



THE MIX



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Our Say - Anxiety, fundamentalism and renewal

There is an intimate relationship between anxiety and fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is essentially an attempt to put things in order and thus allay the anxiety that comes from feeling that the world is out of order. Any effective counter to fundamentalism must deal with this fact. Rational argument is of little use. Emotive reaction will tend to confirm the fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism reduces complex issues to clear-cut options. It draws a line in the sand and wants to know which side you are on. Fundamentalism focuses on rules rather than people. Like the Gnostics of old it claims some special knowledge and insight into truth. It believes this knowledge and insight must be enforced if people are not willing or able to accept it voluntarily.

The religious fundamentalist may appear very committed, articulate, reasonable - at least initially - and courageous enough to make sacrifices for what is "right". But the central issue is not theological. It is psychological. What drives this fundamentalism is not a living relationship with God

who is full of compassion and mercy, faithful from generation to generation. What drives this fundamentalism is anxiety.

It has become a truism that Australian society - like the rest of the human family - is in transition. We have many serious social, political, cultural, economic and religious questions and issues that will not, indeed cannot, be easily resolved. We must live with many unanswered questions that call for intelligent and honest ongoing conversation. We must struggle for creative and imaginative strategies to promote the common good, amidst a good deal of uncertainty about what will or will not achieve that end. We must endeavour to respond intelligently and bravely to what life puts before us, especially when that is not very palatable. None of the major questions or issues before us can be reduced to simply this or that. Every response we make will be, in some measure at least, unsatisfactory and inadequate. That is part of the curse of being born in an exciting time.

This situation inevitably generates a good deal of anxiety. It is fertile ground for fundamentalism in both Church and society. People will look for simple black and white answers, leaders will be pressured to compel conformity, lines will be drawn in the sand and lists will be made of those on the right side and those on the wrong side, desperate attempts will be made to rein life in and reduce it to manageable proportions.

The times demand something quite different from us as disciples of Jesus, people who, after all, profess to always experiencing life as "not-yet", as "in-between", as ultimately a mystery to be lived rather than a problem to be solved. It calls for a deep and well grounded spirituality, one that will give birth to great patience, sincere respect, a willingness to listen, a genuine commitment to personal transformation, humility, courage and above all hope. It also demands intelligence and imagination, hard decisions and committed action and an unashamed trust in Divine Providence. □

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.

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 Peter Lee. My parents emigrated from China when they were young adults. I was born in 1955 in Hong Kong, the youngest of eleven children - eight boys and three girls. My parents practised a local form of Buddhism. My father died when I was thirteen.

When my older sister became a Catholic, my mother told her to take me, and the brother one year older than me, to the Catholic Church. I became a Catholic at that time with my brother, although I did not know what I was doing. Shortly after that my mother also became a Catholic.

When I was baptised as a thirteen-year-old, I did not know much about what Baptism was or what it would mean for me being a Catholic. My older brother who was also baptised influenced me a lot. He was an active member in the Church choir. I am a bit shy, but he understood me. He got me to join the choir and go to Mass. I think my faith was largely a matter of doing what my brother did.

In Hong Kong, people regard a university degree highly. When I left high school I studied at a polytechnic and gained a diploma in science. After working for about one year in a petrol terminal, I left Hong Kong to study in the United Kingdom, where I gained my Bachelor of Science degree.

There was nobody there in London to influence me, so I stopped going to Mass. It was several years after my return to Hong Kong before I began to practise my faith again.

Until this point in my life I had never had to face the deeper and tougher realities of life. It was good to be a student, but I did not touch the real world as a student. When I began to touch the facts of life, I was prompted to question and search.

After working for nine years back in Hong Kong, I came to Australia, although the idea of coming to Australia was not mine. My wife, who had previously applied to come to Australia, got approval, so we decided to emigrate together.

I am married with two daughters. My wife was very active in the Legion of Mary in Hong Kong. I think she has a much stronger faith than I.

I find it difficult to talk about the differences in culture between Hong Kong and Australia. As newcomers to the Australian culture, we have to respect the ways of this country. We cannot expect things to be the same as they were back in Hong Kong. We are here now. This can take a lot of adjusting personally. There are differences, I know, like food and diet, for example, but

we are able to buy food like we had in Hong Kong. So it is difficult for me to name exactly how different the cultures really are.

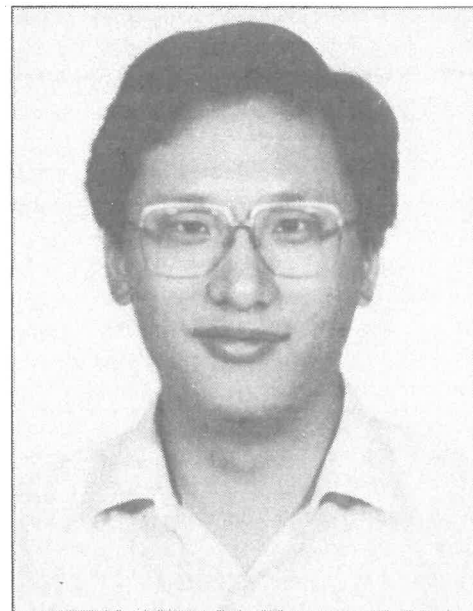
When I came to Australia I tried to find the same kind of work I was doing in Hong Kong, but I could not. I had to choose which professional course I would do in order to get work. To make sure I could survive, I qualified as a librarian from New South Wales University. Fortunately I now have work as a librarian.

A few years ago I was searching for people I could look up to, people who could give me advice, answer my questions. I do not do that any more. Now I draw my strength from reading the Bible and saying the Rosary every day.

Renewal in the Church? That is too big a question for me! I think particularly of Jesus as Prince of Peace. If we follow the way of Jesus - especially in the family - we will be able to settle everything. Even when we cannot settle things as we might like, we can come to the bottom line, which is love. We might even argue and get very upset, but if we know that love is the main thing, we will not get a shattered family.

We need to take special care of the younger people. The best thing we can offer them is to be a model for them. We must provide a warm family environment. They must be able to feel what love is. If they grow up without a sense of love, based on the life of Jesus Christ, they have missed the most important thing in life.

I think we would all agree that life is not always as easy as we would like. Life is something like a laboratory beaker which may contain a variety of ingredients - sorrow, happiness, anger etc. It is important to realise that the beaker is fragile and we have to handle it with care. We need Jesus to look after and guide us, especially in the Church today.



Peter Lee

Your Say - Some thoughts about priesthood and the baptised

by Joan Curtin

The theme of the 1996 Conference of the National Council of Priests was "Priest-Bearer of the Mystery".

St. Paul says, "The mystery is Christ among you: your hope of glory". The priest is the one who is enabled to call down the Holy Spirit on the Bread and Wine - thus making Christ present on the table. However, Christ is not only present on the table, but also gathered at the table.

After Vatican II, during which baptism was re-discovered as initiation into Christ, its significance was re-emphasised. We pass through the waters and die with Christ (water is death-dealing) and we rise to a new resurrected life (water is life-giving) and thus we can say with St. Paul, "I live now, not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me". That is why the celebration of Eucharist is so important, one which we cannot dispense with. Communion services can blur the distinction between the celebrations. Distribution of Holy Communion does not create community.

The symbolism of the bread and wine encapsulates the mystery of becoming the Body and Blood of Christ. But the important thing to get changed in Eucharist is not simply the bread and the wine, but those gathered together around the table. We become what we receive.

St. Paul must have meditated long and deeply as he strove to understand that this Jesus, the Christ, who loved him and died for him (Ga.2:20) out of a personal love, also lived within him. He calls this the mystery of Christ and tells the Ephesians (3:4) "If you read my words, you will come

to understand the depths that I see in the mystery of Christ".

At the Conference attention was also paid to the fact "that a priest is not only someone who preaches and ministers the sacraments, he is someone who - at the core of his being - has been set on fire by God and invites others to catch the flame".

Now St. Luke says in his Gospel, words of Jesus: "I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I am stressed until it be enkindled". Fire cleanses, purifies - also is sacrificial. The love Jesus will cast upon earth is a sacrificial love that will blaze and beat around the Cross on Calvary.

The whole point of Eucharist is a body given to nourish others. There is no satisfactory substitute for our Sunday Eucharist. The early Christians would make every effort to celebrate with their own community on this high point of the week.

The biblical sense of being "gathered" to pray the great prayer of the Christian assembly was a vibrant reality for them. It must be acknowledged that today, for too many, it has become a private act of devotion - all too evident in the way we sit, distancing ourselves from one another, ignoring one another like diners in a restaurant; not too much heart is put into the exchange of the sign of peace either.

And yet, when we leave the Liturgy of the Word and move into the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest invites us "to lift up our/your hearts". Do we, do we lift up our hearts, the symbol of love, to the Lord, our God who created us? We say we do! Then

the priest invites us, "Let us give him thanks and praise".

We respond by "licensing" him as it were, to do this for us, with us: because all that follows is in the plural. We are being carried along "by an action which will produce an outcome". We "give you thanks and praise", "we remember", "we proclaim the death of the Lord Jesus until he comes in glory". Thus we are empowered to have "that mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil.).

The experience of being a "Bearer of the Mystery" as a lay person was expressed by four young people at the Conference. "The People of God" is a very rich theological term ... which gives primacy to baptism and the community of Christ's faithful - Christifideles. All other sacraments, roles and structures find their place in this context (cf Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, *The Mix*, 1:2, 4-5). "The Christian faithful, being incorporated into Christ through baptism, become sharers in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal office ..."

Our prophetic role is evident when the Word of God is proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word, bringing Christ into the community. "Listen to him". Our priestly role is evident as the ordained priest prays the Eucharistic Prayer on our behalf. In the second Eucharistic Prayer, "we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you ...". Our kingly role is demonstrated when we join the ordained priest in serving the sacred meal for the community.

Letters

I sit here at my desk at 2 am in the morning, in sweltering heat and humidity because I can't sleep. I think the only thing that will help me to sleep is to write a few words about what I think is the priesthood. I've only been a priest, i.e. ordained minister, for 12 years. Six of those years have been spent here in Latin America. At present I live in Ecuador in a huge filthy slum. Death from sicknesses such as typhoid, cholera and dengue fever are common. It's a tough life for the poor here. Violence is another form of poverty we have to live with daily.

What do I think priesthood means? Being human; being broken; being given and shared and culminating in the mystery of sharing in the divine life of Jesus. There's no other way for me but through being truly human, and finding Jesus in the other. Priesthood is service - touching Christ in the

human situation of everyday life. "The washing of the feet" is the example of priesthood *par excellence*.

A beautiful old grandmother came to our house accompanied by two lovely girls, her grandchildren. The old lady asked to be baptised. She told her story, which I think encapsulates the meaning of priesthood. She told us that she had never really experienced love in her life; that her parents had handed her over as a baby to an orphanage; later, as a young girl, she worked as a maid/cleaner for a family, but there she received no love. She got married young, but her husband never really loved her. She had her children and even they, as they grew older, never really gave her love. Then she said, her granddaughters came along - they gave her so much tenderness and love that she realised she was lovable and that God

too must love her. She asked to be baptised because she had found love.

Now for me, those beautiful granddaughters and that lovable grandmother express and live the true priesthood of Jesus. The old lady came to meet Christ and share in his death and resurrection in her baptism, her incorporation into the priesthood of Christ, because of the love and service of her grandchildren. Her own hard life had prepared her to find Jesus in His little ones, who take the time to listen and give.

Priesthood is a mystery we all share in; being human, being broken, being given and shared. Truly lived every day in the Eucharist, where we realise our true selves by sharing in the humanity, divinity, brokenness and paschal victory of Christ.

Frank Jones, Ecuador

Essay - Let love loose in the world

by John Heaps

This is the first chapter of John Heaps' latest book. The book is entitled *A Love that Dares to Question* and will be published this month in Australia. It is reviewed on page eight of this issue of *The Mix*.

The Jubilee Year, we all know, is not essentially about pilgrimages, indulgences for visiting churches and praying there, special commemorative medals or stamps or even special religious events. It is about forgiveness and about wiping out debts. The Pope has shown himself to be a world leader in many ways. He has also spoken of the power of example and life as teachers.

There are many people estranged from the Church who love God and his people and serve God and neighbour as best they can. All they need is a word of forgiveness and a sign to welcome them home.

"Offer forgiveness and receive peace" was the heading of Pope John Paul II's 1997 New Year Message. What a wonderful sign it would be to the world if the Pope were to lead the way, not only as he so lovingly did by forgiving the man who attempted to kill him, but by tearing down the walls which block the way to reconciliation to thousands.

"With deep conviction I wish to appeal to everyone to seek peace along the path of forgiveness. I am fully aware that forgiveness can seem contrary to human logic, which often yields to the dynamics of conflict and revenge. But forgiveness is inspired by the logic of love." This theme and these words are set in the context of: "Only three years separate us from the dawn of the new millennium."

There are those good priests who have found that celibacy is not their vocation. Many would rejoice at a word of gratitude for what they have done and given, and a word of welcome back to the priestly ministry or back to full union with the Church without reservations or restrictions.

There are those good people who live in longlasting, life-giving relationships, who are told by Church officials to go back to a former relationship which proved to be destructive and untrue, or to walk away from spouse and family, or to live a celibate life together. These solutions range from the impossible to the sinful. These good people need a word of reconciliation and welcome.

Others find that the requirement of integral confession is a stumbling block. Yet

where there are repentance, reparation for damage done, and love, it seems contradictory that the Church's own law should stand in the way of reconciliation. The reconciling words of Jesus were simple. He knew that love of God and sin could not co-exist in one heart.

Generosity, courtesy, sensitivity and pastoral care are all aspects of the one commandment given by Jesus to form and regulate all our relationships with each other.

Then there are those theologians who have honestly sought a better way of expressing the eternal truths and a way to live the Christian life with authenticity and compassion, who need a generous attitude of open listening and a warm welcome into the heart of a loving Church.

All could be done generously and graciously, ushering in a new attitude of deeper and more complete trust.

Have you ever received a favor, yet felt it was given grudgingly? There are those double messages like, "You may go if you like, but think of me here at home all alone." Such "favors" certainly do not fill people with a spirit of freedom and joy as they go on their way.

In a conversation with an old friend not long ago, an aside revealed something lingering in his memory that I had not realized before. At the time of his wedding he was not a Catholic, his wife was. They were married in the sacristy of the church, out of view of their families and friends. There was still a sadness in his voice as he said, "My family and guests wondered where we had got to for such a long time. Then we came back and went down the aisle as husband and wife." His day of joy had been clouded and the cloud had never fully lifted.

This situation would never occur today and I suppose most of us wonder how anyone ever thought it up. It was supposed to discourage mixed marriages. I don't know what it was supposed to say about human relationships and genuine love in selecting a partner for life.

A dispensation, given with the condition

that the marriage would not take place before the altar in the church, is the type of ungracious giving to which I refer. Surely if we offer forgiveness, a dispensation or any favor, it should be done with wholehearted graciousness and joy at being able to welcome the happiness of others.

The sad situation is that in other areas the same attitude of ungracious giving still persists. An obvious example is the way a priest is treated when he comes to the painful but honest conclusion that he is unable to continue in the ministry under the conditions required by Rome. Neither the manner of obtaining a dispensation nor the conditions under which it is given exude graciousness and generosity.

Generosity, courtesy, sensitivity and pastoral care are all aspects of the one commandment given by Jesus to form and regulate all our relationships with each other. Genuine love will never, and can never, undermine the Church or encourage "easy and hollow solutions," for God is love.

Attempt to develop some of these ideas and look at some other issues of pastoral care and justice in these few pages. Nothing will change for the better if it is not based on, and coming from, a deep spiritual foundation.

As the Church takes full advantage of responding to the Year of Jubilee, it will speak with an authentic and more audible voice in calling others to respond to the "logic of love" if this is truly its own logic. It is an opportunity not only to wipe out debts, but to begin to live in a different way. As we attempt to do this ourselves, we can ask nations to work, not from suspicion and hatred but from trust and love, to show some signs that trust is possible and that it has positive results. We can call on those with the power to liberate poor countries crushed under massive foreign debts to be liberators and gracious givers. Just as in the case of a generous Church, the nations will receive much more than they give. None will lose when love is let loose in the world.□

Bishop John Heaps is a retired auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Sydney.

"What sort of Church would it take to make it possible for us to have the wisdom, knowledge, understanding, courage and love to be the voices that speak out for, and the hands that lift up the downtrodden?" (John Heaps, *A Love That Dares*, 26)

This is the text of David Ranson's presentation at Spirituality in the Pub, Prince Alfred Hotel, Richmond (Vic), April 1st, 1998.

April 1st might be a most appropriate day to address the topic of Faith in Church. Surely one must be a fool to have faith in church in these times. Why would someone have faith in an institution which has become more and more polarised by a petty politic animated by the games of ambition and power? Why would someone want to align themselves with an institution which seems to have a vested interest in maintaining people in a curious dependency of heart and mind?

Why would any thinking person have faith in an institution which seems determined to keep giving answers to questions no one is asking, which speaks in a language which fails to resonate with people's experience, and worst of all, does not have the will to be otherwise? Why belong to a group which has the arrogance to dictate to society what should be the case while its own house is in such moral and spiritual decay?

Why have faith in an institution which has so clearly damaged and distorted the lives of so many people in their most vulnerable and sacred dimensions, and even now refuses to embrace the path of genuine reconciliation and admit that it might have got things wrong?

The closer one is to the centre of things, the less reason there is to have faith in church, and the more foolish one is to hang around. I think of that most remarkable observation of Lewis Mumford's on ancient Roman culture. It has analogous relevance even today.

To investigate this contribution one must fortify oneself for an ordeal; to enjoy it, one must keep one's eyes open, but learn to close one's nose to the stench, one's ears to the screams of anguish and terror, one's gullet to the retching of one's own stomach. Above all, one must keep one's heart on ice and check any impulse to tenderness and pity, with a truly Roman stolidity. All the magnitudes will be stretched in Rome; not least the magnitude of debasement and evil.

I am a fool, because even in the face of this, I have a faith in church. I have faith in church because I have faith in something much bigger than it. I retain faith in church because I believe in the Kingdom of God as announced by Jesus of Nazareth. I would have no faith in church if it were not for this belief in the Kingdom of God. Church is relative to the Kingdom, which always en-

joys a sovereign freedom and unpredictability.

The Kingdom of God, Church and ecclesiastical structure. The three are not the same thing. But each points to the other, more or less effectively, as the finger does to the moon. Foolish indeed, however, is the person who confuses the finger with the moon!

Even in the face of all its contradictions, the Church is still the finger for me which points out the moon. I would not know the Kingdom without Church. I would not be able to trace its contours and its movement were it not for Church. Even the gospel accounts, which hold the essential truth of the Kingdom for me, are first and foremost documents of the Church.

Church keeps me mindful of the Kingdom of God in a way nothing else does. That is why I have faith in it. The Kingdom of God is bigger and wider than the church. But also Church is bigger than ecclesiastical structure. For me, Church is more a verb than a noun. Church is the gathering of people to hear and celebrate and live the story of Jesus of Nazareth. I know that story has power. And I see church occurring in so many different ways.

***Church
is bigger than
ecclesiastical structure.
For me,
Church is more a verb
than a noun.***

I see it in the thirty-second floor of the housing commission estate in Collingwood when little people gather for Eucharist. I see it in the group of professional laymen who gather in prayer to reflect on the deeper issues of their lives. I see church in a group of sexual abuse victims coming together in the name of Jesus to develop programmes and strategies of healing. I see it as people come together to seek meaning and ritual in the face of personal and social tragedy. I see church in my own community struggling to be authentic to its nine-hundred-year-old charism.

Interestingly, I also see the impulse to church in a place like the cinema. George Miller, the famous film director, once asked why people still flock to the cinema even though videos are now readily available. But the video industry has not made the cinema redundant. Miller says we have forgotten the need of people to gather together to listen to a story, and to have their lives re-presented in the tragic quests for

love, for power, for redemption depicted there before them. In the telling of the story, people once again orient their lives and their struggles and their hopes.

Miller calls the cinemas the covert cathedrals of today and the film makers the high priests of our society. In many ways, faith today is forged and given expression in the liturgy of the cinema. The liturgy of the cinema reveals people's need for church and is a covert expression of a hunger for the experience of church.

People want to have faith in church. Faith in this experience of gathering again and again to hear the myths by which we live and hope, is a basic human need. So often ecclesiastical structure is an obstacle to faith in church. Therefore, I do not think one can have faith in church without heaps of critical discernment - without knowing what is coming from where. And who is there to keep pointing out the distinctions to us? In whom do we have faith?

There is a crisis in faith in church today. In the midst of the crisis we need to grow in our sensitivity and alertness to where church is occurring around us. In the midst of our grief about the negative aspects of the Church as institution, we need to celebrate those moments and places where church is occurring. Then we may continue to be true fools for Christ's sake. Bring on the clowns!

David Ranson OCSO is a member of the Cistercian community at Tarrawarra, Vic.

"The fact that the Church exists and lives within a true history also means that she cannot free herself from time, from its burdens and its dullness, and from the delays that it imposes. It is not in spite of time and its unfolding, but in them that the Church carries the gifts of God and puts them into practice. History and the action of people in time, and through the means usually employed by them, are not for the work that God pursues in and through the Church, an extrinsic element, or even a hostile one, which should be reduced as much as possible, forgotten or even eliminated; nor is it an external framework within which a non-terrestrial scenario will develop. It is rather that in which and through which a divine enterprise is realised." (Yves Congar, *This Church That I Love*, Dimension Books, 1969, 89-90)

Words for a Pilgrim People

In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus. (Phil 2:5)

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*And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so that the Kingdom may be proclaimed and the Church established in the midst of the world. (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), n.80)*

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*At Christmastide we pray: 'May the new birth in the flesh of your only-begotten Son set us free'. This sounds almost like Easter. The beginning of our redemption consisted in this: that he who was in the light and riches and glory of God (Jn 17 : 5) decided to share the existence of the poor, the meek and the lowly. He became a little child. He was born into a working family and worked with his own hands. He grew up among a people subject to a foreign power, under officials who were serious about making subjects. He experienced hunger, sorrow, suspicion, proscription by the spiritual elite, resistance, the absolute misery of an accused man, the feeling of being an outcast unable to defend himself against accusations and blows, the scourging, and the cruel execution on the Cross, which was the usual punishment of slaves. Contemplating the circumstances of the sufferings of Christ, we find it hard to realise that he took all this on himself in order to be completely on the same plane with so many poor people; who in all ages have been beaten, hanged, and crucified (the 5000 slaves who were crucified on the occasion of the rise of the Spartans; the 500 Jewish patriots of whom Josephus says that he saw them all crucified at once). (Yves Congar, "The Church in Poverty" from *The Church Today*, Synthesis Series, Franciscan Herald Press, 1968, p.59)*

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The Bible - The temptation to docetism

One of the most consistent and clear themes of the New Testament is the affirmation of the Incarnation, the enfleshing of God. Jesus was what he seemed - a human being. It seems that, initially at least, this was much easier to accept than Jesus' divinity. It is worth noting however that, before the final words of the New Testament are written, the temptation to deny Jesus' humanity is already emerging: "There are many deceivers about in the world, refusing to admit that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. They are the Deceiver. They are the Anti-christ" (2John 7).

St Jerome (347-420) noted: "While the Apostles yet remained upon the earth, while the blood of Jesus was almost smoking upon the soil of Judaea, some asserted that the body of the Lord was a phantom." St Jerome is naming one of the most enduring heresies of the Christian tradition. It is called *Docetism*, from the Greek word *dokeo*, meaning *to seem* or *appear*. *Docetism* says Jesus only seemed to be human. The eminent theologian, Oscar Cullman, says, "Docetism is the primal heresy of ancient Christianity, the only one which we can distinctly see to be attacked by the New Testament."

The three Synoptic Gospels record the birth and death of Jesus of Nazareth in more or less vivid detail. John's Gospel does not record the birth as such but states about as clearly as you could get it: "The Word was made flesh" (1:14). And, of course, John's telling of the passion and death of Jesus is every bit as definite as that of the Synoptics. St Paul is in no doubt about the humanity of Jesus, even if he does not spend any time writing of His life. In his letter to the Philippians he says, "(Jesus) became as men are; and being as all men are he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross" (2:8). Perhaps the reality of the Incarnation is nowhere more emphatically said than by St Paul in his Second Letter to the Corinthians: "For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God" (5:21).

The tragic corollary of *docetism* is a sort of *angelism* or more commonly a *dualism* in which the body is regarded as at best an instrument of, and at worst an obstacle to, the spirit, which is then regarded as the one thing that matters. The thoroughgoing affirmation of the Incarnation puts paid to any *angelism* or *dualism*. As the Letter to the Hebrews says: "He did not appoint angels to be rulers of the world to come, and that world is what we are talking about. ... but we do see in Jesus one who for a short while was made lower than the angels and is now crowned with glory and splendour because he submitted to death; by God's grace he had to experience death for all humankind" (2:5-9).

The Tradition - Jesus is truly human?

Jesus' contemporaries, among the Jewish hierarchy in particular, found it well nigh impossible to accept Jesus' claim to be God. This is entirely understandable when we begin to comprehend the extreme reverence with which the Jews approached God. It seems that the Christian tradition has the opposite difficulty for the most part. We have found it well nigh impossible to accept Jesus' claim to be truly human. And this might be related to a low or distorted opinion of what it actually means to be truly human. "Our lives are mostly a constant evasion of our selves, and an evasion of the visible and sensible world" (T S Eliot).

The essential Christian tradition is clear: Jesus is truly divine and truly human. This teaching is maintained, however, in the face of continual opposition. As Karl Rahner notes: "In the ordinary religious life of the Christian, Christ finds a place only as God." The great Archbishop Fulton Sheen once marvelled at the infant Jesus in the crib with all the knowledge of all time in His infant mind. That is heresy, *Docetism* to be precise.

The heresy of *Docetism*, in fact, can be found clearly stated in some of the best of the Fathers of the Church. The great St Clement of Alexandria (d.c. 220) said "(Jesus) ate, not for the sake of the body, which was kept together by a holy energy, but in order that it might not enter the minds of those who were with him to entertain a different opinion of him. ... He was entirely impassible, inaccessible to any movement of feeling, either pleasure or pain." St Basil says: "(Jesus) ate and drank in a manner peculiar to Himself; he did not even pass his food, so great was the power of self-control in Him."

There is a cartoon that has one of the three wise men travelling towards Bethlehem with a box of nappies. Maybe it is a silly joke. Maybe it is a serious theological statement. So much of our understanding and, more particularly, our living, of the Christian life, hinges around our Christology. It will touch our attitudes to our own personhood, bodyliness, sexuality, holiness, the struggle to integrate faith and living and so on. Perhaps it is time to think again.

Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

• Spirituality in the Pub (SIP):

▫ **Sip Promoter** - Ms Kate Englebrecht is SIP Promoter and can be contacted on (02) 9960 4061 or 0412 400 519.

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

▫ **Bowral** - The Grand Bar and Brasserie, 7.30pm-9pm: August 27 "Peace-making" (Bishop Patrick Power and Terry Naughton) (Info: John on 02 4878 5230)

▫ **Campbelltown** - The Catholic Club, 7.30pm-9pm: July 8 "Happy the Poor" (Rev Bill Crews and Snr Sgt Terry O'Connell) (Info: Sr Julianne on 02 9603 3000 (W) or 02 9603 2749).

▫ **Canberra** - The Statesman Hotel. August 26 - "Australia, the happy country" (Andrew Robb and 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 and Annie Laurie); August 4 "Australian & Happy" (Barry Frost and David Riordan) (Info: Sue on 02 4334 3174 (H) or Toni on 02 4341 6986 (H)).

▫ **Newcastle** - The Hotel Delany, Darby St, September 15 (tba) 7pm-8.30pm: (Info: Gail on 02 49791141 (W) or Gerard on 02 4945 5343 a.h.)

▫ **Paddington** - The Bellevue Hotel, 7.30pm-9pm, August 5 "Happiness - no laughing matter" (Bernadette Tobin & tba) (Info: Marea on 9387 3152 (H)).

▫ **Penrith** - Golf Club, 7.30pm-9pm, July 15 "What will happiness mean for the next generation" (Fr Chris Toohey and Lisa Elliott) (Info: Dennis on 02 4773 8429).

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

▫ **Ramsgate** - The Intersection Hotel, on the corner of Rockey Point Rd and Ramsgate Rd, 7.30pm-9pm: July 21 "Finding meaning through suffering" (Dr Helen Manion and tba) (Info: Claudette on 02 9587 3039 (H)).

▫ **Richmond (VIC)** - The Prince Alfred Hotel, first Wednesdays, 8pm-9.30pm. (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: July 15 "Can you

be famous and happy?" (Bishop David Walker & Geraldine Doogue) (Info: Marie on 9869 8101 or Robyn on 9876 6139)

• SIP for young adults:

▫ **Dee Why** - Commences on August 19, 7.30pm-9pm: "What is SIP?" (Sr Maire Biddle rsj and Fr Michael Whelan sm). (Info: Fr John on 9905 3022).

▫ **Waitara** - Commences at the Blue Gum Hotel on July 7, 7.30pm-9pm: "Surviving the Past" (Leigh-Anne Galea and Barbara Asplet). It will continue on the first Tuesday of each month, July through December. (Info: Greg on 9418 2397)

• **Conversation at Chameleon Café, 48 Lackey St, Summer Hill:** "Aboriginal Land Rights and Wik" with Frank Brennan SJ. (Info: Gerard and Lindy on 02 9799 2907)

CHANGED POST CODE

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 the parish hall on the corner of Mary Street and Gladesville Rd, Hunters Hill. The first will be Friday, July 3, 7.30pm and the topic will be "Reconciliation". Speakers: Maisie Kavanagh and Frank Brennan SJ. (Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262).

• **AudioMIX?** The Mix is now available on audio tape, thanks to the generosity of several volunteers. (Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262).

• **Women in Dialogue:** Women who meet regularly to pray and talk about their experience of church in Australia. Meetings in March, May, July, September and November at Canisius College, 102 Mona Vale Rd, Pymble. (Info: Barbara on 9439 2425, Trish on 9980 8135, Ruth on 9415 6045).

• **Marian Conference** will be held at St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, September 26-29, 1998. The theme will be "Mary for the Third Millenium: Spirituality and Theology for Men and Women of the 21st Century". Keynote speakers will be Sr Kathleen Coyle SSC and Fr Tony Kelly CSSR.

There will be small group work, liturgies, informal gatherings in prayerful surroundings, workshops and open forums. Cost: Residential - \$260 (early bird special \$230 before July 31st 1998); Non-residential - \$200 (early bird special \$175 before July 31st 1998). (Info: Br Eric on 02 9649 7212)

ADVERTISING

The Mix is willing to advertise any person, program or event that is genuinely contributing to the renewal of the Church. Please submit items no later than the 12th of the month previous to publication of that issue. Inclusion will of course depend on space available.

• **Forum for the Future:** The second Forum will be held at McKillop Campus of Australian Catholic University on Sunday August 16, 2pm-4pm. The topic will be "The Future of Women in the Church" and the speakers will be Sr Moira O'Sullivan rsc and Fr Gerry Gleeson. All welcome. Entry free. Donation appreciated. (Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262).

• **Reflection Morning with Bishop Geoffrey Robinson:** Parish hall at Hunters Hill, the corner of Gladesville Rd and Mary St, Saturday August 8, 9am-12noon. All welcome. Entry free. Donation appreciated.

• **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).

SIGNS OF VITALITY

Catalyst is putting together a resource book which will give details of the many good things that are happening throughout the Church in Australia. **We would like your help.** There are certain criteria and a particular format. If you would like to contribute please contact Len Blahut on 02 4736 7783.

• **Christian Spirituality** by Kate Englebrecht. Workshops 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).

Recommended Reading

Kathleen Coyle, *Mary in the Christian Tradition: From a Contemporary Perspective*, Twenty Third Publications, 1996, index, selected bibliography, endnotes, 132 pages, pb.

One of the debates of the Second Vatican Council focused on Mary's role in the Church. There was disagreement over whether the Council should write a whole document on Mary or include reference to her within the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. The latter course was chosen. Kathleen Coyle's book is part of the ongoing conversation about Mary's place in the life of the Church. The Incarnation, which is the sub-text of our Marian devotion, might have been more emphasised and discussed in this book. Coyle's writing is from a feminist perspective (eg "The annunciation story is not about acquiescence but about empowerment. It is about a young woman in a patriarchal society ..."). She gives an overview of the origins, expressions and explanations of Marian devotion from both Scripture and Tradition. Perhaps the best insights come with Chapter Seven where Coyle argues that our failure to develop a thorough theology of the Trinity and the Holy Spirit has led us to seek the merciful and compassionate attributes of the Divine in Mary. Chapter Four has a useful overview of the images of Mary that have emerged in different historical and cultural contexts. The style of this book is simple and pastoral, with questions and suggested readings at the end of each Chapter.

John Heaps, *A Love that Dares to Question: A Bishop Challenges the Church*, Aurora Books/David Lovell Publishing, 1998, 119 pages, pb, \$14.95.

John Heaps was ordained a priest in 1958 and a bishop in 1981. His genuine love of the Church is matched by a deep pastoral sensitivity. This little book consists of twenty-three concise and pithy reflections. (One of these is reproduced on page four of this issue of *The Mix*.) For those who have never had the privilege to sit down with John and have a good conversation about the things that matter, this book is a pretty good substitute. It is conversational in style but very rich, inspiring and challenging in content. Here you will meet a man who is set in motion by the Good News. While he expresses sadness over the failures of the Church, he also highlights the wonderful expressions of faith that are there. He addresses issues such as the primacy of love and relationships, the place of law, forgiveness, the dignity of all the baptised, the rule of celibacy for priests, authoritarianism, social justice, childlikeness and trust. He says: "Our calling is to set captives free. Have we made more captives than we have liberated?" Or again: "That there are very few 'different' people in our Church communities must tell us something. It would be Christian if the differences were there but were welcomed rather than viewed as disruptive." This little book will draw you into a fruitful conversation. It is highly recommended for personal and group reflection.

Boori (Monty) Pryor, *Maybe Tomorrow*, Penguin Books, 1998, photographs, 204 pages, \$16.95.

The book begins with a simple and poignant account of four tragedies. In 1982, Boori Pryor's brother, Kenneth, hanged himself. He was twenty-eight-years-old. In 1988, his brother Paul hanged himself. He was also twenty-eight-years-old. (Boori Pryor notes this was the year of the Bicentennial celebrations.) In 1994, his sister Kim suicided. She was thirty-eight-years-old. In 1996, his nephew Liam was killed in a motor vehicle accident while being pursued by the police. Liam was thirteen-years-old. Each of these people had shown considerable talent. Pryor then goes on to tell his own story, mostly focused on his attempts to educate people about aboriginal culture and promote reconciliation. There is a disarming simplicity, one could even say naivete, about the style. It suits. A lot of Boori Pryor's work is done with school children. He says: "The children give me a lot." And again: "A lot of people have suffered and died for me to be able to keep these songs and dances." And the book is not without its humour: "It takes a lot to stand up there and face a hundred and fifty, two hundred kids, just in my judda jah - my little red undies - and nothing else on except this paint." The reader is reminded of Jesus' call for us to be as little children. Boori's father is a deacon in the diocese of Townsville. He has seven living brothers and sisters. Every Australian should read this book sometime.

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