



THE MIX



JOURNAL OF CATALYST FOR RENEWAL INCORPORATED

Circulation of 2000 in Australia and overseas

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 8

OCTOBER 1999

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Our Say - Women in the Australian church

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference Committee for Justice, Development and Peace, Australian Catholic University and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes worked together to research the role of women in the Catholic Church in Australia. The results of this research are reported in *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus*. On August 18 this year, Lady Deane launched the report at the National Press Club in Canberra. (See page eight of this issue of *The Mix* for a brief review of the report.)

This report has considerable symbolic and practical import for the Church in Australia. When the Convenor, Bishop Kevin Manning, spoke in Rome at last year's Synod, his input was heavily influenced by what he had already seen in this research project. Bishop Manning was in fact the first bishop to speak at the Synod. His input had a powerful impact, probably contributing significantly to the subsequent mood of honesty and courage that characterised that Synod.

Without in any way wishing to downplay

Bishop Manning's personal contribution, it seems reasonable to conclude that the material he presented had its own force.

The roles of both men and women in our society have changed significantly over the past forty or so years. Although, at this time, the change is perhaps more evident in societies of the affluent West, it would be foolish to pretend that any society in the East or the West, in the developed or the developing world, is going to remain unaffected by these changes. And, in concrete practical terms, it is the changes to the social reality of *women* that seem at this time to be the most dramatic and therefore require urgent and honest consideration.

We cannot escape this by simplistically condemning the role changes, supporting our condemnation either by talking theoretically of unchanging human nature or claiming that at some point in its history this or that culture developed the perfect, and therefore essentially unchangeable, social roles for women and men.

The Church, as a social institution in the world, must take this matter seriously. It is pleasing to see our bishops doing that by requesting this research project.

The Bishops' Conference initiative is an excellent beginning to a conversation that must now be vigorously and intelligently pursued in all facets and at all levels of the Church's life. It raises deep and complex issues about the very nature of the Church; it demands that we think creatively and honestly about the relationships between the Church and the world; it asks us to look to the very foundations of our lives as members of the community of Jesus' disciples. We must discern the authentic, as distinct from the inauthentic, in our search.

A major impact of the report comes from its very size: It is 496 pages of dense text. If nothing else, it reminds us that this is hard work, that no easy answers will be forthcoming. However, the groundwork has been done, the possibilities are there. Let us ensure this fine research done by Bishop Manning's committee is not wasted. □

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, 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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This journal is published ten times each year, March to December. It is sent to all Friends of Catalyst for Renewal.
(See coupon on back page for Friend's Application)

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Registered by Australia Post
Publication No: 255003/02125

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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.

All original work in *The Mix*, unless otherwise indicated, is the work of the Editor.

Printed by Serge Martich-Osterman
Printing and Publishing Pty Ltd, Annandale

The Human Face

My name is Margaret O'Hearn. I think I've had a most unusual and interesting life, influenced by generations of forebears whose own stories are ones of strength, faith and change.

My father was an Englishman, a geologist and a man well before his time. He was a passionate lover of the earth and its finite resources – a pioneer environmentalist. He engendered that reverence in his two daughters and two sons. It was part of the culture of the household. He was an Anglican; he, above all others, taught me what prayer is: to stand in awe and wonder at the creator and to love all creation.

My mother was born in Bendigo of an Irish Catholic mother and a Presbyterian father. Her father, who had a beautiful singing voice, entertained the nuns at Sunday afternoon musicals, after preaching in his church in the morning. (This was in the 20s).

I was brought up in two churches – Mass on Sunday morning, evensong in the Anglican Church in the evening. The nuns at the Catholic school made their view very clear about that! So my mother gave me the sure faith of the day, Catholicism, my father gave me an inquiring mind and permission to question. How lucky, how blessed!

We travelled much, my father's work taking the family to most parts of Australia. As I was deemed by the nuns to be too slow to learn, I spent much of my childhood with my father, on geological survey and exploration teams. I was adept with geological maps and knew about fault lines, outcrops and bedding before I could read.

Our travels took us from Tasmania to Darwin and many places in between. Life in Darwin in the 50s was free, unsophisticated and wonderful. Life in the arid regions of South Australia also brought us into close contact with and dependence on native Australians – people of wisdom and tolerance towards white clumsiness and ignorance.

So, without doubt, my spirituality is rooted in my experience, in parents whose difference was complementary and rich, in the wandering nature of my childhood in real and unfettered bush and outback Australia, and in a love of the night sky. Visits to my Irish grandmother in Melbourne brought another Church insight. This tiny silver-haired lady lived in a house within the shadow of St Patrick's Cathedral. Wherever we were, work stopped for the Angelus, rung from the Cathedral bells.

The final two years of schooling redeemed years of bad, sad and unpleasant experience in Catholic schools. The Mercy Sisters

(whose foundation from South America gave them a different charism) ran a boarding school to the east of Adelaide; in this environment for the first time, I experienced Catholicism that was loving and open. They even welcomed my father! Oh what joy, liberation and new learning! This relatively brief time in my life reset my sails for a faith journey which has been rich, rewarding, challenging and frustrating all at once.

I am the mother of six young adults; that is, in itself, a faith journey constantly in the making. I have nursed for over thirty years and now work in family education. Without doubt, my marriage to Tim has been and continues to be a discovery of self, a reflection of God's intimacy in human life and the most real expression of a God who loves first and 'just because'!

Society is changing rapidly. For many of us it seems to be moving away from the structures that protect the vulnerable (and that's all of us at times), and those least able to meet their needs or assert their right of place in society. We pay others to do what is the responsibility of all of us, and individual, local and community supports become paralysed for fear of ineptitude and legal litigation tigers. *Catalyst for Renewal* offers an openness for that continued search for the meaning of our baptismal responsibility, connectedness with others and an ongoing and maturing interpretation of what being a follower of Christ can mean amid rapid social change.

While we look for leadership from outside ourselves, we fail to see that all of us have the permission, the right and the responsibility to take our place as people of the Spirit, truly loved, gifted, empowered and encouraged to seek justice and walk knowingly and confidently with our God.

That is my challenge; that is my journey.



Margaret O'Hearn

Your Say - Women, homosexuals and the church

by Patrick Power

Auxiliary Bishop Pat Power considers another perspective on the recent report on women in the Australian church and appeals for honest dialogue.

During the launch of the *Report on the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia*, there was a moving appeal for the whole Church to enrich itself by drawing on women's wisdom, distinctive talents and experience.

Hearing those words, I was reminded that the following evening I was due to meet some homosexual Catholics as part of the dialogue to which I had committed myself at the time the Rainbow Sash people attended Mass at St Christopher's Cathedral in the middle of last year.

On that occasion they made a plea for understanding, dialogue and a willingness for the Church to listen to and learn from their experience.

During the homily that day I affirmed their requests. Subsequently I wrote to *The Canberra Times*: "To have refused them Holy Communion is one of the hardest things I have ever had to do in my 33 years as a priest. It is to their credit that they responded to my invitation to dialogue and I applaud the many parishioners who met with them after Mass. If our Church is to be fully Catholic we need to find new and better ways of embracing the groups and individuals who are alienated from us. Reconciliation can take many forms."

At the end of last year at the Oceania Synod of Bishops in Rome, I included homosexual Catholics in speaking of marginalised people in society and in the Church.

Before the Pope and my brother bishops, I stated that my experience earlier in the year had given me new insights into their lives and struggles and, hopefully, had helped them remain within the Church.

In some ways they are calling on all of us to "come out", to engage in a conversation, even though it means being prepared to step into an uncomfortable space.

Both of these events have brought some very moving responses - from gay people themselves, from their parents and from "ordinary" people in the Church and in the wider community. Many people have written and spoken of their pain, anger and sense of rejection by the Church.

In the overview of the *Report on the Participation of Women in the Church* we read: "Pain, alienation and often anger resulted from a strong sense of women's marginalisation, struggles, disenfranchisement, powerlessness, irrelevance and a lack of acknowledgement within the Church". Most homosexuals would say a strong "amen" to that in their situation.

A man previously unknown to me wrote in these terms: "I am unsure as to what the Church has to say to me as a man who is gay (apart from being objectively disordered and intrinsically evil).

"I am unsure of the Church's capacity to deal with the mystery of gay people, which I believe is of God. I believe that I am essentially good; the gay people I know are essentially good. The love and compassion I am privileged to share in and witness is profoundly of God."

Many of the voices in the *Report* called for a new expression of the Church's teaching on sexuality, taking into account the experiences of women.

The homosexual people with whom I am in dialogue make a similar appeal. They, along with the women, see the whole issue of sexuality impinging on wider issues in the Church.

In some ways they are calling on all of us to "come out", to engage in a conversation, even though it means being prepared to step into an uncomfortable space.

Such a dialogue will reveal the special gifts of gay people and the unique contribution they can make to the life of the Church and wider society.

John Powell, the American Jesuit, says that good communication involves listening and speaking honestly and kindly.

Surely such openness is not beyond us as we prepare to accept Pope John Paul's challenge to celebrate the Great Jubilee in a spirit of reconciliation which so characterised the mission of Jesus himself.

Bishop Patrick Power is Auxiliary Bishop in the archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn. This piece is reprinted, with permission, from The Canberra Voice (Sep. 1999).

Letters

I can't see us moving forward if two pages are given over to a critic (Thornhill) of one of those moving us forward and no space to first summarising the catalyst (Morwood). The Editor's fallback to experts (top of column 3, page one of *The Mix*, September 1999) is also not a move forward for lay involvement.

Geoff Taylor, Riverton SA

I have studied history for over 40 years and have read Thornhill's reply to Morwood and the latter makes more sense. The former is inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity.

Charles Barry, Blacktown, NSW

I wish to express my disappointment at the

tone of the article by John Thornhill SM and at your decision to publish it (September 1999, Vol 4 No 7). Such seemingly supercilious destructive criticism of another's efforts to interpret the mystery of our faith is out of character with the spirit of *The Mix* and hardly deserves to be included in the category of "genuine conversation". I was not convinced by Father Thornhill's professed reluctance to comment so negatively on a fellow theologian and I am of the view that his final paragraph could well have been deleted. It added nothing to the substance of the article. Would it be possible for you to request Father Thornhill to contribute another article, one which is constructive? For instance, I would dearly like to learn about the pro-

cesses which led to "Christian consciousness" failing to appreciate the full humanity of Christ. Perhaps he could bring his mature grasp of history to bear on the problem of how such an "unfortunate development" came to pass. In the light of his scholarly analysis of how Christian consciousness has "failed" in the past, perhaps we would all be in a better position to avoid such unfortunate developments both now and in the future. In addition, it would be a charitable gesture of recognition that Michael Morwood has at least made a gallant, if erroneous, attempt to set the record straight on the Church's "failure" to uphold the full implications of the Council of Chalcedon.

Peter Coleman, Wollstonecraft, NSW

THE CHALLENGE FOR TOMORROW'S CATHOLIC

by Michael Morwood

In the September issue of *The Mix*, we published an essay by John Thornhill, offering a critique of Michael Moewood's book, *Tomorrow's Catholic: Understanding God and Jesus in a New Millennium*. Michael Morwood replies to that critique below.

John Thornhill claims in his essay on *Tomorrow's Catholic: Understanding God and Jesus in a New Millennium* (*The Mix*, September 1999) that I have been "irresponsible" "to mislead the general reader concerning a dogma so fundamental to Christian faith". He puts my irresponsibility down to my poor knowledge of Church history.

Early in his essay, John writes that my "basic argument is that 'for the past 2000 years' Christian awareness has been dominated by a 'worldview' associated with a primitive cosmology derived from the 'fall' story of the Book of Genesis". He quotes my statement regarding the development of the doctrine of the Trinity: "The reasoning was that we human beings are not able to make up to God for the sin of our first parents; only someone from God's side, as it were, could do this. Jesus has saved us, so Jesus must be far more than merely human." He then says all this is familiar, but: "It is not 2000 years old, however; it emerged in the relatively recent past". This recent past is the "Counter Reformation" period.

I stand by my limited knowledge of Church history. St Athanasius writing on the Incarnation in the 4th century quite clearly shapes his theology within that framework. His theology of salvation is clearly dependent on a literal understanding of humankind's fall from grace at the beginning of creation. He clearly believed that humankind could not of itself restore what was lost. He wrote:

And how could this be done save by the coming of the very Image Himself, our Savior Jesus Christ? Men could not have done it, for they are only made after the Image nor could the angels have done it, for they are not the images of God. The Word of God came in his own Person, because it was He alone, the Image of the Father Who could recreate man made after the Image. (*The Incarnation*, Ch 3)

Jesus who is the Image of God then makes possible what could not be possible without him:

Now that the common Savior of all has died on our behalf, we who believe in Christ no longer

die, as men died aforetime, in fulfillment of the threat of the law. That condemnation has come to an end; and now by the grace of the resurrection, corruption has been banished and done away with, we are loosed from our mortal bodies in God's good time for each, so that we may obtain thereby a better resurrection.

We read Romans chapter 5 and we see the saving work of Jesus interpreted by Paul in the light of Adam's disobedience:

If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as a consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous (Romans 5:17-20).

In Paul's understanding, Jesus "was put to death for our sins and raised to life to justify us" (Romans 4:25).

*I have no problem with
Jesus being thoroughly
human ...
My problem is why the
early Church thinkers
thought Jesus had to be
"truly God"!*

I think I am on safe ground in presuming Augustine thought within the same framework and cemented Church thinking for centuries on Original Sin. I accept John's criticism that a distinction must be made between the atonement theory of salvation from later centuries and the early Church's understanding of a compassionate God reaching out to restore what humankind had lost through its own fault. But Augustine's thinking on Original Sin hardly puts us in touch with a compassionate God.

John thinks I misrepresent the debates of the early Church councils. However, I think he has missed one of the most central points of my book. I have no problem with Jesus being thoroughly human, and I know the councils tried to safeguard the fullness of Jesus' humanity. My problem is why the early Church thinkers thought Jesus *had* to be "truly God"! And my problem is why *no one, repeat no one*, who has offered criticism of *Tomorrow's Catholic* enters into this discussion.

Nicaea and Chalcedon have spoken. We have doctrine set in concrete. Apparently no one is allowed to question what made the

early Church thinkers believe that Jesus had to be "truly God" in order for us to share in God's divinity. All we can do is accept the doctrine on the basis that it is fundamental to Christian faith. However, the worldview and religious imagination in which they reasoned to their conclusion is light years away from what people in the 21st century will think is a reasonable framework for shaping religious faith.

The most important aspect of *Tomorrow's Catholic*, the reason I wrote it, is to challenge adult Catholics to rescue their understanding of Jesus from that outmoded worldview. Faith dependent on yesterday's (as in the 4th century) cosmology will not survive the rigorous questioning of this age. Why, in the 21st century, should Christians continue to believe that Jesus is "truly God"? Don't quote any scripture, doctrinal statement, or source that is dependent on a literal understanding of the Adam and Eve story. That's the challenge. John's focus on Anselm and the atonement theory of salvation is a distraction. It is not central to the book's thesis. The issue is whether the first human beings on this planet lost "the divine image" and Jesus won it back for us. Try articulating what you think Jesus "won" for us; examine the religious imagination at work, and ask whether it is compatible with the belief that throughout all of human history everyone who lived in love, lived in God, and God lived in them.

John stresses that the early Church writers "interpreted the world's salvation as a work of mercy and compassion of God". That's fine, but we are still left with questioning what they thought went wrong in the first place. Paul, Athanasius and Augustine make it quite clear what they thought went wrong at the beginning of humankind. I doubt that most readers of *The Mix* would agree with them.

SPIRITUALITY OF FREEDOM

by Liz Curran

The following is the major part of the presentation given by Liz Curran at Spirituality in the Pub, Notting Hill Hotel, Clayton (Vic), June 29 1999. The other speaker was David Tacey - his text will be published in a later issue.

It took me some time to consider what I would say tonight. Probably because much of my work does not revolve around freedom but around constraint. The constraints of poverty, the constraints of unemployment, the constraints of skin colour, the constraints of discrimination. So to work out what I can say tonight on the topic of the spirituality of freedom is not only a

challenge but a time to reflect and to return to some of the theological and scriptural thinking on the spirituality of freedom.

Do these two words exclude each other or can they be reconciled? Well, some answers emerge from the bible and from writings by philosophers and theologians. It does not mean though, that we are not left with more questions than answers.

William Blake, poet, once said: "Great things are done when men and mountains meet; This does not mean by jostling in the street." (*Gnomic Verses*)

My reflection for tonight has made me reflect on how much "jostling in the street" we all do on a day-to-day basis and how little time we have to reflect, contemplate, take time to get in touch with our spirituality and to free ourselves of the mortal coil.

Arturo Paoli has given the issue of the spirituality of freedom some thought in his book, *Freedom to be Free*. He notes that Genesis commences with "the Spirit of God moving over the face of the waters". And in Luke's Gospel, "and behold, I send the promise of my father upon you" (24:29). He speaks of how from that formless chaos, the creation of the world into cosmos emerged; through the spirit there slowly emerges life, its organisation and its unity - possible only if a principle of love unifies differences. He tells of how when he sees life in the world and freedom at work in the world, hope is reborn.

If we go back to Genesis we think of a world which was created perfect but which over time has led to human actions which appear more destructive than constructive. But do we also take enough time to think of the other side, of music, poetry, painting, the humanisation of the world? One example springs to mind of the origins of the Red Cross: a merchant banker, who on going to Italy, saw the ravages of battle and established a humanitarian body to care for the wounded of either side. In the Gospel, Christ's mission is to free man from the law and from death, that is from fear in order that he can be reborn in the Spirit. The spirit is freedom.

The Holy Spirit is the interior strength and clarity of a person. It is the search for truth, to be loyal and authentic. How? we ask. By, in one sense, taking the time. I guess the time to reflect, to think, to challenge or accept depending on where our search leads us. It could be intuitive, it could be experiential. But the risk with the latter is that it can tend to hinder discovery and we may also become bound in ideologies or resistant to change. If the Holy Spirit is the spirit of the truth then, according to Paoli, the root of all lies is not in the intellect or in the will. It is, rather, in our consciousness. If the Spirit is

purifying and transforming, then in the search for the truth, mankind must, if he or she has the capacity for understanding, be constantly growing.

If the spirit of freedom is attained through striving for the truth, it cannot just come from solitary inspiration to be meaningful but must happen through dialogues, encounters, reading and vital experiences.

Paoli notes that without receptiveness to the Spirit we run the risk of losing the meaning of life. In an age of increasing doubt, uncertainty and insecurity the likelihood of this occurring can increase.

In scripture, Luke tells us not to be anxious as the Holy Spirit will tell us what to say (12: 11-12). But he does not mean we sit idly by, waiting for some bolt of lightning. The whole message of Jesus was that we also have personalised choices. We can be constructive, creative or destructive. We can make choices which are cosmic, which are visionary, which can inspire ourselves and others.

Might we need to prepare ourselves for loneliness, for persecution, for making decisions that are courageous and instinctive?

The world is run by the concrete, by laws, rules, regulations, material assets, traditions - things which appear certain and solid. The spirit, on the other hand, is about creation, looking ahead, freeing ourselves. The two can provide a balance. In today's world we have crises: Do we do as we are told? Do we give up a lucrative position on a matter of principle? Do we partake in a revolution? Do we reject a system we feel is unfair and unjust and risk ridicule or censure?

These choices are personal and subjective. They are often guided by instinct - which can be creative - rather than the external function of rules, order and law. The search for truth, discussed earlier, can be critical in the choices that we make.

A testimony of the Holy Spirit is the prudence which arises from discovering and living one's responsibility in the human community and in history. It is easy to forget that we are not just a function. We are really humans.

One of the "benefits" for politicians in using statistics, rather than referring to live people and their experiences, is that so much can be hidden. So much is ridiculed if it fails to accord to benchmarks or isn't

economically feasible or effective or cost efficient.

The pressure to ignore the need for balance between the concrete and the creative is increasingly the agenda of the economic and political expediencies that surround us.

We must question ourselves on whether we have become captives of the concrete because our systems and so-called leaders program us this way. Consider the push in universities to leave behind the histories, science research, the classics, the literary and the philosophies, in the pursuit of the vocational, economics, law, marketing, advertising - hard, dry and concrete.

Where can the vision for a future come from if the balance and the search for meaning and truth - which can free us - is not encouraged or time is not taken to experience it?

There are so many questions. If we take a moral stance informed by conscience, then we might be forced to ask: What is the role of law and order in this? Where do law and order leave freedom and conscience? What does it mean to be a person searching for God with full integrity and being guided? Are there not tensions between the two? To what degree do we have the freedom to engage in our own search to enable a full flourishing of ourselves as human beings? If only the spirit of truth can free us, ought we not take more time out?

I return to Blake. There is indeed a need to "jostle in the street", to inform ourselves and to increase our understanding of the world in which we live. But if "great things" are to be achieved for ourselves, our families, the next generation and the community around us, we must have the capacity, the will and the time, to develop the spirituality of freedom which will enable clarity, vision, meaning and truth to emerge in our reflections and in our consciousness.

How can we in the modern world educate mankind in fidelity to the person, fidelity to the community, fidelity to history, conviction in religion? Might we need to prepare ourselves for loneliness, for persecution, for making decisions that are courageous and instinctive?

The scripture has said: "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). Does our heart have a role to play in the spirit of freedom?

Liz Curran is Executive Officer of the Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace. Liz has practised as a lawyer in criminal and family law and provides voluntary legal advice to the Darebin Community Legal Service. Her voluntary work also included a special project for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and the Victoria Council of Civil Liberties. Liz is also an educator and has taught here and overseas.

Words for a Pilgrim People

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 7:21)

□□□

By virtue of her mission to shed on the whole world the radiance of the Gospel message, and to unify under one Spirit all people of whatever nation, race or culture, the Church stands forth as a sign of that community which allows honest dialogue and gives it vigor. Such a mission requires in the first place that we foster within the Church herself mutual esteem, reverence and harmony through the full recognition of lawful diversity. Thus, all those who compose the one People of God, both pastors and the general faithful, can engage in dialogue with ever abounding fruitfulness. For the bonds which unite the faithful are mightier than anything dividing them. Hence, let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is unsettled, and charity in any case. (Gaudium et Spes, n 92)

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The usual purgation and healing, whether of the body or the soul, takes place only little by little and by passing from one advance to another with difficulty and patience. Although the angels on Jacob's ladder had wings they did not fly, but went up and down in order and step by step. The soul that rises from sin to devotion has been compared to the dawning day, which at its approach does not drive out the darkness instantaneously but only little by little. A slow cure, as the maxim says, is always surest. Diseases of the soul as well as those of the body come posting on horseback but leave slowly on foot. (St Francis de Sales, **Introduction to the Devout Life**, 1:5, John K Ryan trans, Image Books, 1972; 48.)

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Emotional 'diseases' can be a product of human strengths, strengths that come to be misused in a life, rather than being absent or weakened. (Richard Sennett, **The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life**, Vintage Books, 1971, 23)

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The Bible - Jesus was pretty hard on hypocrites

The prophets often speak out against hypocrisy. Amos is typical, if particularly blunt and to the point: "I hate, I scorn your festivals, I take no pleasure in your solemn assemblies. ... your oblations, I do not accept them and I do not look at your communion sacrifices of fat cattle. Spare me the din of your chanting, let me hear none of your strumming on lyres, but let justice flow like water, and uprightness like a never-failing stream" (5:21-24).

Jesus stands squarely in this prophetic tradition. Matthew's Gospel is of special interest in this regard because of a benign

Greek word to which he gives a perjorative meaning. The word is *hypokrites* which was a theatrical term meaning "actor". Matthew uses the word as we have come to know it, to denote "pretender", "dishonest person", one who does not practise what he or she preaches.

Matthew uses the word in reference to almsgiving: "So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do ... to win human admiration" (6:2). Perhaps more significantly, Matthew uses the word repeatedly in reference to "the scribes and the Pharisees" (cf 23:13-32). Sadly, too often Christians have misinterpreted Jesus' condemnation here, using it to support anti-Semitism. Jesus was not speaking against the Jews any more than the prophets were. Jesus was speaking against hypocrisy. (Compare Mt 7:21-23.)

Perhaps the tendency to use this text to rationalise anti-Semitic behaviour betrays self-anger and self-loathing. To face ourselves and the world in raw truth, without pretense, is more than we are able to bear. Even the most sincere and conscientious are vulnerable to self-evasion and flight. We can all be sure of having one genius - the genius for self-deception.

Jesus' words, as told by Matthew, apply to each of us all the time. None of us can ever claim to have dealt in any final way with our genius for self-deception. None of us can ever be absolutely sure our religious commitment is without pretense, our motivation is pure or that we are entirely free of fantasy. This is reason not to despair but to continually look beyond ourselves, to the unconditional love of God made manifest in Jesus. □

The Tradition - Choosing the inner journey

Plato records how Socrates, at his trial, defended himself by saying: "For I do nothing but about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your property, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul, (and) daily to discourse about virtue and of those other things about which you hear me examining myself and others, is the greatest good of man, and that the unexamined life is not worth living". This sense of what we might call the depth dimension or, to be more personal and dynamic, the inner journey, seems to be universally recognised by cultures throughout the human family. Huston Smith implies this when he quotes Arnold Toynbee: 'Who are the greatest benefactors of the living generation of mankind?' asks Toynbee. 'I should say: "Confucius and Lao-tze, the Buddha, the Prophets of Israel and Judah, Zoroaster, Jesus, Mohammed and Socrates".'

The authentic Christian tradition has always taken the inner journey - our life through, with and in Christ (cf eg Jn 14:23; Rom 8:10, 16; Gal 2:20) - very seriously indeed. Building on Gospel texts such as "What can you offer in exchange for your life?" (cf Mt 16:24-28; see also Mk 8:34-9:1, Lk 9:23-27 and Jn 12:25), disciples have over the centuries given themselves in various ways to the journey of increasing intimacy with the Source of all Love.

Many of those who went to the desert in the 3rd and 4th centuries considered their life the authentic Gospel life, and the life of those who had adapted to the ways of the towns and cities to be a compromise. Until recent times, a belief - more or less explicit - that priests and religious were the truly "holy" ones in the Church, is something of an

unfortunate relic of this thinking. The fact that the Second Vatican Council found it necessary to speak of the "universal call to holiness" (cf *Lumen Gentium*, ch 5) indicates that some distorted views of this matter of the inner journey had grown up within the Church. □

Taking our baptism seriously is essential to the Christian life. It requires a deliberate & concrete choice to do something to increase our awareness of who and what we are as disciples of Jesus. More importantly, it urges and invites us to become aware of who God is and what God offers in and through Jesus Christ. □

Bulletin Board

Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

• Spirituality in the Pub (SIP):

Thanks to Marie Biddle rsj

Due to increasing commitments Marie has been forced to resign as SIP Promoter and Coordinator of Volunteers. We are extremely grateful to Marie for her generous contribution in both areas. We welcome Susanna Davis as the new SIP Promoter and Margaret O'Hearn as the new Coordinator of Volunteers.

SIP Promoter – Susanna Davis is SIP Promoter and can be contacted on (02) 9798 8071.

°**Alstonville** - The Federal Hotel, 7.30-9.00pm: October 12 "Walking the Margins" (Info: Darcy on 6628 1846 or Anne on 6628 6428).

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

°**Bowral** - The Grand Bar and Brasserie, 7.30pm-9pm: October 28 "Spiritual Discernment" (Lucy Palmer & tba) (Info: John on 02 4878 5230).

°**Campbelltown** - The Catholic Club, 7.30pm-9pm: October 13 "Touching the D..." (Patricia de Laney & Timothy Quntan sj) (Info: Sr Julianne on 02 9603 3000 (W) or 02 9603 2749).

°**Canberra** - The Canberra Workers Club, Childers St, Canberra, 7.30pm-9pm: October 27 "Australian Art & Spirituality (Brian Kennedy & Sr Rosemary Crumlin) (Info: Rita on 02 6288 4715).

°**Chatswood** - Orchard Tavern, Cnr. Victoria Ave & Orchard Rd, 7.30pm-9pm: October 12 "In My Family" (Rosemary Wilson & Pam and Chris Virgona) (Info: Michelle on 9958 5963).

°**Clayton (VIC)** - The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm: October 26 "Jewish & Christian Perspectives on the Jubilee" (Margaret Coloe pbvm & Rev Erich Cahn) (Info: Ann on 9701 7076 or 9701 3740 or Joyce on 9700 1250).

°**Collingwood (VIC)** - The Vine Hotel, Cnr Wellington & Derby Sts, 8pm-9.30pm: October 6 (Topic & Speakers tba) Info: Maree on 0412 136681).

°**Glen Innes** - The Club Hotel, Grey St, 7.30pm-9pm: Monday, October 18 "What Does Spirituality Mean for Australians Today" (Michael Whelan sm & Marie Biddle rsj) Info: Kerrie on 6732 2023).

°**Kincumber** - The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive, 7.30pm-9pm: October 5 "The Power of My Story: The 'Hearth' of the

Matter" (Alain Cornish & Margaret Paton) (Info: Sue on 02 4334 3174 (H) or Clair on 02 4344 6608).

°**Newcastle** - The Hotel Delany, Darby St, 7.30pm-9pm: October 18 "Walking the Edges" (Francine Bell & tba) (Info: Gail McBurnie on 02 4979 1141 (W)).

°**Paddington** - The Bellevue Hotel, 7.30pm-9pm: October 6 "How We Live: Is a Gentler Society Possible?" (Tom Uren & Myree Harris rsj) (Info: Maree on 9387 3152 (H)).

°**Penrith** - Golf Club, 7.30pm-9pm: October 20 "Exploring our Potential to Renew the Church" (Teresa Pirola & Fr Vince Casey) (Info: Dennis on 02 4773 8429).

°**Perth** - The Elephant and the Wheelbarrow, cnr Francis and Lake Sts, Northbridge, October 27 "Into the Millennium: Spirituality in the midst of Busyness" (Prof Greg Craven & June Williams), 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: October 19 "Jewish-Christian Relationship" (Rabbi Raymond Apple & Sr Marianne Dacy) (Info: Karen on 9570 3257 or John on 9533 4939).

°**Rouse Hill** - The Mean Fiddler on Windsor Rd, 7.30pm-9pm: December 7 "Spiritual Experience in Music" (Local musicians & writers) (Info: Tim or Margaret on 9634 2927 (H)).

°**Waitara** - The Blue Gum Hotel on the Pacific Hwy, 7.30pm-9pm: October 20 "Spirituality in Action" (Sr Anita Brennan & tba) (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: November 2 "Sign of the Times? (Ruth Powell & Mike McGarrity) (Info: Jocelyn on 0412 114038).

• **Catalyst Dinner** on Friday October 15 at the Hunters Hill parish hall, cnr Mary Street and Gladesville Rd, 7.30pm - 10pm. The topic: "Australian Community and Personal Responsibility". Speakers: Tom Uren AO and Mary Leahy RSJ.

• Other news and events

° **Michael Whelan has been appointed Director of the Aquinas Academy**, commencing January 2000. He will continue to edit *The Mix* and work within Catalyst.

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° **Spirituality Courses** Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney, "Rites of Passage" October 20, 1.30-3pm & October 24, 11am-1pm (Info: Sr Jeanette Foxe on 8912 4887). "Beatitudes of our Lives" November 6, 10am-3.30pm & November 7, 11am-4pm (Info: Sr Claire Taylor on 8912 4898).

° **Men's Night of Spirituality:** St Francis Xavier's Church, Lavender Bay, Wednesday Oct 13, 7.30pm. Speakers: Tim Costello, Robert Fitzgerald, Rod West. MC: Michael Whelan. All welcome!

° **Evening of Spirituality**, October 14, 7.30pm, Mary Immaculate & St Athanasius Church, Cnr Raglan & Whistler Sts, Manly. Speakers: Claire Barbeau, David Leary & Carol Murphy. Entry free, supper provided. (Info: Mary-Anne Addington on 9938 5082).

ANNUAL APPEAL FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

UPDATE

You, our Friends, have so far generously contributed \$31,500 in response to our first Annual Appeal. As a result, we are well on the way to reaching our target of \$50,000. This has given us the confidence to advertise for someone to assist us in our mission of raising the level of good conversation in the Catholic Church in Australia. Your continued support is appreciated.

Recommended Reading

Dr Marie Macdonald et al, *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus*, Harper Collins, 1999, 496 pages, pb, \$29.95.

The four research questions behind this report (see "Our Say", page one of this issue of *The Mix*) were: What are the ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia? What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Church? What are barriers to women's participation in the Church? What are some ways in which women's participation in the Church can be increased? Responses were sought "from women and men, young and old, those who are actively involved in the Catholic Church structures and those who are not". The research, begun in 1996, revealed "the enormous contribution" of women in the life of the Catholic Church in Australia. It also revealed "a strong sense of pain and alienation ... it was perceived that little assistance and support were received from the institutional Church to undertake anything other than ancillary and support roles". The report notes: "One of the greatest challenges to emerge from the research is the need to create a range of opportunities in the Church for respectful listening and dialogue concerning the experiences, needs and aspirations of women". This is an extraordinary document, a powerful testament to deep Christian faith and solid commitment to the renewal of the Church. There is much here to stimulate and inspire. There is also much to promote urgent action.

Discerning the Australian Social Conscience, Jesuit Publications, 300 Victoria St, Richmond VIC 3121, 1999, 376 pages, endnotes, pb, \$24.95.

Frank Brennan SJ writes in the Foreword to this collection of talks: "The demands of the social conscience so often seem beyond reach and even when within reach are exhausting. There is still work to be done. We need intellectual food for the journey". The text of the 1999 Jesuit Lenten Series, presented here in *Discerning*, consists of six seminars with a wide array of presenters, responders and interlocutors. Major presentations were given by Sir Gerard Brennan, Ms Morag Fraser, Dr Bernadette Tobin, Sr Rosemary Crumlin, Dr Peter McCullagh, Dr Patricia Brennan, Mr Fred Chaney, Prof Kevin Hart and five others. Topics addressed: "Australian Values", "Personal Well-being and Social Conscience", "Science, Technology and Social Conscience", "Religion, the State and Social Conscience", "Education and Social Conscience" and "The Arts, Entertainment and Social Conscience". Some of Australia's best thinkers are represented here, giving the book an extraordinarily rich content. There are also some wonderful contrasts, like Kevin Hart's philosophical mind at the front of the book and Bruce Dawe's much more blunt and earthy one at the back of the book. Individuals and groups will find *Discerning the Australia Social Conscience* worth mining for a long time to come.

Brennan Manning, *Lion and Lamb: The Relentless Tenderness of Jesus*, Chosen Books, 1998, 190 pages, endnotes, pb, c.\$15. (Try: Koorong Discount Christian Books, 28 West Pde, West Ryde; tel 02 9857 4477; fax 02 9857 4499)

As the title of this book - now in its 15th printing - indicates, Manning is concerned with the experience of Jesus, God's incarnate presence in the world. He says he wants to focus on the unconditional love of God, "dispelling illusions and myths and helping people to experience the God of Jesus Christ. ... this is the main business of religion." Religion is not a matter of learning how to think about God, but of actually encountering him". One of the greatest enemies of the Gospel is moralism, a tragically common phenomenon in which Jesus is reduced to a moral teacher and Christianity reduced, therefore, to a moral project. The Good News is a mystical reality before it is a moral program. And the moral program will only make sense if it is born of that mystical reality. The "try harder" sermons, "grocery list" confessions and general legalism that have plagued the Catholic culture for so many generations suggest that our faith has been driven more by moralism than mysticism. Manning's style at times drifts into the pat presentation of a speaker who has had too many conference-captured audiences. Yet he offers something very worthwhile in this little book - a readable affirmation that our spirituality begins and ends with the love of God.

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