

# THE MIX



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## **Our Say - The power to participate**

There are at least two good sets of reasons why we should all be working very hard to develop structures of maximum participation within the Church. The first set of reasons is psychological, the second theological.

One of the most basic principles of psychology concerns power. Put most simply it goes something like this: Essential to human health and well being is the conviction that we are part of the equation, that we count for something, that we are able to make a difference.

Human systems with structures - deliberately or indeliberately established - that militate against the gaining and maintaining of such a conviction by the members, will tend to generate a rage of impotence. They may be overt structures - eg decision making processes that take no account of those who will be most affected - or covert structures - eg ways of communicating that minimise the possibilities of genuine conversation taking place.

Many will simply walk away from such a system - if they can - to avoid the pain and struggle of dealing with the rage. Some particularly capable people may handle the rage creatively and work within the system to make that system more life-giving. Typically, however, the rage of impotence is destructive and will manifest itself in a number of different ways. The most obvious manifestation is straightforward aggression - physical, verbal, psychological. Amongst the less obvious manifestations are despondency, depression, apathy and indifference. The potential for sheer wastage of human talent and energy in such systems is obvious.

The theological reasons for working to set up structures of maximum participation within the Church, are perhaps most clearly indicated in the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*. Pope John Paul II, in his introduction to the new Code (*Sacrae Disciplinae Leges*) notes that the purpose of this

Code is "the renewal of Christian living". This Code begins with a series of "General Norms". It then focuses on the people - "The Christian Faithful". This section might justifiably be regarded as the heart of the Code. It begins:

*In virtue of their rebirth in Christ there exists among all the Christian faithful a true equality with regard to dignity and the activity whereby all cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ in accord with each one's own condition and function (Canon 208).*

After baptism, any other role, title or honour, adds nothing to the essential dignity of the baptised. We are baptised into Christ and in Him, with Him and through Him, we all have the same right and responsibility to participate in the life of the Church. There is an urgent and grave responsibility in all this. And it falls on all the baptised. Our life in Christ requires us to work hard for maximum participation. The Church will be more or less diminished without it.

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

These are the current Members:

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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).

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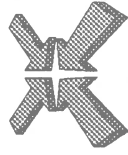
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The Four Arrows and the Cross symbolise diversity giving rise to communion in and through the Paschal Mystery. Those who are diverse by nature and culture, in and through Christ find lifegiving unity.

## The Human Face

**MY NAME IS SONIA GIDLEY-KING.** In 1930, when I was two years old, my father, with my mother, took us on my first trip by ship to meet my English grandparents and relatives. We travelled again in 1933-34 and 1939-40. Dad was a gentle man who had presence. Dad arrived in Australia in 1912 and became successful as a financier. He was nominated for a merchant bank charter in the mid-30's when you had to have £250,000 of your own unencumbered capital. The moratorium laws enacted during World War II, cost him greatly - most of his wealth was gone. However, he was always resourceful and as a collector of fine arts was able to open an antique and fine arts shop in Sydney. The business was going well, but my mother decided to arrive daily with her own goods for sale and became the super sales lady riding roughshod over my father's staff. The situation became intolerable, the business was abandoned and my father then worked for Mark Foy's.

My mother was a beautiful looking woman and much admired, but behind the scene! Dad and I would not know from one hour to the next how she would behave. We suffered mentally and physically as a consequence. I reached 'the pits' one day crying to God, beseeching Him on my knees, naked in the shower, for relief.

Aside from all the problems arising from my mother's mental instability - the dramas, tension, violence, fears, tears, and misery - she was at times very knowing and profound. She insisted, when we were in England in 1933-34, that I made my first Holy Communion at La Retraite Convent and, on returning to Sydney, arranged for my education at Kincoppal Convent, Elizabeth Bay. She was therefore responsible for the two most valuable aspects of my life: my Catholic faith and education. What a paradox!

A number of people have been influential in my life. The Kincoppal nuns gave me stability - a contrast to my mother. When I was six, Mother Brosnahan prayed 'Come Holy Spirit ...' and there was no doubt in my mind that is exactly what happened in the classroom. To me she was what she prayed. I knew she was real. I recall Mother Winifred Mahar, my Mistress of Discipline, with fondness. Mother May Hoare did not teach me in her Latin or Maths class, but as the Mistress of Studies she used to read out the annual distribution of prizes at which she said "Honour and

glory to God alone." I thought that was a great statement. Certain things leap out at you as a profound truth and that leapt out at me. Mother May taught me for nine years, one class a year. When I was thirteen, Mother Leila Barlow was my Class Mistress. Our paths parted but about five years ago we caught up when I requested her help to start 'Wrap With Love'. (See page 3 of this issue of The Mix for a description of the *Wrap with Love project - The Editor*.) I am privileged to know Sr. Leila as my dear friend, mentor and confidante.

My 'teen years embraced party-time, dances, the big bands - Glenn Miller, Gershwin - musical glamour movies.

I used to think that the 'prince of this world' was Jesus Christ until I started a Bible study program and found out it is the devil! When I was saying the Our Father - 'Thy will be done' - I was thinking 'as long as it agrees with mine!' In certain situations I was able to conveniently apply an aesthetic to my conscience.

For 6 years I was the Public Relations/Administrator for a professional cop theatre company and we produced 46 plays. In 1987/88 I got the idea - and instigated the committees - to get the First Fleet re-enactment ships diverted into Jervis Bay and that brought \$3M into the Shoalhaven in 48 hours. The Maritime Services had erected a solar-powered light at Huskisson with my name on it.

I have been married and widowed twice. I have three married children and six grandchildren. I've had major surgery for cancer twice and am now in remission.

You could say I've run out of foxholes in which to hide, and my 'hound' is breathing very close .....



Sonia Gidley-King OAM

# Your Say – Submission to the bishops' inquiry

by Joanna Thyer

The following is a condensed version of Joanna's presentation to the recent bishops' inquiry into women in the Church.

There are powerful barriers to women's participation in the Catholic Church. They are clearly manifest in different ways: via the structures of the Church and also the cultural and psychological attitudes that have become entrenched over the centuries.

I believe there are three major things which are stagnating the spiritual life of the Church and which particularly hinder women: hierarchical structure; outdated theology - particularly in relation to marriage and priesthood - and celibacy.

To address the barriers to women's participation in the church we must first look at the primary problem, the structure. The hierarchical structure of the Church that is dominated by celibate clerical males at the top, and consecrated men and women below, with 'lay' people (a misnomer because they may often be as well qualified as the former) at the bottom, is stifling the ministerial aspirations of many women.

Lack of voice given to women at the different levels of Church, whether it be in parishes, dioceses, etc., all comes down to 'Who really has the power in an organisation?' Decision making processes and active ministry often lack sufficient collaboration and delegation.

## A Sign of Hope - Wrap with love

By Sonia Gidley-King OAM

It was May 1992. As I went into my second operation for breast cancer, my prayer was that God would make my life useful. Three months later I was sitting in my little unit, modestly comfortable, watching the TV evening news, with my cheese and biscuits, olives and lemonade (?) and saying to myself: Tut, tut, tut. Someone ought to do something about it. Those poor skinny Mozambique people, day temperatures up to 45 degrees, at night zero.

You know, it's always the other person who should do something about something! Then a little voice (of conscience?) came: "What are you going to do about it - sit on your hands?". I was made to move out of my comfortable chair, and propelled to my wardrobe to look in the green bags where I found some burgundy wool, left over from my son's school cardi-

That total sacramental power and administrative power is in the hands of celibate clerical males, clearly limits women's ability to participate. For example, for women involved in ministries such as pastoral care, the sacramental barrier in regard to not being able to anoint people, hinders holistic ministry.

Secondly, and this particularly applies to lay women who are in ministry roles, the lack of a just wage for ministry hinders the participation of capable, professionally qualified women who have a call to ministry and a vast amount of life experience to call upon. Because of the stipend situation, low wages often attract only religious and many others who may not necessarily be gifted to a ministry, and more often than not are of an older age group. The idea should be to attract the right people with the right ministerial gifts, regardless of life situation. This requires a just wage.

The danger lies in clericalism which has done enormous spiritual and psychological damage to the Church. By seeing priesthood as the be-all and end-all of ministry we severely limit ourselves and fail to take full advantage of the many gifts that all kinds of people have to offer. By employing these gifts we could make the Church reap the spiritual rewards and also attract more people into the fold.

If women in ministry who had the appropriate gifts and training were ordained for

specific sacraments: such as anointings, baptisms; and able to conduct funerals and weddings in the Church; then the priest shortage would be greatly alleviated; there would be less potential for burn-out amongst priests themselves, and there would be a greater sense of collaboration in the Church. In other words, a paid deacon role (either part-time or full time,) which would even suit mothers; which did not lead to ordination, would solve many problems. It would not in any way threaten the sacred central role of saying the Mass, and would greatly enhance the ministry of over-worked priests and allow many gifted women and men to do good work.

If we address the problem of clericalism and see ministry as collaborative, whilst still maintaining some necessary structure, then I believe most people would be happier with the institutional Church. This is what the Holy Spirit is calling us to do: to let go of the aspects of the Catholic tradition which no longer serve us; maintain the ones that do; particularly those expressed through the Mass, ritual, sacramentality, the monastic tradition, spiritual retreats and so on, in order to allow the spiritual and pastoral life of the church full vent. □

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*Joanna Thyer lives in Sydney. She is a Pastoral Care Chaplain at St Vincent's Hospital and currently studying for her BTh. She is also active in the RCLIA program in her parish and is writing a book on Christian Spirituality.*

would be prohibitive. Together with a friend, I decided to continue knitting, leaving the transport question to the Lord. The day after I completed a week of prayer later that year, a man from Community Aid Abroad rang to say he could fit the wraps in with a consignment of recycled farm machinery destined for Mozambique.

And so the adventure began. We sent 38 wraps in that first consignment. Since then we have sent more than 20,000 wraps to needy people around the world - including Australia. We are a non-denominational network today of approximately 25,000 people. Cold humanity is our concern - humans caring about other humans. □

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*To find out more or to offer help, write to Wrap with Love, PO Box 192, Potts Point, 2011.*

# Essay – Know them by their fruits

by Jean Vanier

The lay movements have advanced with Rome's support, but can be controversial in the local Churches. Often they are accused of being like sects. The founder of the L'Arche community examines the charge. This is an edited and shortened version of the address he gave at the last Tablet Open Day.

Many people are embarrassed by the new Christian lay communities. Their poverty, enthusiasm, celebrations and radical way of living provoke a certain anxiety. They are out of the ordinary. Let us take the same attitude as Gamaliel in Acts 5:

Keep away from these men. Let them alone; for if this plan or understanding is of human beings, it will fail. But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God.

A few years ago I was invited to visit the Jesus People in a broken-down area of Chicago. When I arrived in the large building, formerly a hotel, in which all the members lived, I was somewhat surprised by the rather strange drawings on the walls, the long beards and long dresses, and by the "mother" who seemed to have authority over the group. After supper I was asked to speak to the whole community of about 200 men and women, simply and poorly clothed, including quite a few "punks" with their coloured hair.

As I spent time with them, I discovered that they gave free meals each day to some 300 people who were down and out. I also realised that many of the members had suffered in their younger days, some through drugs or in prison. I asked one of the leaders what their links were with the mainstream Churches of the city. He told me they were not too good because nobody seemed to want to accept them.

I found this strange group of people, which some might call a sect, quite beautiful. I am not sure there are many Christian communities capable of welcoming men and women whose lives have been so disordered and of helping them to live in a more human and more deeply Christian way.

In Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic, there is a small community of L'Arche where a number of young people,

whom we call "assistants", have come to live with people like Luisito, a young beggar with a severe mental handicap whom we welcomed. Some of these young assistants are generous and idealistic but have no interior discipline; their attention span is limited; they are unable to take on a real responsibility; they need continual stimulation and exciting experiences; they are frightened of authority. They join the community for a short time and then leave.

*We all need to be pruned and purified*

*in order to be faithful*

*to the Holy Spirit.*

*Only then can we remain grounded in our identity, charism and spirituality,*

*while at the same time*

*being open to evolving*

*in accordance with the*

*needs of the times.*

Other young people who come are more structured. Quite often they are former members of a lay movement in the Church which some people might call sectarian and closed, because of its strong formation and the way it is separated off from others. And yet they know why they have come; they can assume responsibility.

My experiences in Chicago and Santo Domingo, then, have taught me to be careful before speaking about "sects" or "sectarian" communities. Let us examine the differences between a sect and a community.

In recent years, we have heard of the mass deaths (including suicides) of sect members in Texas, Guyana and Switzerland. Other sects, especially in Latin America, bring people into a dream world, cut off from reality. Still others, based on the cult of Satan, appear particularly evil.

Certain characteristics describe or define a sect:

- A sect is frequently dominated by an all-powerful guru seen as the uniquely inspired prophet and saviour whose teachings and writings alone are true. No other

authority is tolerated. Contacts with other forms of thought or behaviour are forbidden.

The sect has all the truth. It presents itself as having a new message of salvation for all the world. This gives a total meaning to its members' lives and an intense motivation to proselytise and to recruit.

For those in the sect, society is divided into the good and the bad, the saved and the damned. Strong walls of fear are created, making it difficult for members to question anything. They are cut off from family, friends and all other social institutions.

Members are obliged to sacrifice their personal conscience, freedom and critical capacity to the power, security and goals of the group. Their intelligences are manipulated. They live off slogans rather than growing in their understanding of reality through their search for truth.

Anguished, fragile, lonely people are attracted and seduced into the group. The togetherness, security and powerful goals of the group transmit a good feeling and relieve the anguish and pain of loneliness, worthlessness, meaninglessness and lack of direction. This makes it almost impossible to leave without going through even greater anguish, and the apparent risk of emptiness, loneliness and inner death.

Now, some of these elements can be found in all Christian communities, particularly in the early years of their foundation. But as the community grows and deepens and is recognised by a Church, two very distinctive differences become evident.

- A Christian community is there for each person, to foster growth into freedom and a deepening of personal consciousness. Though the mission of the community may be greater than any one member, the integrity and vocation of each is more important than numerical increase or institutional survival. There is a long probationary period before anyone can be committed long-term, and whoever discovers that their place is no longer in the group is helped to leave peacefully.

- A community is not closed upon itself. Community members are encouraged to be in contact with other Christians, movements, spiritual leaders and theologians in the Church as they grow to maturity. They are part of the wider Church which recog-

nises and accepts the goals of the community and the way it is governed, and which can arbitrate in times of conflict.

**T**here are certain signs that reveal that a community or movement is evolving by its fruits. Good fruits, good trees.

First, as the community or movement grows and deepens its own charisma and mission, it discovers the beauty and gifts of others in the local Church, and the importance of communion with the local bishop, which means dialogue. It discovers that it is part of the Church, not the whole Church.

This insertion into the local Church can take time because some new movements, with their enthusiasm and poverty, seem to "rock the boat". People set in their ways and their ideas may not like this. New movements founded in one particular diocese may then need support from the Pope and the universal Church, in the initial stages of their foundation, so as to grow universally.

Subsequently, however, the new movements must become integrated and "inculturated" into the local scene, recognising the authority of the local bishop and cooperating with other movements.

Secondly, it is a sign of the Spirit at work when a movement, conscious of its own limits and weaknesses, and of being closed, realises it has committed errors.

Every new foundation has its own call, but also its shadow side. Every founder bears some darkness as well as light; none is entirely pure. What is true of the founder may be even more true of the first disciples. They tend frequently to be less open than the founder and to interpret in a rigid way the founder's spirituality, vision and way of life.

Movements and communities will normally need help from outside in order to face their shadow side, to perceive and evaluate how authority has been exercised, how power is used and abused. They will also need to listen and accept criticism, to have the courage to question themselves, the honesty to admit shortcomings and the energy to change. They will have to rid themselves of certain aspects that were necessary at the beginning of the foundation but which have become outmoded, even a sign of death.

Thirdly, a movement is growing in the Holy Spirit if it seeks continually to be faithful to an evolving Church, while remaining clear in its identity. This is not always easy, especially for movements founded to maintain rectitude of faith. But

as a movement grows, it is called not only to deepen its charisma and identity, but also to progress in openness. It must learn to follow both the Gospel message and the mind of the Church.

**P**ope John Paul II sets an example of firm identity combined with openness, as shown by the Assisi meeting in 1986 with leaders of other religions, his visits to the synagogue in Rome, and to Morocco and Tunisia, and his insistence that all Catholics work for unity among all Christians.

*Sectarian groups  
tend to be very serious.  
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*But communities growing  
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love and light.*

If a new movement is announcing good news to the poor and allowing them to evangelise it in return, then here again is a sign of the Spirit. To eat at the same table as the poor, to be committed to them in bonds of friendship, is always demanding and disturbing. The presence of the poor and the weak keeps a movement humble and prevents it from closing in upon itself.

The poor oblige it to evolve and to deepen. When Jesus sends his disciples out to announce good news to the poor, he tells them to go in the style of the poor - without money or change of clothes. Is it possible to announce good news to the poor and the broken if we speak from a place of power, comfort and security? God is Emmanuel, God-with-us, looking after us and caring for us in our weakness.

Another important sign is the quality of love for the weaker members of the group: for those who are going through a particular time of psychological or physical difficulty or of doubt, or who feel called to

move on. The latter frequently need help in order to leave the group peacefully, without feeling guilty.

All groups tend to hold on to their members. They do not let go easily. Beyond certain limits, this becomes destructive and indeed sectarian. It is as if for a person to leave the group is synonymous with leaving the Church or leaving God. But it does not seem right or of the Spirit when a brother or sister who leaves the group suddenly becomes a stranger.

Another sign of the Spirit is when joy and celebration flow from trust in Jesus. Sectarian groups tend to be very serious. They consider themselves responsible for reforming the Church and that is serious business. But communities growing in the ways of the Spirit know that Jesus is responsible for his Body, the Church, and that they are but instruments of his life, love and light.

**A**s time goes by, some members of new movements, like members of the Church in general, try to hold on drastically to ways of doing things which are not essential to their charisma; this prevents them from evolving in the Spirit of God. Others, in an attempt to be totally open, reject elements of faith, of spirituality and of their tradition.

We all need to be pruned and purified in order to be faithful to the Holy Spirit. Only then can we remain grounded in our identity, charisma and spirituality, while at the same time being open to evolving in accordance with the needs of the times. □

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*This article is reprinted from The Tablet with permission. The Editors of The Mix appreciate the support given from the Editor of The Tablet and encourage readers of The Mix to read that publication. The Tablet makes an fine contribution to an intelligent, balanced and informed conversation within the Church.*

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If we cannot listen to the subtle manifestation of rich reality in our environment, we will necessarily try to impose our wilful codes on others.

If we are not open to reality and do not obey the voice of reality, a terrible distortion takes place.

Sooner or later we will turn the whole relationship around: Instead of listening to reality in people and events,

we become convinced that reality in people and events should listen to us.

Adrian van Kaam

*The Art of Existential Counseling*  
Dimension Books, 1966, p.80.)

## Words for a Pilgrim People

*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4).*

*All the Christian faithful must make an effort, in accord with their own condition, to live a holy life and promote the growth of the Church and its continual sanctification (Code of Canon Law, n. 210).*

*The shell must be cracked apart if what is in it is to come out; for if you want the kernel you must break the shell. And therefore, if you want to discover nature's nakedness, you must destroy its symbols and the farther you get in, the nearer you come to its essence. When you come to the One that gathers all things up into himself, there you must stay (Meister Eckhart in R. Blakney, Meister Eckhart, Harper Torchbooks, 1949, p.148).*

*My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope that I do not do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone (Thomas Merton, Thoughts in Solitude, Farrar Straus and Cudahy, 1958, p.83)*

*We must get over the error that makes us think that a man's life takes place inside himself, and consequently that it can be reduced to pure psychology.... Life is as far as possible from a subjective phenomenon. It is the most objective of all realities.... To live is to be outside oneself, to realize oneself (Jose y Ortega cited by M. Friedman, To Deny Our Nothingness, University of Chicago Press, 1978, p.22)*

## The Bible - The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments (Decalogue) are found in Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. The Exodus version is the older. They are an attempt to spell out some of the implications of Israel's identity as the chosen people, drawn into a Covenant. How should such a people behave in the ordinary routines of life? We might well ask the same question.

Perhaps the key to the Commandments is the opening sentence: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt" (Ex. 20:2). Nothing is written in the OT before the Exodus Event, everything is written after it and in the light of it. This Event of being loved into freedom is like a template through which the People are to see themselves and their world. If we were to summarise OT morality we could hardly do better than to say: Love others into freedom as you have been loved into freedom. This is the spirit of the Commandments.

The Commandments are guidelines for fidelity to the Covenant - they are not a substitute for the Covenant. The Covenant - and the freedom it brings - will always remain the focus of the People's life. All else will point back to it. The Prophets will have to call the People back to this time and again. This too was the essence of Jesus' argument with the Pharisees.

The first three Commandments call the People to fidelity. There is only one God - the God of the liberating Covenant, a God who cannot be reduced to images and manipulated by magical incantations. This is the God who has said: "I am who I am!" (Ex. 3:14). This One who is the source of Love and Life is also a Mystery. Sometimes the Mystery Presence - which is assured - is felt as absence: "Don't fill the void, live with it; resist the temptation to bring everything under your control; abandon yourself to my freeing love!". When the People make the Commandments an end in themselves, a sort of "owner's manual", they have ironically, by that very fact, violated the Commandments even as they "keep" them.

If the first three Commandments are "forbidding", the fourth is most emphatically "affirming". The keeping of the Sabbath is about affirming the Mystery of God. It is a call to live in awe and reverence, to live in a mood of trusting openness and companionship with the Lord of the Covenant. It calls for leisure - the basis of culture and contemplation. Without this the People tend to miss life in the living, they lose their identity as God's People. This Commandment is like a linchpin for the other nine Commandments. It contradicts the spirit of power and domination that Pharaoh represents. It prepares us for the appreciative lifestyle implied in the remaining six Commandments: Life is fragile at many points, careful to reach out to others in the same spirit of gracious and liberating love in which the Lord of the Covenant has reached out to you. Live as a people loved into freedom!

## Tradition - St Pachomius and Christian community

In the 4th century AD the deserts of Egypt, Palestine, Arabia and Persia were populated with many individuals seeking a more radical, Gospel lifestyle than ordinary society would allow. And from 312 AD, when the Emperor Constantine took on the Cross as his emblem, the numbers swelled considerably because it was believed by many that the Gospel could henceforth only be lived authentically in the desert.

In the early part of the 4th century, there were already signs amongst these Desert Fathers that all was not well. There were the obvious vulnerabilities - from the elements as well as from thugs and brigands - of an individual alone in the desert. There was also the danger of being so caught up in survival that one could forget the reason for being in the desert in the first place. We find the great St Pachomius emerging in this context.

Pachomius saw the value of individuals gathering in community, working together, sharing their food and belongings, praying together and generally building the kind of faith community spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles. With this end in view he developed a simple rule and invited a number of men to join him. Straightforward enough? Wrong! Pachomius learned a lesson that many have discovered since: Human beings do not form community without considerable effort and commitment, checks and balances, clear lines of authority, responsibility and accountability, and a significant sense of shared understanding on what the whole venture is about. Pachomius' first efforts at community life were a dismal failure - a failure from which he learned much and from which the Church benefited immensely.

When Pachomius tried to call the group to order he was mocked. A fight ensued. Pachomius at one point describes how he took a bar from the gate to a couple of recalcitrant types to drive them out. So began a rich tradition of community life within the Church! It should be stressed, however, that Pachomius' community was not generated or maintained simply by severe authority. It is clear from the writings that, apart from common sense, it depended ultimately for its life on its fidelity to the Gospel.

## News in Brief

- **Catalyst for Renewal has appointed:** Sr Marie Biddle RSJ as Coordinator of Volunteers; Ms Catherine Hammond as Assistant to the Editor of *The Mix* and Editor of *The Mix*; Mr Francis Gross as Coordinator of Spirituality in the Pub. We thank Marie, Catherine and Francis for accepting these appointments and look forward to the fine contributions we know each of them will make.
- **Columban Mission Institute's new agenda: global challenges.** With a new thrust to their well known missionary focus, the Columbans at Turramurra (NSW) have established three new Centres: 1) the China Centre, continuing the Society's special interest in the Chinese people and capitalizing on the expertise of mission specialist, Fr Cyril Hally; 2) the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, promoting dialogue and greater understanding; 3) the Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice, a recognition of the social and environmental context of all modern mission activity. The Institute's Director, Fr Trevor Trotter, says it is clear that priests and religious are aging and that future agents of mission will be lay. He sees the Pope's new agenda as a commitment to share over thirty years of experience in forming missionaries, as well as valuable research in key areas.
- **Deputy Popes? Definitely not, says Vatican.** An official denial has been made of a report that three cardinals, all members of the Vatican Curia, have been appointed to handle some of Pope John Paul's duties. The three Cardinals named in *Il Giornale*, a Milan newspaper, are Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Papal Secretary of State; Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; and Eduardo Cardinal Martinez Somalo, Prefect of the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes. According to the right-wing newspaper, they were to take over certain duties including the nomination of bishops. This has been declared false by a Vatican spokesperson.
- **US theologians call for more talk on women's ordination -- and are reprimanded.** A special "task force" set up by the Catholic Theological Society of America declared that there are serious doubts about arguments against women's ordination -- from both Scripture and tradition. Their call for more discussion, study and prayer to be focussed on this issue brought stem criticism from various US bishops. Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver urged the Theological Society to withdraw the document on the ground that it created "unnecessary and belated confusion". That withdrawal seems unlikely since the Society's board and membership supported the report's conclusion that more discussion is needed on whether the Church indeed has no authority to ordain women.
- **"Void spirituality" unavoidable... but very rewarding.** This was one aspect of the scintillating message contained in the week-long course recently presented by visiting Maryknoll priest Larry Lewis, at Hunters Hill. Willingness to face the reality that we are 'walking toward death', allowing ourselves to enter into the void that is at the heart of our human condition; responding to encounters with suffering, weakness and disability as triggers to reflection on the "misfitness" we all share -- this path, according to Dr Lewis, is the way to avoid being seduced by the narcissism and pragmatism of our age. Lewis' talks were part of the Catalyst International Lecture Series with fellow Maryknoller, Bill Frazier.
- **Mixed marriage partners both receive Communion -- in Vienna.** In what are called "situations of pastoral emergency", the Archdiocese of Vienna is now allowing the non-Catholic partners of mixed marriages to receive Communion in Catholic churches. Archbishop Christoph Schönborn has authorised a pastoral guide published by the Archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenical Affairs which affirms that neither a general refusal nor a general permission for non-Catholic partners to receive Communion at the same time as their Catholic spouses does justice to individual problems or to the present stage of the ecumenical dialogue. Not being able to go to Communion together can often put a marriage at risk, but since it is difficult to determine just when this situation has become a "pastoral emergency", the document says the couple must ask their parish priest to assess the situation. A condition for the non-Catholic partner to be able to go to Communion is that he or she must believe in Catholic teaching about the Eucharist.
- **In Brisbane, Archbishop John Bathurst hopes for a Christian meditation group in every parish by the year 2000.** He has invited teachers of Christian meditation from Canada and Britain to lead seminars there as part of the diocesan jubilee program. (The Australian Christian Meditation National Forum will be held on September 13-14 at United Theological College, 16 Masons Dr, North Parramatta. Info: Judi and Paul on 02 9908 1037.)

## Bulletin Board

**Catalyst Calendar**  
(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

- August 6:** Paddington SIP - "Obedience" with visiting lecturers from Maryknoll, New York, Bill Frazier and Larry Lewis;
- August 7:** Catalyst Symposium, "Collegiality and Subsidiarity - Implications for the Sacrament of Bishops", with Geoff King SJ and Deirdre Rofe IBVM, at McKillop Campus of ACU Edward St North Sydney, 7.30pm, entry \$5 or donation (Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262);
- August 20:** Pymble SIP - "Courage" with

John Menadue and David Purnell;  
**August 23:** Reflection Morning with Marie Byrne - Sydney folk should look for details in their parish bulletins nearer the time or contact Marie on 02 9869 8101;  
**August 26:** SIP begins at Rouse Hill - "The Good Life: What is it?" with Geraldine Doogue and Michael Whelan (Info: Marie on 02 9745 3444);  
**September 3:** Paddington SIP - "Chastity" with Marie Byrne and Michael Whelan;  
**September 17:** Pymble SIP - "Honesty" with Alison Crook and Jim Grainger;- **Mary Mackillop Haven Wyong** -

**House of Hospitality.** The Haven aims to provide a welcoming environment in which rest, renewal and a sense of God's presence can be experienced. (Info: Sr Clare Keating RSJ at 5 Page Close, Wyong, NSW - Fax/Ph 043 533 729)  
• **The Mix is now available on audio cassette.** To order or find out more details please contact Pauline on Fax/Ph 02 9816 4262.  
• **New Sip Venues? If you would like to discuss the possibility of a SIP venue in your locality contact Francis Gross on 02 9228 7806 (W), 9460 0225 or 0411 419 332.**

