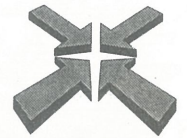


THE MIX



JOURNAL OF CATALYST FOR RENEWAL INCORPORATED

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Our Say - The dangers of secrecy

There have been, in Australia in recent years, some frightening and tragic examples of what happens in organisations when secrecy, rather than transparency, dominates the processes of internal governance. The Police Service in NSW offers one example. The Church in relation to the scandal of sexual abuse offers another.

Secrecy - which is entirely different from confidentiality and discretion - is typically the prelude to, or cover up for, corruption.

The Church ought to lead the way in giving witness to transparency in government. It is, for example, a matter of acute embarrassment for the Church that it took the civil authorities to force us to address the sexual abuse issue. We had become the victims of our own secrecy.

Secrecy seems to be once again playing a less than helpful role in the life of the Church in Australia. There seems to have been little openness about the preparation of the Australian or Curial presentations at the December meeting between a representative group of our bishops and some members of

the Roman Curia, and all we know of what was said in the meetings is in the *Statement of Conclusions*. This secrecy in matters that affect us all so directly and concretely is deeply worrying. Many faithful Catholics in Australia are justifiably angry that their presence in the Church only seems to be a factor after the decisions have been made.

Secrecy such as this makes us wonder what the real agenda of the Rome meeting was. A clue may be found in the Conclusion to the *Statement*. There the Roman Curia refer to themselves as "the primary collaborators of the Roman Pontiff". Surely it is those who "have succeeded to the place of the apostles" (cf *Lumen Gentium n.20*) who are the Pope's "primary collaborators"? This looks awfully like what Archbishop Quinn so cogently criticised in his 1996 Oxford Lecture:

It (is) possible for the Curia to see itself as exercising oversight and authority over the college of bishops. To the degree that this is so and is reflected in the policies and actions of the Curia, it

obscures and diminishes both the doctrine and the reality of episcopal collegiality.

On the face of it, one could be forgiven for believing that the real agenda of the Roman Curia had little to do with the welfare of the Catholic Church in Australia and a lot to do with the preservation of a system in which they maintain control. Secrecy, rather than open conversation, allows this unorthodox situation to persist. It must be named and challenged.

We look forward to both words and actions from the Australian Bishops' Conference later this month, which reassure us that they will be our Shepherds, in communion with the Chief Shepherd, rather than just representatives of the Roman Curia.

In particular we look forward to structures of conversation vigorously promoted to address positively the substantive issues facing the Church in Australia today. These structures should include all the baptised in frank and open dialogue. They might even lead eventually to a national synod. □

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

These are the current Members:
Marie Biddle RSJ, Kevin Burges,
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Amelia O'Sullivan, Carmel Sharples,
John Sharples, Ruth van Herk,
Michael Whelan SM

The following is its Mission Statement:

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

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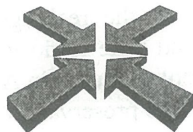
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The Four Arrows and the Cross symbolise diversity giving rise to communion in and through the Paschal Mystery. Those who are diverse by nature and culture, in and through Christ find life-giving unity.

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

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

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The Human Face

My name is Amelia O'Sullivan and I am 24 years of age. My parents sent me to Catholic schools, and our home has always been one with a decidedly Catholic flavour. There was always mass on Sundays, often with donuts afterwards as a special Sunday treat, an advent wreath for the Christmas season and Project Compassion boxes during Lent. Although I had long been part of the Catholic tradition, it was only in my final years of high school that I began to take personal responsibility for my spiritual development and growth.

I was educated at Loreto Normanhurst, and the liturgies were always filled with music and innovation. The celebration of the word was just that – a celebration, and through the sound and colour, there was a real feeling of community and sacrament. It was the sense of community and shared faith that struck me the most during school masses, liturgies and communion services. It was from this that I drew the most comfort and joy.

When I left school I found that the sense of community that had come to mean so much to me was no longer as readily offered. If I wanted to experience shared and active community, I needed to create that myself. This presented a real challenge to me and I struggled with it. Although I had attended an Antioch weekend, I had not become a part of that movement; I didn't have close friends in the parish and my involvement was minimal. I began to stand out a little at university and in the workplace because of my faith and felt a need to evaluate why I called myself a Catholic, to figure out whether that was a title I was happy to own.

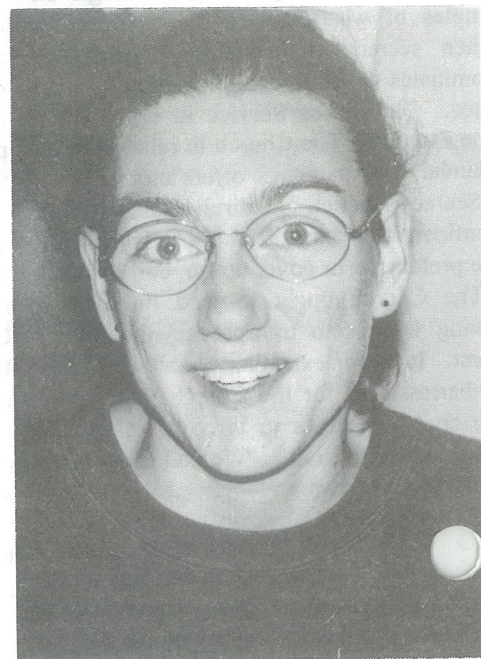
I read a great deal about our church, about spirituality and philosophy, encouraged in my quest through debate with my parents, particularly my mother, and friends. The old adage, 'The more you read, the less you know', rings true, and I know that I have but scratched the surface. My quest for growth and greater involvement with the church and a wider Catholic community will continue to evolve.

There is a visible lack of active young people in our parishes, and the need to encourage young Catholics to return to regular mass attendance and involvement in parish life has been a source of debate in my family. My grandmother feels that too much change is made to welcome the youth and that the older members of the congregation are being forgotten and alienated. I find this particularly interesting because it seems to indicate a lack of pastoral foundation in our parishes.

We need to realise that we own our parishes: we can build, create and shape how they function, given the requirements of the community. Where there is real community and shared purpose, people feel welcome, and it is there that we find strong, active congregations. We should strive to make all the members of the congregation feel that they have something to contribute. We need to provide forums within which they can do that.

I firmly believe that if you want to achieve something, you should think big and start small and, to that end, over the last year I have become more involved in actively building in my parish that sense of community I so enjoyed at school. I am a senior server (as a woman I am unable to be called an acolyte), and I am part of a small group that has started a youth group in our parish. I have been involved in organising Spirituality in the Pub for Youth, and I am part of a home-based prayer group. It has been through these kinds of activities that I have really experienced being Catholic – having, living and sharing that faith.

I have recently become engaged, and my fiancé and I are excitedly making plans for our wedding and for our life together. There are many unknowns in what lies ahead of us, but there are two important constancies: our shared faith and our shared love. In Greg I have a soulmate and a friend, with whom I will gladly share the road ahead, a travelling companion on my life's journey. I will continue to read, to debate and to enjoy the growing sense of belonging to community. My Catholicism is a source of joy and strength for me and, through sharing that faith, I hope to contribute to a developing awareness of community in my parish.



Amelia O'Sullivan

Your Say - A synod for Australia?

by François Kunc

“The Church in Australia faces a complex situation which calls for careful discernment on the part of the Bishops, and a confident and committed response on the part of all Catholics”. So said Pope John Paul II to Australia’s bishops on 14 December, 1998, at the conclusion of their *ad limina* visit to Rome. On the same day, a “Statement of Conclusions” was released, the product of meetings between a number of the Australian bishops and the heads of several dicasteries (departments) of the Roman Curia.

According to its accompanying press release, the Statement “contains proposals and direction for the mission of the Church in Australia” and “provides guidance to the local Bishop”. It has generated a wide range of reactions in the Australian Church, from enthusiastic endorsement to angry rejection. One reaction reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (27 February, 1999) from a group of priests and religious has been to call upon our bishops to convoke a national synod – which the proponents urge must include the laity – to define a vision for the Australian Church.

I hope that our bishops take up the idea of a national synod with enthusiasm. Why? Because I believe that such an historic event would be a keystone of the “confident and committed response” referred to by the Holy Father and assist the bishops in their essential task of “careful discernment”.

To support an Australian synod is not to imply a view of the Statement one way or the other, although it would obviously be the topic of much discussion. In what follows, I identify some principles which I suggest should be fundamental to a synod of this kind:

(i) It must be under the aegis of the Australian Bishops Conference. If it is to have lasting value in the Australian Church of the next millennium, our bishops must give it their active support and involvement. If

canonical formality is required, an Australian synod might take the form of diocesan synods for each Australian diocese, but held simultaneously in the one location (see Canons 460-468).

Representatives of Rome must be invited so that we can meet and hear each other and together endeavour to discern the will of the Holy Spirit for the Australian Church.

(ii) “Priests and people together”. At every stage, from its organising committee to the authorship of any final document, ordained and non-ordained must be *equally* represented. Under Canon 463(1), the laity are obliged to be called and to participate in a diocesan synod, although their number is not specified. Equal numbers of lay and ordained would give the best chance for the synod to reflect the Australian Church today.

(iii) Every effort must be made to ensure that lay representation extends beyond what might be called “the professional laity” of the Church (those closely involved in Church affairs) to the people in the pews.

(iv) Representatives of Rome must be invited so that we can meet and hear each other and together endeavour to discern the will of the Holy Spirit for the Australian Church. A national synod would be an act of fidelity and communion, not of dissatisfaction or resentment (directed at the Statement or anything or anybody else).

(v) The synod must be informed by sound, up-to-date theology. There are notable Australian theologians, both here and over-

seas, whose contribution will be indispensable.

(vi) Not a “talkfest” but a “listeningfest” or: “Speak, Lord, your servants will be listening”. While talking will be the means, listening to each other must be the purpose of the synod.

Space does not permit me to develop practical matters: how the agenda will be determined and what might be included, how the synod will run, in what form its outcome should be expressed, etc. However, it is clear that to ensure success, some personal and institutional resistance will have to be overcome.

To those who object on the grounds of novelty or difficulty, one can say that it won’t be a world first. Canon law offers the model of a diocesan synod, and national synods with significant lay participation have been held before, most recently in Austria. Others (ordained or non-ordained) may feel somehow threatened by such an inclusive, public exercise and what its results might be. The response for them should be to recall that we must all be fortified by Christ’s constant invitation not to be afraid and that, like him, we should trust in his Father.

And, finally, what about those who, for whatever reason, are hurt by, angry with or despondent about the Australian Church? I suspect that, at some time, this category includes each of us who loves her. The answer for them and for all Australian Catholics is that a national synod offers the hope of the encounter at Emmaus: that, gathered together, the participants will recognise in each other the presence of Christ among us and produce a result that will help every member of the Australian Church better to live and proclaim the Good News.

François Kunc is a Sydney barrister.

Letters

Many thanks for the *Statement of Conclusions* and the ongoing enrichment I receive from *The Mix*.

Medley, Keiraville, NSW

Please cancel my copy of *Catalyst* for Renewal as I do not wish to get it any more. This is because, while your magazine is good, I’m no longer really interested in

contributing any effort into the renewal of the Catholic Church.

Mary O’Gorman, Yamba, NSW

I find *The Mix* wonderful reading. Thank you for the piece on prayer by Robert Llewelyn (3:8). Wonderful for me!

Sr C Kirkham, Hobart, TAS

I always look forward to my monthly fix of *The Mix*.

Roger Horton, Ardross, WA

The Mix is a joy!

Jeanette Rowlands, Lane Cove NSW

□ □ □

Essay - Why did I sign?

by Brian Heenan

Bishop Brian Heenan was one of the Australian Bishops who participated in the meeting of a representative group of Australian Bishops and representatives from the Roman Curia at the end of 1998. The Editor asked Bishop Heenan, as one of the signatories to the *Statement of Conclusions*, if he would be willing to write something for the readers of *The Mix*. We are grateful to Bishop Heenan for his honesty and obvious deep pastoral concern. The Australian Church is indeed blessed to have such Shepherds.

The question has been asked of me many times, "why did I sign the Conclusions document?", which came out of the four-day discussion in Rome between the Archbishops of Australia, the Chairmen and Secretaries of five Bishops' Committees and officials of six Roman Dicasteries.

The simple answer is, that was the consensus reached at the final meeting of those who took part in the discussions. It was agreed that the document should be signed as a record that the dialogue had taken place. Various combinations of participants were put forward as possible signatories. The final proposal was the president of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference and Chairmen of the Committees represented and the Cardinal Prefects of the Roman Dicasteries present. This was adopted by the consensus of those present.

In signing the Document, I was not signing on behalf of other bishops. I was aware that many had not had time to take in what was contained in the various sections. I was signing because of a desire to bring the dialogue to a close and with the introductory words of Cardinal Ratzinger clearly in mind. He said:

The signing of the document signifies that it is a fair representation of the dialogue that took place during the interdicasterial meeting regarding some of the doctrinal and pastoral issues challenging the Church in Australia. The document is addressed to all the bishops of Australia and their dioceses, even though not all participated in the meeting. Those invited to take part were chosen because, as the Archbishops and the Presidents and Secretaries of various Committees of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, it was thought that they composed a representative group.

After reading the document, it is hoped that each bishop will see that he can readily and easily give his support to its proposals and direction. The document speaks in general terms, avoiding the mention of specific persons, groups, institu-

tions or publications that might be considered problematic. Rather, it provides guidance to the local bishop to affirm, admonish or correct as he sees fit and according to what is called for in each circumstance.

The Conclusion Document has much to recommend it. At the same time it does not present the overall picture of the strength of the Australian Church. It has sections that show lack of appreciation of the Local Church living out the Gospel in our culture. It does not reflect sufficiently the positive contribution the Australian bishops made to the dialogue. It reminds us that we have to live with the tension that has always existed between the Universal Church and the Local Church. Both are absolutely essential to our life. We have survived over two thousand years; we will in the future.

If it does no more than provide a stimulus for discussion, for recognising our strengths and weaknesses, then it can make a worthwhile contribution to our journey towards an even stronger life in this Australian Church.

Pope John Paul's *Ad Limina* address to the Australian bishops, while drawing our attention to the Conclusions, is most positive in the opening paragraph where he speaks of:

the profound strengths of the Catholic community in Australia, which in the midst of often disconcerting change continues to listen to the word of God and to bear abundant fruits of holiness and evangelical service.

Bishop Heenan is the Bishop of Rockhampton, QLD

A QUESTION OF CHURCH TEACHING

John Heaps

The document published after the meeting between some Australian bishops and some Dicasteries of the Roman Curia has caused concern here in Australia. I believe it is a matter of concern for the whole Church.

In an almost throw-away line, Church teaching is undermined. In the concluding paragraphs there is reference to the meeting "between the Church in Australia and the primary collaborators of the Roman Pontiff". The bishops of the world, not the Roman Curia, are the primary collaborators of the Roman Pontiff. Surely the statement should have read: "The meeting between a number of the primary collaborators of the

Roman Pontiff and some members of the Roman Curia".

If this goes unchallenged, it could be repeated, quoted, presumed to be true and eventually become part of the ordinary magisterium.

I hope someone with more influence than I have, will take up this matter with the appropriate authority.

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

THE MESSIAH

Tony Kelly

The century dies
with too many deaths...

I survived, I think -
though a refugee
from successive grey Utopias,
now hesitantly naturalised
in this present place.
Still, you learn something
from the crash-course of history;
-- mostly irony --
after being always wrong,
ill-prepared and late.

But what now makes me hesitate
beyond clear borders of love and hate,
is a gentle Jew.

Tony Kelly CSsR is a Redemptorist priest and theologian, who lives in Melbourne.

HOME ALONE

Di Phillips

The *Mix* arrived in today's mail and I've already read it! My copy is usually passed around to several parishioners who enjoy reading it. We enjoy reading it because of its simplicity in style and the way in which it addresses issues that we want to know more about. I've actually had someone ask me a few days ago if I had remembered to renew the subscription because "it must be time one of those papers arrived".

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the team on what you produce.

St George is about 530 kms west of Brisbane. Our parish is the whole Balonne Shire, so there are five town communities and lots of people on properties who have varying experiences of 'church'. Most people are kin(g)dom people. They don't have ready access to sacraments of communal church life. A lot wonder what all the present fuss is about and pass it off as those 'city people' who have everything at their fingertips, who don't know what it means to

be deprived of services, making trouble again. Some people say that it doesn't affect them so why worry about it. Then, there are others who want to know as much as possible. *The Mix* is one way of sharing information and the bigger picture of catholic life - so thanks.

I am one of those religious who live alone. This was not by choice. I had hoped that there would be at least one other person who would come west with me four years ago when our Province embarked on this project of doing something positive for the rural and isolated parts of Queensland. St George became my 'home alone', where I experience and now delight in a different form of community living.

There are several Sisters from different Religious Congregations living alone in isolated communities in this diocese. Some are Pastoral Leaders and others, like myself, are Pastoral Associates. We bring the feminine face of the Church to isolated rural areas of Queensland as well as a different style of leadership. Many Australian Catholics appreciate the fact that we are willing and able to come out here and share their life in the more isolated parts of the State. Many women appreciate the opportunity to talk about relationships, the stress and the frustrations of life on the land. The rural decline has meant that women have to be much more involved in the 'family farm'. This has its pros and cons. Women are much more involved in the decision-making now, but their time and energy are much more divided than they were in the past. The stress that families are under out here grows with each year. I wonder if anyone in Rome is interested?

Di Phillips is a Brown Josephite Sister, Pastoral Associate of Balonne Parish, QLD.

A QUESTION OF MORALE

Marie Clarke SM

I just wanted to thank you for your personal reflection on the *Statement of Conclusions* (*The Mix* 4:1). You have gently lifted my morale after it sank in places on reading the *Statement*.

I especially appreciated your reflections re religious, as it showed so much sensitivity and esteem for how far religious have travelled in adapting to a multitude of changes. I answered God's invitation in 1951 and am still grappling with the mental and emotional gymnastics that community style living cause.

Thank you again.

Sr Marie Clarke is a Marist Sister living and working in Rosemeadow, NSW.

CHRIST GUIDING LIGHT

Claire Taylor

I have been a Brown Josephite for 51 years and like you, have struggled personally with the many changes, both in religious life and Church life, over the years. But through these struggles I have grown in my faith and am now in a position where I think and discern very deeply before attempting to come to any conclusions. My guiding light has always been my life in Christ and daily Eucharist, which I see as the strength of my consecrated life.

It is through following the spirituality of our foundress, Blessed Mary MacKillop, that we Josephites are willing to go to far-flung places and, if necessary, live alone.

I, like you, found the remarks pertaining to Australian religious very insulting. ... Where has Rome been while society and family life have been changing? We belong to a country of highly educated men and women who are able to stand tall in acknowledging who we are and what we have achieved. We are a very spiritual country, as opposed to being seen as 'religious'. Indeed, it is through following the spirituality of our foundress, Blessed Mary MacKillop, that we Josephites are willing to go to far-flung places and, if necessary, live alone. We are also eager to foster our love of God and spread this love to others, and at times this means that we choose to live alone, while continuing to belong to our wider and diverse community.

My experience of living alone for 4 years in Canada, where I was privileged to work with Priests and religious from all over the world, was one of deep union with Josephites at home and abroad. Because of the intense and confidential work I did, living alone enabled me to reflect and pray in an atmosphere of quiet and solitude, on daily happenings which could be shared with only one Person - Christ. I would not have had this opportunity if my living conditions had been otherwise. In this highly technological age one does not have to live in the pockets of community members in order to be a religious. Maybe those in Rome who make our rules don't have this need - I do not know, but, surely we can be trusted to act with adult integrity and not be treated as babies who have to be led every step of the way.

As I see it, the confessional box is a

means of control and power. Jesus did not ever have a 'box' built, but eagerly forgave all who asked to be healed. The Gospel of today, The Blind Man, spoke to me of the control and fear dimensions of the Pharisees. If they allowed this Jesus to cure/heal/forgive, they would lose their power to interrogate and frighten those who were already feeling unwanted by mankind. Surely this is the message Jesus came to give us - compassion, not power. When I attend either the second or third rite of reconciliation, I stand with all assembled in the Church and admit that I am a sinner in need of forgiveness, and through the ceremony, I am asking forgiveness of the whole community as well as forgiveness of God. On the other hand it is easy to be anonymous and go to a Church for a 'box' confession and sneak out without anyone seeing you. I understand that the third rite is acceptable in times of grave danger - soldiers in battle - but can we separate this situation from the situation today, where many people are struggling with their spirituality and with their sinfulness, and are in grave danger of losing their souls/their faith because they feel they cannot personally approach a Priest! The proof that Jesus is calling all of us to accept His love and forgiveness is in the hundreds who attend the communal rite of reconciliation. Why do some people have to make our God so small, that they think that there is only one way for Christ to forgive? This is a puzzle to me.

The other point of the Statement, which concerns me, is that it speaks of a 'we' 'they' mentality. We are the sinners - they are the holy ones, for nowhere does the document admit that we, the people, are the Church - all of us together - and that if we listen to the grass roots people we will soon see where our God is leading in this time of change and insecurity. The Holy Spirit is very active in our youth and our aged who dare to question the status quo, and yet it is in questioning that we will come closer to answers. If we are not allowed to question, we will surely die and then Jesus will once again 'weep' as He once did over Jerusalem.

Listening to the 'dissidents' within the Church today, I personally wish they would weed their own gardens and allow others to do the same. No one of us has the whole truth, although they appear to think they have. I feel that they speak out of their own fear and insecurity and want to belong to a Church in which everything is certain and secure - the way I/we lived forty years ago. This is stagnation, not growth.

Sr Claire Taylor RSJ is a Brown Josephite Sister living and working in North Sydney, NSW.

Woman, why turn to me? (John 2:4)

□□□

*The Church is born of the evangelizing activity of Jesus and the Twelve. She is the normal, desired, most immediate and most visible fruit of this activity: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations." Now, "they accepted what he said and were baptized. That very day about three thousand were added to their number.... Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved." Having been born consequently out of being sent, the Church in her turn is sent by Jesus. The Church remains in the world when the Lord of glory returns to the Father. She remains as a sign - simultaneously obscure and luminous - of a new presence of Jesus, of His departure and of His permanent presence. She prolongs and continues Him. And it is above all His mission and His condition of being an evangelizer that she is called upon to continue. For the Christian community is never closed in upon itself. The intimate life of this community - the life of listening to the Word and the apostles' teaching, charity lived in a fraternal way, the sharing of bread - this intimate life only acquires its full meaning when it becomes a witness, when it evokes admiration and conversion, and when it becomes the preaching and proclamation of the Good News. Thus it is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelize, and the work of each individual member is important for the whole. The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself. She is the community of believers, the community of hope lived and communicated, the community of brotherly love; and she needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hoping, to the new commandment of love. She is the People of God immersed in the world, and often tempted by idols, and she always needs to hear the proclamation of the "mighty works of God" which converted her to the Lord; she always needs to be called together afresh by Him and reunited. In brief, this means that she has a constant need of being evangelized, if she wishes to retain freshness, vigor and strength in order to proclaim the Gospel. (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), n.15)*

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The Bible - The good shepherd

One of the most tender images of Jesus is that of the Good Shepherd. The image is used several times throughout the Synoptic Gospels, but is nowhere more simply and beautifully put than in John's Gospel (Ch 10). Although it may be simply stated here, it is, in fact, anything but a simple statement.

Three facts in particular can help us to begin to hear this image as presented by John. In the first instance, it is helpful to meditate Psalm 23 and Ezekiel 34. The Psalm is a lovely song of trust. In ancient Near Eastern thought the images of the shepherd and the hospitable host merge. The psalmist sings of God in this way, the One who guides and protects, the One who brings the faithful to his own table. It is a song that reflects the Covenant and the conviction that God is ever-faithful, filled with steadfast love from generation to generation. And the Prophet Ezekiel berates the leaders for not being faithful shepherds of Israel. Those leaders have broken the Covenant because they do not care for the people as God does: "I, the Lord their God, am with them, and they, the house of Israel, are my people, says the Lord God. And you are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God" (Vv 30-31).

In the second instance, this passage in John is written *after* and *in the light of* the resurrection. This is a proclamation of the Risen Lord and a call for the faithful disciples to unite themselves with Him. It is an invitation to a *mystical* response before it is an invitation to a *moral* response. In other words, it is about being united with Christ in our beings, recognising and fostering that baptismal reality through which we are being called ever more deeply into intimacy with the Father. Jesus is true Shepherd because He is like the Lord of the Covenant in the way he cares for and about the people.

In the third instance, John's Gospel has a polemical edge to it. It is very aware of those who proclaim a "lie" and those who simply will not receive the Truth. The image of the Good Shepherd is presented immediately after the detailed account of The Man Born Blind. In that account, the leaders of the people are like those Ezekiel berated. They are not acting in fidelity to the Covenant, God would never treat the people the way these leaders do. In contrast, Jesus is a Good Shepherd, an irrefutable sign that He is the Son of God.

After absorbing this *mystical* message, having it enter us and awaken us to our true identity in Christ, then, and only then, are we in a position to start contemplating what is required of us if we are to follow His way, entering the gate that He is.

The Tradition - The shepherd metaphor

The metaphor of the shepherd and the sheep has been maintained down through the ages as a rich image for the Church's self-understanding. Most recently, the Second Vatican Council draws on it: "In the Old Testament the revelation of the kingdom is often conveyed by means of metaphors. In the same way the inner nature of the Church is now made known to us in different images taken either from tending sheep or cultivating the land, from building or even from family life and betrothals; the images receive preparatory shaping in the books of the prophets. The Church is a sheepfold whose one and indispensable door is Christ (Jn 10:1-10). It is a flock of which God himself foretold he would be the shepherd (cf. Is 40:11; Ex 34:11f.), and whose sheep, although ruled by human shepherds, are nevertheless continuously led and nourished by Christ himself, the good shepherd and the prince of the shepherds (cf. Jn 10:11; 1 Pt 5:4), who gave his life for the sheep (cf. Jn 10:11-15)". (*Lumen Gentium* n.6).

St Augustine has a well-known sermon (n.46) - one of about 800 that are extant - in which he uses the metaphor of the shepherd and the sheep. If we take a moment to reconstruct the great man - a true shepherd - preaching, it can help us appreciate his use of the metaphor and therefore its value to the authentic tradition.

Augustine preached incessantly from a chair placed in the apse of the Church. He had a weak voice and as he spoke, his audience, mostly simple folk, "reacted spontaneously, applauding, sighing, remonstrating and joining with him (to his satisfaction) in completing his favorite quotations from Scripture" (John J O'Meara). His sermons were mostly improvisations which were then recorded either formally or informally.

Sermon 46 is both profoundly pastoral, addressing the difficulties and scandals created by the unfaithful shepherds as Ezekiel had done, and theological, recalling the truth of the covenant relationship in Christ which constitutes the People of God, that community we call the Church. Perhaps the spirit of this sermon is captured by Augustine's deeply pastoral plea: "Offer the bandage of consolation, bind up what is broken" (46:12). □

Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

• Spirituality in the Pub (SIP):

Sromoter - Sr Marie Biddle rsj is SIP Promoter and can be contacted on (02) 9745 3444(W) or 9712 2109(H).

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

°**Bowral** - The Grand Bar and Brasserie, 7.30pm-9pm: April 22 "Church, Relevance for Today" (Dr Michael Costigan & Meg Miller) (Info: John on 02 4878 5230).

°**Campbelltown** - The Catholic Club, 7.30pm-9pm: April 14 "Claiming Our Place" (Bishop John Heaps & Larri Hayhurst) (Info: Sr Julianne on 02 9603 3000 (W) or 02 9603 2749).

°**Canberra** - The Olims Hotel, Ainslie Ave, Braddon, 7.30pm-9pm: (Info: Rita on 02 6288 4715).

°**Chatswood** - Orchard Tavern, Cnr. Victoria Ave & Orchard Rd, 7.30pm-9pm: April 13 "Our Youth - Seen but not Heard" (Flynn McDermott & Patrick Eyers) (Info: Michelle on 9958 5963).

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

°**Collingwood (VIC)** - First Wednesdays, 8pm-9.30pm. Info: Maree on 0412 150081).

°**Kincumber** - The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive, 7.30pm-9pm: May 4 "The Power of My Story: Let Love Bring Us Home" (Peter McGrath cp & Monica Brown) (Info: Sue on 02 4334 3174 (H) or Clair on 02 4344 6608).

°**Newcastle** - The Hotel Delany, Darby St,) 7.30pm-9pm: (Info: Gerard on 02 4979 1211 (W))

°**Paddington** - The Bellevue Hotel, 7.30pm-9pm May 5 "The Call of the East" (Michael Griffith & Serge Martich) (Info: Maree on 9387 3152 (H))

°**Penrith** - Golf Club, 7.30pm-9pm, April 21 "Finding Meaning Today in Relationships" (Speakers tba) (Info: Dennis on 02 4773 8429).

°**Perth** - The Elephant and the Wheelbarrow, cnr Francis and Lake Sts, Northbridge. Fourth Wednesday of each month, 7.30pm-9pm (Info: Michael on 08 9448 2404)

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

°**Ramsgate** - The Intersection Hotel, cnr Rocky Pt Rd and Ramsgate Rd, 7.30pm-9pm May 18 "Materialism & Spirituality" (Robert Fitzgerald & tba) (Info: Karen on 9570 3257 or John on 9533 4939).

°**Rouse Hill** - The Mean Fiddler on Old Windsor Rd, 7.30pm-9pm: April 13 (Info: Tim on 9634 2927 (H)).

°**Waitara** - The Blue Gum Hotel on the Pacific Hwy, 7.30pm-9pm: April 21 "What is Prayer?" (Bishop David Walker & Rev Susanne Pain (Info: Ruth on 9416 4687)

°**Wollongong** - Mt Kembla Hotel, Mt Kembla, 7.30pm-9pm: (Info: Tom on (02) 4228 5038).

• SIP for young adults:

°**Chatswood** - Orchard Tavern, Cnr. Victoria Ave & Orchard Rd, 7.30pm-9pm: (Info: Jocelyn on 0412 114038).

• **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.

NEW CATALYST PATRON

At the end of 1998 Sr Ann-Marie Webb SM retired from her position as the Head of the NSW Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes. In that capacity she had served as one of Catalyst's first Patrons. We thank Sr Ann-Marie for her support and encouragement. Sr Annette Cunliffe RSC is the incoming Head of the NSW Conference and in that capacity has agreed to be one of Catalyst's Patrons. We welcome Sr Annette and look forward to working with her.

• **Eremos presents an Evening with Sr Veronica Brady, Can These Bones Live - Where to from Here?, Wednesday May 5, 7.30pm at the Centre for Ministry, 16 Masons Dr, North Parramatta.** Bookings are essential. Members \$10, others \$15. (Info: Kate on 02 9683 5096)

• **"Kinda Catholic", a weekend for practising, lapsed and questioning Catholics aged between 25 and 40, May 28-30.** (Info: Ann or Ilona on 02 9909 3008)

THANKS TO THE MARISTS

Catalyst now has excellent office space and meeting rooms at 1 Mary Street Hunters Hill. Our thanks to the Provincial, Fr Jim Carty SM, and the Marist Fathers, for their generosity in allowing us this space.

• **A Shoah Memorial Service, Tuesday April 13 in St Mary's Cathedral Crypt at 5pm.** This is sponsored by the NSW Council of Christians and Jews. The Council organises a number of such events through the year. (Info: Marianne on 02 9351 4162)

• **The Halifax-Portal Lectures are on again this year, Tuesday Evenings at 7.30pm at Lidcombe Catholic Club, 24 John St Lidcombe.** Close to station. Free parking available. May 4: "Lambeth '98: Canterbury Tales" by Archbishop H Goodhew, Anglican Church, Diocese of Sydney; May 11: "The Synod of Oceania: an exercise in collegiality" by Bishop David Walker, Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay; May 18: "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back - an ecumenical line dance", Mrs Morna Sturrock, journalist, historian and author, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne; May 25: "The Gift of Authority 1999 - the contribution of ARCIC to the discussion among the churches" by Rev Dr Peter Cross, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and member of ARCIC. **Entry is free.** (Info: Sr Patricia on 02 9390 5168)

• **Australian Christian Meditation Community** - April 17, Reflection Day in Bush Surrounds (Info: Joan (02) 9417 6385).

• **Spirituality Evening at St Cecilia's Parish Balgowlah, Wednesday, April 28 at 7.30pm in the Parish Church (Cnr Wanganella & White Sts).** Speakers Tom Uren, Herb Elliott & Carmel Bendon Davis. Entry free - donations accepted.

• **Mary MacKillop Haven - House of Hospitality, 5 Page Close, Wyong NSW.** Do you need peace and quiet,? (Info: 02 4352 2414)

PUBLIC FORUM

Catalyst is organising a Sydney Town Hall meeting to address issues around the recent *Statement of Conclusions*. There will be a panel of speakers - including **Bishops Geoffrey Robinson and Brian Heenan**, with **Michael Whelan SM**. **Geraldine Doogue** will be the Moderator. The intention of the meeting is to clarify the significant issues arising here and begin to discern how we might proceed. **The public forum will be at the Town Hall on Thursday evening, April 22, 7.30pm - 9.30pm.** Entry free. Donations appreciated. All welcome! (Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

• **Deepest Longings** - companion video to the book of the same name by Thérèse Daly IBVM. A contemporary approach to the spirituality of St Ignatius. \$30. (Info: Sr Verna, Loreto Province Centre, PO Box 74, Albert Park VIC 3206)

• **Catalyst for Renewal Incorporated has a web site: <http://home.mira.net/~mdw/>**

Recommended Reading

Harvey D Egan, *Karl Rahner: Mystic of Everyday Life*, A Crossroad Book, 1998, 208 pages, endnotes, pb, c.\$30.

Carol Lee Flinders, *At The Root of This Longing: Reconciling a Spiritual Hunger and a Feminist Thirst*, Harper, 1998, 369 pages, index, hb, c.\$45.

Nikos Kazantzakis, *Report to Greco*, trans. Bruno Cassirer, Faber and Faber, 1989, 512 pages, pb, \$19.95.

Karl Rahner was born on March 5 1904 and died on March 30 1984. He was one of the great theologians of the Church, not only in this century but of the last two thousand years. John XXIII asked him to be one of the special advisers in 1961 to prepare for the Council. In 1962 he was censured by Cardinal Ottaviani. Throughout, Rahner was a man of deep and simple faith. To all but the initiated, his serious theological works were unintelligible. His reflections on the faith journey, on the other hand, were immediately intelligible to any who were serious about that journey themselves. Egan has done us all a wonderful favour with this book. In a style that is both readable and extremely well documented, Egan allows Rahner's own words and the details of his life to speak with power and clarity of a man who knew how much God loved the world and himself in particular. Maybe the key to Rahner is found in his own comment: "I believe because I pray". And his belief was no superficial piety or rational assent. Rahner wrestled with the big issues of our time. One of his last acts was, from his sickbed, to dictate a letter in support of Gustav Gutierrez and liberation theology. Rahner points to a spirituality of the ordinary, the field of life where we find God in all things. This could be an especially encouraging book for those who feel demoralised or dispirited at this time.

In her Prologue to this evocative book, the author states: "Eventually, I would have to conclude that for me, at least, (spirituality and feminism) are mutually necessary: for the aims of either to be fully realised, both would have to be accommodated". As this statement indicates, the book is autobiographical and experiential in style. Flinders, who professes no allegiance to any particular religious tradition, was at Berkeley in the early seventies and was part of a "commune" in which forty people lived together on a farm they restored. A few years ago she came to a point where she realised that "the maps I'd relied on for years were out of date, and I really was entering a kind of wilderness". Julian of Norwich is one of her primary companions on "this interior journey". "Like Julian I would be travelling sitting still". Flinders' lack of commitment within a concrete social religious structure has her straying at times towards a fairly private kind of religious expression. She also seems to misunderstand the radical and necessary connection between spirituality and authentic religion. However, both her companionship with women of the authentic mystical tradition and her own honesty make this a challenging and at times inspiring book. We would do well to listen to voices such as Flinders', they may just lead us back to the Gospel.

Kazantzakis is probably best known as the author of *Zorba the Greek*. He is also known for his somewhat controversial *The Last Temptations of Christ*. He is a man of passion, intellect and spirit. *Report* is an enthralling expression of all three. Even as he reminds us of the lack of passion and energy for the deep human quest in contemporary Western culture, he also reminds us that it is still possible for any of us to be fired by the deepest longings. Kazantzakis shows the petty ambitions and plastic treasures of a materialistic consumer society for what they are: paltry and pathetic distractions. Everyone will almost certainly find something to react strongly to in this book. It is not that Kazantzakis is moralistic or preachy. Far from it, in fact. He is passionately committed to living from the depths of his being and going wherever that takes him, doing whatever that demands. He speaks of the difficult times in which we find ourselves and responds: "Difficulty has always been life's stimulant, awakening and goading all our impulses, both good and bad, in order to make us overleap the obstacle which has suddenly risen before us. Thus we sometimes reach a point much further than we had hoped: by mobilizing all our forces which otherwise would have remained asleep or acted reluctantly and without concentration". The reader is in the company of a modern-day mystic.

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