



THE MIX



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Our Say - Lessons from a waterfront and a battlefield

Belfast, until recently, was a battlefield. Until, that is, the relevant leaders had the courage, humility and sheer common sense to sit down with each other and engage in good conversation. The struggle for reconciliation and peace in Northern Ireland is far from over, but a wonderful step has been taken. There seems good reason to be hopeful that at least the seeds of lasting peace have been planted. One can only look back with deep sadness at the wasted years of senseless bigotry and hatred, the ruthless killings and wanton destruction that went on until all the parties were willing and able to enter into that conversation.

Over the last short while in Australia we have witnessed a very sad and destructive dispute on the waterfront. It would not be appropriate for us here to attempt an analysis of that dispute as such. However, given the significance of the dispute for Australia at this time - and perhaps for generations to come - it is not only appropriate but necessary for us to ask what lessons it may hold. Clearly there is more to this than just another industrial dispute.

One of the more disturbing features of this dispute is that it seems to have been dealt with as a fight which will end with one winner and one loser. Sadly, this sort of win-lose approach to dealing with differences is not uncommon in Australia.

A missing component in so much of our social effort is *good conversation*. We do not have a tradition of good conversation in this country. Our whole legal system is an adversarial one. Parliament is frequently - and it seems appropriately - referred to as "the bear pit". The heroes are those who can "stand the heat", the preferred strategies are those that "turn up the heat". "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen!" is a sort of rallying cry for "the winners". God help the losers. For many, it seems that confrontation, manipulation and aggressive competition are more desirable than conversation, facilitation and collaboration.

If this sort of dispute resolution is accepted, what might be the implications for Australia as a democratic society, struggling to address serious, complex, moral, political, cultural and social issues which are

bound to give rise to major differences of opinion? Can we the Church - called to be a sign of God's liberating love in the world - learn anything from this?

There are at least two clear lessons in this for us, the Church in Australia.

Firstly, we must play our part in the key issues of our time. Renewal in the Church is inextricably linked with renewal in society at large. For example; we can promote conversation, reconciliation and mutual respect.

That first lesson raises for us a second - and perhaps the most important - lesson of all. We cannot enter the public forum, and speak with authority as Jesus did with His contemporaries, unless the ideals and principles about which we speak are first of all pursued with vigour and rigour within the Church. We too must learn the art of conversation with each other, the critical need for constant promotion of reconciliation and mutual respect and the importance of the common good in the community of Jesus' disciples. □

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

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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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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.

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The Human Face

My name is Marianne Stevenson. I was born, the third of eight children - four boys and four girls - in Burnie, Tasmania, in 1959. After attending primary school run by the Sisters of Mercy, I went to Marist Regional College, which was coeducational and run by Marist priests and Sisters of Mercy. I was very lucky to be in contact with nuns and priests of very great integrity, and with much vision of faith and spirituality. One of these was Michael Whelan, and we have maintained an intermittent contact since then.

At 18 I left home to attend university in Hobart. I came to know and love a man who was studying medicine with me, Philip. After about eighteen months we married, to the consternation of our parents as we still had two years of medicine to do, and also because Philip had severe kidney disease. In fact, shortly after we married he had to start on a dialysis machine, and subsequently had a renal transplant which failed. Through all this we managed to finish our medical degree, survive our intern year back in Burnie, and move to Newcastle for what Tasmanians call "mainland experience".

During our first year in Newcastle, Philip became seriously ill, and he died of an overwhelming infection at the end of 1984. I was fortunate to have family and friends and a great hospital chaplain, who supported me through this difficult time. I came home to my parents for about two months and will never forget their loving support and the quiet but strong support from my siblings and friends.

I decided to return to Newcastle for at least another year, to sort out what I wanted to do next. On the way back, I stopped in Melbourne to be godmother to my best friend's daughter, and at the baptism met the godfather, Tony. I enjoyed his company, and was keen for the relationship to continue. As it turned out, Tony was keen too, and after a year of corresponding and visiting to and fro, we decided I would move to Melbourne and we became engaged, and were married in 1987. I am lucky to have a partner in life who is truly a "kindred spirit" - we have many different ideas and ways of doing things but a great marriage!

We lived together in Melbourne for ten years, and in that time had two children, Kathryn and Dominic. We met several other couples who were involved in the Church and keen to share a sense of "parish family". Unfortunately, the parish priest wanted to maintain the status quo, which was of minimal lay involvement, minimal spiritual nourishment, and no adult faith education or desire to be involved in Church

reform and renewal. This was my first personal experience of this kind, and it may surprise some to find that this was the first time I found myself in a real crisis about my faith. I had to sort out in my own mind the difference between my place in the Church and my relationship with God. Until then I had had such positive personal experiences of Church that there was no conflict.

I became involved in two groups of people who thought as I did; who loved the Church and didn't want to leave, but who were struggling with the institutional church and its representatives. These groups were WATAC and Come and See Network, and in them I found people who were passionate about their faith and what it meant for them, and who were prepared to spend time and energy working towards their vision of Church.

In 1997 we moved to Hobart, and I feel as if I have "come home". However, I have not found a parish home where there is a vision of Church compatible with my vision. I am aware that there will always be differences of opinion, and different ways of expressing faith, and I think that is vital for a healthy community. But I need to see a certain likemindedness, a recognition of the changing world, of people's intelligence and education and spiritual integrity, and an attempt to live a Christian life that is relevant to our lives today.

I believe that life events and experiences with people help to form us, in whatever way we allow them. My hope for the future is that the Church will allow events and experiences to contribute to its formation, and not be fearful of what it might become, but trust in the goodness (the God-in-them) of the community of believers.



Marianne Stevenson

Your Say - In search of spirituality and community

by Joy McDonald

I grew up in a small country town in the pre-Vatican era when Catholics were definitely Catholics and Protestants definitely Protestants, no mistaking it! We Catholic school children walked down one side of the street after school, while the public school kids came down the other. And what colourful abuse was hurled from side to side!

The Church's teachings came across to me mainly as full of sin and hell, so I can truthfully say that I grew up in a religious atmosphere of fear. No matter how hard you tried - and I did try - you just couldn't win, you were still downright sinful. The way I saw it, you were always in big trouble.

Then along came Vatican II. All of a sudden I was told I was a great little person, full of wonderful gifts and potential, just bubbling over with goodness. And I wasn't the only one who had changed -- God had forgotten all about the sin and punishment business and was into forgiveness and love, too! It was mind-boggling, as far as I was concerned. Even today, some thirty years on., in my thinking, God still seems to be swinging back and forth between pre- and post- Vatican II

At this point in my life, I would dearly like to believe that the Church is relevant for where I'm at, but unfortunately it seems to

keep coming across as outdated in its thinking and far removed from real people's lives. About ten years back I made a sincere attempt to find guidance and help from the Church during a very difficult period, but the religious to whom I turned was too busy at that time doing "church work"

More recently I lost my parents within a few years of one another and also moved from my hometown, so the upheaval made me question everything: life, death, religion, my personal spirituality. Even today, I have to live with most of those questions unanswered, but I'm sad to say that it was to professional people outside the Church that I felt I had to turn in my grief and loss.

If at that time, however, I had had the opportunity to benefit from the pastoral ministry of the priest I have since met in my new parish, I think I would have experienced some of the warmth that I yearned to receive from my faith. This priest had spent earlier years in the town I had grown up in, had married both my brother and sister and when he saw me after I had moved, I can't describe what his welcome meant to me. He introduced me to people in the new parish and really made me feel a part of that community. I felt it *mattered* to them that I was participating in their faith-life.

With its spirituality, deep meaning, and charitable works, the Church always intrigues me. I don't want it to be off-putting. I work in a Church-run cottage for intellectually disabled children and I am proud to be a part of what this group of Catholic religious is doing for these children and their families. I know that to many people in society today this type of charity is the most relevant and endearing face of Christianity.

I sometimes feel that the picture we are currently getting of the Church is like the disconnected pieces of a puzzle: there is the spiritual/faith piece, the structural/ hierarchical piece, the community/parish piece, the good works piece -- and many of us seem to be able to relate only to one of these, or maybe a couple. We hold strong reservations about the others, often springing from disappointments, as in my case.

My greatest desire is that the Church today would come across to everyone as a beautiful combination of deep spirituality and caring community. □

Joy McDonald lives in Lithgow and works in Croydon (Sydney) where she cares for a group of disabled children.

Letters

"Priesthood" is a religious term and is defined in current dictionaries as one who represents people in offering sacrifice. From a Catholic perspective ordained priesthood belongs to males only who perform rituals that are at the heart of Catholicism -- they celebrate Sacraments, the highlight of which is the Eucharist. This is their most important function in the 1990's. Ordained priests do many other functional tasks as well, such as gather (usually only) Catholic people in prayer or good works, explain Christian theology and practice and generally lead their flock in a Christian way of life, hoping that outsiders will join the Church.

The Catholic Code of Canon Law as well as the Vatican II documents have much to say about ordained priesthood. In fact one may judge that too much is said about this minority in the Church. It would be easy to draw from the quantity written that the Catholic Church is obsessed about its ordained minority and has strangled this ministry with all of its rules and orders.

Writings also exist about the "priesthood of the laity" and I would believe that in the

past thirty years or so some people within the Catholic Church are beginning to understand what is meant by this and as a result they have grown in their own God-given dignity and spirituality. Sadly, this priesthood is experienced by too many as a ministry whereby they help Father do his job. Many see priesthood as belonging to a man who is somewhere between being a person and an angel, a man who is "another Christ", maybe a man who knows all the answers about Catholicism.

Maybe "priesthood" is out of focus, both ordained and that of the laity. More positively, maybe "priesthood" is an archetype, a given, something one has from birth. I can't believe that any god would limit such a given to males only. I would not want to believe in such a god. It would seem that many other civilisations as well as those currently on this earth, would have some sort of priesthood within them. I would see these priests (unfortunately usually male) leading the people in some form of communal or private worship of some sort of deity.

People of all times seem to need a leader to help them express awe and wonder, fear, gratitude, or even ask for favours. It seems to depend on the image of god held by people. The priest seems to have been one of the community acknowledged to have special qualities to mediate for all before the deity.

In this day and age we could laugh at some of the types of things that priests once did to appease the gods on behalf of their people. In centuries to come I suspect that we will have left enough ammunition for others to do the same about our practices today! Whilst we can only do our best with the knowledge that we currently have, let us not stagnate and set in concrete the current understanding that we exhibit of priesthood. May we have the courage to examine, reflect and maybe gradually and sensitively change, even if this will greatly upset many people who have trusted their priests and church so blindly and been encouraged to do so.

Sheila Gibson, Eastwood NSW

Essay - Faith in leadership

by Max Charlesworth

This is the text of a talk given by Professor Charlesworth at Spirituality in the Pub, the Prince Alfred Hotel, Richmond, Victoria, in March 1998.

The title 'Faith in Leadership' is nicely ambiguous. It may mean the faith that a good leader should have, what that most visionary of US Presidents, George Bush, called 'the vision thing'; it may mean the attitude of trust that the populace (the led, us) ought to have towards their leaders; it may mean that we *hoi polloi* must make a 'leap of faith' with regard to all forms of authority and leadership (ours not to reason why); it may mean simply that, as many people say nowadays, faced with the complexities and dangers of contemporary life we need 'strong leaders' (of a Jeff Kennett kind) in politics, in business, in the Churches.

I want to adopt a sceptical stance and question whether we should really place so much faith in our leaders, whether they be in politics or the Churches or whatever. One of my favourite graffiti is: 'Don't vote for politicians, it only encourages them', but that could be generalised to all would-be leaders. In my view we look for leaders much too much and exaggerate their importance; we need, so it seems to me, to demystify and deflate the idea of leadership and put leaders in the proper place, which is a very modest one, and we should have a very qualified 'faith' in them.

In the early Christian communities of the first two centuries, the leaders had a very low profile and were simply one among the various ministries in the Church, along with prophets, catechists, miracle workers, healers, speakers in tongues, discerners of spirits, etc. (The early Churches obviously had an energetic social life!) All these roles were called 'charismata', gifts of God, of Christ and of the Spirit, and those who had the gift of leadership (according to the theologian Edward Schillebeeckx, they were more like managers) had no special importance.

Speaking of managers, I recently heard Kate Carnell, the Premier of the ACT, say that the ACT was such a small place she thought of herself as a cross between a Lady Mayor and a state premier like Jeff Kennett or Rod Borbidge (a pretty remarkable political hybrid!). She was, she said, something like a general manager. I think that that is the way all our political leaders ought to see themselves - as fix-it people or as

what has been called 'piecemeal social engineers', and not as some kind of charismatic figures who incarnate and represent the will of the community.

Hegel, the great 19th century German sage, claimed that certain individuals in history embodied and expressed the 'spirit of the times' (the *Zeitgeist*) and were what he called 'world historical individuals'. Hegel's unfortunate idea (a kind of secularised version of the divine right of kings doctrine) has done a lot of damage in Western history in that it has encouraged a great array of political crooks and psychopaths - from Napoleon to Hitler and Mussolini, not to mention lesser figures like Cecil Rhodes and the later leaders of most African states, and even some florid Australian examples - to think of themselves as having some special charism or grace.

Unfortunately, I don't have a term for the state of affairs I am arguing for. The classical term 'anarchy' won't quite do since I am not arguing against the idea of government and social order as such. In fact, I am all for suitably demystified 'law and order' both in the State and in the Church.

Perhaps I might borrow some terms from the great, and late, philosopher Karl Popper. Popper drew a distinction between what he called utopian social planning presided over by a philosopher king (he had Plato and Marx in view) and 'piecemeal social engineering' done by a kind of low-level fix-it person who saw herself or himself as a manager or engineer oiling the wheels, making running repairs, keeping things on track, and generally muddling through. In Popperian terms what I am arguing against are various forms of utopianism (and utopianists), and what I am arguing for is a kind of piecemeal social engineering approach to so-called leadership.

I am a card-carrying member of the Catholic Church (Latin/English rite) and I cannot evade saying something about leadership in that Church. My friend Paul Collins has recently been called to account by the Roman authorities for his critical (but eminently moderate) history of the extraordinary process of theological and institutional development by which the diffuse and low-level leadership of the first - and second - century Churches in Ephesus and Corinth, etc. was transformed into an absolute monarchical leadership with a 'Supreme Pontiff' three hundred years later. (I must say that I have never been able to

envisage Jesus - or even God, for that matter - as a Supreme Pontiff).

Someone once remarked ironically that the Catholic Church never changes, it simply 'develops', but the development of the Church as an absolute monarchy in fact represented a revolutionary change which we are, 1500 years later, still trying to unravel and come to terms with. I have studied some aspects of this change in the last part of my recent book *Religious Inventions*, 1997. (Reviewed in this issue of *The Mix*, p8 - The Editor). The remedying of the present situation will require a counter-revolution, an institutional and attitudinal revolution, at all levels of the Church, and this will take a long time.

In 1864 Pope Pius IX solemnly proclaimed 'The Syllabus of Errors' which in effect condemned the whole movement of liberal democracy, the idea of the freedom of the individual conscience and what we now call 'human rights', the separation of Church and State and any attempt to accommodate the Church to the modern world (the dread heresy of 'modernism'). In effect the Church has now to come to terms with and learn from those liberal values and democratic institutional processes and attitudes which it rejected in 1864. A beginning was made at the Second Vatican Council but many of the Council's initiatives have since been frustrated. As I said, the *new aggiornamento* will take a long time, and no one should hold their breath.

Fortunately, there is a distinction in the Church (and indeed in all such institutions, universities and so on) between what might be called the institutional rhetoric or 'mythology' (in a neutral, anthropological sense) and the day-to-day real life of people in the Church who get on pragmatically with the business of being Christians and who are not quite sure what the 'magisterium' is. Someone recently said to me about a friend, 'He's one of those Catholics who think that 'magisterium' is the name of one of Bart Cummings' latest horses!' I can only say that as I travel around the Church, both here and elsewhere, I constantly meet, in the most unlikely places, marvellously hopeful developments and marvellously charismatic people. I get the impression that, as the great French novelist Georges Bernanos once put it, 'Grace is everywhere'. □

Emeritus Professor Max Charlesworth is an internationally renowned philosopher and former Head of the Department of Philosophy at Melbourne University.

PRIESTS IN THE CHURCH: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

by Vince Redden

Excerpts from a talk Fr Vince Redden gave at the Catalyst Dinner, October 17, 1997, at Hunter's Hill.

I am the youngest of five children. My sister is seven years older than I am, my eldest brother, sixteen years older. My family owned a property near Coonabarabran so in the usual course of events I would have become a farmer. My paternal grandparents were Irish, my maternal grandparents English (though with a name like McCarthy there had to be a strong Irish connection). My family were staunch Catholics. My earliest faith memories were of going to Mass at a small station church at Purlawaugh, arriving around 8am and going home at lunch time. It was a small but very strong Catholic community.

My mother was a woman of deep faith, very close to God, and wonderfully generous. Being the youngest I received a better education than my two brothers and two sisters, spending all but one year at schools in Sydney. Boarding with aunts in Mosman I went to Mass almost every day. A lasting memory is that of not being allowed to serve on the altar because I went to St. Aloysius and not the local Marist Brothers! Faith and things Catholic were my constant companions, and I was very happy with that.

In secondary school I went to Riverview as a boarder, continuing a very happy and advantageous education with the Jesuits. Among the Jesuits I found some significant mentors, particularly Father John Drury, a tough but good man in that spare Ignatian model. To him I owe a great debt for prompting me to consider priesthood. My childhood to teenage period was a very happy one, filled with lots of love and care, perhaps my only regret being that I never really knew my father, who died when I was five.

I went to the seminary at Springwood in 1955 to meet with the other 53 hopefuls who commenced study for the priesthood in that year. In many respects seminary life was not much different from life in a boarding school. To some, seminary life was in St. Teresa of Avila's words "the dark night of the soul"; to me it was days filled with many activities, a disciplined but balanced life of prayer, lectures, study, recreation and lots of good mates. I recall one Retreat Master putting the wind up me by declaring in ringing tones that by the time we were ordained (1961), the streets of

Sydney would be running with blood (that was in 1955, the height of the Cold War)!

In 1961 I was ordained and appointed to Haberfield. My parish priest was Monsignor John McCooe; the other priest in the house was Peter Phibbs, then Director of what is called Centacare today. I was mortified to be told that one lady had remarked on my arrival at Haberfield, "When are they putting the cot into the presbytery?" On another occasion a parishioner remarked on our sermons: "McCooe speaks on money, Phibbs speaks about sex, and we have never worked out what Redden is talking about".

My thirty-six years of priesthood have been very happy. A significant part of those years was twenty-five years in the Army Reserve as a chaplain, an opportunity to minister pastorally to those of the Faith as well as those with no religious affiliation. It was an opportunity to find myself as a person and a man, meeting physical challenges not often encountered by a priest.

In general there seems to be, in the words of Cheryl Kernot, "a vision vacuum" in the local church. For so long we have been in maintenance mode, but now that is severely threatened by an ageing and diminishing clergy to serve existing parishes. In Sydney there are 136 parishes, 182 active diocesan clergy (30 in other ministries), with an average age of 58.9 years. There is little understanding by the broader Church of the increasing workload of priests and the burden of outdated structures (e.g. numerous Sunday Masses paralleled in parish after parish). It is a 24-hour-a-day job, with great difficulty experienced in taking adequate time off and finding someone to act as a locum.

There is the expectation that priests will carry on into their dotage, with serious consequences for them personally and for parish communities. Add to this an increasing administrative burden, the need to be a financial genius, a builder with insight, an educator capable of empowering one's fellow Christians to share the task of animating the local community via collaborative ministry.

The challenge is to balance one's vocation of pastor with time for self; cope with the prophetic role of moving people to share your vision of Church; be the iconoclast challenging treasured but outdated practices and structures; cope with the power plays in the Church, having no or little say in the appointment of bishops due to the vertical exercise of power, and having the impression that one's opinion is neither sought nor trusted in matters impacting on the Church.

Enough of this depression! Truly, it is a great time to be alive in the Church.

Every time I pick up a book or an article there seems to be a challenge therein; men and women seeking a vision for the Church; strong challenges to a rigid, one model Church; trying to place the Church in a context, not as a stand-alone monolith. My friends, the communities where I have laboured in the past, the present community at St. Mark's Drummoyne, are such a support to me. The fraternity of my priest friends, my mates, with whom I have an easy familiarity, (and that includes quite a number of bishops!), is so important. They are aware of my weaknesses and my strengths, they accept me and support me.

My ministry of pastoring is critical to my priesthood, a wish to serve in the most difficult of pastoral problems, the desire to be Christ in some broken, human way to a community member with a seemingly insoluble problem, outreach to the grieving.

My own family, immediate and extended, provides much joy and happiness. I now have a brother and two sisters, 17 nieces and nephews, 29 great nieces and nephews, and a number of cousins, and I find absolute delight in ministering to them.

As a young priest I commenced my service in a Church that had changed little in four hundred years. Not long after ordination things began to change with increasing rapidity. I was fortunate that, being young, I was open to the insights and direction of the Second Vatican Council. Gradually I shed the problem of clinging to an allegedly perfect model of Church, a one-model Church that had given me power, status, a different lifestyle, celibacy, strange clothes and a lot of outdated structures. My vertical model of Church was under threat from differing models, largely contextual and relating to local needs.

The new age is the age of pluralism, an age in which all the baptised have the power and insights of the Holy Spirit. The challenge of our age is for local communities to bear witness to the dangerous memory of Christ, aware that while we must strive for the reality of the kingdom, to come close to God, our human condition means that we will never fully realise that ideal, at least in this life. So the Church and communities must have many expressions, each seeking all the possibilities of the Kingdom, trying to reveal them, but never achieving the perfect Church.

There are indeed great signs of hope in the Church. I know the Spirit is always with us, creating situations of which we never dreamt, but which are a blessing for us. □

Vince Redden is a priest of the Archdiocese of Sydney and Parish Priest in Drummoyne.

Words for a Pilgrim People

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (John 13:34-35)

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It must be borne in mind that to proceed gradually is the law of life in all its expressions; therefore in human institutions, too, it is not possible to renovate for the better except by working from within them, gradually. Pius XII proclaimed: Salvation and justice are not to be found in revolution, but in evolution through concord. Violence has always achieved only destruction, not construction; the kindling of passions, not their pacification; the accumulation of hate and ruin, not the reconciliation of the contending parties. And it has reduced people and parties to the difficult task of rebuilding, after sad experience, on the ruins of discord. We must therefore consider this point most closely joined to the great tasks of magnanimous people, namely, to establish with truth, justice, charity, and liberty new methods of relationships in human society: the relations among individual citizens, among citizens and their own countries, among nations themselves, among individuals, families, intermediate associations and individual states on the one hand, and with the community of all humankind on the other. This is a most exalted task, for it is the task of bringing about true peace in the order established by God. These people, necessarily few in number, but deserving recognition for their contributions in the field of human relations, We publicly praise and at the same time the earnestly invite them to persevere in their work with ever greater zeal. And We are comforted by the hope that their number will increase, especially among those who believe. For it is an imperative of duty; it is a requirement of Love. Every believer in this world of ours must be a spark of light, a center of love, a vivifying leaven amidst the human family: and he or she will be this all the more perfectly the more closely he or she lives in communion with God and in the intimacy of his or her own soul. (Pacem in Terris, John XXIII, April 1963, nos 162-164)

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The Bible - Jesus stuck to what mattered

One of the most evocative phrases in the Gospels is found in the Gospel of Luke: "When the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem" (9:51). Jesus' fiercest temptations concerned this journey to Jerusalem. Luke records one such temptation at this point in his Gospel: "The people would not receive him because his face was set toward Jerusalem". Jesus must have been sorely tempted to explain, to stay awhile with these people and help them understand. He might have even felt like punishing them, like James and John suggested. Instead he rebuked James and John and "went on to another village".

Jesus' mission is focused on Jerusalem. If he is to be who he is, he must go there. His freedom lies in choosing this. Any other choice would be a denial of his freedom and the truth of who he is. Luke - like the other Synoptic writers - explains it in the so-called "prophecies of the passion": "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (9:22).

In a word, he must deal with the ultimate enemy: Sin and Death. He must deal with them by embracing his mortality. The immediate enemy of the human family can be any one of a number of things - sickness, political oppression, social strife, economic hardship, military subjugation, adverse weather and so on. If the actions of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels show anything, they show that he could have very efficiently dealt with these and any number of other immediate enemies. Consider the health care system he could have established, the social harmony he might have promoted, the economic prosperity. Clearly that was not why he came. His mission was to confront the real enemy. That was what mattered in the end. The rest, though very important in its own way, was not what mattered in the end.

The disciples, after Jerusalem, begin to comprehend that Jesus is not just another moral teacher or would-be revolutionary. Slowly they become aware that he lives on in the world, that that hideous sight on Calvary was actually the reason he came, the moment of triumph.

Through the template of this apparent failure, they begin to understand Jesus' determination to go up to Jerusalem. They remember him "setting his face". They too find themselves drawn ineluctably into the same mission, the same journey - through him, with him, in him.

The Tradition - An eye for what matters

Any honest telling of the Church's history must speak of a spectrum of emotion, a disturbing mix of virtue and vice, high ideals and base motivations, wisdom and stupidity, wonderful triumphs of the human spirit side by side with tragic compromises and comic failures. What, then, keeps the essential tradition alive?

Through it all is the enduring reality of Jesus who is the Christ. That whole wonderful and pathetic, joyful and sad, comic and tragic thing we call "the Christian tradition" began, and continues, ultimately because of Jesus, and who he is and what he did. All those who claim to represent the Christian tradition, from the most wise and mature to the silliest and the most bizarre, speak of Jesus Christ - more or less sincerely - as the focus of their lives.

At least two important considerations - and some corollaries - arise in this context. Firstly, it is hard to imagine any one group of people being able to represent the reality of Jesus Christ among us with absolute purity and complete fidelity. A corollary of this is that it is reasonable to accept that it will always require a diversity of groups in every age together to even begin to represent the fullness of Jesus Christ's mission in the world. Another corollary of this first point is that it would be inappropriate of any one group to shut itself off from what it might learn from the many others faithfully representing some aspect of Christ in our midst. None can claim exclusive representation or possession of Christ.

Secondly, Jesus Christ himself, the risen Lord, is the heart and soul of the tradition. A corollary of this is that if we shut him out, the tradition dies, even if the rhetoric and ritual remain. Another corollary of this second point is that if we allow him to live in us and through us, the tradition lives, even if many wonderful customs and structures die.

The only reason, in the end, for taking an interest in the tradition is that we believe Jesus is who he claims to be: The Messiah, the risen Lord, the one who by dying conquered death. Through him, with him and in him we shall live. This is what matters. The necessary form and structure, if they are appropriate, help us to live this great mystery, to understand it a little more, to celebrate it, to allow the liberating and lifegiving action of God to find its way through us, with us and in us, into the world at a given time in a given place.

News in Brief

• **The Church's part in the Rwandan genocide of 1994** is now coming to light. In a report for *The Tablet* (May 2, 1998) the BBC's African Service correspondent, Ameial French, wrote: "In the 1980's, the Church turned a blind eye to a campaign of political killings by (President) Habyarimana and his supporters; in 1994 the Church's leadership failed to acknowledge that genocide was taking place. (The head of the Catholic Church in Rwanda, Archbishop Vincent Nsengiyumva of Kigali, was a close friend and confidante of President Habyarimana. The Archbishop was subsequently murdered during the war by the mainly Tusi Rwandese Patriotic Front rebels.) At a lower level, large numbers of

priests and nuns did nothing to save lives and appeared openly to support the killings. Fr Modeste Mungwarareba - secretary-general of the Catholic Bishops' Conference in Rwanda - believes they had been transformed by an ideology which saw members of one ethnic group - the Tutsis - as bad. 'People who were killing thought they were carrying out the will of God,' he said. He compared them to Nazis who wore badges saying 'Gott mit uns' (God with us). 'You see, religion can be dangerous,' Fr Modeste said. Some priests said they were acting on the basis of revelations coming from Kibeho, a traditional site of holy pilgrimage in Rwanda. It has been said that the failure of Church members to make a stand meant

that many Rwandans, including deeply religious people, were left without any kind of moral or ethical support system. This had terrible consequences in a conservative society used to strict hierarchies and demanding obedience from its members. After the genocide, a substantial number of priests fled from Rwanda, fearing reprisals for the killings. Many priests and nuns are in gaol awaiting trial on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. (Two priests have been sentenced to death.) The incriminations, bitterness and fear found today within Rwandan society, are mirrored in the Church. Rwanda is caught in a kind of paralysis and Church leaders acknowledge that reconciliation is a pipedream."

Bulletin Board

•Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

• Spirituality in the Pub (SIP):

Sip Promoter - Our special thanks to Francis Gross for the fantastic work he did in this position. Other commitments have forced him to direct his energies elsewhere. Sr Marie Biddle RSJ is Acting SIP Promoter and can be contacted on 02 9745 3444 (W) or 02 715 1827 (H).

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

Bowral - The Grand Bar and Brasserie, 7.30pm-9pm: June 25 "Conscience" (Michael Mahoney & Margaret Hinchey) (Info: John on 02 4878 5230)

Campbelltown - The Catholic Club, 7.30pm-9pm: (Info: Sr Julianne on 02 9603 3000 (W) or 02 9603 2749).

Canberra - The Statesman Hotel. August 26 - "Australia, the happy country" (Andrew Robb & Susan Ryan) (Info: Rita on 02 6288 4715).

Clayton (VIC) - The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm: (Info: Ann on 9701 7076 or 9701 3740 or Joyce on 9700 1250).

Kincumber - The Kincumber Hotel. July 7 "Dying to be happy" (Brian Shaw & Annie Laurie) (Info: Sue on 02 4334 3174 (H) or Toni on 02 4341 6986 (H)).

Newcastle - The Hotel Delany, Darby St, 7pm-8.30pm: "Facing Self, Facing the Other," with Mary Ringstad and Richard Lennan. (Info: Gail on 02 49791141 (W) or Gerard on 02 4945 5343 a.h.)

Paddington - The Bellevue Hotel, 7.30pm-9pm, July 1 "Can you age & be happy" (Hugh Mackay & Catherine Hammond) (Info: Marea on 9387 3152 (H))

Penrith - Golf Club, 7.30pm-9pm, July 15 "What will happiness mean for the next

generation" (Chris Toohey & tba) (Info: Dennis on 02 4773 8429).

Geelong (Info: Denis on 03 5275 4120).

Ramsgate - The Intersection Hotel, cnr Rockey Pt Rd and Ramsgate Rd, 7.30pm-9pm: June 16 "The contemporary search for meaning" (Terence McBride & Mary Cresp) (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: August 25 "Can governments guarantee happiness?" (Phil Glendenning & tba) (Info: Tim on 9736 2324 (H)).

Waitara - The Blue Gum Hotel on the Pacific Hwy, 7.30p-9pm: June 17 "Simply happy" (Rosemary Stanton & Jim McKeon) (Info: Marie on 9869 8101 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)

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We have been notified by Australia Post that there is a new post code for addresses using the mailboxes at Gladesville. Our new post code is **1675**. Please use this new post code in all your correspondence to Catalyst for Renewal. Thank you.

• **Catalyst Dinners** will be held twice this

year in Sydney. The first will be Friday, July 3 and the topic will be "Reconciliation". 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.

• **Fallible Tales of Scripture's Women or How Can You Be Wrong?** A course at Mt St Benedict, 447A Pennant Hills Rd, Pennant Hills (NSW), June 3, 10 and 17, 9.30am - 12.30pm, \$40 or \$15 per session, Sr Margaret Hinchey RSM the presenter.. The Sisters of the Good Samaritan run similar programs at Mt St Benedict often. (Info: 02 9484 6208 or 9484 7033)

• **Bishop Labayen from the Philippines** will visit Australia 5-25 September, 1998. The Bishop's visit is sponsored by Pax Christi. Bishop Labayen will address gatherings in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and possibly Canberra. His main theme will be "Human Rights". (Info: 03 9379 3889 or 02 9517 9425).

• **Formation Plus** offers Lectures, Seminars and Workshops in Christian Spirituality by Kate Englebrecht. Workshops will be conducted on Saturdays July 25, August 1 and 8, 11am-4pm at The Centre for Christian Spirituality, 14 Frances St, Randwick. (Info: Kate on 9960 4061 or 0412 400 519).

• **Men's Retreat** at St Mary's Tower Douglas Park, 12-14 June, 1998 and 18-20 June, 1999. Cost \$50 per day, negotiable. (Info: 02 4630 9159).

Recommended Reading

Max Charlesworth, *Religious Inventions - Four Essays*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, index, footnotes, 157 pages, pb, \$29.95.

Religion is always in danger of being distorted, on the one hand, by those who over-emphasise or exaggerate the divine initiatives and revelations and diminish or neglect the human inventions that attempt to appropriate and foster those divine initiatives, and on the other hand, by those who dismiss religion as merely a human invention, denying that there is any divine initiative. In these essays, the internationally renowned philosopher, Max Charlesworth, explores this tension well. The book's theme is "the dialectical interplay between religious revelations and the creative human appropriation of, and response to, and development of, those acts of grace". The matter of these essays, difficult and subtle though it be, is made relatively accessible by remarkably lucid thinking and a very readable style of writing. There is, for example, little recourse to jargon and the footnoting serves the text well. The challenge to wrestle with such difficult subject matters as "diversity" in religious expressions and "change" within particular religious traditions, is put before the reader in a stimulating way. The essay, "The Making of a Christian Ethic", is particularly stimulating and should be immensely interesting to Catholics who have struggled with the Church's moral teachings. It is to be hoped that the book gets wide readership.

Paul Collins, *Papal Power: A Proposal for Change in Catholicism's Third Millennium*, Harper Collins, 1997, index, endnotes, bibliography, 228 pages, pb, \$22.95.

In 1995 Pope John Paul II asked, in his encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint*, "that we may seek together ... the forms in which this ministry (of Peter) may accomplish a service of love recognized by all concerned" (n.95). Paul Collins' book should be read as part of this conversation urged by the Holy Father. It is a matter of urgency that we have such a conversation. Collins writes in a popular and somewhat polemical style. This leads to some fairly broad brush strokes in dealing with complex issues, and a tendency to promote a sort of win-lose mood to the conversation. Not all would agree that "the fundamental questions that confront us in the Church today centre on leadership, authority and power." However, there is no avoiding the historical facts raised in this book or the immense significance of the Second Vatican Council's attempts to promote collegiality and a decentralization of power and authority within the Church. The success or failure of the Council's vision to promote greater collaboration and realistic decision making among all the baptised, will have considerable ramifications for generations to come. Collins' book should be welcomed and read by as many as possible - especially those who have positions of authority within the Church. He talks of things we have dared not discuss. We must discuss these things.

Caroline Jones, *An Authentic Life: Finding Meaning and Spirituality in Everyday Life*, ABC Books, 1998, 312 pages, pb.

Several years ago, many of us were bewildered and saddened by the decision to terminate one of ABC Radio's most popular programs - *The Search for Meaning*. This book is something of a compensation. Caroline Jones has a well-earned reputation as one of Australia's foremost interviewers. She has demonstrated an extraordinary ability to get to the bottom of things. She does this with the utmost respect and care for the interviewee. Slowly the layers are peeled back and the deeply human story is unveiled. She draws on that skill and experience to exemplify this marvellously practical and rich introduction to the inner journey. She deals with themes such as "Desire of the Heart", "Grace", "Suffering", and "Living with Change". At the end of each chapter a number of useful questions and suggestions are offered for the reader to pursue the theme further in a more personal way. The self-absorption and fuzziness of much of the literature passing itself off as "spirituality" today is avoided. Of course, Caroline Jones does not do the work for us. She points to markers along the way and gives helpful hints drawn from her own life and the lives of the many people she has encountered in her work as an interviewer. The disarming simplicity might mislead us into thinking we are beyond this. It might help, therefore, to work through this book within the context of a group.

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