letter is on the agenda - I don't go to Mass. I don't go because I know that, in all probability, it will annoy and even insult me. So I save myself the annoyance - as annoyance does nothing to enhance my spirituality. I also boycott the Red Mass - the official Ceremonial Mass at the opening of law term - because the Cardinal insists on speaking of the important role judges play in our society. Except he speaks only about male judges. But although I have my protests, I do not propose to take myself out of the community. So fundamental is it to the spirituality which I need to express.

The second stunning thing that I experienced on coming back to the community is that, out of community, I have begun to understand a sense of prayer. The words which ring in my ears most profoundly are the words of Christ when he said: "When two or more of you are gathered together, there am I in the midst of you". That to me is the commencement of prayer. It may also be the ultimate in prayer. It is, I think, the beginning of the expression of a relationship with God.

Community has also helped me to begin to understand concepts which I once considered mere platitudes. Again the most profound - God is love - is something which at this stage I sense - although I am not able to articulate it in a way which satisfies my training - a training which requires me to explain my meaning and my conclusions.

So my journey, my personal voyage of discovery has begun. There are times when I think that I am still standing on a doorstep which opens onto a blue yonder. Compelled to enter. Frightened to do so. Frightened of losing control. Afraid to sense whilst not being able to articulate. Holding back. Afraid to let go. But absorbing, sensing. Increasingly understanding that God provides. Not materially, but emotionally, spiritually. Not protecting from pain but providing the strength to live through it. Understanding, slowly, that all that God asks of me is trust. □

The Honourable Justice Margaret Beazley is the first woman judge of the New South Wales Court of Appeal. She lives with her husband and three children in Sydney.

Words for a Pilgrim People

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2Cor.5:21)

The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since, especially in the sacred liturgy, she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from the table both of God's word and of Christ's body. She has always maintained them, and continues to do so, together with sacred tradition, as the supreme rule of faith, since, as inspired by God and committed once and for all to writing, they impart the word of God Himself without change, and make the voice of the Holy Spirit resound in the words of the prophets and Apostles. Therefore, like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by Sacred Scripture. For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life. Consequently these words are perfectly applicable to Sacred Scripture: "For the word of God is living and active" (Heb. 4:12) and "it has power to build you up and give you your heritage among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32; see 1 Thess. 2:13). (Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum), n.21)

For this reason the Word of God became a human being and the Son of God became the son of man in order that human beings, being mingled with the Word of God and being granted adoption should become the children of God. (St Ireneus, Against the Heresies, Bk. 3, 19, I.3)

Maybe the burning bush was burning all the time and Moses didn't notice. Maybe the miracle is when you stop and pay attention. (F. Prose, Household Saints, St. Martin's, 1981, p.220.)

The Bible

There are two similar passages in Luke's Gospel that speak to us very gently yet powerfully of the need to take the Word to heart, letting it be absorbed like food, so that it can transform us from within. The first is 8:21, when he has been told his mother and brothers are outside and want to see him: "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it". The second is 11:28, when a woman in the crowd cries out in praise of his mother: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it".

The Word is first and foremost Jesus Christ. We speak of the Bible as the Word by derivation, because it contains the revelation of God which has its fullness in Jesus. The Bible is a place of encounter, where bonds of intimacy are forged and the Covenant of Love is ratified again and again. By meditating that Word with an open and expectant heart, one that is eager to be transformed by the love of God, the experience of reading will be one of transformation. We must wait upon the Word though, listening with our ears and minds that we may hear with our hearts and stomachs.

We miss the full lifegiving value of the Bible if we read it merely as an object of abstract study or aesthetic interest, or if we read it as a book of quotations or, worse, as an arsenal of references that support a particular ideological stance. The Word has only one intention in the end: to draw us into the Trinitarian life of everlasting love. Thus the Word spoken through the Old Covenant - and the Word spoken in and through Mary's child.

Preachers of the Word, in particular, must remember that they are anointed for a significant responsibility in the community - one that is not free of major pitfalls. The task of the preacher is simple: proclaim the Word! If the proclamation is not the Word, the more talented the preacher is, the worse will be the results. No one will promote atheism and anti-religious feeling more effectively than those of us who preach the Word without having first taken it to heart and been transformed by it. But what a privilege it is to be called to share the Word, to tell the greatest story ever told, to speak of God's everlasting love!

Suggested Reading: Aelred Squire, "Holy Reading" Ch. 10 in *Asking the Fathers*, Christian Classics, 1993; Demetrisu Dumm, *Flowers in the Desert*, Paulist Press, 1987; *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*.

Tradition

In the Patristic Church - roughly from about 50 to 450 - the Word was generally held with much the same reverence that later generations gave to the Eucharist. The Book of the Gospels was enthroned for Synods, it was venerated in processions and Origen (185-254) urges those who are to handle the Book to wash their hands for the same reason they wash their hands before receiving the Eucharist.

The Scripture was seen as another Incarnation. St Ignatius of Antioch (c. 110) represents the tradition well when, in his Letter to the community in Philadelphia, he says he is "clinging for refuge to the Gospel message as to the Incarnate Christ". St Augustine, writing on the Gospel of John 300 years later, says: "The true Christ: in Word and in flesh".

The Word was even thought of as worship of God - indeed, another and complementary form of the Eucharist. Our Liturgy of the Word today owes its origins to this tradition, where the Word of God and proclamation of that Word are themselves worship. The prayer said by the one who proclaims the Gospel also has its roots here: "May the words of this Gospel wipe away our sins". This immersion in the Word is a cleansing and reconciling experience. It was even common practice in Augustine's time for beggars to sing the Psalms and thus be entitled to alms because that was a good and holy thing to do on behalf of the community. The tradition carries a profound regard for the salvific power of the Word.

Perhaps the words of a sermon attributed to Augustine sum up the Patristic attitude to the Word: "I have a question to ask you, brothers and sisters. Tell me, which do you consider to be of greater value, the Word of God or the Body of Christ? If you wish to answer correctly you would have to say that the Word of God is not to be treated as inferior to the Body of Christ. How careful we are that nothing slip from our hand and fall to the floor. But the same care must be taken to ensure that the Word of God, which has been given into our keeping, is never lost to our hearts through our thinking or speaking of other things. The one who is negligent in hearing the Word of God is no less guilty than the one who through carelessness allows the body of Christ to fall to the floor".

Suggested Reading: Michael Whelan, *Living Strings: An Introduction to Biblical Spirituality*, E. J. Dwyer, 1994, pp.23-32; Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism*, Oxford University Press, 1993 - this is a particularly outstanding work; Olivier Clément, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*, New City Press, pp.97-103; Linus Bopp, "The Salvific Power of the Word According to the Church Fathers" in *The Word: Readings in Theology*, P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1964, pp.147-167.

News in Brief

- **Maitland Diocese has begun, again, to publish its own newspaper - *Aurora*.** The previous paper - *The Catholic Sentinel* - ceased publication in 1968. Fr Peter Brock is the Editor and *Aurora* is distributed free of charge. All at Catalyst for Renewal wish the Maitland Diocese every success in this renewed venture.
- **A recent communiqué from the Vatican announced that "a Working Group composed of representatives of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (U.S.A.) and representatives of the Congregations for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments and for the Doctrine of the Faith has met at the Vatican for the purpose of completing a final review of the revised New American Bible edition of the 'Lectionary for Mass'. ... At the end of the sessions, all participants expressed satisfaction with the results achieved."**
- **Bishop Arthur Francis Fox, emeritus of Sale, died at the age of 92, on February 16.**
- **Cardinal Arns and the bishops of his diocese, Sao Paulo, have given their support to a mass of landless peasants who are marching on the Brazilian capital. They hope to be in Brasilia by April 17th - the first anniversary of the massacre by the military police of land-reform marchers in Eldorado dos Carajas. The Church's Pastoral Land Commission also issued a statement defending occupations of land as a means of putting pressure on the government.**
- **In Sao Paulo the police have a policy called Zero Tolerance aimed at reducing crime in the city centre. The bishops have condemned the policy as "sinful". The policy is designed to rid the streets of beggars. It treated poor people "like urban refuse" the bishops said.**
- **Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne told a plenary session of the German bishops that the Church should concentrate on important issues instead of spending its time on finances and structures. He asked whether the Church had been led astray by its riches, so as to turn from pastoral to social issues. (The Minister for Finance noted that, if the planned cuts to income tax come in, then the church tax linked to that will also be cut by more than \$2 billion (Australian).)**
- **The Pope has imposed a "papal delegate" on the Society of St Paul, replacing their elected Superior General. The Pauline Fathers and Brothers focus on the media as their apostolate. Their Roman publication - *Famiglia Cristiana* - has a weekly circulation of more than 1,000,000. *FC* has openly discussed matters - eg communion for divorced Catholics - in a way that has worried the Pope.**

Bulletin Board

- **The Halifax- Portal Lectures, sponsored by the Anglican and Catholic Bishops of NSW, will take place in May on successive Tuesday nights, 7.30pm at Santa Del Monte Hall, corner Carrington Ave and The Boulevard, Strathfield. The series is named after the Anglican Viscount Charles Halifax (1839-1934) and French Vincentian Abbé Etienne Portal (1855-1926) who met in 1889 and through their long friendship together promoted dialogue about Church re-union. The four lectures are as follows: May 6th: **The Orthodox Churches - Archbishop Aghan Baliozian of the Armenian Apostolic Church.** ("The Catholic and Armenian Churches are only a step away from unity" (*The Tablet*, Dec 1996); May 13th: **The Anglican Communion - Re Dr Bruce Kaye, General Secretary of the General Synod of Australia.** (An Anglican/Catholic committee for dialogue was formed in 1993 to reflect on the work of a similar international commission. It continues to meet.) May 20th: **The Uniting Church - Rev Dorothy McRae-McMahon, Director for Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia.** (Formal dialogue between the Uniting Church and the Catholic Church began in 1993 and continues with regular meetings.) May 27th: **The Legacy of Halifax and Portal - Ms Denise Sullivan, Secretary of the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations.** (*Info: Sr Patricia on 9390 5100*)**
- **Spirituality in the Pub (SIP) began again in March, 1997. The theme of this year's program is "The Good Life", with each evening highlighting one of the virtues. Topics include 'Courage', 'Fidelity', 'Chastity', 'Hope', 'Peacemaking', 'Honesty' and 'Discipline'. Speakers include Ruth Cracknell, Gabrielle Carey, Michael Whelan sm, Michael Easson, Michael Kelly sj, Josephine Mitchell, Chris Pupplick, Maisie Cavanagh and Diarmuid O'Murchu. SIP is held at two venues, March through October - Paddington and Pymble. The Paddington sessions are at the Bellevue Hotel in Hargrave St on the first Wednesdays of the month (*Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262*); the Pymble sessions are on the third Wednesdays of the month, except in April when it is on Wednesday April 9th - to accommodate overseas speaker Diarmuid O'Murchu (*Info: Marie on 02 9869 8101 or Robyn on 9876 6139*).**
- **Spirituality in the Pub begins in Melbourne, Wednesday May 7th, 8pm-9.3pm, The Upper Room, Prince Alfred Hotel, 619 Church St, Richmond. The speakers will be Rev Tim Costello from the Collins Street Baptist Church and Urban Mission (and yes, Peter is Tim's brother) and Phil Ruthven, Head of IBIS Information Systems. The topic will be "Downsizing, right sizing - Where's your job going?". The inaugural committee is Judith Lynch, Kate McKenzie, Mick Kelly SJ, Fr Michael Elligate, Paul Fennessy, Richard Curtain and Simon Feely. Entry is free. Buy yourself a glass of ale or wine and join the throng for a great evening on May 7th.**
- **The first of three Catalyst Dinner for 1997 will be held on Friday May 2nd and the topic is "Men in the Church". The speakers will be John Menadue AO and Peter Capelin QC. The venue is the parish hall in Hunters Hill. You are advised to make your bookings early! (*Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262*).**
- **Catalyst International Lecturers, William Frazier MM and Larry Lewis MM, will be in Australia from mid-June until early August. They will be lecturing at the CTU, Hunters Hill in June and July. These lectures are open to the public. (*Info: Pauline on 02 9816 3266*). For further information see the enclosed flier. Specific groups (such as school staffs) are invited to inquire as to the availability of the speakers (*Info: Michael on 02 9816 3614*).**
- **Formation Plus - a new approach to ministry from Kate Englebrecht, offers 3 introductory workshops in Christian Spirituality entitled "Created", "Broken", "Restored". The workshops reflect the 3 pillars which underpin our Tradition and will be held on three successive Sundays in May - 11th, 18th & 25th - 10am-1pm, at The CTU, 1 Mary St, Hunters Hill. (Kate is a Member of Catalyst for Renewal.) (*Info: Kate on 02 9960 4061*)**

Recommended Reading

- Jean-François Six, *Light of the Night: The Last Eighteen Months in the Life of Thérèse of Lisieux*, SCM Press, 1996, endnotes, 247 pages, pb, c. \$30.
- David J Tacey, *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia*, Harper Collins, 1995, index, endnotes, 224 pages, pb, c. \$20.
- Michael Goonan, *A Community of Exiles: Exploring Australian Spirituality*, St Pauls, 1996, bibliography, endnotes, 128 pages, pb, \$14.95.

Certain dispositions are required for a fruitful reading of hagiography in any tradition. Our Catholic tradition is no exception. Amongst other things, the reader ought to have respect, if not love, for the tradition, together with a keen eye for the boundaries between the mythical and the merely factual. Nowhere is this more true than in the case of the great St Thérèse of Lisieux whose autobiographical text was bowdlerised by her older sister Pauline (Mother Agnes) and published as if it was Thérèse's own work. The "autobiography", whilst extremely popular, did not do justice to the saint. Perhaps this led Karl Rahner to say: "I find many aspects of this saint's personality and writings irritating or merely boring". Jean-François Six has made a significant contribution towards setting the record straight. This is the best book on T. since Bernard Bro's *The Little Way* (out of print). Written more for the student than the meditator, this book opens up the spiritual depths of a truly post-modern woman - someone who knew atheism and despair in her own being. What sustained her in the darkness was her conviction of an everlasting mercy - that is indomitable.

David Tacey was born in Melbourne, grew up in Alice Springs and is Senior Lecturer in English and Australian Literature at La Trobe University. Tacey says of "this is a generalist book on the psychological and spiritual situation of Australian society" (*Preface*). The author looks to a "resacralisation" of Australian society, arguing that the scientific rationalism of the Enlightenment era has deprived us of a much needed contact with the spiritual in our own depths and in the natural world we inhabit. In particular, he argues that we will never understand the Aboriginal peoples and therefore never find true reconciliation with them, nor will we solve our most serious ecological problems, without re-discovering our spiritual roots. He draws well on Australian literary sources. If the book has one flaw, it is its dependence on Carl Jung and the theory of archetypes. Jung as a guide in psychiatry is one thing - as a guide in the spiritual quest he is quite another thing. However, Tacey's fundamental thesis is just so real and to the point that Jung is little more than a distraction in the end. Tacey's book affirms and challenges those who work to make the Gospel real in Australia today.

The author argues that "human experience is a primary source of divine revelation" (*Introduction*). He further argues that, central to the experience of being Australian, is the experience of "exile". Apart from the indigenous peoples, we are all from somewhere else or descended from those who are from somewhere else. In this, those very indigenous peoples have similarly been made "exiles" in their own land. The theme is explored by reference to The Exile of the Jewish people in the 6th century BCE - using the books of Tobit and Esther - and the Australian novels *Cloudstreet*, by Tim Winton, and *Woman of the Inner Sea*, by Thomas Keneally. This is a useful little book for its ability to promote a conversation on matters that must be central to our future as a nation - our relationship with the Aborigines, among various ethnic groups, with the land and with our history. As participants in the Christian tradition, we have available to us an excellent frame of reference for understanding our peculiar situation in Australia. We have probably never taken that possibility seriously enough, probably because we have never taken our own experience as Australians seriously enough.

✂ _____ Detach and post today _____

YES! I WOULD LIKE TO BE A FRIEND OF CATALYST FOR RENEWAL AND RECEIVE THE MIX

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

MY FRIEND'S DONATION OF \$30 FOR ONE YEAR IS ENCLOSED

(This donation is not tax deductible)

(NB: IF YOU CANNOT AFFORD \$30 ANY DONATION IS ACCEPTABLE)

I am paying by Cheque MasterCard Visa Bankcard

I am also including a further donation to support the work of Catalyst for Renewal

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 \$1000 Other

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Name on card: Expiry date:/..... Signature:

PLEASE TELL ME HOW I CAN VOLUNTEER TO HELP CATALYST FOR RENEWAL

Post to: Catalyst for Renewal, PO Box 139, Gladesville, NSW 2111 (Tel/Fax: 02 9816 4262)