

# THE MIX



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## Marea Donovan

The human face 2

## Geraldine Doogue

What is it about Easter? 3

## Deirdre Grusovin

One woman's journey 4

## The Bible

Questions for the first christians 6

## Tradition

The priest in the 5<sup>th</sup> century 6

## Our Say - On being relentless about good conversation

If I care deeply about someone, I will want to foster that relationship. I will take certain steps to support and deepen the relationship. Some things I will quite deliberately avoid, others I will quite deliberately at least attempt to do.

For example, I will avoid being harsh, confrontationist, aggressive or rude with that person. I will avoid backing that person into a corner or humiliating him/her or engaging in win-lose arguments. I will avoid tendentious and emotionally loaded language, hurtful words and references, and strategies that are calculated to score points rather than seek the good of the one I love. I will avoid all those things that I would not like done to me.

On the other hand, I will do my best to listen to and understand that other person. I may become frustrated and angry at times, find it necessary to disagree and even say hard things. But I will always endeavour to do it in a way that allows the other person room to manoeuvre, apologise, clarify or at least walk away with dignity. I will at all times focus on what is

most constructive for the relationship, most caring of the other, most likely to be life-giving for both of us.

Even if the relationship breaks down because the other is unwilling or unable to engage in the kind of mutuality necessary to make it work, that should not force me to behave in a way that might be destructive to both myself and others. Admittedly it can take great maturity to maintain one's dignity in the face of another's refusal to listen or consider an alternative point of view. And the more important the relationship is to me, the more important it is to respond constructively and the more difficult it probably is to do so.

The challenges facing the human family at this time are massive. For example, it would be hard to exaggerate the importance of issues such as care for the environment, the dignity of the human person within an increasingly depersonalised world, the issues of genocide and famine.

The Church is called to be a sign of God's liberating love within that family (cf

*Lumen Gentium*, n.1). She shares "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.1). One of the massive tasks facing the Church - a task that must be addressed by each generation - is that of developing more appropriate structures, rituals, symbols and language that will allow "the people of this age" to hear the Good News in, through and because of the Church.

For those of us who love the Church, this is not a time for authoritarian pronouncements or refusal to listen, confrontationist or aggressive behaviours, win-lose arguments or point-scoring. It is, rather, a time for many conversations, for listening and understanding, patience and respect, imaginative experiments and thoroughgoing scholarship.

Good conversation, relentlessly pursued, will gradually give birth to an environment where we will be free enough to make the generous responses that are called for if the Church is to be renewed according to the vision of the Second Vatican Council.

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

These are the current Members: Marie Biddle RSJ, Kevin Burges, Dr Ann Bye, Marie Byrne, Aidan Carvill SM, Marea Donovan, Geraldine Doogue, Kate Englebrecht, Francis Gross, Catherine Hammond, Sam Hammond, Michael Kelly SJ, Robyn Lawson, Maryellen McLeay, John Menadue, Dr Chris Needs, Carmel Sharples, John Sharples, Ruth van Herk, Michael Whelan SM

The following is its mission statement: We are believers who are attempting to establish a forum for conversation within the Catholic Church of Australia. Our aim is to prompt open exchanges among the community of believers, mindful of the diversity of expression of faith in contemporary Australia. This springs explicitly from the spirit of Pope John XXIII and Vatican II: "Let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is unsettled, and charity in any case" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.92).

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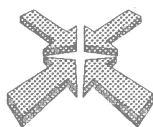
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**The Four Arrows and the Cross** symbolise diversity giving rise to communion in and through the Paschal Mystery. Those who are diverse by nature and culture, in and through Christ, find life-giving unity.

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.

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

## The Human Face

**M**y name is Marea Donovan. I was born in Dubbo in NSW. Mum and Dad were Catholics and teachers in the State school system. Dad was always the Principal of his small schools and Mum his "staff". We moved around from one small NSW town to another - from Bohnock to Coolongolook, Coopernook and other places. I had a very happy childhood and attended Mum and Dad's schools until I was ready for High School.

Until I started High School at St Joseph's in Taree, my faith was definitely "caught" from Mum and Dad. When I was 12, Mum and Dad opened the primary school at Avalon Beach in Sydney and I attended Monte Sant' Angelo College at North Sydney. The plaque on the big brick fence said: "College for Young Ladies". For the girl from the bush who had never lived in a house with electricity or inside toilet or hot running water, this was a bit daunting.

I spent six happy years at the University of Sydney, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Laws and a refined knowledge of the art of Bridge. David and I were married the day President Kennedy was assassinated. I think our wedding guests talked about that rather than about us!

I then joined David and his father as a partner in the legal practice of Donovan and Donovan in Port Macquarie. I lived and practised there as a solicitor for 25 years. We had five children. I became very active in the Parish and in Catholic Education at Parish, Diocesan and State level. I also taught David to play Bridge.

In 1989 we "retired" to the beachside suburb of Bondi in Sydney. I became the first female Deputy Chairman of the Catholic Education Commission of NSW, and chaired the Governing Council of the Catholic Theological Union, Hunters Hill.

I now chair Catalyst for Renewal and offside for David - with whom I continue to lead a happy life - in the small legal practice we operate from home. I am also undertaking a Master of Arts in Theology; play competition tennis; visit, with David, our daughter Catherine and her husband Gavin in New York for about a month each year. Every three or four weeks I go to see my 95-year-old aunty who now lives in a hostel at Eden on the south coast. And nine weeks ago on 9 February, our granddaughter Matilda, whom I love to distraction, was born. I spend as much time as I can with Matilda. (Bridge! What is that?)

You know, one of the funny things about my faith journey is that it wasn't until quite recently that I became really aware that I was on it!

But this discovery, which I believe coincided with the time I began my theological studies, has made me acutely aware the fact that every event in my life, even the apparently most insignificant little thing, forms part of the framework of that journey. Nothing on the "outside" of me has changed, but the "inside" has undergone an enormous shift.

It is all intimately involved with understanding that I need to be conscious of, and to work on my relationship with God all the time. And this means, not only at Eucharist and in the more traditional "formal" times of prayer, but also in the messiness of day-to-day living and in relationships. My inner relationship with God, lived out in the participatory arenas of home, parish, Church and society, teaches me to be non-judgmental and caring.

The hierarchical "official Church" has generally been very kind to me. I have from time to time found myself in difficult situations that I would hope would not be repeated. But in the main, "the Church" has provided me - a lay person and a woman to boot - with many opportunities to work collaboratively with others at formal leadership levels, where I have served, and sometimes chaired, Parish, Diocesan and State Commissions, committees and Boards.

My hope for the Church of the present and future is that we can truly put into practice the spirit that permeates the documents of Vatican II - a spirit of openness and dialogue - so that all God's people can work collaboratively to tackle the challenges which face us.



*Marea Donovan & Matilda*

# Your Say – What is it about Easter?

by Geraldine Doogue

Mood swings at Eastertime could be the title of this little reflection. Or how I learned to stop worrying and re-discover the bleeding obvious about the resurrection.

Speaking entirely personally, the build-up to Easter this year seemed unusually meaningless.

Palm Sunday had been subsumed into a mere bracket within the broader Passion Sunday tag; Lent had made little impact on my busy days; suddenly Holy Week had been re-dubbed *Easter Week* by a range of broadcasters and Good Friday as *Easter Friday*; there seemed absolutely no sense of an impending 'event'.

My daughter informed me that most of her (Catholic) school friends were highly unlikely to attend any of the services, possibly only Easter Sunday Mass. Gradually, the thought dawned that Easter might genuinely be observed by the highly committed only.

By the time a sopping wet Holy Thursday night had arrived I was quite down in the dumps about the power of ritual to exert any serious meaning. Face it, I bought to myself, Easter is losing any capacity to influence even the broader Catholic community, let alone secular Australia.

How could it possibly compete with Christmas, I pondered, with all its commercial help from October to December? Its symbols, for one thing, conferred such an advantage.

Christmas turns on the story of a beautiful newborn emerging into the world against the odds, promising so much. Easter is about death, oh yes, and resplendent new life, but only after the funereal pace and determinedly bleak tone of Good Friday. No, this was not for modern Australia.

Then something happened at the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday morning at my suburban church and I was forced to reconsider.

The story was told again, that's what happened. Its sheer drama once more caught us all in its spell. It wasn't a full Church but those present were, almost to the last man, woman and child, fully engaged, unless I'm very much mistaken. As they say in the classics, you could have heard a pin drop.

It didn't work for all of us all the time. People are standing for a while after all. Young and old are asked to concentrate for longer than usual and ours was an incredibly unadorned affair. But the words from Brian Moore SJ (*His Cross and Ours: Praying the Stations*, Dove Publications, 1989) crept into my soul. Looking around, I wasn't alone.

For here is a narrative tale without peer, centring on losses big and small, of tragedies obvious and subtle. In the hands of a good wordsmith and reader, it so easily applies to the modern calvaries of individual Australians, buffeted by lack of certainties.

People in my church paused to consider the power of the message. It was impossible to be unaffected - the ultimate compliment to a liturgy.

But here is a little paradox, as my parish priest pointed out. The Stations are not a formal Church rite. There are no 'compulsory' readings, no order of service. Yet rarely has something seemed so relevant to my daily life at work and home. For me, the lingering message was the need for compassion, for being alert to the inarticulate call for help, modelled by Simon of Cyrene and St. Veronica, such unlikely heroes.

Others were undoubtedly affected differently. Each year, the long gospel or the

Stations tap something afresh.

We shouldn't be surprised. The story of Jesus at Easter can stand very much on its own, competing with all comers .... and the less adorned the better, I've come to believe.

Maybe, too, the Church should set itself one clear task in the next 20 years - to rehabilitate Easter as a ritual of meaning not only within the Catholic community, but beyond. Easter time offers lots of possibilities, speaking in both a strategic and spiritual sense. It is so much saner than the frenzy that marks Christmas these days.

Most of us merely take, say, the four-day break, then go back to work, minus that absurd 'must-finish-everything' mentality that grips so many of us from mid-December onwards. It's getting worse in my observation.

People are available for reflection at Easter time, I would argue, much more than at the end of the year. At the moment, Easter is used for rest and relaxation, and most minds are not pre-occupied with deep theology.

But they could be available for a good story, like that of a 33-year-old activist wrongly convicted for preaching an unpalatable political message. I can see cleverly placed slabs of text and short commentaries, à la the Stations, doing very well in some of the big Australian newspapers, as long as the emphasis is on applying this immortal tale to contemporary life.

Make Easter meaningful once more and a lovely, easy Aussie break offers a chance to consider how death and resurrection are part and parcel of life at the coal face. The raw material is there. Can't we accept the challenge of marketing it better? □

*Geraldine Doogue is co-presenter of ABC's Life Matters, and a member of Catalyst for Renewal.*

## Letters

You express interest in readers' views on the priesthood. I have the greatest respect and affection for the many priests I have known over the years. I must also say (at age of nearly seventy) that I have never known one who appeared to fail to meet the high standards of personal conduct we have come to expect of them.

Re their relationship with the laity, I have asked many times, but I have never

received a satisfactory explanation, of our habit of using 'Father' as a courtesy title, common among Catholics in English-speaking countries. The ban on the use of 'Father' in Matthew XXIII seems to me quite unequivocal. It seems to me that the implied fatherhood of his congregation puts both priest and laity in an impossible situation, the implication being that the

priest assumes a moral responsibility for the lives and consciences of the people, a responsibility no human being can assume with adults. Surely the job of a priest, as we understand it, is to administer the sacraments and teach the gospel. Fatherhood has got nothing to do with it.

*Gavin Byrne, O'Connor, ACT*

# Essay – One woman's journey

Deirdre Grusovin

The following is an edited version of a talk given by Deirdre Grusovin at our Catalyst Dinner on August 1, 1997. The topic was "Parents in the Church".

I am one of a generation of catholic females who grew up in one world, parented in another, and now journey on seeking a better understanding of self, of family, and relationship with God and church.

We were educated in an Irish-Australian pre-Vatican II church which affirmed certain role models and the place of women, both in the church and society. Religious life was the ideal option, marriage and motherhood an inferior but acceptable alternative - after all, future vocations needed parents.

If you weren't married by the age of 26 you were on the shelf. I was getting into dangerous territory at 23 and still not married, while most of my school friends were.

Before walking down the aisle, you attended Father Leonard's marriage lectures - segregated, of course. He had different advice to give to the boys and girls.

Our children arrived soon and frequently. We had no thought that the cycle would not continue as always. Our husbands would provide food and shelter and wise counsel. We would manage the home and nurture our children. Our babies would grow up in the practice of their catholic faith, marry a catholic (mixed marriages to be avoided at all cost) and produce more catholic children.

To be honest, we did have a somewhat ghetto mentality. But it all turned out rather differently, because, as the children grew up, so did we.

Our husbands found that they hadn't married our mothers, as we became involved and exposed to the women's movement and notions of liberation and equal opportunity. We also found we had untapped abilities.

Then came John XXIII and Vatican II. Now that was the start of a very confusing and frustrating period in my life because our parish priest was of the old school, fearful of the change and of those progressives who were breaching the protective walls which had surrounded our lives.

Sunday homilies left me questioning and

sometimes angry. They seemed to be more destructive than constructive.

We evacuated to another parish and I suppose the children never really related or put down roots in a local parish structure again.

The pill and increasingly sophisticated medical technology were raising ethical-moral dilemmas that no previous generation had had to confront. There was bound to be conflict.

Some of my friends continued to have numerous children. Natural family planning was a great help but some found it hard going. Everyone's circumstances were different. Some took the pill and separated from the church. Others coped by shopping around for an understanding confessor. Others thought this to be a hypocritical exercise and followed their own conscience.

There were lots of tragedies in the process: nervous breakdowns and failed marriages. My closest friend from school days refused to darn socks any more, and despite four small children, went back to university to complete further studies. She became a champion of the women's movement and later one of the originators of the ABC's *Coming Out* programme.

It's important for me to confess at this stage that I liked having babies, and I was a very conservative - probably insufferably conservative - young catholic mother.

*My closest friend from school days refused to darn socks any more, and despite four small children, went back to university to complete further studies. She became a champion of the women's movement and later one of the originators of the ABC's Coming Out programme.*

I - and I'm sure many others - feel that Holy Mother Church has never come to

terms with "woman" as a whole person rather than a reproductive tract. Perhaps it was all too hard for the institutional church to deal with. But the reality was indifference and rigidity, and no inclination to listen, on the part of the male power structure that is the church. Morris West, in *A View From the Ridge*, states: 'That which the faithful find hardest to forgive is the unwillingness of their senior pastors to confront openly with them the problems which they face in the world today'. He comes to the conclusion 'that institutional power distances men and women from their own humanity. They forget that men and women are the subjects and objects of salvation, not institutions'.

How much meaningful investment has there been in scientific research, how much genuine commitment to gaining a greater understanding of the female physiology and psychology?

How can male celibates who have lived their formative years in all-male institutions have an understanding of female issues? How many women were co-opted to provide advice to those learned communities? As a woman and a mother of three growing girls, one starts to think about such things.

I remember my stunned reaction when some years ago I was told that while religious monastic libraries hold little on subjects relating to the female condition, there are volumes on matters relating to the male - for example many learned works written on the subject of masturbation.

How do you tell your daughter she can't be an altar server but her brother can? Why has the church provided ordination to married clergy, for the most part conservatives, who have left the Anglican church over the issue of female ordination and yet deny such a ministry to our own clergy? Why is there such difficulty with the general concept of a married clergy?

And then of course there is the continuing debate on female ordination. Mary McAleese, Professor of Law at Belfast University, writing in *The Tablet* of the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, 1997, asks in an article entitled, *'It Won't Wash with Women'*: 'Have any catholic Bishops in Ireland undergone equal opportunities training in Ireland? My question would be, 'Have any catholic Bishops anywhere?'. She makes the point that in the Irish church.

'An all-male clergy had a perfect and seemingly safe alliance with Irish mothers. Faith flowed from generation to generation, down the conduit established by that formidable partnership. It flowed freely because there was trust, deference, even servitude on one side, presumption and paternalism on the other'.

She goes on to say: 'Women have observed the enormous drain of heterosexual males from the priesthood, and the growing phenomenon of gay priests. They are quietly asking what is happening at the core of the call to priesthood that attracts homosexuals in much greater numbers than their population distribution would explain. These questions are not being raised in any homophobic way, but are among the raft of questions bubbling to the surface as we struggle to come to terms with the manifest demise of the model of priesthood on which the priest-mother alliance was once founded and is now foundering'.

In the same issue, Colm Kilcoyne, the parish priest of Cong, County Mayo, looks for the remaking of the church. He makes the point that: 'The male celibate structure of the Irish catholic church is profoundly offensive to many women. This maleness will kill the church unless something is done about it urgently'. He takes on the church authorities and their appalling handling of sexual abuse within the church:

'What hurt was the suspicion that the church authorities were more concerned with protecting their image than they were with seeing justice done. People trained to look to Rome, and the manual for guidance, were lost when they had to rely on plain decency. They ran to lawyers when they should have turned to scripture ... the church's national voice has been drastically stilled, its credibility reduced ... the sight now of a Bishop on a television panel makes even the most loyal catholic become tense at the potential for embarrassment'.

We have been fortunate here to have Bishop Geoffrey Robinson prepared to speak publicly on this most difficult issue. Many of us are most grateful for his honest and open statements. He has provided the leadership we all crave, but at no little cost.

I am sorry that there is such a failure of communication between the church and my children. They feel little relationship with the formal church. But at root they have the faith. The biggest influence in my life and the lives of my sisters and brothers was without doubt the living example given to us by our parents. Their legacy we try to pass on to our children.

We stay within the church. There is no other place we want to go - and you can't change things from without. Morris West tells us in *A View from the Ridge* that he believes there will come a surge of power from women within the church, more and more of whom will give challenge to patriarchal mind sets, as St. Catherine of Siena, a girl in her early twenties, once gave challenge to, and heaped moral reproach upon the delinquent Papacy in Avignon. There was a martial vigour in what she urged upon Gregory XI: 'Siatemi Uomo Virilee Non Timoroso - Be For Me a Virile Man and not a Coward'.

The church will survive but I think it will be a very different church. I hope it will be a church truly living gospel values.

The words of Archbishop Oscar Romero inspire me: 'It helps now and then to step back and take the long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. We plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise'.

*Deirdre Grusovin is an elected representative in the Legislative Assembly of the New South Wales State Parliament.*

### A Personal Observation

by Bishop Patrick Power

While I sympathised with the Royal Family who were in a non-win situation, like so many others I felt they were inept in dealing with Diana's death. They seemed to be out of touch with what was going on, and out of tune with the aspirations of ordinary people.

It worries me that the Church at *all* levels can be caught in the same bind as the Royal Family. We have our agenda, our way of doing things and, despite what might be going on in the lives of people, we are often unable to respond in a manner which brings them the love of Jesus.

Is this why so many young people, people who have suffered marriage breakdown, the unemployed, those battling addictions, priests who have left the active ministry and many others, feel that the Church is no longer their home?

When Jesus walked this earth nearly 2000 years ago, who were the people to whom he most reached out?

It was not the success stories, the perfect people, it was the battlers, the sinners, the "lost sheep".

*Bishop Power is auxiliary bishop in Canberra. This piece first appeared in the local diocesan paper, The Catholic Voice, October 1997.*

### A MEDITATION

by N T Wright

Consider what happens normally in the world. When we are cursed, we curse back, if only in our hearts. When we are hated we pass the hate on; we keep it, so to speak, in circulation. Someone is mean to me so I take out my feelings on someone else, probably someone weaker than me. So it goes on - in the world of humankind. Tiberius Caesar, growing old and suspicious, is ever more likely to take it out on his government officials; and Pontius Pilate is afraid of what may happen when he gets back to Rome if reports circulate about his ham-handed administration. Pilate, in turn, takes out his fear and spite on the subject people who find themselves at his mercy. The Jews, meanwhile, have reason enough of their own to be bitter and frustrated, and a would-be Messiah who doesn't deliver the goods is an ideal target; and so the weight of the world's insecurity, anger, bitterness, hostility, is heaped on to the head of Mary's son, the young man from Nazareth. ... But the divine way is different. Jesus takes temptation, hatred, curses - the bitterness of a bitter world - and he absorbs it into himself on the cross. Jesus, pronounced guilty as a blasphemer, for claiming to be the Son of God, demonstrates on the cross that he was speaking the truth, by doing what only the Son of God could do - loving his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end, the bitter end. And this pattern, acted out uniquely on the cross, becomes then for us, by the Spirit of Jesus working within us, the pattern we are commanded to live out, as we give back good for evil, blessing for curse, prayer for persecution. One might say that this is *the* vocation of the Church: to take the sadness of the world and give back no anger; the sorrow of the world and give back no bitterness; the pain of the world and not sink into self-pity; but to return forgiveness and love, blessing and joy. That is what Jesus was doing on Calvary. He drew on to himself the sin of the ages, the rebellion of the world and humankind, the hatred, pain, anger, and frustration of the world, so that the world and humankind might be healed, might be rid of it all.

*(The book from which this extract is taken is reviewed on page 8 of this issue of The Mix.)*

## Words for a Pilgrim People

*Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, and then you will be healed. My brothers and sisters, if one of you should stray from the truth and another succeed in bringing that person back, be sure of this: any person who brings a sinner back from crooked ways will be rescuing their own soul from death and cancelling innumerable sins. (Jas 5:16, 19-20)*

*The Council has openly acknowledged the presence of positive values not only in the religious life of individual believers of other religious traditions, but also in the religious traditions to which they belong. It attributed these values to the active presence of God through his Word, pointing also to the universal action of the Spirit: "Without doubt," the Vatican Council's Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, Ad Gentes, affirms, "the Holy Spirit was at work in the world before Christ was glorified" (n. 4). From this it can be seen that these elements, as a preparation for the Gospel (cf the Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium n.16), have played and still play a providential role in the divine economy of salvation. This recognition impels the Church to enter into "dialogue and collaboration" (the Vatican Council's Declaration on the Church and Non-Christian Religions, Nostra Aetate, n.2; cf the Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes, nos.92-93): "Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral good found among non-Christians, as well as their social and cultural values" (Nostra Aetate, n.2). (Pontifical Councils for Interreligious Dialogue and for the Evangelization of Peoples, **Dialogue and Proclamation**, 1991, n.17)*

*When I discover that I am poor, that I am confused, that you call me by my name, that you love me, then there is the moment of transformation. (Jean Vanier, **Followers of Jesus**, Gill & MacMillan, 1976, p.80).*

## The Bible - Questions for the first christians

"Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution" (Acts 6:1). "The Hellenists" may simply have been one of the separate language groups of Jews in Jerusalem at that time. One group spoke the Aramaic of Palestine ("the Hebrews") and the other, consisting of immigrants from the Diaspora who had settled in Jerusalem but spoke only Greek ("the Hellenists"). There are some utterly predictable signs of human beings being human here. (Maybe this is one of the sorts of things Jesus had in mind when he said "Love one another!") The response is worth noting: "The twelve summoned the body of disciples and said ..." (6:2). Authority is exercised by "the twelve". "The seven" are appointed "to serve tables".

And this is a harbinger of bigger questions to come. In Acts 15:1-3 we read: "Some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brethren: 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved'". This conflict arises in Antioch, at the end of Paul's first mission. Paul and Barnabas debated with them but apparently were not able to resolve the issue so "Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question" (Ibid).

This conference at Jerusalem in 49AD is sometimes referred to as the "Council" of Jerusalem. "The Apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. And after there had been much debate", and Peter spoke with authority, echoing his vision of the clean and unclean foods (cf Acts 10) and the dispute with those who wanted to insist on circumcision (cf Acts 11:1-18), they asked two men to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch with a letter to say that circumcision should not be imposed on gentile converts but that certain dietary laws should be observed - obviously a compromise response given Peter's revelation. The early Church did not proceed without difficulty or ambiguity.

For Jews, trying their best to be faithful to the teaching of Jesus - also of the Jewish tradition - these questions would have been momentous. However, their ability to cut through to what matters in the end allowed them to move forward: "We believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus just as (the gentiles) will" (Acts 15:11).

## Tradition - The priest in the 5<sup>th</sup> century

"A specific religious and social order which many articulate Christians had come to take for granted, came to an end in many regions in the course of the fifth century" (Peter Brown). This was a slow, complex but definite process in the western Roman Empire. Many of the barbarians had already been absorbed into the Empire through their recruitment into the Roman army. Many had also converted to Christianity long before. (This latter fact led to conflicts between groups based on arguments around orthodoxy, eg the Visigoths ascribed their victories in Gaul to their "Arian" orthodoxy.)

"The intensely communal quality of the Christian churches, which we have seen developing in the cities of the fourth century, now stood out in pointed contrast to a divided and easily dispersed secular aristocracy. The local church became the 'fixative' that held whole populations in place. ... More important still, the buildings of the church spoke of the day-to-day determination of cities to survive and to be seen to survive" (Ibid).

Constantine had already transferred the privileges of heathen priests to Christian bishops and priests in his Edict of Milan (313). Amidst the disintegration of the Empire in the west during the fifth century, "the functions held by government officials passed into the hands of Christian bishops. ... (This change) had a profound influence upon (the Church's) structure and internal forms of life" (Jean Leclercq). The changes evolved slowly and were marked by two particular factors: ① The laity no longer enjoyed the same facilities for acquiring culture as did the clerics; ② The political and social structures that had been in force were replaced by episcopal authority. Priests served as the auxiliaries of the bishops, who were sometimes more numerous than the priests. Bishops relegated most of their ministerial functions - preaching, baptising, presiding at the eucharist - to their priests.

The laity were looked upon as "irresponsible children whose duty it was to venerate and obey the priests. ... This change of mentality was symbolised in certain material changes: eg the altar was pushed back to the end of the apse, which signified that the liturgy had become more and more a ceremony, a strictly clerical affair. ... The clergy formed a special category of Christians, an order set apart, distinguished by its juridical privileges, its culture, the way of life implying celibacy and the work they were allowed to do" (Ibid). This led to "the clericalization of the Church" and a concomitant "'clergification' of the clerics". The clerical state of life had now become an officially recognized secular status, whereas at the beginning it was purely ecclesial and sacramental (Ibid).

# News in Brief

• **The initial phase of the process for the canonisation of Pope John XXIII** has been completed. The whole process is likely to take some years yet. When Pope John died on June 3, 1963, there were calls for his canonisation, some even suggesting the Second Vatican Council - still in session at the time - should canonise him by acclamation. Among the prominent promoters of the cause were Cardinal Suenens and Dom Helder Camara. Many Jews have always looked favourably on John's canonisation. Pope Paul VI opted for the

ordinary process. Pope John Paul II has also introduced the causes of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Pope Pius XII.

• **Another missionary has been killed in Bihar province of northern India.** He was Br Luke Puttaniyil, a Missionary of Charity. Br Luke was killed along with the driver of a lorry and his assistant, when they were bringing a truckload of medical supplies from Calcutta for the poor. Br Luke was 46 and the police say the motive for the killings was highway robbery. No

arrest has yet been made for the beheading last year of a Jesuit priest who worked among low caste people in a nearby town. Last month a Catholic priest from the same area was stabbed by a group of masked men who invaded the compound of his Church.

• **The International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee** is to set up a group of historians and theologians "to pursue further studies on the Shoah" and "to seek together a healing of memory".

## Bulletin Board

### • Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

#### • Spirituality in the Pub:

**Ballarat** - (Info: Kevin on 03 5332 1697).

**Bowral** - The Grand Bar and Brasserie, 7.30pm-9pm: fourth Tuesday of the month (Info: John on 02 4878 5230)

**Campbelltown** - The Catholic Club, 7.30pm-9pm: May 13 - Michael Whelan and Kate Englebrecht will give an introductory evening on SIP, outlining its history, spirit and purpose. (NOTE: This had originally been scheduled for May 6 but was changed to fit in with other events in the diocese. (Info: Sr Julianne on 02 9603 3000 (W) or 02 9603 2749).

**Canberra** - The Statesman Hotel. (Info: Rita on 02 6288 4715).

**Clayton (VIC)** - The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm: May 5 - "Spirituality and Politics", (speakers tba). (Info: Ann on 03 9701 7076 or 03 9701 3740 or Joyce on 03 9700 1250).

**Kincumber** - The Kincumber Hotel. (Info: Sue on 02 4334 3174 (H) or Toni on 02 4341 6986 (H)).

**Newcastle** - The Hotel Delany, Darby St, 7pm-8.30pm: May 19 - "Change and Growth: Reconciling People, Reconciling Earth" with Louise Campbell and Michael Mahony. (Info: Gail on 02 49791141 (W) or Gerard on 02 4945 5343 a.h.)

**Paddington** - The Bellevue Hotel, 7.30pm-9pm, May 6 - "Can You Be Alone and Happy?" (Ruth Cracknell and Stephanie Dowrick). (Info: Marea on 9387 3152 (H))

**Penrith** - The Golf Club, 7.30pm-9pm, May 13 - (Info: Dennis on 02 4773 8429 or 02 4751 7096).

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

**Ramsgate** - The Intersection Hotel, cnr Rockey Pt Rd and Ramsgate Rd, 7.30pm-

9pm: May 19 - Michael Whelan and Kate Englebrecht will give an introductory evening on SIP. (Info: Claudette on 02 9587 3039 (H)).

**Richmond (VIC)** - The Prince Alfred Hotel, first Wednesdays, 7.30pm-9pm. (Info: Simon on 03 9497 1631).

**Rouse Hill** - The Mean Fiddler on Old Windsor Rd, 7.30pm-9pm: May 26 - "Happy the ..." with Ailsa McKinnon RSM and John Phillips. (Info: Tim on 9736 2324 (H)).

**Waitara** - The Blue Gum Hotel on the Pacific Hwy, 7.30pm-9pm: May 20 - "Are you ever too old to be happy?" with John Ireland and Sr Jude OA. (Info: Marie on 9869 9801 or Robyn on 9876 6139)

• **SIP for young adults:** Two venues in Sydney are currently being explored - Pymble. (Info: Greg on 9418 2397) and Manly (Info: Fr John on 9905 3022).

• **Conversation at Chameleon Café**, 48 Lackey St, Summer Hill. (Info: Gerard and Lindy on 02 9799 2907)

• **Women's Night of Spirituality** at St Mary's Church North Sydney, Thursday May 7, 7.30pm, with Petrea King, Camilla Cowley and Maureen Watson. Caroline Jones will introduce the speakers.

• **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

• **Catalyst Dinners** will be held twice this year in Sydney. The first will be Friday, July 3 and the topic will be "Reconcilia-

tion". Speakers: Maisie Kavanagh and Frank Brennan SJ.

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

• **Mark: Jesus the everyday man**, a reflection day at Mt St Benedict, 447A Pennant Hills Rd, Pennant Hills (NSW), May 8, 10am-4pm, \$20, byo lunch, tea and coffee provided. The Sisters of the Good Samaritan run similar days and seminars at Mt St Benedict often. (Info: 02 9484 6208 or 9484 7033)

• **Spirituality at St James**, Level 1, St James Hall, 169 Phillip St, Sydney - "Praying with the Inner Journey: An Evening on Ignatian Prayer" with Des Dwyer SJ on May 12, 6.30pm-8pm, \$15; "An Introduction to Christian Spirituality" (3 sessions) with Kate Englebrecht on May 13, 20 and 27, 1.10pm-1.50pm, \$10/session; "Encounters with Reconciliation" with Pearl Wymarra on June 10, 6.30pm-8pm, \$15. Concessions available. (Info: Richard on 9810 2448)

• **Sydney City Mission** is a non-denominational Christian Community Services Organization aiming to spread the love of God and meet human need. In conjunction with their work for the poor they have a series of regular publications dealing with particular social issues (eg "Families on the Edge" (1997) with case studies, statistics and practical recommendations concerning families in distress; "Children in Poverty" (1997) again giving personal stories, statistics and recommendations.

