

# THE MIX



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## Our Say - The church: how much will we change?

Many *Mix* readers will remember a world that was much more predictable, apparently much less changeable, than this one. There was a deep confidence, or at least an unspoken assumption, that life, as we knew it, would just go on.

Perhaps one of the most significant shifts in our thinking and our attitude, over the past thirty years or so, is found in our thinking about, and our attitude to, what is changeable and what is not changeable.

This shift of thinking and attitude is evident in the Church. We have grown so accustomed to change, all around us, that we are left wondering what - or whether? - anything is unchangeable. Our thinking about change has itself changed, and this demands a careful, intelligent and honest response from all of us.

The Church must always be in continuity with Jesus Christ and the apostles. Fidelity to the authentic Gospel tradition is non-negotiable. Paradoxically, however, the Church must constantly be changing and

adapting in order to remain faithful to that authentic tradition (cf *Lumen Gentium* 8).

Such a commitment to change and adaptation - a commitment in fact to ongoing renewal - also demands a commitment to an ongoing conversation whereby we discern the ways to bring alive the authentic Gospel tradition in particular places at particular times. We are accountable both to the Gospel and the human family. In every age we need to discern the changeable from the unchangeable, the appropriate from the inappropriate, the relevant from the irrelevant.

There seems to be a profound anxiety, within some quarters of the Church at this time, that if we admit we were wrong about some significant teaching, then all is lost. Radical change seems impossible.

There are, in fact, numerous occasions in history where the Church has, very appropriately and mostly with good effect, changed significant teachings. For example, Church teachings have changed on usury, slavery, celibacy for clergy, the role of con-

science, attitude to Jews, religious freedom and ecumenism. (On page 3 of this issue of *The Mix*, Humphrey O'Leary cites some particulars and suggests that there is a definite pattern to be found here.)

It is sad to think that the Church's teachings on some significant issues might be shaped, not so much by a vigorous conversation we are promoting between the Gospel and the human family, but by a belated desire to catch up with thinking and practice that has been led and shaped by others.

Was there another time in history when the Church had as many opportunities as she has today, to contribute positively and significantly to the process of change within the world? Was there another time that had a greater need of the Church to be what it is called to be: a sign of God's liberating love in the world? In order to meet this challenge, we must embrace the facts, and engage in an intelligent and honest conversation about what the Gospel and the human family ask of us today. □

# The Human Face

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

These are the current Members: Marie Biddle RSJ, Kevin Burges, Dr Ann Bye, Aidan Carvill SM, Susanna Davis, Marea Donovan, Geraldine Doogue, Denys Goggin, Margaret Goggin, Francis Gross, Catherine Hammond, Sam Hammond, Regis Hickey CFC, Christine Hutchison, Maryellen McLeay, Dr Chris Needs, Margaret O'Hearn, Dr Tim O'Hearn, John Robinson, 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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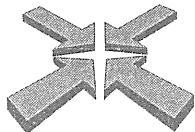
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The Four Arrows and the Cross symbolise diversity giving rise to communion in and through the Paschal Mystery. Those who are diverse by nature and culture, in and through Christ find life-giving unity.

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.

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My name is Mary Leahy. I was born into a working-class family in Co. Cork, Ireland, in 1957. Steve, my father, was a labourer and Jenny, my mother, worked in a factory before she married. I was the youngest of three, my sister Geraldine being four years older and my brother David eight years older. Good family planning!! My father suffered heart problems for many years until he died suddenly at the age of 50. My mother struggled to give us the best life she could.

And that life was grand, a life in which we came up against the raw reality of poverty and its many implications. We were the underdogs ... and yet, at the same time, this life let us touch the grand adventure that life is. I experienced what I would now describe as the intimate dignity of my human existence - uncluttered by possessions - certainty, acceptance.

Although we were Irish and Catholic, immersed in a sacralised sort of culture, surrounded by the smells and bells of the day, somehow by the grace of God we weren't too caught up in "piousity", a very real danger of the time.

I remember my real religious experiences as being not so much within the church walls as times of simple joys at home: listening attentively for the sound of my father's Honda 50 as it struggled up the hill; celebrating wakes - anybody's - but especially my father's; sitting around the fire talking and singing, arguing. We enjoyed a variety of political views within the same household and often shared them vigorously and dangerously.

The changing seasons made a great impact on me and, although it rained most of the time(!), you could still recognise the bleak and deathly winter, followed by the flourish of spring and summer. A rhythm thoroughly awe-inspiring! All these things made up the stuff of my religious/human experience.

These experiences, I believe, worked constantly to unwrap the swaddling dogmas, as it were, that always threatened to make Jesus/God and religion into an insignificant reality. God was mysteriously present in a way that didn't seem to need explaining.

God is to me like a breath, so intimate, so necessary, so full of potential. Immanent and yet mysterious. Passionate and yet mundane. And very real.

I had a variety of career and travel opportunities after leaving school - including chewing gum manufacturing, motor mechanic, barmaiding....

I had always felt a desire, an urgency, to share with others something of my experi-

ence of God, of my experience of me, and I always felt that this experience, while being very intimately me, was also very universal.

It was within the Church structure that I felt I could most adequately honour this urgency, an urgency to share a certain freedom which, for me, is most profound and most spiritual, and yet most human. Having contemplated the scary prospects of marriage, I then contemplated the equally frightening prospects of religious life.

And I decided to join the Sisters of St Joseph here in OZ, where my sister Geraldine was.

I nursed for nearly ten years, during which time I completed a B.Th. at Catholic Theological Union, Sydney. For the past seven years, I have been part of the Stella Maris mission team and have journeyed with merchant seafarers as they battle out their often miserable human existence as honourably as they can.

Circumstances such as the Church and my Religious Congregation I perceive as blessings through which I can endeavour to be true to my human urgency to live a gracious and humble life and to promote such in my relationships. However, integral to this is my responsibility to continually critique my own dispositions and those of the Church, religious life and society, always returning to the Gospels to reflect on the person of Jesus, the flesh-and-blood reality. He is the man who had that great capacity to celebrate life, to push the boundaries; one who offers, I believe, genuine freedom.

At the risk of sounding simplistic, these days I frequently ask myself in different and difficult situations: "What would Jesus do?" and there is always an answer. Bloody marvellous, really!



Mary Leahy RSJ

# Your Say 1 - The church changes her mind from time to time

by Humphrey O'Leary

For those acquainted with the history of law in the Christian body, the phenomenon of reversal of position by the Church is familiar one. Stands taken by the Holy See have a way of being less permanent than was at first foreseen. Reversal of position can be observed not only regarding laws and decisions whose scope was purely disciplinary, but also regarding many laws and decisions whose basis was asserted to be doctrinal.

The adoption of non-Western cultural practices into Christian life and worship was condemned by the Holy See in the Chinese and Malabar Rites controversies of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, but subsequently allowed by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in the 1930s and, later still, encouraged in the Liturgy Constitution of Vatican II. The application of form criticism to the interpretation of the Scriptures was frowned on by the Pontifical Biblical Commission early in this century, but later canonised by the same commission in its 1964 Instruction Concerning the Historical Truth of the Gospels.

Reflection on this phenomenon of reversal of position by the Church has led me to formulate the following schematiza-

## Five stages in reversing a church law

New discipline is:

- Stage I - not mentioned
- Stage II - rejected
- Stage III - allowed as exception
- Stage IV - encouraged
- Stage V - imposed

The stages are self-explanatory. In Stage I, there is silence on the part of the Holy See. In Stage II, there is categorical rejection of the suggestion that the proposed discipline

could be introduced, and doctrinal reasons are usually adduced for this rejection. In Stage III, the new discipline is introduced in certain cases, but only as a tightly defined exception. A current example is the ordination of married men, confined to convert ministers and to mature-aged men who will not proceed past diaconate. In Stage IV, the Holy See warmly encourages the new practice and gives ample faculties for its introduction. Communion under both kinds has pretty well reached this stage. In Stage V, the new discipline becomes mandatory, and the old, once so tenaciously urged by the Holy See, may no longer be followed.

## *Few of the instances of reversal of position have been purely disciplinary.*

Let us follow certain disciplines through the successive stages. The modern ecumenical movement dates from early in this century. For almost thirty years the Holy See had nothing to say about Catholic participation (Stage I).

In 1928, Pope Pius XI issued the Encyclical *Mortalium Animos*, roundly rejecting the ecumenical movement and declaring that "such efforts can meet with no kind of approval among Catholics" (Stage II).

In its 1949 instruction, the Holy Office laid down conditions under which Catholics could take limited part in ecumenical discussions (Stage III). Vatican II in its decree on Ecumenism gave encouragement to a wide range of ecumenical activities (Stage IV). The day is yet to come when the last protesting Tridentine Catholic will be dragged by the heels into a fully re-united Church (Stage V).

In other areas, Stage V is already with us. Vernacular liturgy was at first ignored by the Holy See (Stage I), then categorically ruled out by Pius XII in his address to the 1956 Assisi International Congress of Pastoral Liturgy (Stage II). Already, however, change was occurring in the administration of sacraments and sacramentals through vernacular rituals (Stage III). Vatican II and subsequent developments gave the fullest encouragement to vernacular liturgy (Stage IV). The last era is already upon us as the Directory for Masses with Children forbids the use of Latin in such celebrations (Stage V).

Few of the instances of reversal of position have been purely disciplinary. Involvement in ecumenism and adoption into worship of "pagan" practices meant a re-think of doctrinal positions. So too has the steadily enlarging use by the Church of her power to dissolve valid marriages, and so too did the long-settled question of the right to accept interest on loans without committing the sin of usury.

Vernacular liturgy and interest on loans have reached Stage V. Marriage for clergy and Eucharistic intercommunion have reached Stage III. Is it too much to suggest that with the recent declaration on the question of the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood, this matter has now moved from Stage I to Stage II? □

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*Humphrey O'Leary is a Redemptorist priest, canon lawyer, former Principal of the Catholic Institute of Theology in Auckland, New Zealand, first President of Yarra Theological Union in Melbourne and currently Superior of the Redemptorist Community in Christchurch, New Zealand. He hopes one day to write more on this topic.*

## Letters

We are two of those over-50s you mentioned as making up the bulk of the audience at the big happening in April. Unfortunately we were unable to be present. Both of us have been frustrated at the foot-dragging, if not outright hostility, to the implementation of the reforms of Vatican II. The great panjandrums of the Vatican and others. We notice that our old Parish Priest, Brian Heenan, was one of the speakers. Great! He was a great PP and now he is a great Bishop. We still correspond with him.

We much enjoy *The Mix* as well as *The Tablet* and other up-to-date literature. The article by Sheila Gibson is interesting as we are involved in adult education in our parish and we are looking for new ideas. Bernard Häring's little section provides much-needed encouragement in a letter writing discussion in which we are currently engaged. We believe that questions must be asked by Church members and answered by the 'authorities'. They could also admit that they do not know the answers any more than

the rest of us. We think that protest and discussion are as much part of church life as they are of civic life.

*Pat & Lois O'Shea, Virginia, QLD*

May I take the opportunity to congratulate you on the success of the (Town Hall) evening. Wonderful, so full of hope and love. I came away feeling renewed and graced.

*Monica Watts, Bateman's Bay, NSW.* □

# Essay - *Fides et Ratio* and its application

by Peter James Cullinane

The following is part of a discussion paper presented by Bishop Cullinane, in March 1999, on the applicability of *Fides et Ratio*, in New Zealand.

Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio* (1998), like his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (1993), is foundational. Both deal with our ability to reason, to judge, and to know, which is decisive for exploring, explaining and communicating our faith. In attempting to summarise and simplify this encyclical, my focus will be on its applicability in our own country.

It seems surprising that our ability to reason, to judge and to know could be called into question, but we would be foolish to think otherwise. Our secular culture, and even popular religious thinking, have become pervaded by a soft romanticism that leaves people dependent on mere opinion and "feeling". The sheer multiplicity and variety of views and opinions can lead people to distrust even our human ability to reach objective and universally valid truths. How often we hear it said that "no one can judge"; all that individuals can do is "make their own choices". In ethical questions, the "right to choose" is proclaimed as self-validating, i.e., there is no need for any criteria beyond what the individual decides: making the choice is enough to make it right. ...

The Pope was already addressing this kind of scepticism and moral relativism when, in *Veritatis Splendor*, he challenged the view that it belongs to conscience to decide what shall be right and wrong. Our Catholic tradition, and the biblical tradition, have always seen conscience as the judgement we make when we apply norms that are not of our own making. This presupposes that we can actually know objective truth. It also presupposes that we attain freedom through our openness to truth. As the Pope reiterates in *Fides et Ratio*, truth and freedom "either go together hand in hand or together they perish in misery" (90).

At stake in all this is ultimately what it means to be a person. The secular ideology of "individualism" makes self-interest (not necessarily selfishness, but even sincere self-interest) the criterion for determining what is true, good, worthwhile, and morally right. Catholic teaching does not understand persons in this atomised way: we are persons in relationship - in relationship to other persons, the world and God. This is what it means to be made the image of a

Trinity in whom persons exist only in relationship.

Consequently, Catholic teaching understands personal rights as what we need in order to live in right relationships, i.e. responsibly. Rights don't even have to be "balanced" by responsibility; they only exist in function of responsibilities. They are what we are entitled to in order to fulfil our responsibilities. This does not imply a lesser regard for what it means to be oneself; it just means that we become our true selves through being "for others".

## *The Pope himself does not hesitate to speak of the search for truth as a journey - based on a prior obligation to seek the truth.*

In *Fides et Ratio*, the Pope is concerned to reassure people that they can know the truth (cf n.102) - on the basis of which they can also know what is good and right. There was a time when people took this for granted. Faith and reason were seen as

two wings on which the human spirit could rise to knowing the truth, which is ultimately God, and in knowing God know the truth about ourselves (Intro).

It is only in recent centuries that faith and reason became separated, (cf nn.5, 45) producing a deep and widespread scepticism, in which not knowing God and not knowing ourselves also seem to go together.

Some have resorted to a kind of pragmatism, based on

a concept of democracy which is not grounded upon any reference to unchanging values: whether or not a line of action is admissible is decided by a vote of parliamentary majority... Even the great moral decisions of humanity are subordinated to decisions taken one after another by institutional agencies (89).

Others have simply given up on the human ability to know ultimate objective truth, and have opted for a kind of "nihilism" (cf 46).

The Pope also speaks of an "undifferentiated pluralism": faced by the sheer volume and fragmentation of knowledge, people simply conclude that one opinion is as good as the next. ... The

Pope himself does not hesitate to speak of the search for truth as a journey - based on a prior obligation to seek the truth (cf 25).

*(Being in) the service of the truth, the believing community (is) a partner in humanity's shared struggle to arrive at truth; (it also) obliges the believing community to proclaim certitudes arrived at, albeit with a sense that every truth attained is but a step towards that fullness of truth which will appear with the final revelation of God (2).*

The Pope too is opposed to intolerance (92) and insists on the need for freedom for the act of faith (13). Unfortunately, the Church has not always given the impression that believers are free to do the questioning that leads to new understanding, or that they can do so freely. ...

The Pope traces the source of these confusions to the separation of reason and faith, philosophy and theology. He supports the proper autonomy of each, but urgently wants their relationship to each other to be restored.

When philosophy acts without reference to divine revelation, it undermines its ability to pursue its own goal, which is to discover what it means to be human. When faith, deprived of reason, it loses the structures needed to explore, articulate and communicate itself (cf 48).

It is this separation of faith and reason that underlies the widespread assumption that what can't be known by the methods of the sciences simply can't be known, or isn't there to be known. The consequences are grave; without any vision of the human person beyond what is accessible to the methods of the sciences, there is no reason for not subjecting persons to the needs of the marketplace, and technology has no ethical criterion beyond itself: the possibility of doing something becomes the sufficient justification for doing it. As I said earlier, what is at stake in all this is what it means to be human. And we can only know of the transcendent dignity of human persons through divine revelation and faith (cf 83).

The separation of faith and reason has also impacted on faith. Luther's original put-down of nature and reason, and Calvin's radical interpretation of scripture alone and grace alone, live on in the inability of some mainstream Protestant churches to resolve fundamental ethical issues (on the basis of scripture alone), and in biblical fundamentalism and the harm it does. Within all our churches, the disjunction of faith and reason

shows up in a primary emphasis on subjectivity and a scepticism regarding the possibility of expressing faith in universally valid doctrines (cf 53).

Philosophy too has suffered. Some streams of philosophy have ditched any interest in metaphysics (55, 61); they limit themselves to the study of how we know and how we communicate, and leave aside the content of what we can ultimately know. The resulting "crisis of confidence in the powers of reason" has serious consequences for the faith (cf 55, 84).

The Pope addresses these concerns to bishops, and he will be satisfied with nothing less than reaffirming

strongly the conviction that the human being can come to a unified and organic vision of knowledge. This is one of the tasks which Christian thought will have to take up through the next millennium of the Christian era. The segmentation of knowledge, with its splintered approach to the truth and consequent fragmentation of meaning, keeps people today from coming to an interior unity. How could the Church not be concerned by this? It is the gospel which imposes this sapiential task directly upon her pastors, and they cannot shrink from their duty to undertake it (85).

As a teacher of the faith, the Pope looks to the scriptures and finds that

What is distinctive in the biblical text is the conviction that there is a profound and indissoluble unity between the knowledge of reason and the knowledge of faith. The world and all that happens within it, including history and the faith of peoples are realities to be observed, analysed and assessed with all the resources of reason, but without faith ever being foreign to the process. Faith intervenes not to abolish reason's autonomy nor to reduce its scope for action, but solely to bring the human being to understand that in these events it is the God of Israel who acts. Thus the world and the events of history cannot be understood in depth without professing faith in the God who is at work in them ... reason and faith cannot be separated without diminishing the capacity of men and women to know themselves, the world and God in an appropriate way (16).

The way the Pope explains the impact of philosophy on the different areas of theology (64-69) has consequences for those of us who send priests or religious to do high studies.

The Pope also addresses those who do philosophy, and chooses to encourage them:

I cannot but encourage philosophers - be they Christians or not - to trust in the power of human reason and not to set themselves goals that are too modest in their philosophising. The lesson of history in this millennium now drawing to a

close shows that this is the path to follow: it is necessary not to abandon the passion for ultimate truth, the eagerness to search for it or the audacity to forge new paths in the search. It is faith which stirs reason to move beyond all isolation and willingly to run risks so that it may attain whatever is beautiful, good and true. Faith thus becomes the convinced and convincing advocate of reason (56).

He urges them especially to recover the sapiential dimension of knowing because he sees that as giving the "ultimate framework of the unity of human knowledge and action" (81).

As we would expect of John Paul, his primary focus is always on Christ (7). What God wants us to know about ourselves cannot be reduced to statements and documents. It can only be revealed in a Person (32-34). In Christ we discover how much we mean to God. "Knowing" becomes a matter of accepting and loving this person, in a relationship for which we are enabled by the Holy Spirit.

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*Bishop Cullinane is the bishop of Palmerston North, New Zealand.*

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## WOMEN, ORDINATION, AND THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

The Editor

In the light of the Holy Father's reflection on the search for truth in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, a recent article in *The Tablet* (May 8 1999, 623-624), bears serious consideration. The article is by John Wijngaards and is entitled "When Women Were Deacons". Wijngaards begins his article:

So women deacons in the early Church had no part in the sacramental ministry, according to Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos (*The Tablet*, 3/10 April, p.500). (Cardinal Hoyos is the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy.) His statement must have made the thousands of women deacons who faithfully served the Church in the past turn in their graves. For they were formidable women, if we are to go by the 28 tombstones on which some of them were commemorated. One was Athanasia in Delphi in the fifth century AD, who was ordained by Bishop Pantamianos. The stone carries a curse: 'May anyone who disturbs the tomb in which this honoured and blameless deaconess lies buried, receive the fate of Judas who betrayed Our Lord Jesus Christ'.

Wijngaards argues that "the historical facts

are becoming clearer by the day" that women shared the same sacramental ordination as men at one time in the tradition.

Wijngaards refers the reader to an internet site - [www.womenpriests.org](http://www.womenpriests.org) - where one can find "precious Greek and Syriac manuscripts" formerly "concealed in dusty libraries". He goes on:

The manuscripts contain ancient ordination rituals for male and female deacons, documenting the Church's practice from the fourth to the eighth centuries AD, and confirming the oldest ordination prayers already found in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, a so-called fourth century "church order" with regulations for discipline and liturgy. A study of the documents shows that in the Church in the East, centuries before it split with the West, both men and women were admitted to the diaconate through a precisely equivalent sacramental ordination.

Can we trust [www.womenpriests.org](http://www.womenpriests.org)? Perhaps they have made an honest mistake? Perhaps they are perpetrating a fraud? Perhaps they have unearthed authentic texts documenting ancient Church practice? We would all like to see further scholarly research done on these texts, firstly to authenticate them and secondly to interpret them.

On the face of it, the evidence seems worth taking seriously as part of the broader conversation which seeks to know the truth concerning women and ordination and the authentic tradition. Anyone serious about making that journey ought to at least examine this evidence.

The theological and pastoral implications are profound. The authentic tradition holds that there is but one sacrament of orders. *Lumen Gentium* describes it as follows:

Christ, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world (Jn 10:36) has, through His apostles, made their successors, the bishops, partakers of His consecration and His mission. These in their turn have legitimately handed on to different individuals in the Church various degrees of participation in this ministry. Thus the divinely established ecclesiastical ministry is exercised on different levels by those who from antiquity have been called bishops, priests and deacons (28).

If there were, in fact, women ordained deacons in the authentic tradition, as men were ordained deacons, these women shared the one sacrament of orders. And if they shared it then, why is it not possible for them to share in the sacrament of orders today? If the Church is serious about "the journey" of truth, about which Pope John Paul speaks, then this issue must be taken very seriously indeed.

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*The Editor will be happy to assist readers to find the full article by Wijngaards. Send a long SSA envelope with your request.*

## Words for a Pilgrim People

Do you understand what I have done to you? (John 13:13)

□□□

Simple and friendly conversation about spiritual topics, with individuals or groups, was one of the chief means of apostolic ministry employed by St Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) and his companions who joined him in founding the Society of Jesus; and this procedure penetrated and undergirded all the other more visible activities to which the success of these first Jesuits is often attributed, such as preaching in crowds, giving the Spiritual Exercises, or organising men and institutions. (Editor's Foreword to Thomas Clancy, **The Conversational Word of God**, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1978)

□□□

Even as bright and shining bodies, once touched by a ray of light falling on them, become even more glorious and themselves cast another light, so too souls that carry the Spirit, and are enlightened by the Spirit, become spiritual themselves and send forth grace upon others. This grace enables them to foresee the future, to understand mysteries, to grasp hidden things, to receive spiritual blessings, to have their thoughts fixed on heavenly things, and to dance with the angels. So is their joy unending, so is their perseverance in God unending, so do they acquire likeness to God, so - most sublime of all - do they themselves become divine. (St Basil the Great, **Treatise on the Holy Spirit**, 9:23)

□□□

We forget at our peril that man is a symbol-making creature; and if the symbols (or myths, which are a pattern of symbols) seem arid and dead, they are to be mourned rather than denied. The bankruptcy of symbols should be seen for what it is, a way station on the path of despair. (Rollo May, **Power and Innocence**, Fontana Books, 1976, 70)

□□□

Humankind cannot bear very much reality. (T S Eliot, *Burnt Norton*)

□□□

## The Bible - The treasure in the field

Chapter 13 of Matthew's Gospel has a series of parables on the Kingdom. The Kingdom is compared to the sowing of seed, the dandelion among the wheat, a mustard seed, yeast, the treasure in the field, the pearl of great price and the dragnet. Nowhere else in the Gospels do you find such an array of images to describe the Kingdom. Matthew even spends time telling us about the nature of parables and why Jesus teaches in parables. And this latter point is particularly significant. Jesus left us no analytical explanations or logical arguments in response to the great questions. He told stories and performed actions.

*How beautiful and liberating  
when we are set in motion  
by the presence of Christ in  
our lives.*

Consider v. 44: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field". The implication for the hearer is: Let the image have its way, let it take hold of your imagination and surprise you. And the image is utterly mundane. Jesus could hardly have used a more secular image. Think on this, he says, let the image rather than any rational content be your first engagement with this teaching. This comes hard to the modern Western mind-set. For us knowledge is about control, not surrender, overtaking and dominating rather than being overtaken and being captured. This rationalistic way will never understand the parables.

So what is the plot in Jesus' little story? "A man" - anyone, even you; "finding" - finding is as much a matter of receiving as it is a matter of giving, of being found, a moment of grace; "selling" - our man is overjoyed, the obvious thing is to sell everything in order to acquire "the treasure", madness not to; "buying" - the final, obvious step, doing what must be done. The Kingdom is like this? Perhaps we could think of this as a model for the Christian life: Encounter (epiphany, revelation, road to Emmaus stuff) moves us naturally towards conversion (detachment, reconciliation, getting rid of useless baggage) and commitment (decision, action, all that promotes intimacy with God in Christ). How tragic and imprisoning when we try to do the commitment or conversion and we have not found "the treasure"! Christianity thus becomes a dour and wilful struggle. How beautiful and liberating when we find "the treasure" and are set in motion! Christianity becomes a joyful and willing commitment. When this happens, we do indeed know that the Kingdom is among us.

## The Tradition - Releasing the good

The Tradition repeats a refrain through its theology and liturgy: God has taken the initiative, the Incarnation is God among us, liberating us through the saving death and resurrection of Jesus. God's great Spirit is let loose in the world. Our fulfilment as human beings is found in being part of this wonderful release of God. Holiness is not so much what we achieve but what we allow God to achieve. Thus, truly holy people will be marked by at least two outstanding characteristics: Grace and freedom. Their beings will have a graciousness and freedom about them because they will have discovered that their lives, like the cosmos itself, are in the hands of Love and Mercy and Goodness and these are ultimately unstoppable.

St Gregory of Nyssa (d.c.395) is sometimes referred to as the Father of Christian mysticism. He wrote a beautiful essay on prayer entitled *The Life of Moses* and *Sermons on the Song of Songs*. Gregory was a married man, the younger brother of St Basil, who ordained him bishop of Nyssa, a remote outpost of Basil's province near modern-day Armenia, in 371. His sister was St Macrina. He was a fairly poor administrator but was a great writer and preacher and a staunch defender of the Church's teaching on the Incarnation, making a very significant contribution to the Council of Constantinople in 381. He had a wonderful sense of God at work in the world and how the Presence of God can be released in and through us.

In his *Treatise on Virginity*, Gregory represents the Christian life as a process whereby we cooperate with grace in recovering and releasing the presence of God in our beings: "It is like people who slip and fall in the mud and get their faces so smeared that even their relatives cannot recognise them. So humanity fell into the mud of sin and lost the likeness to the eternal Godhead. Now the removal of what is foreign is a return to what is connatural and fitting; and this we can only achieve by becoming what we once were in the beginning when we were created. Yet to achieve this likeness to God is not within our power. By our human efforts we can merely clear away the accumulated mud of sin and thus allow the hidden beauty of the soul to shine forth". □

*Holiness is not so much  
what we achieve but what  
we allow God to achieve.*

## Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

### • Spirituality in the Pub (SIP):

◦ **Promoter** – 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: August 26 "Transitions" (Geraldine Doogue & Mary d'Apice rscj) (Info: John on 02 4878 5230).

◦ **Campbelltown** - The Catholic Club, 7.30pm-9pm: July 14 "Being Compassionate" (Stephanie Dowrick & Stephen Clark) (Info: Sr Julianne on 02 9603 3000 (W) or 02 9603 2749).

◦ **Canberra** - The Canberra Workers Club, Childers St, Canberra, 7.30pm-9pm: August 25 "Spirituality: the Male/Female Experience" (Sr Loraine Gatehouse & Neil Harigan) (Info: Rita on 02 6288 4715).

◦ **Chatswood** - Orchard Tavern, Cnr. Victoria Ave & Orchard Rd, 7.30pm-9pm: August 10 "Our Road Together" (Barbara Asplett & Br Graham Mundine) (Info: Michelle on 9958 5963).

◦ **Clayton (VIC)** - The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm: August 31 "Spirituality of Fallow's" (Pauline Clayton & tba) (Info: Ann on 9701 7076 or 9701 3740 or Joyce on 9700 1250).

◦ **Collingwood (VIC)** - First Wednesdays, 8pm-9.30pm. (Info: Maree on 0412 136681).

◦ **Kincumber** - The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive, 7.30pm-9pm: August 3 "The Power of My Story: May those who live in the shadows be seen by those in the light" (Fr Ramsey Nuthall & Sandra Smith) (Info: Sue on 02 4334 3174 (H) or Clair on 02 4344 6608).

◦ **Newcastle** - The Hotel Delany, Darby St, ) 7.30pm-9pm: September 20 "Walking the Edges" (Christine & Warren Shepherd) (Info: Gerard on 02 4979 1211 (W)).

◦ **Paddington** - The Bellevue Hotel, 7.30pm-9pm: August 4 "Why go to Church?" (Geraldine Doogue & David Leary) (Info: Maree on 9387 3152 (H)).

◦ **Penrith** - Golf Club, 7.30pm-9pm: August 18 "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. 7.30pm-9pm: August 25 "Into the Millennium Challenges for Church (Dr Peter Carnley & Janette Gray rsm) (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: July 20 "Spirituality in Daily Life" (Sr Jeanette Foxe rsj & tba) (Info: Karen on 9570 3257 or John on 9533 4939).

◦ **Rouse Hill** - The Mean Fiddler on Old Windsor Rd, 7.30pm-9pm: August 3 "Where Do I Find Spirituality in Australia Today?" (Ken Jarvis & Nicole Breeze) (Info: Tim on 9634 2927 (H)).

◦ **Waitara** - The Blue Gum Hotel on the Pacific Hwy, 7.30pm-9pm: July 21 "An Emerging Australian Spirituality" (Fr Frank Brennan sj & Sr Maureen Flood) (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: August 3 "Share the Gospel - Use Words If Necessary!" (Julia Byrne & Clare Barbeau) (Info: Jocelyn on 0412 114038).

### • Other Catalyst Forums:

◦ **Catalyst Forum for the Future:** Sunday August 15, 2pm-4pm at the McKillop Campus of ACU, North Sydney. "The Future of Leadership in the Church". Speaker: Mr Robert Fitzgerald AM. (Info: Pauline on (02) 9816 4262).

### BACK COPIES OF THE MIX

*The Mix* began in April 1996. All back copies of *The Mix* are available on request. Please send a long SSA envelope for each three copies requested. If you are requesting more than a few copies, please negotiate that with Pauline.

Donations to help defray costs are always gratefully received. Thank you.

◦ **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.

◦ **Town Hall tapes and booklets:** We still have a few copies of the tape of the presentations at the Public Forum, Sydney Town Hall, April 22 1999. There are also copies of the booklets containing the texts of those presentations. \$10 each + \$2 post/pack. (Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

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

### • Other news and events:

◦ **Reading St Augustine "The Confessions"** with Kate Englebrecht on Tuesdays, July 20, 27, Aug 3, 10, 10am - 12 noon, Centre for Christian Spirituality (Info: Kate on 9398 2211).

◦ **Australian Christian Meditation Community** - August 15 Day of Meditation, Benedictine Monastery, Arcadia (Info: Fr Edward Doran 02 9653 1159).

◦ **Spirituality Weekend:** An affordable spirituality weekend for young adults, based on the Enneagram, will be held at Marist Farmhouse at Mittagong commencing Friday evening, July 16<sup>th</sup> (Info: Br Don Newton 02 9349 7333 or 0417 691 904).

◦ **Mt St Benedict Centre** July 17/18, 9.30am - 4.30pm, Attitudinal Healing (2) (Info: 9484 6208).

◦ **Wollongong Catalyst Friends** are invited to contact Rudi Peperkamp 4284 7735 (particularly in the North Wollongong area) if you are interested in getting together for a monthly meeting.

◦ **The Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace** invites you to a Lecture by Professor Robert Schreiter (CTU Chicago) on Friday, July 30, 8pm at ACU, Edward St, North Sydney, and to a seminar on Monday, August 2 "The Ministry of Reconciliation: Tasks for the Jubilee" with Fr Robert Schreiter, at Lidcombe Catholic Club (Info: Br Mark O'Connor on 0417 689 095).

### THE FUTURE OF FAITH AND REASON

by Professor Max Charlesworth

The text of Professor Charlesworth's presentation at the third Catalyst Forum for the Future is now available in small booklet form. \$5 per booklet + \$2 p/p.

Inquire about other Catalyst literature including texts from the first Forums

◦ **National Charismatic Renewal Retreat for priests, deacons, religious and associates,** January 19-14/15, 2000, Newman College Melbourne University. Director: Fr Richard McAlear OMI. (Info: Bill on 02 4968 2428 or Wahid 03 9629 7140)

# Recommended Reading

Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church (Expanded Edition)*, Triumph Books, 1991, 468 pages, index, bibliographies, pb, \$33.50.

*Doors to the Sacred* is a practical handbook giving an overview of the different practices by which the Church has developed the celebration of the sacraments. Starting with a chapter entitled "Sacraments in all Religions", Part One of this book gives a good sketch of the thinking that lies behind the development of sacraments today. Martos will surprise some readers with his section on "Catholic and Protestant Sacraments". Part Two then looks more closely at the histories of the seven sacraments. The Second Vatican Council began with a review of the liturgy and celebration of the sacraments. Perhaps we were all a bit naïve when the Council's project of reform and renewal began. Today the celebration of the sacraments has become the focus of intense debate and even conflict within the Church. There is much misunderstanding and misinformation in this area. One wonders, for example, how much our current reformed sacramental rituals are influenced by the practices of the most recent generations and how much by the riches of the authentic Gospel tradition. Priesthood and eucharist come easily to mind. Martos' historical descriptions do us a great favour. The style is popular but it is well researched, with many other references to follow. This is an invaluable contribution.

Frances M Moran, *Notes on Self for the Restless Spirit*, Harper Collins, 1998, 113 pages, bibliography, pb \$14.95.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century German Romantic poet, Novalis, said: 'Philosophy is, strictly speaking, a homesickness'. He was echoing something that the great guides of our tradition articulated so powerfully, none better than St Augustine: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee". *Notes on Self* takes up the same issue of human restlessness and longing in the contemporary context. The author has her doctorate in psychology and is a practicing therapist. She presents her reflections in a conversational way. "Jane" and "Anton" reflect on their life experiences and then put that reflection in dialogue with St Teresa of Avila and St Thomas Aquinas respectively. The author gives her own reflection then on the life and thought of St Augustine. This book is very readable and will strike a chord with anyone who has wondered if there is more to life than material possessions and biological functions. She has certainly named the key to the depth dimension and the inner journey: our experience of longing and restlessness. We need to reflect more on this human ground out of which our spirituality grows. At times the popular style can be misleading. For example, I am not sure that she is quite fair to Aquinas when she says: "There is only certainty of what is to be done by a rational and wilful self". That is a minor fault. This book is recommended for personal and group reflection.

John T Noonan, "Development in Moral Doctrine", *Theological Studies*, 54 (1993) 662-677.

In his Opening Speech at the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII noted: "The substance of the ancient deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. And it is the latter which must be taken into great consideration". John Noonan's essay takes "the latter into great consideration" and makes a valuable contribution to an internal conversation the Church must urgently pursue. Noonan examines four areas of moral teaching in which the Church has changed its stance significantly: usury, marriage, slavery and religious freedom. He then reflects on the ways that Catholic moral theology has dealt with the changes of thinking in each instance. Fear of radical change within the Church, often coupled with a quite untrue assumption that the Church has never contradicted its essential teaching on any matter of significance, can paralyse the renewal process urged upon us by the Second Vatican Council. Noonan's research will help us to get beyond that fear and that assumption, so we can vigorously pursue the conversation that will enable the Church to make some wise and groundbreaking contributions to the big moral questions that face the human family at this time. (*The Editor will get any interested reader a copy of Noonan's essay on request. Please send a SSA long envelope with four further stamps to help defray costs.*)

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