



THE MIX



JOURNAL OF CATALYST FOR RENEWAL

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 4

JUNE 1997

Anthony Reilly

The human face 2

Teresa Pirola

The other side of the gender debate 3

Michael Whelan

Tradition (Part Two) 4

The Bible

The Word of God as conversation 6

Tradition

The medicine of mercy 6

Our Say - The source of both unity and diversity

In the celebration of Pentecost the Church meditates on one of the great paradoxes of our tradition - a truth that is at once liberating and demanding: the Spirit begets *both* unity *and* diversity. In the Spirit of God we discover communion with others and our unique individuality.

Acts (2:1-11) speaks of the diversity of languages that is an expression of our unity in the Spirit. The destructive alienation, manifest in our inability to speak with each other, is overcome, not by obliterating the differences, but by affirming them. Those who were disconnected individuals are now a community. They can understand each other as they each express their individuality through their respective languages.

St Paul, writing to the community in Corinth (1Cor 12:3-7, 12-13), reflects on "the variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; ... all sorts of service but always the same Lord". All our talents come from God and point back to God. Their very expressions - even in their uniqueness, diversity

and individuality - are signs of unity when we recognise their origins. The unity is achieved precisely in the expressions of diverse gifts.

John (20:19-23) recalls how the disciples were gathered in a closed room for fear of the Jews. "Jesus came and stood among them". His transforming and unifying presence sends them forth in peace. They are anointed by the Spirit of the Risen Lord. Henceforth their lives revolve around Him. They derive their mission from Him and everything they do from now on will be done by the power of His Spirit. That Spirit will draw them and all they meet into the loving embrace of God.

Our unity *and* our diversity are both derived from our relationship with God in Christ through the power of the Spirit. Institutional signs of this unity (eg the papacy) are essential though relative to this primary source. This is easily forgotten. When we do forget the primary source

of our unity as disciples, we make ourselves vulnerable to two particular errors.

Firstly, we are inclined to look for unity primarily in and through efficient institutional structures, strong authority figures and simplified ideology. Secondly, in the face of this contrived unity - which will tend to foster opposing forces of conformity and rebellion - those who wish to respect the God-given diversity of the community will almost certainly find themselves at odds with that community.

These particular errors are not unknown in the Church's history. No structure, authority or ideology can give us the unity in diversity that is essential to the Church. Perhaps this is the sort of thing that influenced Pope John XXIII to have us pray for "a new Pentecost". There is ultimately only one place we can find unity - an authentic unity that gives focus and energy - and diversity - an authentic diversity that gives creativity and imagination: the Spirit of God. □

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

These are the current Members:
Marie Biddle rsj, 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, Carmel Sharples,
John Sharples, 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).

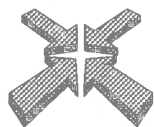
The Patrons are:
Mr Robert Fitzgerald
Mr Gerald Gleeson
Prof Francis J Moloney SDB, AM
Dr Richard J Mulhearn OAM
Most Rev Geoffrey Robinson
Sr Deirdre Rofe IBVM
Sr Ann-Marie Webb SM

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:
Michael Whelan sm, Ms Joanna Thyer
Ms Geraldine Doogue, 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 ANTHONY
MREILLY. I was born in Sydney in
1958. I have an older brother and two
younger sisters. I went to St Pius
Chatswood to school, just a short distance
from where we lived in Forestville. (I see
Robert Fitzgerald in one of the earlier
copies of *The Mix* - he was my CUO in the
cadets.)

Dad was a lineman in the PMG and
worked his way up in that organisation.
Mum and Dad were very strong in their
faith. My older brother and I were altar
servers from 7 to about 15 years of age.
Everyone else had dropped it in sixth grade
and we had to keep doing it until year 9!

Full marks to the Christian Brothers for
their education. While our parish priest
was talking about communism and the
bishops going communist, and linking that
to bikinis and pool parties, the Christian
Brothers were giving us really good stuff at
school relating my faith to the world I was
experiencing and the questions I was asking.

Br Grahame Rossiter was particularly
good. He did a whole lot of work in extra
curricula projects with kids. Through such
things as YCS Camps, he helped us de-
velop even further our understanding of the
faith and human relationships. I found a
model of Church I could relate with and
justify. Camps at Bilgola organised by the
Marist Fathers were also significant for
me. On one of those camps I read Carlo
Carretto's book *Letters from the Desert*. He
wrote about the God of love and it hit me
very hard. It convinced me that the only
necessary motivation for any religious be-
haviour is love - love of God, yourself and
others. Church is not about the fear of hell,
and sacramental obligation so much as it is
about the invitation to respond to his love
and to do that as a community.

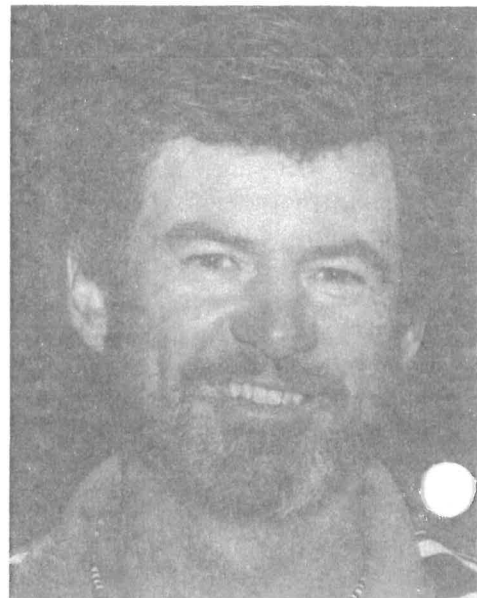
I enjoyed my time at Macquarie Uni-
versity. This opened me to a bigger world.
I realised that it was not necessary to have
gone to a middle class Catholic school to
be a decent person. During that time I at-
tended The Kite Fliers Week, run by Sr
Pakpoy rsm and Fr Mark Raper sj. That
was a big one. They had asked certain
schools to recommend young school leav-
ers for an intensive social justice experi-
ence. After that, I knew I could never walk
away from the challenge of social justice.
So I developed this threefold understanding
of the Church - as community, as loving
relationship to God, as prophetic "get-your-
hands-dirty" role in the world.

After teaching for a while, I went to Af-
rica, mostly just to travel but also to teach.
The bush school in Zambia, 600 km from
the capital was a radical dislocation in
every way. I met an old priest in Zaire.
He'd been a Marist Brother and had be-
come a priest because all the priests in that
region had been executed in the early six-
ties. He walked out of the jungle with a
bushknife in his hand and a monkey on his
back and started talking about "la plus
abandonné". He was expressing one of the
keys to Marist Spirituality in a most
graphic way. That sense of Mary in the
midst of the early Church, Mary with an
eye to the world's most wounded. That fit
with my sense of Church and the world.

I returned to Australia and joined the
Marist Fathers in 1986. I struggled a lot
with the gap between the institutional
Church and the ideals I had. But I chose
then as now to love this Church and work
for reform from within.

I was ordained in 1993 and am now
part of a team - a Mercy Sister, a Christian
Brother and three Marist Priests - working
in Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in the
Diocese of Lismore. We aim to deepen the
dialogue with the Koori people to discover
if and how they want to be Church. The
Pope's Alice Springs address of 1986 is a
major point of reference for us. We w'd
like them to bring the riches of their cul-
ture to the Church.

The Koori people are accustomed to
finding the spiritual through the natural
world. And its changing me, developing
aspects of my spirituality. For example, the
ability to look at nature with awe and know
that this is connecting me with God. They
can teach us about sacramentality and
mysticism. They've been good for my faith.



Anthony Reilly sm

Your Say – The other side of the gender debate

by Teresa Pirola

Are women in danger of sabotaging their own goals by ignoring men? The emergence of the men's movement presents a golden opportunity for feminism. But are women prepared to hear the other side of the gender debate?

Women are angry. And everyone knows it. Even the most staunch bastion of patriarchy cannot deny the existence of feminism as a force to be reckoned with. Scarcely a day passes without a feminist conscience prick. The media is full of it. Politicians jostle for the women's vote. Churches are conducting surveys, running conferences and establishing committees on 'women's issues'. While far from being resolved, the concerns of women are on the social, political and religious agenda.

Not so when it comes to the other - complementary - reality: men are hurting. Suddenly all the heat and headlines about 'gender issues' disappear. Talk about male powerlessness and you are likely to get a blank stare. Object to men being portrayed in television commercials as domestic imbeciles and the most you will get is a shrug of shoulders. Express concern about the oppression of the 'success' trap, about the fact that men have a lower life expectancy than women, about the statistics on violence committed against men (e.g. men are almost twice as likely as women to be victims of violent crimes - even when rape is included - and three times more likely than women to be victims of murder*), about the exclusion men experience in the birth and raising of their own children, about the absence of men from the pews on Sunday, and a host of other male issues and suddenly the conversation drops off into a void of awkward or disapproving silence. Despite all the noise about gender equality, talking about men's issues is simply not politically correct.

Given this one-sidedness of the gender debate, one can only ask why, in an age when feminism claims to be reconstructing gender relations in such a way that benefits both women and men, the opinions and experiences of men don't really seem to count. Far from being seen as a valuable contribution to issues of gender conflict, writings on masculine experience and the male perspective (by authors such as Amdt, Biddulph, Bly, Farrell, Rohr & Martos) are either ignored, politely tol-

erated or seen as a threat by many women's groups. Yet it is from these very writings arising from the embryonic men's movement that one gleans critical insights into the male psyche; insights which reveal some of the deepest reasons for sexism and which, if listened to and acted upon, can only enrich and propel the efforts of those movements that genuinely espouse equality of the sexes.

As a thirty-something woman who applauds much of the consciousness-raising and practical gains of feminism, I am increasingly concerned about its accompanying blindspots. Frankly, the tired litanies of men's sins against women are wearing thin. The constant tirade of cliches depicting women as either helpless victims or sinless saviours are bringing a boring predictability to social communications while being of questionable effectiveness. The image that jumps to mind is that of a nagging wife haranguing a deafened husband. He's heard it all before. She's said it all before. But what she hasn't heard is *him*. And he presumes she's not going to hear him - even if she thought to ask.



The situation begs a fresh injection of gender perspective. Enter the newly emerging men's movement - the other half of the gender equation - where a brave new world of insight is on offer to those who care to stop and listen. What happens when we do? We discover that most men (yes, even the clerical-collared variety) are not power-hungry misogynists bent on making life difficult for women, but sincere and good human beings with their equal share of suffering and sinfulness, health and holiness, insight and blindness. We find that that sexism is a two-way street; that while men have been dominating the public arena, women have been (consciously or unconsciously) carving out their own power base in the domestic arena of personal relations including all its unwritten rules of exclusion and prejudice. Both sexes stand locked in an unhappy stalemate of mutual misunderstanding. The pain of women excluded in the public sphere is

matched by an equally painful suffocation of men in the private sphere. The truth can be frightening. Men experience isolation, entrapment and rejection in ways that would shock the average woman who assumes men to have the upper hand in gender politics.

It is this ignorance, this lack of acknowledgement of the pain of men that is not only an unfortunate characteristic of many feminist voices today but constitutes a major threat to their own goals. For the fact remains that, no matter how much one dwells on the oppression of women, *it is impossible to liberate just one half of the human race*. That's like trying to address the problems of a rocky relationship by focussing on the needs and grievances of one partner only. Such a remedy is seriously flawed. Clearly man-woman conflict involves a complementarity that touches the core of human existence. At every level of society a spirit of reconciliation and compassion towards women and men is essential. We must resist the temptation to comfortably settle for just one side of the argument. We must be willing to delve below the superficiality of public opinion, beyond the cliches, in search of resolutions that tackle gender conflict at its deepest roots.

The emergence of the men's movement presents a golden opportunity for feminism. While rejoicing in feminist accomplishments, women can also rejoice that new insights into the gender debate are forthcoming, however gradually, from the opposite sex. We can feed on the freshness of this perspective, dialogue with it and encourage women to meet its challenges. On the other hand we can ignore it, resent it, ridicule it ... and keep nagging. The choice is ours.

* Warren Farrell, author of *The Myth of Male Power* (Random House, 1993) quotes these figures from the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Survey Reports NCJ- 122024 Dec 1990 and NCJ- 1 15524 June 1989.

Suggested reading: Steve Biddulph, *Manhood: A Book About Setting Men Free*, Finch Publishing, 1994. Warren Farrell, *The Myth of Male Power*, Random House, 1994. Daphne Kingma, *The Men We Never Knew: Women's Role in the Evolution of a Gender*, Millennium Books, 1993. Richard Rohr and Joseph Martos, *The Wild Man's Journey: Reflections on Male Spirituality*, St Anthony Messenger Press, 1992.

Ms Teresa Pirola operates "The Story Source", a Sydney-based publishing venture.

- what is the essence of the Eucharistic celebration - what *must* be included in order to be faithful to the Tradition, and what *may* be included or omitted?
- can a "Communion Service" be accepted as a suitable substitute for a full celebration of Eucharist? (See J Dallen, *The Dilemma of Priestless Sundays*, Liturgy Training Publications, 1994, for an excellent discussion of this question.)
- is it possible that we might be blinded to the authentic Tradition by practices that have crept into our Eucharistic celebrations over the centuries that have little or nothing to do with what Jesus intended that night before He died and, indeed, little or nothing to do with today's culture?
- are we enhancing or diminishing the Tradition when breakaway groups have "home Eucharist" with self-appointed presiders or no presiders as such?

Struggling with these questions as a community is both difficult and distressing. Nonetheless, they are the sorts of questions we must ask and we should not seek slick answers - be they of the "conservative" kind or the "progressive" kind. Part of the Christian vocation of our time is to live the pain of this situation in union with our Paschal Lord. That may be our biggest contribution to keeping the Tradition alive.

Let us turn our attention now to the related issue of priesthood in the Tradition. Strange as it may seem, one of the most significant influences in the development of priesthood as we know it today (in the West at least) within the Tradition is the disintegration of the Roman Empire during the fifth century.

Prior to the fifth century lay people played an active part in all the internal workings of the Church. They had important roles in the liturgy which was, at that time, still very much a liturgy focused on the assembly of all the baptized. They had their word to say in the election of bishops and the nomination of priests. They contributed to the drawing up of Church laws and customs, prepared some of the matters for discussion at the Councils and even took part in some of those Councils. They administered Church properties and often preached. As the scholar Jean Leclercq puts it:

There was no monopoly on the part of the *clerics*: they lived among the laymen, had the same way of life and manner of dress; they were urged to practise chastity, either within the married state or as celibates; they officiated at the altar and administered the sacrament of baptism (Jean Leclercq, "The Priesthood in the Patristic and Medieval Church" in N Lash and J Rhymer (eds) *The Christian*

Priesthood, Darton Longman and Todd, 1970, p.55. This is an excellent summary article by Leclercq. The Editor would be happy to help any *Mix* reader get a copy of the article.)

Very little is in fact known of "the average priest" of this time. The main quality demanded of the priest seems to have been "a certain standard of honest living" (ibid). He generally got by with little learning, was the immediate auxiliary of the bishop, presided at Eucharist, celebrated baptism and tended to be pastoral rather than missionary. Few could survive on the offerings of the community so most had other jobs to earn their living.

***This is God's Church,
God's work;
our centre of gravity
must at all times be God;
we must see the Church
and world as God does;
we are God's servants.***

After the barbarian invasions, "when all the administrative framework had disintegrated, the functions held by government officials passed into the hands of Christian bishops" (Leclercq, p.57). Leclercq notes that this had "a profound influence upon (the Church's) structure and forms of life" (ibid). The massive social and cultural shift produced two highly significant factors that have greatly affected our experience of priesthood to this day:

- firstly, lay people ceased to enjoy the same facilities for acquiring culture and education as did the clerics;
- secondly, the political and social structures that had been in force were replaced by episcopal authority.

Because bishops thus became invested with many secular functions, they relegated most of their ministerial functions to their priests - principally preaching, baptizing and presiding at Eucharist.

The laity receded further from the active life of the Church. This is perhaps most graphically illustrated in the Form Tradition by the architecture of the Church building - "the altar was pushed back to the end of the apse which signified that the liturgy had become more and more of a ceremony, a strictly clerical affair in which laymen had nothing to say" (Leclercq, p.59). During the sixth century the custom of celebrating Eucharist without a congregation began.

The clergy had become "a special cate-

gory of Christians, an order set apart and distinguished by its juridical privileges, its culture ... the way of life implying celibacy, and the work which they were allowed to do" either earning their living from offerings and tithes, or from a benefice, in particular from the revenue on lands owned by the Church. It was also at this time that it became important for the cleric to dress differently from the laity - a radical shift from the earlier centuries where the priest was forbidden to dress in any distinguishing way. There was "a progressive clericalization of the Church ... and the clericalization of the clerics" (Leclercq, p.60).

Most of this development was driven by the prevailing political, social and cultural forces. The developments seemed to have little or no relationship to the Gospel as such. Priesthood as we know it today still bears the shape given it by those forces at work in the early medieval world.

Again, we are confronted with immensely complex and difficult questions here, ones that will demand both unusual courage and great wisdom if we are to deal with them creatively. There is no quick fix.

It is as well for us to have some practical principles to which we can refer as we struggle with the questions and issues of our time. I suggest the following:

- "I am with you always!" This is God's Church, God's work; our centre of gravity must at all times be God; we must see the Church and world as God does; we are God's servants;
- build your personal relationship with God; learn to pray and develop a deep prayer life; foster the contemplative dimension in your daily work and living;
- deliberately build lifegiving relationships based on your faith; seek out like minded people, converse with them, share your faith with them, travel the faith journey with them;
- seek education in the faith; read, attend seminars, keep on learning;
- the passage to life is through death; the Church must die continually in order to live; you and I must individually die in order to live; we must live the paschal rhythm in union with our Lord;
- work within the system; choose your engagement with the system on the basis of the possible rather than the ideal; seek some practical aspect of the Church's life where you can be useful and derive a sense of being part of renewing the Church. □

Michael Whelan is the author of The Call to Be (1986), Living Strings: An Introduction to Biblical Spirituality (1994) and Without God All Things Are Lawful (1995).

Essay – Tradition (Part Two): Living the heart of it

by Michael Whelan

This is the second of two essays on Tradition (see the May issue of *The Mix* for the first). In this essay we will reflect on two central and interdependent realities of the Tradition: Eucharist and Priesthood. We will follow that with some suggested practical guidelines as to how we might respond to the situation in which we find ourselves today. But first, we must name the times in which we find ourselves and point to some of the implications for the Church and Tradition.

An era has ended. It was an era in which there was considerable consensus as to meanings and values and it has quite simply come to an end. This ending of an era applies to the human family, not just the Church. Massive changes are afoot throughout the world. Institutions, social structures, governmental systems, customs, symbols, rituals, perceptions, relationships, meanings and values are all more or less affected.

It is not for us here to try to point to the exact time and cause of the ending. Rather, we must attempt to name what has happened and try to develop effective ways of responding, so that we can receive the essential Tradition amidst the change, be faithful to that Tradition and facilitate its reception by the next generation.

We noted in Part One of these reflections on Tradition (*The Mix*, May 1997, pp.4-5) that Tradition has two distinct though intimately interdependent streams: the *Faith Tradition* - bearing what we believe - and the *Form Tradition* - bearing the ways we concretize what we believe. In both streams there is constant need for critical reassessment so that we remain faithful to the heart of the Tradition.

Repetition over many years and even centuries is no reason, in and of itself, to continue a given practice of the Form Tradition or articulation of the Faith Tradition. For example:

- ever since the Council of Nicaea in 325 we have celebrated Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon of spring - as it appears in the northern hemisphere; would it be unfaithful to the authentic Tradition if we changed the time/date of Easter?
- for many centuries we celebrated the Eucharistic Liturgy in Latin with a particular set of rubrics - now we celebrate it in the local language with different rubrics;
- since the ninth century the word *Filioque* (literally *and the Son* - i.e. the Holy Spirit

proceeds from the Father and the Son) has been in the Creed in the West, in contrast to the Eastern Churches which are quite explicit that the Spirit proceeds only from the Father - how is the faith best stated?

- the Council of Vienne (1311-1312) condemned as "heretic" anyone lending money for profit and so confirmed a longstanding teaching which would not be promulgated by the Church today;
- the seven Councils of the first millennium were all summoned by the Emperors - none by the Popes; such a situation would be regarded as outrageous today;
- nuns at the time of the Second Vatican Council typically wore habits modeled on the dresses of seventeenth century European women - change was needed;
- the Easter Vigil was celebrated through Holy Saturday night and into Easter Day morning at the end of the fourth century, but from about the fourteenth century until 1951 it was celebrated on Holy Saturday morning, in broad daylight, mostly by clerics - Pope Pius XII ordered the change.

The Christian community must celebrate Eucharist in some way if it is to maintain lifegiving links with the Tradition. Such celebrations are "the fount and apex" of the community's life.

In none of these instances - and many others that could be quoted - can we reasonably argue that we must continue the particular expression concerned in order to be faithful to the Tradition. On the contrary, in order to be faithful to the Tradition, we must be prepared to change in such instances. The advice of Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for Doctrine and Faith, is a helpful reference in this matter:

Criticism of papal pronouncements will be possible and even necessary, to the extent that they lack support in scripture and the creed, that is, in the faith of the whole church. When neither the consensus of the whole church is had, nor clear evidence from the sources is available, an ultimately binding decision is not possible (cited by Francis A Sullivan, *Creative Fidelity*, E J Dwyer, 1996, p.89).

It is helpful to remember both the facts of history and the signs of our times when we seek to understand the celebration of Eucharist. According to our Faith Tradition,

the celebration of Eucharist is the celebration of the heart of the tradition for it re-enacts sacramentally the Paschal Mystery. "Each time you eat the bread and drink the cup you proclaim the death of the Lord Jesus until he comes in glory!" (cf 1Cor. 11:23-27). The Second Vatican Council expresses the Faith Tradition in these words:

Taking part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, (all the baptized) offer the divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with it. Thus, by the act of oblation and through holy Communion, all perform their proper part in this liturgical service, not, indeed, all in the same way, but each in that way which is appropriate. Strengthened anew at the holy table by the Body of Christ, they manifest in a practical way that unity of God's People which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most awesome sacrament (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, n.11).

The Christian community must celebrate Eucharist in some way if it is to maintain lifegiving links with the Tradition. Such celebrations are "the fount and apex" of the community's life. All the baptized have a right and responsibility to look out their sisters and brothers in the faith, assemble, and "eat the bread and drink the cup" in remembrance of Him. This touches the very heart of the Christian Tradition. When the baptized are unwilling or unable to participate in the Eucharist, their participation in the tradition itself is in jeopardy. The surest way to rob the Tradition of its lifeblood is to prevent the baptized from assembling and celebrating Eucharist.

Over the centuries the Form Tradition has given us varying ways of celebrating what the Faith Tradition holds to be true of the Eucharist. Most recently, we have seen considerable changes to the form of the Eucharistic celebration initiated by the Second Vatican Council.

The changes in form are an attempt to reflect a recovery of the authentic Faith Tradition. Clearly we still have much work to do before we develop appropriate ways of expressing the Faith Tradition in the different cultural situations of our world. For example:

- to what extent do the rituals and symbols of our Sunday celebrations reflect both the authentic Tradition of the Eucharist - as revealed in the Gospel - and the lives of the people who are assembled there?

Words for a Pilgrim People

He resolutely took the road to Jerusalem. (Lk. 9:51)

'If you knew the gift of God!' (Jn 4:10). The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God's desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for God. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.2560)

*Among the central mysteries of Christian and Church life we proclaim in the Lord's Supper the death of the Lord until he comes again. We Christians, then, are really the only people who can forgo an "opiate" in our existence or an analgesic for our lives. Christianity forbids us to reach for an analgesic in such a way that we are no longer willing to drink the chalice of the death of this existence with Jesus Christ. And to this extent there is no doubt that in living out its Christian existence Christianity is required to say in an absolute and sober realism: yes, this existence is incomprehensible, for it passes through something incomprehensible in which all of our comprehending is taken from us. It passes through death. And it is only when this is not only said in pious platitudes, but rather is accepted in the hardness of real life - for we do not die at the end, but we die throughout the whole of life, and, as Seneca knew, our death begins at our birth - and it is only when we live out this pessimistic realism and renounce every ideology which absolutizes a particular sector of human existence and makes it an idol, it is only then that it is possible for us to allow God to give us the hope which really makes us free (Karl Rahner, "Remarks on the Christian Life" in his **Foundations of Christian Faith**, Crossroad Book, 1978, p.404).*

*Emotional 'diseases' can be a product of human strengths, strengths that come to be misused in a life, rather than being absent or weakened. (Richard Sennett, **The Uses of Disorder**, Vintage Books, 1971, 23).*

The Bible - The Word of God as conversation

Each of the three synoptic Gospels gives us a version of a very revealing incident in the life of Jesus. When asked which was the greatest commandment, Jesus recited - in part at least - a prayer with which every one of his listeners would have been familiar: "Listen Israel, the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart etc." (Mk 12:29ff; also Mt 22:34ff and Lk 10:25ff. The part about love of neighbour does not come from the prayer but Lev 19:18). The prayer is called The Shema and is said even today by Orthodox Jewish men, morning, noon and night. Its substance may be found in the Book of Deuteronomy, 6:4-9. The prayer derives its name from the first Hebrew word - *shema* - which means *listen or hear*.

The Shema is a prayer of remembrance, recalling as it does the decisive event of the Exodus and the Covenant of love that carries rights and responsibilities on both sides. In so far as it helps the people to live in remembrance, it also situates their daily lives within the context of the relationship with God. These people, if they are to maintain their sense of who they are, must constantly listen and hear the Presence of Yahweh in their midst.

It is fair to say that life, in the biblical perspective, is built around, grows out of and finds its energy and direction in an ongoing conversation with the God of the Covenant. Meditation on the Word, prayer and liturgy are acts of remembrance that remind us of this, and consciously place us back in the conversation. They help us to live in remembrance of the truth that, at all times, in the depths of our beings, "God's Spirit and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God" (Rm 8:16). The ethical call to love only makes sense in this context - as a natural consequence of being in an intimate relationship with the One who is Love. It is as if the Word says: "As you have been loved into freedom by being with Me, go and be with others in the same way - love them into freedom!"

The prophets of the OT remind us that the conversation is diminished and can even be stopped when we indulge in self-serving behaviour. Concretely, this shows itself especially in injustices to our neighbours. By disposing ourselves in the spirit of The Shema - listening attentively to what is happening in every circumstance, with a willingness to hear and heed the promptings of the Spirit of Truth and Love - we will find ourselves drawn to certain dispositions. In particular, we will be inclined to detach ourselves from all manner of selfishness and self-serving in order to be free to flow with the mutuality in this conversation. That will be our delight. That conversation will transform us in our daily lives.

Tradition - The medicine of mercy

At the time of Jesus' birth, there were many Jews looking for a return to the glory days of Israel - or at least liberation from the Roman yoke. It was therefore not surprising that one of the struggles Jesus should have, was that of convincing the people His Kingdom was not of this world. Thus, He forbids the apostles to speak of his mission (cf Mk 8:30; 9:9); also those whom He has cured (cf Mk 1:44; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26); even the devils he has cast out (cf Mk 1:25; 1:34; 3:12). Only in the light of the cross and the empty tomb can the early community begin to grasp the revolutionary and radical nature of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom to which Jesus gives witness lies at the very foundations of reality as we know it. This is a Kingdom where *being* clearly precedes *doing* or *having* - important as these may be. This Kingdom comes into being with and through His saving death. Members of the Kingdom are called to be "leaven", "salt" and "light", signs of God's loving and freeing presence in the world. They will be people who are in the world as servants, trusting in the great promise "I am with you!". They will never forget that God so loved this world He gave His only Son for it (cf Jn 3:16). That Son came that we might have life and have it to the full (cf Jn 10:10).

Very early in the piece a deformative tendency crept into the Church. Louis Bouyer describes it well when he speaks of Tertullian: "Where Tertullian's influence has proved most harmful is, perhaps, in the kind of polemics which he succeeded only too well in acclimating in ecclesiastic circles: combining an abstract and completely *a priori* logic with the supposition (candid or implied) that the adversary must be a fool or else dishonest".

It would be a mistake to believe that Tertullian was the first to turn the call to evangelize into a hard edged polemic. There are strong hints of this even in the Gospel references to "the Jews". As Bouyer indicates, the Tertullian style has tended to be very much a part of the Church's style over the centuries. Pope John XXIII not only called us to engage all people of goodwill in honest and open conversation, he set a new mood for dealing with error and those who oppose us: "The Church has always opposed errors. Frequently she has condemned them with the greatest severity. Nowadays, however, the spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity".

News in Brief

• **Catalyst for Renewal held another successful Catalyst Dinner on May 2nd.** The topic was "Men in the Church" - continuing the Dinner theme of "People in the Church". The speakers were John Menadue and Peter Capelin QC. The 193 guests enjoyed a wonderful evening of conversation, greatly stimulated by the guest speakers. A copy of the full text of John Menadue's presentation is available on request to The Editor. (Please send a stamped, self-addressed long envelope with your request.) Summaries of both presentations will appear in *The Mix* in due course.

• **At the second conference of the National Board of Women in Durham in April,** it was proposed that the access of women to the diaconate should be discussed by the Joint Dialogue Group, which brings together the NBCW and the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

• **A priest, three lay people and four East Timorese refugees were arrested on Easter Monday** when they allegedly climbed the fence of British Aerospace at Warton, Lancashire. Hawk jets were manufactured at Warton and are used by Indonesia in East Timor in what the United Nations has declared an illegal occupation. One third of the population - some 200,000 people - has now been killed in this occupation.

• **A recent survey among professional scientists in the US has revealed that 40% of them believe in a personal God and the afterlife.** This is almost exactly the same proportion as in 1916 when the same survey questions were put to scientists of that time.

• **The president of the Austrian Bishops' Conference has said that the "We Are Church" movement will not be invited as**

responsibility of dioceses, Church organizations and other movements. He said he did not regard "We Are The Church" as a representative body.

• **The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have issued new guidelines to Catholic Schools entitled *Catholic Schools and Other Faiths*.** The document recommends that all schools revise their mission statements, in view of their Christian duties to pupils of other faiths. It acknowledges the difficulty of keeping the right balance of upholding Catholic beliefs and respecting and remaining open to other faiths.

• **Representatives of the Council of Churches of Britain and Ireland have welcomed Pope John Paul's *Ut Unum Sint* (1995).** However the Churches failed to agree on a response after meetings in November 1996 and March 1997.

• **Deceased: Paulo Freire - Brazilian educationist, perhaps best known for his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Fr Aelred Squire - English Dominican since 1946, in recent years he had become a hermit in Big Sur, California where he died suddenly in May this year, aged 76; perhaps best known for his work *Asking the Fathers*.**

CATALYST FOR RENEWAL WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE ITS PATRONS. IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER THEY ARE :

Mr Robert Fitzgerald
Mr Gerald Gleeson
Professor Francis J Moloney SDB, AM
Dr Richard J Mulhearn OAM
Most Rev Geoffrey Robinson
Sr Deirdre Rofe IBVM
Sr Ann-Marie Webb SM

Coming issues of *The Mix*
will carry profiles of each of our Patrons.

a group to a summit to discuss Church reform. Dates were announced for The Dialogue for Austria (September 1997 to May 1998) and the Delegates Summit (24-26 October 1997) at which crucial issues for the Catholic Church in Austria would be discussed. The president, Bishop Johann Weber, ruled that the selection for the 400 delegates for the Summit was the

Bulletin Board

Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

June 4: Paddington SIP - "Trust" with Michael Easson and Barry O'Keefe;

June 16: Catalyst International Lecture Series with Bill Frazier and Larry Lewis, begins at Hunters Hill;

June 18: Pymble SIP - "Balance" with Geraldine Doogue and Geoff Stumbles (Info: Marie on 02 9869 8101 or Robyn on 02 9876 6139);

June 28: Friends Reflection Morning - St Bernadette's Parish Centre, 14 Wheeler St Lalor Park, 10am-1pm, BYO lunch.

July 2: Paddington SIP - "Hope", with Terence McBride, Win Childs and Michael Kelly;

July 16: Pymble SIP - "Authenticity" with Jim McKeon and Marilyn Correy;

August 1: Catalyst Dinner - "Parents in the Church" with speakers Deirdre Grusovin and Richard Mulhearn;

August 26: SIP begins at Rouse Hill - "The Good Life: What is it?" with Ger-

aldine Doogue and Michael Whelan (Info: Marie on 02 9745 3444);

SIP may also be found in Melbourne (Info: Simon on 03 9497 1631). Keep your ears to the ground - we believe things are happening like this all around the country. If they are not happening where you are, ask 'Why not?'. Or else contact Catalyst for Renewal's Convenor of SIP, Sr Marie Bidle RSJ on 02 9745 3444.

• **Politics in the Pub is on at the Harold Park Hotel, Glebe, every Friday night, 6pm-7.30pm.** The mission statement of the organising group is as follows: "We are people who characterize ourselves as 'left' and 'democratic' who are attempting to establish a left politico cultural focus in Sydney. There is no hidden agenda except to promote cross fertilization and discussion. We are not establishing another political party. All welcome, children too". Coming events include Stewart Firth and

Moses Havini on "Papua, New Guinea/Bougainville: Predators in Paradise" (June 20) and Ian Webster and Arthur Chesterfield Evans on "How Can Our Health System Be Saved: Priorities or Profits?" (July 4). (Info: Win on 02 9552 3599 or Pat on 02 9358 4834).

• **An Enneagram Workshop is being given by Noel Davis at the Eremos Institute, 16 Masons Dr North Parramatta on July 5 and 12, 9.30am-4.30am.** The Eremos Institute conducts many workshops in adult education. Another is "The Way of Prayer", by Alex Nelson on July 26, at St Alban's Anglican Church, Pembroke St Epping, 9.30am-4pm (Info: Kate on 02 9683 5096).

• **Australian Christian Meditation Community National Forum September 13-14, United Theological College, 16 Masons Dr North Parramatta (Info: Judi & Paul on 02 9908 1037).**

