

# THE MIMX



JOURNAL OF CATALYST FOR RENEWAL

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 10

DECEMBER 1997

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## Our Say - Reconciliation is part of renewal

The Second Vatican Council asked us to think differently about the Church. Picking up on the spirit of some of Jesus' images - yeast, salt, light - the Council spoke, for example, of the Church as "a kind of sacrament or sign" (*Lumen Gentium* n.1: cf also n.9 & n.48 and *Gaudium et Spes* n.43). The Church sees itself as a sign in the world, not a *sanctuary from* it.

The kind of thinking evoked by this vision of the Council has many implications. One of those implications is that we must include, as central to our vision for the renewal of the Church, a constant, serious and honest conversation with the historical and cultural reality in which we find ourselves. In other words, renewing the Church in Australia necessarily includes a commitment to addressing the major questions facing Australian society now.

There is, according to the Council, an essential interdependence between Church and world. What, therefore, demands our attention in Australia at this time? Where is the Good News especially needed?

One of the biggest - perhaps the biggest? - moral challenges for Australia at this time concerns our relationships with the indigenous peoples of this land.

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (ACBC) has taken a public stand in this regard. For example, in a six page press release of Friday December 20, 1996, the ACBC stated concerning the current Government's proposed *Native Title Act*:

Given that the balance of the amendments strongly favours industry, rather than native title holders, it is essential that we re-commit ourselves as a nation to reconciliation through recognition, respect and justice .... The national settlement concerning native title must be based on a faithful implementation by our parliaments of the spirit and principle of the High Courts' *Mabo* decision which ensured that Australian law should not be frozen in an era of racial discrimination.

The ACBC quotes Pope John Paul II when he met with Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders at Alice Springs in 1986:

Let it not be said that the fair and equitable recognition of Aboriginal rights to land is discrimination. To call for the acknowledgment of land rights of people who have never surrendered those rights is not discrimination. Certainly what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow.

Reconciliation lies at the heart of the Gospel. A renewing Church will be a reconciling Church. It will give wholehearted support to reconciliation wherever it is needed - both within its own community and in the wider community. It will regard any manifestations of divisiveness, bigotry, racism or hatred as tragedies that cry out for the healing touch of truth and mercy.

The Church, like the wider Australian society, must promote reconciliation at all levels. Whatever else we claim of ourselves as Church, it will be a pretence if we are not also able to say we are promoting - or at least desiring - reconciliation with the Aboriginal peoples of Australia.

# The Human Face

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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Geraldine Doogue, Kate Englebrecth,  
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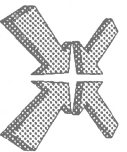
The following is its mission statement: We are believers who are attempting to establish a forum for conversation within the Catholic Church of Australia. Our aim is to prompt open exchanges among the community of believers, mindful of the diversity of expression of faith in contemporary Australia. This 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).

The Patrons are:  
Mr Robert Fitzgerald  
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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.  
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Publication No.255003/02125

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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 life-giving unity.

Catalyst for Renewal Incorporated publishes *The Mix* as one of its forums for conversation. All reasonable expressions of opinion relevant to the renewal of the Church are welcome. The Editor reserves the right not to publish a submitted text. Not all the opinions expressed in *The Mix* are those of Catalyst for Renewal Incorporated.

My name is Mary-Ann Knoblanche. I was born in Sydney in 1953, the youngest of six children. I have four brothers and one sister. I began my schooling at St Kevin's in Dee Why before we moved to Mooney Mooney when I was ten. There I went to the State school for about six months. While at the State school I was given the task of teaching the Catechism to the three other Catholic kids.

I enjoyed myself at that school, though not as much as the next one. The Parish Priest took me off to the convent school attached to the orphanage at Brooklyn. That was great. The classroom was a pretty torrid affair at times though. Occasionally kids would run away. And there was a sadness there too, seeing that some parents would not come to visit their children.

I then attended Mater Maria at Warriewood until Year 10, after which I went to St Margaret's Childrens' Hospital as a cadet nurse. I loved working with the premature babies. I went then to Mona Vale and completed my General Nursing studies in 1973. After a year working in casualty I went overseas with a friend, then married Greg in 1976. We have four daughters.

Amongst the people who have had a special influence on my life, two of the most influential have been my mother and father. I could say I learned love of God from my mother and love of people from my father. I loved Dad dearly but he was very demanding, particularly on Mum. Dad was a fairly strict disciplinarian and Mum always provided the buffer zone. She had a wonderful faith, although she stopped going to Mass when I was still a young girl. I only found out later that the reason she stopped was because she had an argument with the Parish Priest who had made some comments about my father. (Dad was Catholic through and through but rarely went to Mass.)

About nine years ago - when our kids were 11, 9, 7 and 5 - I started to get more active about my faith. I had been involved in children's masses and was part of a prayer group but wanted more. I began degree studies in theology (and completed a BTh this year). I also worked with a friend on the parish sacramental program for a couple of years, and with my husband Greg have helped coordinate youth liturgies and music.

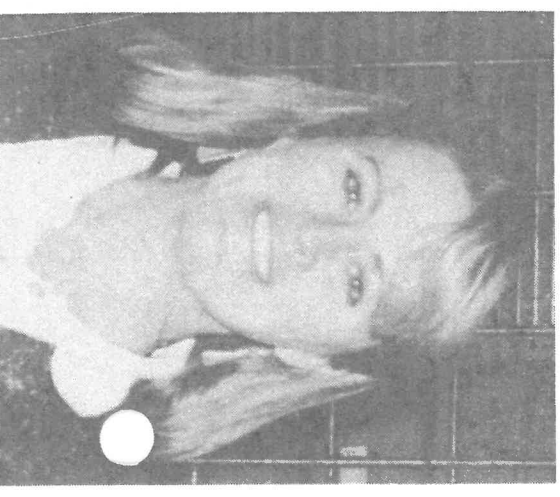
I had complained often that there was nothing in the parish for young people and about this same time someone in the prayer group introduced me to Antioch. So Greg

and I took it on with another couple. We were involved there for about five years. Even now I take some of those young people up to Claireville for retreats. I want to help them maintain the momentum in their faith that Antioch gave them.

I get thrilled by the little things in parish. Like when people reach out to each other in care, when they respond to a request for help. I believe people are keen to help but we have lost a sense of networking or something. People always respond wonderfully when they're asked. But we seem to have lost that sense of community where we really know each other and where you don't have to ask.

We need to focus on the real needs of people in the parish. I am sure there are a lot of people who come to Mass who have incredible needs. For example, next year I am going to try and set up a program for kids from families where there has been either a divorce or a death. Perhaps there is room to do more with the RCIA candidates. They could, for example, be invited into one of the prayer groups in the parish. We need to include them somehow into our community so that after their initiation at Easter they are still supported and encouraged in this new direction of their faith journey.

I fear that there are too many people walking away from the Church. They need to be nourished and they are desperate to be nourished. We must be courageous and humble enough to admit when we are wrong and say we are sorry. In particular, for my daughters and for all women, we must say we are really sorry we have cut out half of the wisdom, sacredness and goodness from being fully celebrated. And the young people, they can spot hypocrisy a mile away. They're our hope. But we have to help them.



Mary-Ann Knoblanche

# Your Say – Conversations at Chameleon Cafe

by Bernard Boerna and Michael Windsor

For the best part of a year, a small group of people in the inner West of Sydney discussed ways they might implement something like Spirituality in the Pub. After a false start - the pub suddenly became unavailable! - they have established a vital conversation in a café. This is a report on their first conversation with Rev Bill Crews of the Exodus Foundation, and Fr Chris Riley, who works with the street kids.

Rev Bill Crews and Fr Chris Riley are well known for their efforts in outreach to young, disaffected Sydneysiders and others marginalised by our community. On the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup> August, they spoke to a packed group at the Chameleon Cafe in Summer Hill about what drives them in their work. How did they develop their passion for social justice? And how does their story and message relate to the rest of us?

The discussion that followed was light-hearted at times, as well as probing, challenging and thought provoking. The idea that, if you are not part of the solution you are part of the problem, was a personally

challenging one that stayed with many of us.

Another moving thought was the assertion that "miracles" do occur in everyday life. Rev Crews, whose Exodus Foundation at Ashfield feeds hundreds of people, stated that the soup kitchen was never short of food. He spoke of the large load of sausages that were donated on one occasion; on another, of the aged pensioner who counted through her weekly commitments to find that she could afford to make a small weekly donation of \$1.30. He likened the constant source of food for the soup kitchen to the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

The idea of *Conversations at Chameleon Cafe* originally came in response to an article by Geraldine Doogue which suggested that people concerned about the direction of the Church should do something about it themselves. A group of friends then started meeting for meals at each other's homes to discuss ways to act as a catalyst to promote discussion in the inner-west of Sydney on contemporary issues regarding human relationships, social justice, spirituality and our relationship with our environment. Our belief is that in the

heart of every person there is a will to live in community and a thirst for social justice and peace (and a cappuccino!).

We liked the model provided by Spirituality in the Pub's convivial forum and, although we couldn't find a suitable local pub (we tried!), a new cafe at Summer Hill proved the ideal venue. We were a little nervous about taking the final step but went ahead anyway, called ourselves Inner West Inner Quest (!) and started advertising through local parishes etc. The only thing people needed to bring was themselves and their thoughts.

We had a great first night on the 27<sup>th</sup>, our apprehension soon disappearing, as the evening took off. We enjoyed the challenge, the stimulation and the fun.

We would not have had the confidence or experience to proceed without the active support and encouragement of Bishop Geoffrey Robinson (our Patron), Michael Whelan SM and Marea Donovan from Catalysts for Renewal. We have found the process to have been empowering and reinforced our need, as part of the church, to contribute to building the church of tomorrow. Thank you for your support and encouragement. ☐

## Letters

I delight in the arrival of *The Mix*. Its excellence is maintained. I speed read through it all, then take it more slowly. Richard Lennan has a style of his own. I recorded his paper - "Orders: A Developing Tradition" - given at the Halifax-Portal series in 1996. He spoke on Rahner at the Jewish-Christian Study Luncheon in 1995. I look forward to part two of Richard's paper in the November *Mix*. ... I think (Catalyst) is a brilliant movement which is proved as it grows from strength to strength.

*Joan Curtin, Lavender Bay, NSW*

I really look forward to my copy of *The Mix* - it gives hope for the future. The dinner at Hunter's Hill recently was most enjoyable and I thought Bishop Walker was excellent - very open!

*Patricia Woodbury OP, Campsie NSW*

I enjoyed *The Mix* at a friend's place re-

cently. What you are doing is good. Enjoy yourselves!

*Deslie Falls, Casino, NSW*

I missed the May Catalyst Dinner, so, upon reading the edited version of John Menadue's presentation, "Men in the Church", I again realized how important it is to be 'touched' by another's story. I resonate in so many ways with the struggle and know it is a quest for freedom ... Like John I have had, and still do have, difficulties with certain areas of the Church. I have a meltness regarding community. We are all treading in our own ways - some dedicated, steady and constant; others shuffle with the inner questions in a different way, wandering to the side-shows to obtain a broad picture. Many have a real passion for the traditions, ceremonies etc. .... For me, I know the journey is a choice to be open to lessons of loving. Often being propelled to a point of vulnerability, to expose oneself, to symbolically stand naked before others

... the path of being humbled. A softening and tenderness, a breaking down in order to break through, to uncover in order to recover. The heart stretching to know about God's love, yearning to be graced so as to pass that love on to the unloved parts of self and to brothers and sisters. To be aware of the blessing of insight given. As someone said recently: to learn to live the paradox of oneself. Thank you for *The Mix*. It is stimulating and encouraging. I see many reflections of myself in the words of John Menadue and Cardinal Martini. I read their stories ... we walk the same ground, striving to work it all out. In spite of our determination and stubbornness, Jesus still manages to heal our blindness, to help set the prisoner free.

*Joan Ward, Central Coast NSW*

Keep up the good work. *The Mix* is wonderful reading!

*Carmel Guiffrida, Tully, Q*

# Essay – The choosing of bishops: history and theology

by Geoff King

*The Mix presents a shortened version of a talk given by Geoff King, sj, at the first Symposium sponsored by Catalyst for Renewal, 7 August, 1997, and Deirdre Rofe's Response.*

In 374 Milan needed a new bishop upon the death of its Arian bishop Auxentius. The neighbouring bishops, fearing violent divisions between Arians and Catholics, asked the emperor to allow them to choose the new bishop. The emperor, however, refused and ordered that the traditional method - election by clergy and people - be followed. Clergy and people, divided indeed into Arian and Catholic factions, duly assembled. The governor of the province, one Ambrosius, was present in order to keep the peace. He happened to be a popular governor and a catechumen. Somehow the assembly used some lateral thinking and chose him as bishop, presumably because he was acceptable to both factions. The story goes that an inspired child had suddenly called out "Ambrose for bishop!". Thus are Fathers of the Church created!

Next, to 1049 and France - Reims to be precise. Pope Leo IX addressed the bishops, calling for public confession by any of them who had bought the episcopal office ("bought" meant perhaps a money transaction, certainly the pledging of fealty to a feudal lord). Consternation followed the papal invitation. The archbishop of Reims, who was of course hosting the event, asked for a private interview. The bishop of Langres asked for legal representation in the persons of two other bishops, but one of them became mysteriously tongue-tied. The bishops of Coutances and Nevers confessed that their families had bought the bishopric for them, but without their knowledge. The bishop of Nantes admitted that he knew that his father had bought the see for him - in fact his father had himself seen the previous bishop. These men were variously pardoned or made to resign.

We move another seven hundred years to the 1780s and the newly-formed United States. The new country was about to get its first bishop. The priests of the about-to-be diocese of Baltimore petitioned the Holy See to be allowed to elect the bishop, giving as their reason the democratic ideals on which the new republic had been formed. The petition was granted, and John Carroll

was duly elected, as was his successor, Leonard Neale.

Finally, to the Austro-Hungarian empire roughly in those same 1780s. The emperor, Joseph II, was pursuing a policy of bringing the church under the control of the state. For Joseph, the state was entrusted with both the material and moral welfare of its subjects. The church was simply one agency which should help in promoting this welfare. If the ruler judged that church institutions were not doing this, he could suppress them. Thus, the clergy exercised a function which was primarily social rather than sacral, and so were subject to state supervision; church property could be put to use in the national interest; all papal decrees, disciplinary or doctrinal, were subject to imperial approval; as, of course, were episcopal nominations.

*It is difficult not to feel that a more participatory process would better embody the predominant theology of the Council than does the present system of Roman nomination after secret consultation.*

These vignettes illustrate, I suggest, four of the major stages in the evolution of the process of episcopal selection. Clearly the practice of the early church in selecting bishops was of a participatory kind - the whole local church community was in some way involved. This practice embodied a theology of the local church and of the episcopate. The practice changed, not because that theology was rejected, but as part of political and social change - roughly, the rise of feudalism. Further

changes were often the result of an understandable papal reaction to the claims of secular rulers. An understandable reaction, but one which swung the pendulum too far in the direction of clerical and ultimately papal control.

With Vatican II's shift back to a more participatory theology and to a rediscovery of the significance of local church, it seems

right to move back to something closer to the participatory practice of the early church, a practice abandoned for socio/political rather than theological reasons.

The system of Roman nomination went largely unchallenged until the late 1960s. At Vatican II, there was little mention of the process for the selection of bishops. Presumably most of those present, being themselves bishops, thought that the system that had produced them could not be all that bad. As a matter of fact, the one voice that spoke in favour of restoring some form of election came from Archbishop Young of Hobart.

But of course the theological moves made by the Council were bound to raise the issue of selection of bishops. It brought once more to the fore the significance of local church. *Lumen Gentium* (n.23) famously stated that the Catholic Church is in the local churches as well as being formed out of them. The Pope is presented as not only a decision-maker, but as a visible source and foundation of collegiate unity. And, while the scope of collegiality itself has been a matter of dispute in recent years, Josef Ratzinger was expressing something close to a consensus when in 1965 he wrote that collegiality should not be taken in some narrowly juridical sense but should lead us back to the early church's sense of itself as a "fraternity".

In addition, of course, Vatican II encouraged the development of participatory models of church, most notably by its liturgical reforms with their insistence on the "full, conscious and active" participation of the faithful.

None of these theological moves logically entails any particular mode of selecting bishops. But it is difficult not to feel that a more participatory process would better embody the predominant theology of the Council than does the present system of Roman nomination after secret consultation.

Indeed, it can be argued that some kind of participatory process in the choice of leaders has become part of our culture. A string of church documents has embraced the notion of *inculturation*. The gospel, it is commonplace to say, has to be incarnated in each culture. A gospel that remains alien will produce an alienated

church community. It is hardly surprising then that in a country like Australia, where democratic forms are taken for granted, a person who is an adult in the world will chafe at being treated as a child in the church.

Of course, no culture is without fault. The gospel must be inculturated, it must also be counter-cultural. No doubt gospel values do challenge some of our practice of democracy. But it would be difficult to show that the gospel is opposed to participatory structures of decision-making.

The rediscovery of *reception*, the enduring tradition of the reception of the bishop by the community, was a significant feature of post-conciliar ecclesiology, thanks especially to the work of Yves Congar. The council itself had given the lead in *Lumen gentium* (n.12): This paragraph speaks of the sense of the faith (*sensus fidei*) of the whole people of God, which is a sure guide in matters of belief; it goes on to say that the whole people *receives* a teaching not just as a human word but as the Word of God.

Of course, there is an obvious corollary in all this. Reception is much more likely to occur when people have had some role in formulating the teaching of law in question recognised already by Hugo-cio in his massive twelfth century canonical commentary.

It has also been recognised that reception, and certainly non-reception, has played its part in the choice of bishops. We can recall the comment of Hervé Le-grand:

The consent of the church in the election was regarded as an action of the Spirit, and once the bishop had been elected and ordained, he was received by the church as one designated by the Spirit".

And again the obvious corollary: Involvement in selection will do much to promote reception.

Certainly, open discussion of the needs of a diocese and of the qualities desired in its next bishop is entirely compatible with present canon law. And surely it is possible to find some middle ground between undue politicization of the process, on the one hand, and the present system of secret and one-by-one consultation of a limited number of people, on the other.

A secular society is far from all good, but at least it frees us from those centuries of power struggles between church and state which so bedevilled the process of selection of church leaders. Perhaps a

church that is certainly more marginalised can also become more participatory.

## RESPONSE

by Derrite Rofe, IBVM

You may have heard of the story of Lady Beninck, mother of Lady Otoline Morrell who, among many claims to fame, was the mistress of the English philosopher, Bertrand Russell. Lady Beninck was much given to fits of the vapours when under stress. In addition to inhaling smelling salts, she apparently would say over and over, in mantra-like fashion, to calm her nerves: I am an Englishwoman, I was born in lawful wedlock and I am on dry land.

Faced with the pleasure of responding to Geoff King's masterful paper, characterised by a tone at once scholarly and irenic, I found myself resorting to the Lady Beninck approach. My credentials and the basis of my reply are as follows: I am a laywoman, I was born and bred in the Catholic Church and I am on reasonably firm ground when I embark on a critique of some features of the Australian scene in the light of Geoff's paper.

From this vantage point, it seems to me that the principles of collegiality and subsidiarity are not sufficiently at work in the operational procedures of the Catholic Church in Australia nor, if *The Tablet* is to be believed, in other parts of the world either. My concern is directed towards a sense of progressive and increasing isolation of the people of God from the processes of Church life, of which the appointment of Bishops is a key example.

What Geoff has so capably and compellingly demonstrated is that in this matter of the appointment of bishops, things have not always been thus. The acquisition of Bishops across the centuries reflects the changing strengths of the forces at work - be they the local community, the feudal lords, the centralizing Papacy or the emergent nation states. The resultant practice is often very understandable but that does not make it desirable.

To the person in the pews, let alone the person in the street, it's all a bit remote and arcane. On one level, there is in Australia a healthy indifference about the whole process. Does it really matter to your average Catholic who the Bishop is, what his theological stance is based upon and what his particular passions might be? For the majority, of far greater significance is the question of who is coaching the

Wallabies or the Swans. (One could reflect somewhat wryly that there is not much collegiality and subsidiarity at work in those appointments either).

As a member of the laity, one never quite knows the *full* story but on the face of it, the exercise of power/authority on the part of the Pope/Curia which does not acknowledge the role of the people in the consultation, appointment and reception of a Bishop is certainly unwise and may be illegitimate. Recent episcopal appointments in Australia do not offer much comfort let alone evidence that this principle is accepted. I have been in leadership positions long enough to agree that there will always be some matters that must remain confidential and that we do not operate on a simplistic democratic voting procedure; nonetheless in the recent experiences to which I alluded earlier, it is not merely a matter of not knowing the whole story. It is more a matter of questioning the fundamental approach and mind set which fails to admit the rightness of having a more open and broadly consultative process in place for the appointment of the chief pastor of a local Church.

This is where the issue of patterns is important. If our experience in this country were on the whole positive, one could cope with the occasional blip. The question is: How many blips constitute a major trend?

It is as well that one of the helpful images of Church is that of the pilgrim people of God. We are only on the way to finding that perfection John describes in the Book of Revelation. The Church *semper reformanda* must give proof that it takes this necessity seriously; the concepts of participation, inculturation and reception which Geoff proposed as ways forward give hope that change is feasible. There is little doubt in my mind that such change is also deeply desired.

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*Fr Geoff King SJ is a Canon Lawyer who lectures both in Australia and overseas. Sr Derrite Rofe IBVM is a former Major Superior of the Loreto Sisters in Australia and currently Principal of St Mary's University College in Melbourne. The full texts of both papers are available on request from the Editor. Kindly include a self-addressed stamped long envelope plus four further stamps.*

## Words for a Pilgrim People

Jesus said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his garden; and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches. (Lk 13:18f)

A body calls also for a multiplicity of members, which are linked together in such a way as to help one another. And, as in the body, when one member suffers, all the other members share its pain, and the healthy members come to the assistance of the ailing, so in the Church the individual members do not live for themselves alone, but also help their fellows, and all work in mutual collaboration for the common comfort and for the more perfect building up of the whole Body. (Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* (1949).)

The living Truth, the great breaker of idols and destroyer of false gods, is easier to live with than the most comforting of lies. It is better to lose the God we found it easy to envisage, and the faith that was only a protection from our fears, and stand naked and unknowing in the presence of the One who can only really be known when he is lived with. At least with that God we can and, indeed, must begin from where we are. There can be no becoming that does not start from something that already is. (Aedred Squire, *Asking the Fathers*, SPCK/Paulist, 1973, p.11)

One of the monks, called Serapion, sold his book of the Gospels and gave the money to those who were hungry, saying: I have sold the book which told me to sell all that I had and give to the poor. (Thomas Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert*, New Directions, 1960, p.37)

There is a lag between the end of an age and the discovery of the end. The denizens of such a time are like the cartoon cat that runs off a cliff and for a time is suspended, still running, in mid-air but sooner or later looks down and sees there is nothing under him. (Walker Percy, *The Message in the Bottle*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981, p.19)

## The Bible - Bishops in the early church

The disciples of Jesus discovered a basic principle of life very early in the piece: When human beings gather and endeavour to live and/or work in concert they must develop structures of some kind. Organization is required, roles and responsibilities are developed, certain structures of authority are necessary. Thus an institution is born.

Our understanding of exactly how that institution developed in those earliest years is particular, what was the origin, nature and specific mission of the episcopacy, is very limited. The word *episcopacy* comes from the Greek word *episkopos* meaning *supervisor*.

In the NT we read of *episkopoi* (*supervisors*). The word occurs five times in the NT (cf Acts 20:17, 28; Phil 1:1; 1Tim 3:2; Tit 1:7; 1Pet 2:25). Those people who are referred to as *episkopoi* are also sometimes referred to as *presbyteroi* (cf Acts 20:17, 28, 1Tim. 3:2, 5:17; 1Pet 5:1-3). The word *presbyteroi* is the Greek for *elders*. It seems likely that some of the *elders* were *supervisors*, some were not. The *presbyteroi* seem to have formed a council and this ruling body may have entrusted some of its members with the being *supervisors*.

When St Paul is writing to Timothy he says: "The saying is sure: If anyone aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task. Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way: for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil; moreover he must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil!" (1Tim 3:1-7).

This rather detailed description of the bishop by St Paul is more practical than theological. It has more to do with specific pastoral circumstances that must be addressed, than it has to do with any reflection on the theological reality of the episcopacy as such. It is however a clear example of the early Church's response to the need for organization in order to carry out its mission. We see the seeds of an institutional reality that has taken shape through the ages in response to various political, social, cultural and economic forces.

## Tradition - St Gregory bishop of Rome

Pope Gregory I was born of a patrician family in Rome about 540. His great-great-grandfather was Pope Felix III (483-492). Felix was a widower when he was elected Bishop of Rome. After some years as the chief civil magistrate in Rome, Gregory established his own home on the Coelian Hill as the monastery of St Andrew and became a monk there when he was about 35. He also established six other monasteries on the family estates in Sicily. From 579 to 585 he was papal agent at Constantinople. He formed many friends while in Constantinople and later, when he was Pope he wrote to one of them, Bishop Leander of Seville: "The image of your face is impressed forever on my innermost heart".

When he returned to Rome he retired to his monastery where he hoped to live out his days in solitude and prayer. Apart from the political and military difficulties, Rome had been devastated by a massive flood in 589 which destroyed, among other things, the papal granaries which were used to feed the poor. It also started a plague. Gregory's predecessor, Pope Pelagius II was among the first victims of the plague in February 590. Gregory was elected unanimously by the local church officials. He wrote a letter to the Emperor to prevent the appointment but his brother intercepted the letter and substituted his own, informing the Emperor that everyone wanted Gregory as the Bishop. Gregory then tried unsuccessfully to flee the city. So in September 590 the deacon Gregory was ordained Bishop of Rome.

Gregory's letters immediately following his episcopal ordination are filled with lament: "I am tossed to and fro by the waves of business. ... When my business is done, I try to return to my inner thoughts but cannot, for I am driven away by vain tumultuous thoughts. I loved the beauty of the contemplative life ... but by some judgement, I know not what, I have been wedded ... to the active life". Gregory became one of the great figures of medieval Europe. He wrote powerfully on the Christian life and the role of bishops. He sent the first mission-aries to England - forty monks from his own monastery - under the care of St August of Canterbury. He was a strong advocate of celibacy among the clergy, like Pope St Leo, the Great in the middle of the fifth century. He was the first Pope to speak of himself as "servant of the servants of God". Gregory was almost continually ill as Pope, enduring great pain, and bed-ridden for most of his last six years. He died in 604.

# News in Brief

• On October 30, Pope John Paul met with participants in the 17<sup>th</sup> plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Liturgy and recalled that this year is the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of its institution by Pope Paul VI. He drew particular attention to the World Youth Days which fall under this Council, saying that "young people are indeed the hope of the Church as she enters the third millennium."

• Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, President of the Central Committee for the Great Jubilee, on October 30 opened in the Vatican a special colloquium on "The Roots of Anti-Judaism in the Christian Sphere". He said the colloquium had "purely exegetic, theological and historical ends". He added: "Proceeding from anti-Judaism rather than anti-Semitism means centring the study on religious motivations, because, since they touch the conscience, they are much more prolific and determinant than simply racial or political motivations." He also noted that "the synposium is an extension of the Conciliar

declaration *Nostra aetate*, which marked a decisive turn and gave new impulse to the reflection of Christian theologians on Judaism." The final communique of the colloquium included the following statement: "The Jubilee will be above all a great thanksgiving to God for Jesus Christ, source and model of all holiness. To be full and total, this thanksgiving must be preceded by an examination of conscience. Where we have not answered God's plan, a commitment to conversion becomes necessary. The errors and voids of the past must never be repeated in the future. ... The first stage of commitment to conversion is the recognition of facts."

• On November 4, Archbishop Renato Martino spoke at UN Headquarters in New York concerning the Report of the UN High Commissioner for refugees. He said: "Our century has been described as a 'century of refugees' ... there are over 50 million refugees and internally displaced people today or one out of every 120 people in the world. ... They face a

desperate situation which often turns them into objects of political bargaining and deprives them of their human identity. ... The majority of refugees are innocent civilians, 80% of whom are women and children, almost 90% live in developing countries; a considerable number are killed either by starvation, epidemics or landmines; many of the richer countries close their doors to refugees. ... A tiny percentage of the global spending on disastrous weapons could take care of millions of abandoned human lives." The Cardinal ended by quoting the Holy Father: "This 'greatest of all human tragedies of our time' must find an end soon."

• John Menadue has received a high imperial honour from the Emperor of Japan. In Emperor Akhito's latest honours list, John is awarded the Grand Cordons of the order of the Sacred Treasure, together with two former Tokyo Chief Justices. John was Australia's Ambassador to Japan in the late seventies after serving as Head of the Prime Minister's Department.

## Bulletin Board

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

• Spirituality in the Pub has finished for 1997 at Paddington, Pymble and Rouse Hill. Notice of 1998 venues, topics and speakers will be carried by this *Bulletin Board* when we resume with the first issue of *The Mix* for 1998 in March.

• For information on SIP venues: Bowral (*Info: Kevin on 048 6118 37*), Ballarat (*Info: Kevin Murphy on 03 5332 1697*), Geelong (*Info: Denis on 03 5275 4120*) and Melbourne (*Info: Simon on 03 9497 1631*). Plans are under way to start SIP in Newcastle, Campbelltown, Kingsgrove, Penrith and the Central Coast (all in NSW).

• New Sip Venues? If you would like to discuss the possibility of a SIP venue in your locality - or inform us of one that has started - contact Francis on 02 9460 0225 or 0411 419 332.

• *diomIX?* *The Mix* is now available on audio tape, thanks to the generosity of several volunteers. For further information contact Pauline on 02 9816 4262.

• Brisbane College of Theology Summer School in Feminist Theology, January 12-16, 1998. "The Psalms and Feminist Christians" by Dr Gail Ramsawh, at Trinity Theological College, Auchentflower, following the Women Scholars of Religion and Theology Conference. (*Info: Elaine on 07 3267 5356*)

• Catholic Theological Union at Hunters Hill will be offering a series of Horizons Courses (informal adult education in the faith) in 1998. Courses include "Sacraments of Initiation" with Dr Brian Gleeson, "Skills in Pastoral Care" with Mrs Catherine Quinn, "Contemporary Christian Prayer" with Sr Marie Biddle rsj and "Biblical Perspectives: Old Testament" with Sr Moira O'Sullivan.

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE MIX  
WILL BE MARCH 1998**

• Preparing for the Christmas Feast - a directed or private retreat. Monday December 15 to Monday December 22 at Mt St Benedict Centre, Pennant Hills, NSW. (*Info: Mary on 02 9484 6208*)

• St Benedict's Monastery, Arcadia (NSW) will offer a series entitled "Praying with Icons 1998", on six Saturdays between March and July 1998. Speakers include Bishop David Walker, Sr Elizabeth Brennan sgs, Fr Tony Corcoran sm, and Br Ron Peters fsp. (*Info: Mario on 02 9563 1159*)

We received a blurred fax from  
Anne(?) Walls, 17 Ainsworth St....  
Can anyone help us find Anne?

• Are you familiar with the Council of Christians and Jews? They organize activities and publish a regular newsletter promoting dialogue between Jews and Christians. (*Info: The Hon Secretary, Council of Christians and Jews, 2 Devine St, Erskineville, 2043, tel: 02 9692 4162*)

• Uniya, the Jesuit Social Justice Centre, offers a fine information service, including excellent material on the proposed *Native Title Act*, by Frank Brennan sj. Uniya also publishes Briefing Papers on social issues of significance from time to time, in conjunction with Caritas Australia. (*Info: 02 9356 3888*).

## Recommended Reading

• James Murray, *Would You Believe? Australian Dialogues on Faith and Doubt*, Millennium Books/E J Dwyer, 1997, 228 pages, pb, \$19.95.

• Bernard Häring, *Priesthood Imperiled: A Critical Exploration of Ministry in the Catholic Church*, Triumph Books, 1996, index, 175 pages, hb, \$39.95.

• Peter Block, *Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1996, index, 264 pages, pb, \$29.95.

This book offers us 21 challenging, sometimes inspiring, always thoughtful, personal conversations. Among the people featured are Paddy McGuinness, Archbishop Stylianos, Barry Oakley, Racheal Kohn, Archbishop George Pell, Bob Santamaria, Peter Steele SJ, three Carmelite Nuns and ex-Senator Michael Tate. Much is in the first person, increasing the sense of intimacy. James Murray has done an excellent job in allowing these people to speak in an honest and straightforward way about their doubts and their beliefs and why they have these particular doubts and beliefs. There is much for the thinkers in this book. The forthright honesty of an atheist sits strangely well alongside the experienced faith of a Carmelite Nun; the rich Greek Orthodox tradition complements the ancient Jewish tradition; the nuanced and poetic voice of a Jesuit priest creates a nice tension with the simple conservatism of a Catholic Archbishop. The style is very readable and the pieces on each individual are brief, making it a book that the reader will easily return to again and again. Murray's fine Introduction includes a substantial and very beautiful article on euthanasia. A good Christmas gift.

Fr Häring reflects on his own life of 56 years as-a priest as a starting point for reflecting on priesthood in the Church today. He was ordained in 1939 and found himself immediately drafted into Hitler's army as a medical orderly. In his reflections, the author draws inspiration from Jesus the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. He notes the significance of Constantine and the radical shift from a persecuted Church to an officially sanctioned Church in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Häring speaks positively of the Second Vatican Council Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests. He has no time for ecclesiastical careerists nor the "separation and alienation" of the priest within the community. He does not give emphasis to the saving death of Jesus and the centrality of the Cross - an important theme for both Church and priesthood. His fairly negative references to asceticism and positive references to priests being "clairvoyant" and "inward-looking" are a bit perplexing. However, this is a worthwhile book with much both to challenge us and inspire us. Fr Häring must be listened to, his voice must be taken seriously. He has a good deal to contribute to the ongoing conversation on priesthood and ministry.

This is a book about organizations. Peter Block says "the evidence that our organizations are not working well is fully upon us". He argues that our attempts to address this state of affairs has generally been ineffective because we bring some fundamentally bad thinking to the project. As the title indicates, Block is promoting a profound shift in attitude: "Ultimately the choice we make is between service and self-interest". He challenges the constant focus on the need for leadership. Block argues that this promotes a mindset of dependency - someone will put it all together for us. Block is aware that the vision he is promoting asks for significant change in each of us - if he were religious he would speak of conversion: "If there is no transformation inside each of us all the structural change in the world will have no impact on our institutions." This is a useful book for those in the nitty gritty of Church organizations. For example, it would be particularly helpful for people setting up or facilitating parish and diocesan parishes or councils. Though it is a readable book, with examples and stories, it will be best appreciated by those who have a particular interest in the dynamics of organizations.

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