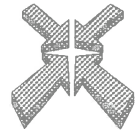




THE MIX



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Teresa Pirola

The human face 2

Carmel Duffy

Regional adult faith worker 3

Townsville Pastoral Planning Commission

The role of women in the Church 4

The Bible

The priest in the old testament 6

Tradition

The priest in the early church 6

Our Say - What are we to make of the *Instruction*?

On August 15, 1997, the Holy Father promulgated the document *Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*. The document was issued by eight Roman Congregations and Pontifical Councils and launched in November.

The *Instruction* is divided into three sections. The first (6 pages) - entitled "Premise" - says its purpose is "simply to provide a clear, authoritative response to the many pressing requests ... seeking clarification in the light of specific cases of new forms of 'pastoral activity' of the non-ordained". The authors, in particular, are concerned about "certain practices ... which have had very serious negative consequences".

The second section (7 pages) - entitled "Theological Principles" - outlines the faith tradition concerning ordained ministry and its relationship with non-ordained ministry. In particular, the *Instruction* emphasises the uniqueness of the ordained priesthood which is "absolutely irreplaceable" and this calls for a "continuing, zealous

and well-organised pastoral promotion of vocations Any other solution deriving from a shortage of sacred ministers can only lead to precarious consequences."

The third section (17 pages) - entitled "Practical Provisions" - deals with questions of roles, structures and language. For example, the *Instruction* notes that "it is unlawful for the non-ordained faithful to assume titles such as 'pastor', 'chaplain', 'coordinator', 'moderator' or other such similar titles which can confuse their role and that of the Pastor, who is always a Bishop or Priest".

It seems that this *Instruction* was aimed at particular abuses in certain places. The Bishops of England and Wales, for example, were told it did not apply to them. Cardinal Clancy, who was in Rome for the launching of the document, has also urged care in its interpretation. (See page 7 of this issue of *The Mix*.)

Despite a number of references to "collaboration" and the Second Vatican Council, the tone of the document is negative

and legalistic. The reader could be forgiven for thinking it is, in fact, prompted by an attempt to forestall necessary change, and that the authors are unaware of the realities of the Church in places like Australia.

Perhaps the most significant statement in the *Instruction* is the following:

Indeed, were a community to lack a priest, it would be deprived of the exercise and sacramental action of Christ, the Head and Pastor, which are essential for the life of every ecclesial community.

A growing number of communities in Australia and elsewhere lack this "essential" element. Many faithful Catholics who love the Church and her rich tradition, especially that of priesthood, are deeply troubled by this. And they are justifiably angry when they are told simply to "promote vocations".

This document - even if it is meant for a selected audience elsewhere - will leave many faithful Catholics sadly disappointed and frustrated. It will also tend to further erode Rome's credibility and authority.

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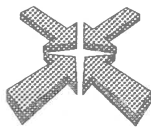
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The Four Arrows and the Cross symbolise diver-
sity giving rise to communion in and through the
Paschal Mystery. Those who are diverse by nature
and culture, in and through Christ, find lifegiving
unity.

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.

All items submitted for publication in *The Mix*
should reach the Editor no later than the 12th
of the month previous to publication.

The Human Face

My name is Teresa Pirola. I was born
in Perth in 1962, the second of four
children. Most of my upbringing was in
Sydney, although Dad's medical studies
took our family overseas for five years.
Three of those years, living in New York,
were particularly formative for me. School
life, a melting pot of Anglo-Saxon, Afro-
American and Jewish culture, was very
stimulating. Creativity was encouraged. It
was a public school and on Wednesday
afternoons the Catholics were bussed to
CCD classes.

It was in New York that I had a gentle
conversion experience at age ten. It had
something to do with the books I read (C.S.
Lewis' 'Narnia' series for children and the
words of Mother Teresa in 'Something
Beautiful for God') and it had something to
do with the people who were coming into
our home at the time: people connected
with lay spirituality movements like *Teams
of Our Lady* and *Marriage Encounter*;
people who prayed together, shared meals
and home Masses and worked on their
'relationships'. In hindsight I was growing
up in a new era of church unleashed by
Vatican II - pretty radical changes I sup-
pose, but to me they felt 'normal' because
that's all I knew.

Returning to Australia in 1974 was
somewhat difficult. As a teenager my
Christian faith hit a desert. By the time I
left school I considered myself 'agnostic'
and dabbled in the Bahai faith of my boy-
friend. Then about a year later - I was 18 -
I was given a key to understanding the
Church. It's a long story, but let's just say
that the 'key' was to see the Church as a
family rather than an institution. Jesus
came alive for me through his body, his
people.

This experience changed my life, a life
that has found expression in various forms
of community and mission over the last 17
years. Depending on their perspective,
people usual tag me with one or other label
(e.g. Antioch, RCIA) but in reality there
has been a plethora of apostolates (full of
amazing people) that have kept my faith
alive and active.

In 1991 I left a diocesan job to start up a
new apostolate in the 'grass roots' of the
church. I called it *The Story Source*. I felt
that there were many solid people of faith -
especially in families - whose witness and
gospel insights went unnoticed in the
church simply because they were deemed
to be 'ordinary'. My plan was to highlight
their wisdom by creating an undercurrent

of storytelling in parish bulletins across the
country; stories about real Australians liv-
ing the gospel in practical ways. A story or
two in a parish bulletin, week after week,
year after year, imparts an almost 'sub-
liminal' message.

The Spirit lives in *us*; the church is...
Multiply this effect by hundreds of parishes
and you have a quiet 'Good News' move-
ment that arises from and flows back into
the fabric of people's lives. At least, that's
the vision! *The Story Source* began in my
living room and today regularly supplies
some 500 subscribing parishes with bulle-
tins and leaflets illustrating the gospel
through such stories. There is a wonderful
freedom in 'working for the church' in a
grassroots ministry. You can create your
own niche in the church, even when it
can't be found in traditional avenues.

I love playing sport (like touch football,
running, figure skating); it's a great source
of joy and challenge. My current passion is
triathlon. Training for triathlons is a bril-
liant way of getting amongst God's crea-
tion in Sydney's waters, parks and beaches
and feeling so 'alive'!

Amidst countless blessed experiences,
there has also been a theme of grief in my
life; grief over lost love, shattered dreams
and intense disappointments in the church
(and by 'church' I mean all of us). I
tion this not to sound melodramatic but
real. I believe grief is an inescapable part
of human loving. It's scary and we'd like
to ignore it, yet grieving and healing are
essential to embracing the heart of the Pas-
chal mystery.

To me, to be a follower of Christ and part
of his body is like the parable of the treas-
ure in the field. It is the greatest of riches
that comes at a great price.



Teresa Pirola

Your Say – A ministry of adult education

by Carmel Duffy

I am the third Adult Faith Worker in the Mackay area of the Rockhampton diocese, and have been doing this work for most 2 1/2 years. My contract runs for another year. I work 15 hours a week for the school year, and my time is flexible, including evenings and some weekends.

This position is the only one of its kind in our diocese, and serves 9 parishes in the area. My mission is to facilitate education and growth in faith using a pastoral approach. My background is in Secondary School teaching. I am married and with my husband Larry, have four children from 16 down to 5. That in itself makes for a hectic life.

The work is extremely varied. It involves my working both with individuals searching for growth in their faith and small groups - including a Small Christian Community. Sometimes I conduct inservices in liturgical ministries at parish level.

I also liaise with the priests in our local Deanery and with our Bishop. Part of my work involves organising visiting speakers to our region, and supporting the Regional Pastoral Council as a delegate. Another of

my responsibilities is to oversee a small regional Adult Faith library.

Currently, I am a member of our Diocesan Liturgical Commission and that provides me with a wide network of people and greatly helps facilitate communication at many levels.

I was first asked to do this work for 6 months and during that time develop a consultation process in the region to see what the needs were in this area of adult faith. I subsequently applied for, and was given the job for two years.

Apart from regional speakers and prayer days, most of my work is in response to specific invitations from groups or parishes. This allows for great diversity in the job - and some busy periods.

I have undertaken some units in Faith and Spirituality from the Catholic Correspondence Centre to facilitate my own development. As well, I attend seminars in various areas of ministry when I can.

This work has given me a great insight into many facets of modern church life with all its stresses and strains. It has both

challenged and nurtured my own faith and spiritual development. But, most especially, it has brought me into contact with so many people, all on their own faith journeys, yet supportive of me and others.

There are a number of significant issues we are facing in our diocese. One is that of providing people to serve the needs of the community. This implies at least two other significant issues. Firstly, people need to be educated and trained for the various ministries. Secondly, lay people need to be encouraged and enabled to serve in these ministries - especially that of presiding at Sunday worship in the absence of a priest. All this of course involves encouraging and educating our people in the true spirit of the Second Vatican Council. It also involves continuing support for adults in their spirituality.

Finally, I see the area of youth ministry as an issue that is so often put into the 'too hard' basket, and yet it is so important. □

Carmel Duffy lives with her family just outside Mackay in North Queensland.

Letters

It never ceases to amaze me how one's opinions can change the entire meaning of a statement. I consider myself a supporter of *Catalyst* and its Mission and in the interest of 'truthful' conversation I feel compelled to point out a very serious error. In the article on Tradition (Volume 2 Number 9 1997, p6) you misrepresent the position of Loisy. His statement "Jesus annoncait le royaume, et c'est l'Eglise qui est venue," was intended to be taken in the positive sense and was never spoken with cynicism. Loisy went on to argue that the Kingdom of God, like the Church, is a past, present and future reality that contains in it the history of salvation. Salvation history is not a spatial concept and so the nature of the Church is to be for another - namely the Loving Creator God. Our common expression of this is Church. I notice that you use a small 'c' for Church; if by that you meant institution then you should have said so and then the whole article would have made a lot more sense. In answer to your question: Tradition - the church is the kingdom? Loisy would surely have replied: Tradition - the Church is the Kingdom! In the interest of the mission you have set for

yourself I would hope that this 'misunderstanding' of the text would be corrected in the next issue.

Paul PP Ghanem OFM, Box Hill, VIC

[*Editor's Response:* I welcome Paul's letter. The use of the word 'cynical' was based on three factors. Firstly, the very content of the sentence seems to imply at least a tension (contrast? opposition?) between "the Kingdom" announced by Jesus and "the Church" that came. Secondly, Loisy himself tended to be, as Rosemary Radford Ruether notes, "bitter and polemical". Thirdly, the context, which was one of intolerance by the Church of such thinkers as Loisy. However, I think Paul introduces a subtlety that bears a closer look. Loisy, in writing his *L'Evangile et L'Eglise* (1902), was arguing for the necessity of scientific historical investigation as a *sine qua non* for understanding the origins and character of Christianity. In particular, he was arguing against the liberal Protestant Adolf von Harnack, who claimed that the creeds and laws of the early Church had obscured the essential Christian reality. Loisy argued

that the Church was the necessary and living medium for expressing the Gospel in the world. As a corollary of this, Loisy also argued that Church dogmas and teachings should not be regarded as absolute but relative to the age which produced them. It seems fair to say that Loisy was searching for a positive view of the Church beyond what he was seeing and hearing from Rome. (Alfred Loisy, 1857-1940, was a French priest and biblical scholar. He came to epitomize an intellectual thrust known as "Modernism" - an attempt by Catholic scholars in Europe to open the Church to modern scientific method and generally break the rigid and absolutist strictures of neo-Scholasticism. Much of what passed for heresy then would be taken for granted now, eg methods of biblical scholarship. Loisy was excommunicated in 1908 at which time he publicly renounced his faith and espoused a 'religion of humanity'.)]

I enjoy the newsletter. Keep up the good work. It is for me a sign of hope and encouragement. Congratulations.

Maurie Sullivan CM, Ashfield, NSW

Essay – The role of women in the church

The following is excerpted from "Participation of Women in the Catholic Church of Australia". A presentation of the Pastoral Planning Commission of the Diocese of Townsville. Copies of the completed text may be obtained from the Coordinator, Pastoral Planning Commission, Catholic Diocesan Centre, PO Box 186, Aitkenvale, Qld 4814. Ph: (077) 255 888).

There is a story in Charles Handy's book *The Empty Raincoat*:

Once I stopped and asked the way. "Sure, it's easy" the local replied. "Just keep going the way you are, straight ahead, and after a while you'll cross a small bridge with Davy's Bar on the far side, you can't miss it!"

"Yes, I've got that", I said, "straight on to Davy's Bar".

"That's right. Well, half a mile before you get there, turn to your right up the hill".

It seemed so logical, the author continued, that he thanked the man and drove off. By the time he realized that the logic made no sense the man had disappeared ...

The Pastoral Planning Commission suggests that if the Church keeps going down its present road *it will miss the right turn and end up at Davy's Bar* instead of where it wants to go.

The Commission suggests it is easy for the Church to fall into the trap of desperately trying to perpetuate its language, structures, symbols, rules, practices, attitudes and way of decision-making. In doing so it becomes an inflexible institution that is introverted and centred on itself; an institution that is struggling to survive.

Fortunately, the Church is more than inflexible institution. The Church is people - and God living within the very being of the gathering of the people sent out on mission - a mission of searching for God in the world.

The Church will become transformed when it searches for God in the world. It has to find God in the world not in itself.

Mission is at the heart of our Faith Tradition, but to be a Church on mission some of the Church's Form Traditions will have to change.

The Commission suggests that one key underpinning the mission of finding God in the world is relationships. Rela-

tionship is at the heart of our Trinitarian Faith Tradition. And relationships draw on both the feminine and the masculine qualities in all people.

Mission, the building of relationships, is a mutual process. The Church does not have all the answers. Rather, its aim is to explore, discover and learn and then, in turn, give the rich gifts of its Tradition transformed by what it has learned from its experiences.

The Church is not setting out *to solve a problem but to live the mystery*.

For parishes, finding God in the world could be as simple as *establishing neighbourhood church* - standing with the family in crisis; with the household that has recently moved into the locality; with the lonely, scared woman imprisoned in her home; with the frightened patient who has received news of a serious illness; with the abused, and the oppressed

For this to happen, a parish has to establish structures that go out to find those who are hurting and forgotten, rather than waiting for those in need to come to the church building.

Many parishes adequately serve those who come with a need - those wanting baptism; a child to be educated; a funeral for a loved one; a meal for someone who is sick; a welcome for those who come to worship with the community; a visit when a sick call comes

Parishes can respond to the need that is brought to the attention of parish leaders and ministers, but how many parishes go into the world to find the need?

If building relationships is a key to finding God in the world, the Church needs the qualities of sensitivity and gentleness; compassionate mercy; insight and perception; imagination, creativity and intuition; waiting, listening and respectfully allowing life to unfold; inclusivity, ... qualities usually associated with the feminine.

The Church can only be of this world when it feels the anger, rage and pain along with ecstasy and joy. The Church needs the complementarity of the masculine and the feminine, the head and the heart, but during this desert time of confusion and change it, perhaps, needs more of the heart so that the new will be a blend of the two.

We might ask ourselves:

1. How do we understand mission - is the task to bring God to the world or is find God in the world?
2. If we bring the God we find in the world into our Sunday gathering, will this change the shape of our liturgy? Will it make our liturgy more meaningful?
3. How can we ensure that the complementarity of both the feminine and the masculine is reflected in the mission, worship, sacramental life and leadership structures of our Church?
4. What buildings, facilities, personnel, finance will be needed to resource this mission?
5. How can the Church encourage those men who are now the decision-makers in the Church to recognize and respond to the feminine in themselves?
6. The Church has to build a new institutional framework to replace the old. What will it be? Who will do this? How will it be done?
7. Tradition is an action word, a dynamic. It means *to hand over*. It is a passing on of the responsibility to struggle for meaning and purpose and to work to make the world a more human place in accord with God's plan. It is the passing on of experience in terms of light gained and mistakes made. Is the existing institution willing to live by its tradition of *handing over*?

The Bishop of this diocese recently presided at the Sunday Eucharist in a parish and used his homily to challenge the people. He said that the pastoral team in his ideal parish is *everyone who worships*, as everyone gathered at the Sunday liturgy is sent out on mission. He explained the significance of Gospel as mission and then stated that those who were not willing to be on mission should *sit down for the gospel*.

We will continue to argue over who should be in charge of what and who should be allowed to do what as long as we focus on the structures of the present Church more than on its mission.

Being on mission requires the qualities of both the masculine and the feminine.

In the Gospel Jesus stood as He proclaimed His mission. Do we here today want to sit for the Gospel or are we willing to stand with Jesus on mission and: *be anointed by the Spirit of the Lord, bring good news to the afflicted, proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, let the oppressed go free, proclaim a year of favour from the Lord because this is what you are sent to do.* (Luke 4:18-19; 43).

A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Thomas Merton

On December 10 this year it will be thirty years since the death of Thomas Merton. Just short of his fifty fourth birthday, he was accidentally electrocuted while attending a conference in Bangkok. The following is part of a letter sent by Merton to friends on January 22, 1967. We present this text as a tribute to an extraordinary person. The full text may be found in other places, including William Shannon, *The Ground of Love* and Mary Tardiff (ed), *At Home in the World*. The latter is reviewed on page 8 of this issue of *The Mix*. (Fr Charles Davis, mentioned in this letter, was a prominent English theologian who left the Church and married, amidst a good deal of publicity, in 1966.)

It is a quiet, cloudy Sunday morning, not too cold. I am hoping for some rain to fill my rain barrels and give me water to wash dishes with. I still have enough to wash out the coffee pot for another three or four days. I bring drinking water daily from the monastery in a gallon bottle. I know what it means to save on water, and I use only two or three gallons a day for everything at the hermitage. (Showers I take at the monastery.)

There has been a lot of talk about Fr. Charles Davis and his farewell to the Church. Note, his problem was Church authority, not celibacy. He could conceivably have left the priesthood and gotten married with a dispensation. In a long statement, which was front page news in England, he made some very drastic criticisms of the abuse of authority in the Church. I do not think these criticisms were altogether baseless or unjust. The present institutional structure of the Church is certainly too antiquated, too baroque, and is often in practice unjust, inhuman, arbitrary, and even absurd in its functioning. It sometimes imposes useless and intolerable burdens on the human person and demands outrageous sacrifices, often with no better result than to maintain a rigid system in its rigidity and to keep the same abuses established, one might think, until kingdom come. I certainly respect Fr. Davis's anguish - who of us does not sometimes share it? But I cannot follow him in his conclusion that the institutional Church has now reached the point where it can hardly be anything other than dishonest, tyrannical, mendacious, and inhuman. He feels he has a moral obligation to leave

the Church, and he offers this theological justification for his decision.

I hope most of us Catholics have learned by now that this kind of decision on the part of one of our brothers, merits our compassion and understanding, not fulminations against heresy and bad faith. One can feel Fr. Davis is still a brother without coming to the same conclusions as he did.

I have, in fact, just been reading Romano Guardini's excellent little book on Pascal. He analyses "the demon of combativeness" in Pascal - a demon which is no prerogative of Jansenists. At times one wonders if a certain combativeness is not endemic in Catholicism: a "compulsion to be always right" and to prove the adversary wrong. A compulsion which easily leads to witch hunting and which, when turned the wrong way, hunts its witches in the Church herself and finally needs to find them in Rome.

There are always human failures which can be exploited for this purpose. Pascal nearly went over the falls completely, but he recognized the destructiveness of his own inner demon in time, and knew enough to be silent and to believe and to love. The story of his death is very moving.

There comes a time when it is no longer important to prove one's point, but simply to live, to surrender to God and to love. There have been bad days when I might have considered doing what Fr. Davis has done. In actual fact, I have never seriously considered leaving the Church, and though the question of leaving the monastic state has presented itself, I was not able to take it seriously for more than five or ten minutes.

It is true that if I had at one time or another left the Church, I would have found scores of friends who would have approved my action and declared it honest and courageous. I do not claim any special merit in having decided otherwise. Nor does a decision for Christian obedience imply an admission that I think authority has always been infallibly just, reasonable, or human.

Being a Catholic and being a monk have not always been easy. But I know that I owe too much to the Church and to Christ for me to be able to take these other things seriously. The absurdity, the prejudice, the rigidity, and unreasonableness one encounters in some Catholics are nothing whatever when placed in the balance with the grace, love, and infinite mercy of Christ in His Church.

And after all, am I not arrogant too? Am

I not unreasonable, unfair, demanding, suspicious, and often quite arbitrary in my dealings with others? The point is not just "who is right?" but "judge not" and "forgive one another" and "bear one another's burdens."

This by no means implies passive obsequiousness and blind obedience, but a willingness to listen, to be patient, and to keep working to help the Church change and renew herself from within. This is our task.

Therefore, by God's grace I remain a Catholic, a monk and a hermit. I have made commitments which are unconditional and cannot be taken back. I do not regard this position as especially courageous: it is just the ordinary stuff of life, the acceptance of limits which we must all accept in one way or another: the acceptance of a sphere in which one is called to love, trust, and believe, and pray - and meet those whom one is destined to meet and love.

More and more I see the meaning of my relationship with all of you, and the value of the love that unites us, usually unexpressed. This is the area in which the term "union in Christ" really means most to me, though some of you are not enrolled in my Church.

More and more, since living alone, I have wanted to stop fighting, and arguing, and proclaiming, and criticizing. I think the points on which protest has been demanded of me and given by me are now well enough known. Obviously, there may be other such situations in the future. In a world like ours - a world of war, riot, murder, racism, tyranny and established banality, one has to be able to stand up and say NO. But there are also other things to do.

I am more and more convinced of the reality of my own job, which is meditation and study and prayer in silence. I do not intend to give up writing, that too is obviously my vocation. But I hope I will be able to give up controversy some day. Pray for me. When one gets older (Jan. 31 is my fifty second birthday) one realizes the futility of a life wasted in argument when it should be given entirely to love. □

Cordially yours in Christ,
Thomas Merton

"In the night of our technological barbarisms, monks must be as trees which exist silently in the dark, and by their vital presence purify the air" (Thomas Merton, *Basic Principles of Monastic Spirituality*, Templegate 1957/1996, p124)

Words for a Pilgrim People

I am most happy to be proud of my weaknesses, in order to feel the protection of Christ's power over me. I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Attempts to manipulate people are common today, but it does not follow that we have to give in to them. In practice, the only priest whom people will always feel they need is the priest who is conscious of the full meaning of his priesthood, the priest of deep faith, who professes his faith courageously, prays fervently, teaches with deep conviction, serves, lives the beatitudes, knows how to love disinterestedly and is close to all, especially to those who are most in need. (Paul VI, Letter to Priests, April 1979, n7)

There is a classic comparison, my Brothers, running through contemporary philosophy between Socrates and Christ, a judgement between them in human excellence. Socrates went to his death with calmness and poise. He accepted the judgement of the court, discoursed on the two alternatives suggested by death and on the dialectical indications of immortality; found no cause for fear; drank the poison and died. Jesus - how much the contrary. Jesus was almost hysterical with terror and fear; looked for comfort from friends, and for escape from death and found neither; finally got control over himself and accepted his death in silence and lonely isolation. I once thought this was because they died a different sort of death. ... Now I believe that Jesus was a more profoundly weak man than Socrates. Socrates never wept over Athens. Socrates never expressed sorrow or pain at the betrayal of friends. He was possessed and integral, never over-extended, convinced that the just man could never suffer genuine hurt. And for this reason, Socrates - one of the greatest men who ever existed, a paradigm of what humanity can achieve within the individual - Socrates was a philosopher. And for these same reasons, Jesus of Nazareth was a priest - ambiguous, suffering, mysterious and salvific. (Michael Buckley SJ, "A Sermon for Priests", Madonna, June 1, 1979)

The Bible - The priest in the old testament

Let us begin with a *caveat* and two reminders. The *caveat* is that, in treating of such a complex subject, in such a small space as this, wrong impressions can be easily given. The first reminder is that everything in the OT is written after the Exodus Event and in the light of it. The text, in other words, is a faith document intimately influenced by a sense of the liberating action of God in rescuing the people from Egypt and forging the Covenant with them in the desert. The second reminder is that we must read what is there, not impose our wishes. This is closely related to the first reminder. It is also related to the fact that we, as bearers of the modern Western mindset, typically think very differently from the writers of the Bible. And, finally, we all tend to find confirmation of our pet theories in history.

The Hebrew word for priest used in the OT is *kohen*. Its etymology offers nothing certain as to its meaning. We must look to the *functions* of the priests and how their combination changed in the course of priesthood's evolution in Israel. Throughout the biblical period an Israelite priest was fundamentally *a man attached to a sanctuary or temple*, the house of God, where he took care of the direct service of the deity and provided certain services for society which only a person enabled to approach God more closely might provide.

Towards the end of the seventh century (under Josiah) all the sanctuaries were suppressed in favour of worship centralised in *Jerusalem*. Henceforth that was regarded as the proper place of priestly ritual. This move also saw a growing emphasis on *the administrative responsibilities* of the priest. Thus, in the time of Jesus, priests were a very significant part of the governance of Jewish society.

In earlier OT times, the principal activity associated with the priest was that of *oracular consultation*. This later developed into a *responsibility for the law*. Priests also were always associated with *offering sacrifices*. Whilst sacrifices were, in earlier times, also offered by those who were not priests, gradually it became the exclusive preserve of the priesthood.

We know almost nothing of ritual acts whereby a man became a priest in early biblical times. However, there is evidence of complex rituals introducing the priest to his role from the sixth century. Typically, a man inherited the role of priest or was invited to it by a tribe or family. The tribe of Levi is especially associated with priesthood in the OT.

Tradition - The priest in the early church

Our period is roughly 300 years from the end of the NT period until the end of the patristic period - that is, c. 100 - c. 400. The NT period will be dealt with within the section on the Bible. The 5th century marked a pivotal period in the life of the Church, one in which there were some very significant developments in the shape of priesthood. But more of that later.

The distinguished historian, Jean Leclercq, has noted that "there exists relatively little information concerning 'the average priest'" in either the ancient or medieval Church. However we can make some claims with confidence, based on good scholarship.

The letters of St Ignatius (d. c. 107), Bishop of Antioch, give us the first clear statement of the threefold division of church offices into the episcopate, the presbyterate and the diaconate. Each of the churches of Asia Minor reflected in Ignatius' letters seems to have been led by a single bishop who was supported by a council of presbyters and a number of deacons. By the end of the second century this arrangement seems to have become the norm.

The communities tended to be small, and as each had its own bishop, the liturgical functions of the presbyters were minimal. For many generations, for example, solemn baptism with its attendant chrismation as well as the reconciliation of sinners were reserved to the bishop. Significantly, St Cyprian (c. 200-258), Bishop of Carthage, in the middle of the third century uses the terms *episcopus* (bishop) and *sacerdos* (priest) almost interchangeably. It was only later that *sacerdos* became the common way of referring to the presbyter.

Laymen took an active part in all the internal workings of the Church at this time. They played an important role in the liturgy which was still a 'popular' liturgy, that is a liturgy for the people. They played their part in the election of bishops and the nomination of priests, contributed to the drawing up of Church laws and customs, prepared some of the matter for councils and even took part in the councils, administered Church properties and it was an accepted thing that they should preach. The priests lived among the lay people, had the same way of life, same dress, and were urged to practise chastity either as married men or celibates. The priest assisted the bishop by officiating at the altar and baptizing. In the fifth century the priest begins to acquire a significantly different role in the Church.

News in Brief

• In early November 1998 the Vatican published its *Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of Non-Ordained in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, already referred to on the front page of this issue of *The Mix*. Cardinal Clancy, in his most recent circular to the priests of the Archdiocese of Sydney, made the following comments on that *Instruction*: "As I mentioned when this document was launched, the matters of concern it deals with do not seem to be widespread in Australia. The document has to be understood and interpreted against the background of very grave abuses in certain other parts of the world. The central thrust and pre-occupation of the *Instruction* is to safeguard the real and perceived distinction between the priesthood of the ordained and that of the laity. The more precise application of the *Instruction* to our own situation will become clearer with time. I am working with the Liturgical Commission to prepare guidelines, especially for Special Ministers of

the Eucharist, and lay conductors of funeral services. In the meantime, I would ask you to be attentive to the spirit of the document in the various programmes of lay formation and adult education that you may be conducting in your parish. Thank you."

The Christmas edition of *The Tablet* carried a letter from Bishop Reinhold Stecher of Innsbruck, Austria, concerning the *Instruction*. Stecher notes that "many (of the details) are reminders of things that are necessary and important." "My real concern," writes Stecher, "is the refusal to recognise the actual pastoral situation in so many countries the world over and the refusal to recognise the theological importance of the Eucharist for the Christian community and for the Church."

In *The Tablet* of December 13, 1997, Fr Owen Hardwicke, vice-chairman of the National Conference of Priests in England and Wales, wrote an article on the *Instruc-*

tion. Fr Hardwicke notes that the Bishops of England and Wales had not been consulted about the document and, although it had been promulgated in August, they found out about it only during their *ad limina* visit in October. "So it was important for them to be assured by the Vatican, as indeed they were, that abuses alleged in the *Instruction* do not exist in England and Wales" wrote Hardwicke. Fr Hardwicke goes on: "There are grounds for deeply regretting the wholly negative way in which the baptised People of God are described throughout as 'the non-ordained faithful'. And as soon as their good service is acknowledged, the document makes clear that this must only be 'in situations of emergency or chronic necessity'.

(The full text of both Bishop Stecher's letter and Fr Hardwicke's article are available from the Editor of The Mix on request. Please send a SA long envelope plus two other stamps to cover costs.)

Bulletin Board

• Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

• **Spirituality in the Pub** - some of the 1998 events are now available:

Ballarat - The Western Hotel, the second Wednesday, 12.30pm-2pm, and the fourth Wednesday, 6.30pm-8pm. *(Info: Kevin Murphy on 03 5332 1697).*

Bowral - *(Info: John on 02 4878 5230)*

Campbelltown - The Catholic Club, 7.30pm-9pm: May 6 - Michael Whelan and Kate Englebrecht will give an introductory evening on SIP, outlining its history, spirit and purpose. *(Info: Sr Julianne on 02 9603 3000 (W) or 02 9603 2749).*

Canberra - The Statesman Hotel (Henry Parkes Room), Curtin, 7.30pm-9pm: March 25 - "Can Happiness be Pursued" with Michael Whelan and Stephen Muggford *(Info: Rita on 02 6288 4715 (H)).*

Central Coast (NSW) - The Kincumber Hotel, 7.30pm-9pm: March 3 - Michael Whelan and Kate Englebrecht will give an introductory evening on SIP, outlining its history, spirit and purpose.

Waddington - The Bellevue Hotel in Hargrave St on the third Wednesdays of the month, 7.30pm-9pm: March 4 - "What is Happiness" with Gabrielle Carey and Michael Whelan; April 1 - "Can You Be

Catholic and Happy?" (speakers tba); May 6 - "Can You Be Alone and Happy?" (speakers tba).

Geelong *(Info: Denis on 03 5275 4120).*

Melbourne - First Wednesday of the months March through October at the Prince Alfred Hotel Richmond, 7.30pm-9pm: March 4 - "Faith in Leadership", speakers Prof Max Charlesworth and Hon John Cain *(Info: Simon on 03 9497 1631)*; and **Melbourne South-East SIP** at the Notting Hill Hotel, 260-262 Ferntree Gully Rd, Clayton, 3 Tuesdays in May, August and October, 8pm-9.30pm: May 5 - "Spirituality and Politics", speakers tba *(Info: Ann on 9701 7076 or 9701 3740 or Joyce on 9700 1250).*

Penrith - The Penrith Golf Club, 7.30pm-9pm: March 10 - Michael Whelan will give an introductory evening on SIP, outlining its history, spirit and purpose. *(Info: Dennis on 02 4773 8429 or 4751 7096).*

Pymble - The SIP evenings held in the Pymble Hotel have now moved to Waitara; in May or June a **SIP for Young Adults** will commence at the Pymble Hotel *(Info: Jim on 9144 2702).*

Ramsgate - The Intersection Hotel, cnr Rockey Pt Rd and Ramsgate Rd, 7.30pm-9pm: May 19 - Michael Whelan will give an introductory evening on SIP, outlining

its history, spirit and purpose. *(Info: Claudette on 02 9587 3039 (H)).*

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

Rouse Hill - The Mean Fiddler on Old Windsor Rd, on the last Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm-9pm: February 24 - "How Will I Know When I am Happy?" with Caroline Jones and Kevin Bates. *(Info: Tim on 02 9736 2324 (H)).*

Waitara - The Blue Gum Hotel on the Pacific Hwy, the third Wednesdays of the month, 7.30p-9pm: March 18 - "Is Happiness Possible When You Are Seeking It?" with Michael Whelan and Carolyn Smith *(Info: Marie on 9869 9801 or Robyn on 9876 6139)*

• **Forums for the Future:** The first Forum will be held at the McKillop Campus of ACU, North Sydney, Sunday May 17, 2pm-4pm. The topic will be "The Future of the Church" with speakers Ms Teresa Pirola and Fr Richard Lennan. Entry free. Donation appreciated.

• **Parish Resources:** *The Story Source* publishes clip material for Sunday bulletins with an emphasis on storytelling and Gospel-life connections. For brochures or samples, tel/fax: 02 9314 0867.

