



THE MIX



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Our Say – The Olympic spirit

The French educationalist who revived the Olympic Games in Athens in 1896 – Baron Coubertin – was an idealist and a man of his times. It was Coubertin's intention to foster national and international goodwill and harmony through sport. He told a group of Olympic officials in London in 1912 that "the most important thing in the Olympic games is not winning but taking part – just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle".

A few years earlier he is also supposed to have said that "women have but one task, that of crowning the winner with garlands".

The Baron – assuming he was still alive and had not changed his earlier thinking – would have found the Sydney Olympics both satisfying and disturbing.

Coubertin's wish that the Games should foster national and international goodwill seems to have been met remarkably well in Sydney. Consider just one part of that event: The Olympic torch relay. The relay had a wonderful inclusiveness about it.

It did something to the spirit of the community. It not only brought people out of their homes, it brought them out of themselves.

And what a remarkable ritual it all was! The "mother flame" was kept nearby to re-light the torch if it blew out. The flame was kept burning in a special lamp, protected each night. Every time a cauldron was lit by a local identity the people rejoiced.

It was an Australian pilgrimage. What was actually being expressed here? Why did this strange "secular liturgy" draw us all in and make us feel so good? Why was there such a great spirit about the place when the flame arrived?

We will all have a "favourite moment" to remember about the Games. One that would have to rank among the most memorable, however, occurred at the Opening Ceremony. Six Australian women – all of them very successful Olympians – took the torch in a relay around the stadium, with one of them lighting the cauldron that burned brightly over the proceedings for the

following days of competition – the fire and the water were one.

This ritual not only recognised the participation of women in the Olympic Games over the past century – and their place in Australian history generally – it also recognised Australia's indebtedness to the Aboriginal people of this country.

An Aboriginal woman – Nova Peres Kneebone – had begun the relay at Uluru. When Cathy Freeman lit the cauldron 100 days later, it was not the technical whiz-bangery that impressed, but the forty thousand years of human history in this country, embodied in her, that we are belatedly acknowledging and still struggling to assimilate into our Western consciousness.

Catholic tradition has maintained a profound appreciation for symbol and ritual. The experience of the Olympics, among other things, reminds us of the importance of that tradition. It also reminds us of the potential that remains to be unlocked in celebrating our symbols and rituals. □

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

These are the current Members: Dominic Beirne, Patrice Beirne, Marie Biddle R SJ, Kevin Burges, Aidan Carvill SM, Susanna Davis, Marea Donovan, Geraldine Doogue, Denys Goggin, Margaret Goggin, Catherine Hammond, Sam Hammond, Regis Hickey CFC, Francois Kunc, Maryellen McLeay, Dr Chris Needs, Margaret O'Hearn, Dr Tim O'Hearn, John Robinson, Pat Robinson, Louise Sefton, John Sharples, Ruth van Herk, Michael Whelan SM, Carole Wilson

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

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

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

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The Human Face

My name is Maurice Costello. I was born in Brisbane in 1941. I'm an orthodontist, married to Glenda, and we have four adult children and three grandsons.

As an only child I grew up in a loving environment 'surrounded' by religious: two uncles were priests (Fathers Pat and Frank Costello) and an aunt was a Sister of Mercy (Sr Mary Ethelreda — Helen Costello).

Dad was active in St Vincent de Paul, while Mum was deeply devoted to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. My maternal grandmother's cousin (long deceased) was Archbishop John O'Reilly of Adelaide.

My whole life as a child, with the Good Samaritan nuns and later the Christian Brothers, seemed to be 'faith-centred'. Unfortunately, it was the era of a God of fear, and filled with rules, regulations, rituals and... scruples.

I joined the RAAF as a dental officer and, in Malaysia, stopped going to Mass, but our chaplain, Fr Terry Ganzer, a primary school classmate and friend of my uncle, Fr Frank, never once brought up the subject. We were close mates.

After 15 months it got to me, somehow, and I 'returned to the fold' of my own will. Perhaps it was the Holy Spirit, as during that time I was developing a strong interest in Eastern spiritual traditions.

Early on I had sought out the De La Salle Brothers in Penang, who gave me their school syllabus for religion. The course included Animism, Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Islam...and their relation to Christianity.

I began to realise that the Holy Spirit works in all spiritual traditions. Years later I was to discover the writings of Fr Bede Griffiths, and my spirituality 'came of age'.

Over the past 35 years I have grown to discover a wonderful God of love, a perfect parent who forgives us the instant we misbehave. I find the spirituality of Julian of Norwich particularly comforting.

Why all this fuss about penitential rites when we have all been forgiven anyway? God does not condemn us...he bathes us in love!

We all love our own children, no matter what they do. We forgive them even if they have not asked forgiveness. How much more so with God — the perfect parent!

Glenda and I have been married 32 years now. Hers has always been a 'direct' spirituality, without religious trappings. Mine has grown into a deep faith-centred one, seeing God within others, within me and in all of creation.

I am interested in astronomy and quantum physics, and find a depth of spirituality in Einstein. Creation continues

now. The only reality is the present moment... and the Risen Christ exists now.

As I see it, the Church, as we know it, is in the process of dying, but from the death will come a resurrection. The dying 'seed' of church is bathed in a nutrient broth of spirituality. There is a sea of 'searchers' anxious for spiritual discovery, people willing to let go of the past and be excited about the future.

Today's Church is different from two hundred years ago, from four hundred years ago, from the tenth- to the twelfth-century Church — which again was different from the early Church.

Yet through it all runs a thread of spirituality: Bede Griffith's Golden String, which today seems to be reaching a crescendo with the new global village. No longer will we all accept central control.

The Holy Spirit seems to be allowing a great freedom of expression from the grass roots, leading at present to a 'dark night of the soul'.

SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB
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But, as Michael Whelan said recently in *The Mix*, the desert is an exciting place for regrowth!

Let us not lose heart. True spirituality is alive and well globally, albeit in many different forms. I see meditation as a form of unification within the spiritual path — devoid of ego, devoid of 'self', with a sharing in the wonderful truth of Reality.....

Now is real. The past is gone. The future does not exist. God is within. To die is merely to let go of the ego and this world's four dimensions: length, breath, depth and time, and to become absolutely united with the Power, the Source, God, Nirvana.

What a blessing for all to look forward to!



Your Say: The spirituality of forgiveness

Dr Joy Sandefur

Reconciliation between Aborigines and other Australians

Forgiveness is more than a handshake and hollow words. An Aboriginal friend of mine was asked to go along to a church and discuss reconciliation. It turned out that what was required was for her to come along with a dozen friends, and a service of reconciliation would be held. She refused to do this, as there was no process in place to deal with the issues that had made reconciliation necessary. Nor was there any notion of working for a just outcome.

There is no spirituality in reconciliation that is merely a formality and grand sounding words. What then is forgiveness?

Forgiveness is relational. It is two people or groups of people seeking reconciliation after a wrong has been recognised and forgiveness sought.

Reconciliation is a concept that has been in the church since its inception and the primary example of this is God reconciling the human race to himself through the death of His Son Jesus Christ. We learn from this that reconciliation is costly and that it involves forgiveness. Our reconciliation to God involved far more than a few fine words.

Reflecting as a White person on what is involved in the reconciliation of Aborigines and other Australians, I have concluded that it must be a process that involves *respect for the truth, a need to work for justice, an apology that includes a request for forgiveness*. Without all these elements, there is no spirituality in asking for forgiveness for the hurt caused to Aborigines since we claimed this country.

Respect for the truth

The Indigenous people cannot offer our nation genuine forgiveness, and reconciliation cannot occur, unless there is a deep respect for the truth by both parties. We need to come to some sort of public judgement about the past before reconciliation can take place.

Facing the truth of the past is difficult for those of us who are older. The truth is contrary to what we were taught and what was accepted as truth about Aborigines. When I went to school, Aborigines were barely acknowledged. We were told that this was an empty land that was there for the taking.

There were only a few clashes between settlers and Aborigines. This was wrong. The evidence is now in the public arena. The work of C D Rowley, Henry Reynolds,

Michael Christie and many others refutes the notion that the population of a few Aborigines quietly faded away and let us have the country.

If we are going to enter into the spirituality of reconciliation and forgiveness, we must acknowledge the truth of our past treatment of Aborigines and its devastating effect on them. True reconciliation must involve matters of the spirit.

Justice

Having acknowledged the truth of the past, we need to work for a just outcome for Aborigines. It is not enough to acknowledge the past and do nothing. Reconciliation involves justice. We need to do what we can to work for justice for Aborigines. This can be done by becoming informed about Aboriginal issues and talking to your family and friends about the need for reconciliation that results in a just outcome for indigenous people. You can stand alongside of indigenous people in their struggle for justice.

Reconciliation is a concept that has been in the church since its inception and the primary example of this is God reconciling the human race to himself through the death of His Son Jesus Christ.

The Aboriginal Catholic Ministry makes five modest suggestions that it would be good to actively support. The result would be that Aborigines would feel accepted and part of the church. They would regard it as a just outcome. The five suggestions are as follows:

1. Reconciliation

A formal statement of reconciliation between the Church and Aborigines.

2. Recognition

This can be achieved by plaques hung in churches, to acknowledge the indigenous people who originally owned the land that the church is built on.

3. Restoration

The introduction of Aboriginal perspectives into homilies would restore a sense of belonging.

4. Freedom

This refers to freedom for Aborigines to celebrate the ceremonies of the church in an Aboriginal way. This would give freedom to worship in a culturally appropriate way.

5. Land

Acknowledgment of Aboriginal ownership of land by payment of a Reparation Levy towards the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne Cultural and Spiritual Centre.

Working beside Aborigines to achieve the five proposals of the ACMM would support reconciliation.

Apology

Once we have understood the truth of our past treatment of Aborigines and started to work for justice, we are ready for the next step in the process of reconciliation. This is to apologise for the wrongs of the past. An apology does not say in this situation: I am guilty. Rather, it is a recognition that our society has perpetuated a wrong and that we are sorry it happened.

Forgiveness

Having acknowledged the wrongs of the past, committed ourselves to work for justice and made an apology, we are in a position to ask for forgiveness. We should not ask Aborigines to forget the past nor can we demand forgiveness.

When we have worked through the process discussed here, we can then request forgiveness and reconciliation. In this way we go beyond mere words and handshakes and touch the spirituality that is involved in reconciliation.

By recognising this spirituality and engaging in the process, we — the church and our nation — will all be enriched. The spirituality of a genuine reconciliation will make us a better nation in the years ahead.

Dr Joy Sandefur holds the position of Worker on Aboriginal Matters for the Melbourne Anglican Diocese. This is a shortened version of her address to a Melbourne SIP.

Thank you once again for some stimulating reading. This applies to each copy of *THE MIX*.

Br. Michael McCabe, New Plymouth, N.Z.

Essay – Obedience in the church

by Michael Whelan

The following is the text of a presentation given by Michael Whelan SM at the Catalyst Dinner of April 7 this year. Sr Annette Cunliffe was the other speaker and her presentation was published in the September issue of *The Mix*.

The way we were: two symbolic moments

1. The first symbolic moment

At the beginning of the fourth century AD, there was an Egyptian in the army of Emperor Constantine, serving in North Africa. His name was Pachomius. While in the army he met a number of Egyptian Christians and when he left the army in about 314, he did as many devout followers of the Way did in those times – he went to the desert to live a life of prayer and asceticism.

Pachomius must have been an impressive man, with an obvious gift for organisation and leadership, because many other solitaries came and gathered around him. Very soon he set up, on the banks of the Nile, what was to become the first Christian communal monastery. Pachomius' rule for monastic communities is the earliest we possess in the Christian tradition.

The significance of Pachomius – or *Saint Pachomius* as he has been recognised – for our subject, lies in the fact that he instituted the notion of obedience as a formal part of monastic life. And we can get some idea of what he had in mind when we read in his *Life* of an incident at the very beginning of his monastic foundation.

Along with the good and the devout and the well-intentioned, many others much less good, less devout and certainly less well-intentioned, had also come to the desert. It seems that some of these characters turned up in Pachomius' community and created difficulties. When asked to go, they refused. They made fun of Pachomius and his rule.

The gentle and idealistic Pachomius was driven to one of those desperate moments which often gives rise to an action or discovery that is right out of proportion to that moment and has consequences far beyond it. He seized the bar of the gate for a cudgel and physically drove the malcontents out. If you were going to be part of Pachomius' community henceforth, you would do as Pachomius told you.

Given the highly significant place of St Pachomius in the history of Christian monasticism, and the highly significant role

of monasticism within the development of the Church during the first millennium, Pachomius and his exact rule of life are helpful pointers to understanding the way obedience has been seen within the Church.

2. The second symbolic moment

At the beginning of the fourteenth century AD, a millennium after Pachomius, on November 18, 1302 to be precise, Pope Boniface VIII promulgated his famous Papal Bull, *Unam Sanctam*. With King Phillip the Fair of France particularly in mind, this brief document – the English version is fewer than 1000 words – represents something of a landmark statement of papal authority. The last sentence reads: “We declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.”

Pope Boniface's statement represents a type of thinking about authority in general and papal authority in particular that pre-dates him and has long outlived him, enduring, in fact, until recent generations. The definition of Papal Infallibility at the First Vatican Council (1869-70), and more particularly the generally uncritical and simplistic understanding of that definition that flowed through to the grassroots of the Church afterwards, are well known to everyone here.

Pope Boniface's statement represents a type of thinking about authority in general and papal authority in particular that pre-dates him and has long outlived him, enduring, in fact, until recent generations.

Bishop Geoffrey Robinson, in an essay published in *The Mix* (May 1996), summed up succinctly the prevailing view of authority and obedience which pertained within the Church until October 11 1962 by quoting two previous popes. He cites, first of all, Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903):

It is beyond dispute and quite unambiguously clear, that two ranks exist in the Church that are quite different in nature: the pastor and the flock. In other words, the leader and the people. The first of these two ranks has the role of teaching, governing and directing people in life, and establishing the necessary rules. The other has the

duty of submitting itself to the former, obeying him, carrying out his orders and paying him honor.

Bishop Robinson then goes on to cite Pope Pius X (1903-1914):

In the hierarchy alone reside the power and authority necessary to move and direct all the members of the society to its end. As for the many, they have no other right than to let themselves be guided and so follow their pastor as an obedient flock.

The way we are: two more symbolic moments

1. The first symbolic moment

On the morning of October 11, 1962 the Second Vatican Council began at St Peter's Basilica in Rome. When Pope John XXIII arrived at the doors of St Peter's he did something very simple, which could have meant almost nothing if it had not been done in that place at that moment by that man. Archbishop Derek Worlock of Liverpool, who witnessed the moment, recalled it twenty years later in the following way:

When (Pope John) reached the doors of St Peter's, he ordered that the *sedes gestatoria* lowered to the ground. There he dismounted from his portable throne and made his way on foot up the length of the council chamber: the Bishop of Rome amidst his brother bishops of the universal Church.

This was a profoundly symbolic moment, one that signaled things to come. In that walk, Pope John XXIII crossed a line in history. There will be no going back.

In this context it is interesting to note that Pope Benedict XV (1914-22), appalled at the carnage of the First World War and anxious to promote reconciliation, especially between Catholics on both sides, had contemplated an ecumenical Council. It never eventuated.

Pope Pius XII (1939-58) similarly is said to have toyed with the idea of a Council in the late nineteen forties. His concern was slightly different from that of Benedict, however. Pius wanted to condemn certain modern errors and define the dogma of the Assumption. In fact, he handled the former with his encyclical *Humani Generis* (“On Some False Opinions which Threaten to Undermine the Catholic Doctrine”) on August 12, 1950, and the latter on November of the same year with his Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*. We can probably be grateful that Pius XII did not

call the Council, as it is difficult to see how, in the historical context, it would have been as effective as the Council which was eventually convoked by John XXIII roughly a decade later.

2. The second symbolic moment

On July 25 1968, Pope Paul VI published his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* ("Of Human Life"). Despite appearances to the contrary, this symbolic moment had little or nothing to do with sexuality or procreation. Rather, it had everything to do with authority and obedience.

Bishops' Conferences around the world did their best at that time to respond more or less coherently and compassionately to the cries of their people in reaction to this encyclical. Our own Bishops' Conference wrote in a Pastoral Letter of 1974 to the priests of Australia (indicating that they too had "crossed the line" with John XXIII):

It is not impossible that an individual may fully accept the teaching authority of the Pope in general, may be aware of his teaching in this matter, and yet reach a position after honest study and prayer that is at variance with the papal teaching. Such a person could be without blame; he certainly would not have cut himself off from the Church; and in acting in accordance with his conscience he could be without subjective fault.

Behind the scenes there was a vigorous attempt to have this teaching of our Bishops' Conference reversed. It is reflected, for example, in a minor – and unfortunate – subsequent document – a "message from the Episcopal Conference to the Directors of Catholic Family Planning Centres" in 1976. In that "message" it is stated that the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* "binds the consciences of all without ambiguity and excludes the possibility of a probable opinion opposed to this teaching".

Occasionally to this day you will hear some Catholics choose to refer to this latter "message" as if it abrogated the teaching given in the earlier Pastoral Letter. Again, the issue at stake is one of understanding authority and obedience within the Church.

The way we might be: two probes

1. The first probe

On Thursday of the Third Week of Lent, the First Reading in the Eucharistic Liturgy was from Jeremiah 7:23-28. The Jerusalem Bible translation which most of us would have used, began that reading: "Listen to my voice, then I will be your God." The Hebrew word translated here as *listen*, is *shema*. The Revised Standard Version, as well as some other versions, translates

shema in this passage as *obey*.

The notion of obedience in the best of the biblical tradition – reflected in both the Hebrew and Greek languages – is first and foremost about *paying attention, listening intelligently* with a view to *hearing* – actually *HEARING* – what is happening, what is required, what is asked so that action can follow accordingly. What is more, this is all focused on the Covenant. Whatever other applications there might be for the notion of obedience, they must be relative to and reflective of the Covenant, that intimate relationship of liberating love God has forged with His people.

For us as Christians, that Covenant is the New Covenant sealed in the blood of Christ. Any understanding of obedience must find its meaning in that relationship with God in Christ. Obedience will always be about intelligent listening, about being thoughtful and alert, attentive to the ways of God revealed in Christ.

It is an obedience that, for the most part, will look for all the world like "doing as you are told". But there will be times – probably very rare – when a thoroughgoing embrace of Christian obedience may look more like disobedience because you will refuse to do as you are told. And you will take that stand – and you might even cause some distress, even temporary chaos in doing so – precisely because you are obedient in the best Christian sense of the term. And this may apply with regard to Church law and practice as well as the law and practice of the civil order.

In the depths of their conscience, human beings detect a law which they do not impose upon themselves, but which holds them to obedience.

The Second Vatican Council pointed in this direction when it wrote in *Gaudium et Spes* ("Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World"):

In the depths of their conscience, human beings detect a law which they do not impose upon themselves, but which holds them to obedience. Always summoning them to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to their heart: do this, shun that. For human beings have in their hearts a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of being human; according to it they will be judged (cf. Rm 2:15-16). Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of the human person. (16)

2. The second probe

Much of our thinking and talk about

obedience has focused more on *behaviour* than the *person* who is behaving. Given the biblical foundations of our understanding about obedience, we must first think of the person, the subject who is called to listen, hear and heed, and why that subject is called to listen, hear and heed.

To be a person is to be in relationships. We find our fulfillment as human beings in and through relationships: with God – however we name that One – with ourselves, with other people and with the physical world around us. Our beings and our potential fulfillment demand that we pay attention to who and what we are, listening to what is going on so that we can heed. In other words, to be human demands obedience in the best biblical sense of that word.

Conclusion

In the nineteen thirties a whole new theology was developing. Without denying the validity of the Thomistic tradition, some theologians were exploring other options. In particular, they were opening up a broader understanding of the Church, of the laity and their role within the Church, of the liturgy and of ecumenism. Among the leaders of this new theology was a Dominican priest by the name of Yves Congar.

In the year that Pope Pius XII published his encyclical *Humani Generis* – in which "the new theology" was condemned – Rome moved strongly against Congar and his colleagues. Congar was exiled to Jerusalem and required to submit to Rome everything he wrote at that time. Fr Congar – like a number of others similarly treated (eg Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou, Hans von Balthasar and Karl Rahner), submitted. He did as he was told.

The fact that Yves Congar and the other "new theologians" were subsequently vindicated, that they were later to become the guiding lights of the Second Vatican Council and the beginnings of the renewal of the Church, is not the reason to commend their willingness to submit. They are commendable because of their genuine obedience, and that obedience is not found in their doing as they were told. It is found rather in the fact that they listened to and heard a deeper, all-encompassing Covenantal reality. They were rooted in a stream of life that far outstrips the pettiness of the most petty and fearful Church bureaucrat. Yves Congar, who died on June 22 1995, remains for me an example of obedience in the Church.

Michael Whelan SM is Director of the Aquinas Academy, Executive Director of Catalyst for Renewal and Editor of The Mix.

Words for a Pilgrim People

'What were you arguing about on the road?' They said nothing because they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. (Mark 9:33-34)

□□□

A sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary human beings and the demand is increasingly made that people should act on their own judgment, enjoying and making use of a responsible freedom, not driven by coercion but motivated by a sense of duty. The demand is likewise made that constitutional limits should be set to the powers of government, in order that there may be no encroachment on the rightful freedom of the person and of associations. This demand for freedom in human society chiefly regards the quest for the values proper to the human spirit. It regards, in the first place, the free exercise of religion in society. This Vatican Council takes careful note of these desires. It proposes to declare them to be greatly in accord with truth and justice. ... First, the Council professes its belief that God himself has made known to humankind the way in which people are to serve him, and thus be saved in Christ and come to blessedness. We believe that this one true religion subsists in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, to which the Lord Jesus committed the duty of spreading it abroad among all peoples. Thus he spoke to the apostles: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined upon you" (Mt 28:19-20). On their part, all are bound to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and his Church, and to embrace the truth they come to know, and to hold fast to it. This Council likewise professes its belief that it is upon the human conscience that these obligations fall and exert their binding force. The truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it makes its entrance into the mind at once quietly and with power. (*Dignitatis Humanae* ("Declaration on Religious Freedom"), 1.

The Bible – Living is seeing

At the very end of Chapter 10 in Mark's Gospel – immediately prior to Mark's description of the final days of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem – there is one of the most lively stories of the Gospels. Jesus is leaving Jericho "with the disciples and a great crowd" (v46) and there is a blind beggar sitting by the road. Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark seems to go out of his way to name this man: "Bartimaeus, that is the son of Timaeus". Again, Mark is more definite than the other two Gospel writers about what happens next: "When heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout and cry out, 'Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me'" (v47).

Let us pause at this point in the story. There is a naïveté in Mark's telling of the story – a naïveté that would suggest the conclusion that more and more serious scholars are espousing, that Jesus did perform miracles. You see, the miracle is, in a sense, taken for granted in this story. Jesus' granting the man's sight is a sign of something much more important happening between the two of them. This story, in fact, is essentially a story of faith – the relationship with Jesus to which we are all called. This man names Jesus – he is "Son of David". This is equivalent to saying: "You are the one we have awaited!". Bartimaeus *already sees*.

Faith is a healing and liberating relationship with Jesus Christ.

Let us continue with the story. Jesus stops and asks them to call Bartimaeus over and "throwing off his cloak he jumped up and went to Jesus" (v50). This is no ordinary blind beggar! There is passion and urgency about this man. You get the distinct feeling that he will do *anything* for this Jesus. "Then Jesus spoke: 'What do you want me to do for you?'" (v51). Too obvious a question? No, there is a drama unfolding here, two people in dialogue. One of them is the Christ, the other is humanity. Our need must be felt, acknowledged, named. We must cry out directly to Jesus for help.

"Rabbuni, let me see again." Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has saved you.' At once his sight returned and he followed him along the road." (v52). The essential import of the story is confirmed again. It is about *faith* and faith is a healing and liberating relationship with Jesus Christ. In Him, living is seeing. □

The Tradition – Seeing as knowing

Throughout the tradition there is a strong tension maintained between, on the one hand, our *ability to know* God and on the other hand our *inability to know* God. This tension gives rise to the two rivers of life that intermingle in the tradition – the *apophatic way* and the *kataphatic way*. The first – also referred to as the *via negativa* – proceeds by way of *negation*, constantly reminding us that whatever we say of God can only, at best, give us a place to stand, as it were, from which we gaze towards the divine horizon. The second – also referred to as the *via positiva* – proceeds by way of *affirmation*, constantly reminding us that we can and must speak of God and that this can be done coherently.

The metaphor of *seeing* helps protect both poles of this tension in our knowledge of God. St Gregory of Nyssa (330-395), in his sermon *On the Beatitudes*, writes: "The way that leads to the knowledge of the divine nature is inaccessible to our reason. ... Such then is He Whose essence is above every nature, invisible, incomprehensible. Yet he can be seen and apprehended in another way, and the ways of this apprehension are numerous. For we can see Him, who has made all things in wisdom (Psalm 103:24), by the process of inference through the wisdom that is reflected in the universe. It is just as in human works of art, where the mind can in a sense see the author of the ordered structure that is before it, in as much as the artist has left the artistry in the work of art. But notice that what we see here is not the substance of the craftsman, but merely the artistic skill that he has impressed in his work. So too, when we consider the order of creation, we form an image, not of the substance but of the wisdom of Him who has done all things wisely. Again, when consider the origin of human life, how God came to create humanity not out of any necessity but merely by the goodness of his free will, we say that we again contemplate God in this way, but it is His goodness and not His essence that is the object of our knowledge". □

The metaphor of seeing helps protect both poles of this tension in our knowledge of God.

Bulletin Board

Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

SIP Promoter – Terry O'Loughlin on (02) 16 4262 or (02) 9816 5091.

email: terry_catalyst@hotmail.com

[NSW and ACT – 7.30-9.00pm unless specified].

◦ **Boorowa** – The Boorowa Hotel, October 12 “Where’s God in Suicide?” Faye Green & Neil Harrigan (Info: Margaret 6201 9802 or Christine 6385 3304).

◦ **Bowral** – The Grand Bar and Brasserie, October 26 “Unity in Diversity” Monica Attard & Harry Graves (Info: John 4878 5230).

◦ **Campbelltown** – resumes 2001 (Info: Sue Brinkman 4627 2953).

◦ **Canberra** – ‘The Australian Story’ - The Canberra Workers Club, Childers St, Canberra, October 25, Topic & Speakers tba (Info: Rita 6288 4715).

◦ **Chatswood** – ‘Sowing Seeds: Fostering Growth’ Orchard Tavern, Cnr. Victoria Ave & Orchard Rd, October 16 “Home: ‘Home sweet home’ – at what cost?” Terry Meagher & Pat McDermott (Info: Michelle 9958 5963).

◦ **Five Dock** – The Illinois Hotel, Cnr Parramatta Rd & Arlington St, October 25 “Developing Gross Domestic Happiness: Building Bridges between Communities” Eva Cox & Fr John Usher (Info: Noeline 9744 8141).

◦ **Jamberoo** – The Jamberoo Hotel, October 9 “Hope and Courage”, Brian Stoney sj & tba (Info Anne 4232 1062 or Gaye 4232 2735).

◦ **Glen Innes** – The Club Hotel, Grey St, (Info: Kerrie 6732 2023).

◦ **Kincumber** – ‘Proclaim Jubilee’, The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive, November 14 “Jubilation – Prepare a Feast!” Dinner with Guest Speakers tba (Info: Robbie 4390 0370 or Clair 4344 6608).

◦ **Newcastle** – The Mary Ellen Hotel, Glebe Rd, Merewether, “The Seven Deadly Sins” October 16 ‘Lust’; November 20 ‘Wrath’ Speakers tba (Info: Lawrence 4967 6440).

◦ **Paddington** – The Bellevue Hotel, Resumes 2001 (Info: Maree 9387 3152 (H)).

◦ **Penrith** – Golf Club, October 18 “What is the Role of the Church in the new century” Fr Paul Roberts & Freda Whitlam (Info: Dennis 4773 5521).

◦ **Wentworth Hill** – The Mean Fiddler on Windsor Rd, November 14 “Our Spiritual Story in Music” tba (Info: Tim or Margaret 9634 2927 (H)).

◦ **Waitara** – ‘Living the Gospel: What Sort

of People Do We Want to Be’ -The Blue Gum Hotel on the Pacific Hwy, October 18 “Your life may be the only Gospel some people will ever read” Rev Bede Heather & Rev Peter Miller (Info: Kathryn 9983 0162)

◦ **Wollongong** – Mt Kembla Hotel, Mt Kembla, November 13, Topic & Speakers tba (Info: Tom 4228 5038).

Other States:

◦ **Ballarat (VIC)** – (Info: Kevin 03 5332 1697).

◦ **Clayton (VIC)** – The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm: November 28 “Healing the Inner Person, Healing Ourselves” Mary Ellen Davis & Jack Stewart (Info: Yvonne 9700 7340 or Joyce 9700 1250).

◦ **Collingwood (VIC)** – The Vine Hotel, Cnr Wellington & Derby Sts, 8pm-9.30pm. (Info: Maree 0412 136681).

◦ **Geelong (Info: Denis 03 5275 4120).**

◦ **Mordialloc (VIC)** – The Kingston Club Hotel, 7.30pm-9pm, October 25 “Women and Men in Partnership”, Dr Marie McDonald & Graeme Holmes (Info: Maria 9579 4255).

◦ **Spirituality Café, Rosanna**, October 6 “Aboriginal Spirituality”; November 3 “Spirituality and mental health” Ros Cairns (Info: Marian 9459 4403).

◦ **Devonport (TAS)** – Molly Malone’s Irish Pub, 7.30pm-9pm, Last Wednesday of each month (Info: Fr Richard Ross 6424 2783).

◦ **Fortitude Valley (QLD)** – Dooley’s, First Monday of month (Info: Lois 3260 7384).

◦ **Perth** – The Elephant and the Wheelbarrow, Northbridge, 7.30pm-9pm (Info: Michael 9448 2404).

SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB

COMMUNITY WEBSITE

[http://communities.ninemsn.com.](http://communities.ninemsn.com.au/SpiritualityinthePub)

[au/SpiritualityinthePub](http://communities.ninemsn.com.au/SpiritualityinthePub)

Other Matters and Events

◦ **Mount St Benedict Centre**, Pennant Hills, “Understanding you and your Personality” October 27-29; “Jubilee Time” November 18; “The Carlson Chorale” November 26 (Info: 9484 6208).

◦ **Spirituality Courses Mary MacKillop Place**, North Sydney, “Women in our Salvation Story” October 25, 1.30-3pm, October 29, 11am-1pm (Info: Sr Jeanette Foxe on 8912 4887). “Introduction to the New Testament” October 9, 11am-1pm; “Guided Meditations on the Gospels” November 13 & 20, 11am-1pm (Info: Sr Elizabeth

Crilly on 9954 9688).

◦ **Reflection Morning** October 21st, 9.30am – 12.30pm, Parish Hall, cnr Mary St & Gladesville Rd, Hunters Hill. All welcome.

SIP ORGANISERS’ WEEKEND LIVE-IN

A special weekend for those involved in running SIPs – November 18/19. Let us support and encourage each other. **Even if you are not yet part of the formal SIP network, we would love you to join us for this event.** (Info on 02 9816 4262)

◦ **Catalyst Dinner** Friday October 13, cnr Mary St and Gladesville Rd, Hunters Hill, 7pm for 7.30pm. Topic: “A Conversation on Justice” Speakers: Terry O’Connell and Julia Ryan (Info: Pauline 9816 4262).

◦ **Appeal for Volunteers** to help organise Reflection Days. Please phone Carole Wilson 9869 1036 or CFR office 9816 4262.

◦ **‘Why I Love This Land’** Hunters Hill Parish and Kuri-Ngai Partners are holding a dinner as a way of meeting and sharing with Aboriginal people different stories about this land, October 20, 7.30pm, Parish Hall, Cnr Mary St & Gladesville Rd, Hunters Hill. Tickets \$35 (cheques payable to Kuri-Ngai Partners) available from Mary-Ann Knoblanche 9816 2273. Tables of 6 can be booked. All profits from this night to produce a Newsletter which allows the voices of Aboriginal people to be heard and for spirituality weekends for family groups.

◦ **Richard Rohr** will be the guest of Aquinas Academy in November in Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane, Adelaide and Newcastle (Info: Patricia on 02 9247 4651).

◦ **Eremos Workshop** November 11 ‘The Body at Play and the Body at Rest: An Interplay workshop’, Rod Pattenden, Trish Watts, Sue Pain, Maree Haggerty, 9.30am-4pm, Centre for Ministry, 16 Masons Drv, North Parramatta (Info 9683 5096).

APPEAL FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

We have launched our Second Annual Appeal by writing to our *Friends* to help us in our mission of raising the level of good conversation in the Australian Catholic Church. Thank you for your generous response last year which enabled us to employ our Projects/Development Manager.

Recommended Reading

Garry Wills, *Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit*, Doubleday, 2000, 320 pages, index, endnotes, hb, \$US20 from *amazon.com*.

Fifty years ago a book with this title would almost certainly have been a bigoted diatribe against “the whore of Babylon” – aka the Roman Catholic Church. The times have changed. This book is a measured and constructive critique by a highly reputable academic historian who also happens to be a Catholic. His particular concern is the way the papacy has developed in modern times. Wills argues that, contrary to the straightforward and open manner of Jesus, the papacy has tended to align itself with the manipulative and obfuscating manner of the world. Not only does this lead to dissembling and other forms of speech and behaviour that hide rather than expose the truth, it tends to lead to the very obstructive conviction that we cannot admit we were wrong. Wills writes: “There is nothing here as clear-cut as simple lying. That is why I speak of the ‘structures of deceit’ that recruit people almost insensibly to quiet cosmetic labours buttressing the church by ‘improving’ its substructure.” Such ‘structures of deceit’, Wills argues, beget an environment where it is increasingly impossible to speak with the simple directness and truthfulness with which Jesus spoke. As a consequence, the Church’s mission in the world is undermined and change seems like betrayal. This is a timely and challenging book, written with intelligence and compassion by a Catholic. Recommended.

Charles R Morris, *American Catholic: The Saints and Sinners who Built America’s Most Powerful Church*, Random House, 1997, 511 pages, endnotes, index, photographs, hb. (Also available from Vintage as pb - \$US13.50 from *amazon.com*.)

Perhaps this book is inappropriately named as it deals mostly with the Irish roots of American Catholicism. (Not much is said of the Eastern European immigrants and Hispanic Catholics.) Yet *American Catholic* has much to recommend it. Australian Catholics will find in it many resonances. Morris makes a fairly obvious point that is too often overlooked: Catholicism in the US is “as much a culture as a religion”. He goes on: “The story of American Catholicism is therefore the story of the rise and triumph of a culture, and the religious crisis that has ensued in the wake of that culture’s breakdown. Most of the Church’s much publicised recent problems – the financial, sexual and other scandals that are blazoned across the front pages – can be understood as the floundering of an institution suddenly forced to make its way solely as a religion, shorn of the cultural supports that had been the source of its strength.” The questions that arise are not peculiar to the US: What is “the Church”? What are we renewing? What is the authentic Gospel tradition? What is negotiable and what is not negotiable? What matters in the end? Despite the fact that the content of this book is specifically American, the patterns and processes it uncovers are universal. Recommended.

Donald B Cozzens, *The Changing Face of the Priesthood: A Reflection on the Priest’s Crisis of Soul*, The Liturgical Press, 2000, index, footnotes, 148 pages, pb, c \$30.

Donald Cozzens began his ordained priesthood the year the Second Vatican Council finished – 1965. “As the vision of the council became ever-clearer,” writes Cozzens, “the cultic, pre-conciliar model of priesthood entered into a creative balance with the servant-leader model. The clear identity, the unquestioned status, the exalted privilege – features that helped priests deal with the sacrifices and crosses inherent to their vocation – began to blur.” Cozzens is currently president-rector and professor of pastoral theology at St Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology in Cleveland, Ohio. He reflects on “the state of the priesthood at the close of the twentieth century”. Themes include identity, integrity, sexuality, friendship, the betrayal of our young, preaching and the changing face of the priesthood. This book is remarkable for both its honesty and its wisdom. There are no definitive answers here. But readers will find themselves in the company of a deeply committed and intelligent Catholic priest as he faces the needs, limits and possibilities of those human beings called God to serve as ordained priests. Sometimes poignant and sad, always honest and hopeful, *Priesthood* is currently the best thing written on this subject. Compulsory reading for priests, highly recommended for others.

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