



# THE MIX



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## Our Say – A new season is dawning

On October 11<sup>th</sup> 1962, Pope John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council with a speech commencing *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (“Mother Church Rejoices”). A few months ago the world’s media carried a story from Rome that the standard English translations of the Pope’s Latin language address contained deliberate mistranslations designed to give it a more progressive slant than the Pope had intended. It was said that key qualifications had been omitted.

In June this year, to coincide with the exposition of the late Pope’s remains on the feast of Pentecost, the Vatican newspaper published parts of the speech as set out in the official record (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*) “retranslated from the Latin so that Pope John’s method may appear with clarity”.

Some of the relevant sentences (with the restored omissions italicised) read:

“... that the present time what is needed is that the entire Christian teaching *with no part omitted*, be accepted by all in our time with fresh zeal, with serene and tranquil minds, as it still shines forth in the Acts of the Council of Trent and First Vatican Council ... it is necessary that

*such certain and immutable doctrine, to which we owe the obedience of faith*, be scrutinised and expounded with the method that our times require. One thing is the deposit of faith *and the truths contained in our venerable doctrine*, another thing is the way they are announced, *with the same meaning and the same content*”.

In fact, the story was not new. Peter Hebblethwaite, in his 1984 biography of Pope John XXIII, mounts a convincing case that the qualifications were not the Pope’s, but were subsequently inserted into the official record by curial officials. Hebblethwaite concludes that when the Pope discovered what had been done, “he was too canny to sack the editor of *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. He simply quoted himself, in the original non-edited version, in important speeches”.

Whatever Pope John XXIII may have intended to say, the very event of the Council – which ushered in a radically different style of Catholicism – and its documents, are much more important. In the Council itself – the highest authority in the

Church when it is sitting – we have an incarnational reality, an actual event of history, where the Spirit of God moved in our midst in most powerful ways. Pope John XXIII prayed – and urged the whole Church to pray – for a “new Pentecost” to emerge out of the Second Vatican Council. The “new Pentecost” did begin with the Council and continues to unfold today. That Council began to chart new waters for the barque of Peter.

It seems, nevertheless, that Vatican II’s inheritance remains controversial. If we are to avoid useless and damaging conflict, we must deliberately, intelligently and wisely promote good conversation – the Catholic genius for diversity in unity and unity in diversity must be nurtured. With this issue of *The Mix* is a document which sets out the theme that *Catalyst* has selected to continue the conversation for renewal during the period leading up to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Council. We look forward to your participation. □

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

## THE HUMAN FACE

I was born into a close extended family, the sixth of seven children. Like his five brothers who each had properties in the local area, my father ran a wheat and sheep property. My parents were very happily married and were always a great support to each other. My mother had grown up on the land.

Being Catholic was a taken-for-granted part of family life. We travelled to Boggabilla (northern NSW) for Sunday Mass each week and regularly prayed the family rosary. I recall that my father always carried with him a pocketknife and a pair of rosary beads - symbols of his life on the land and his devotion to the faith. Our family was blessed to have wonderful parents who were both people of faith and very hospitable to others.

I attended primary school as a weekly boarder at the local Catholic co-ed boarding school in Goondiwindi - in my eyes, this town was world famous long before Gunsynd! I remember my primary years as very happy ones. I was even coached in cricket by a young Fr. John Bathersby (now Bishop of Brisbane).

I began secondary school at Nudgee College in Brisbane. With the sudden death of my father, we moved to Sydney and I completed the final years of school at Waverley College. Sadly, my mother also died before I completed my schooling.

The loss of both my parents in my late teenage years gave me an enduring sense of not taking the good things in life for granted and of seeking to find meaning in the midst of suffering.

My primary school years began at the same time as the second Vatican Council was getting underway. I began school with a revised Catechism and ended it with discussions of Eric Fromm's *The Art of Loving!* Like many of my generation, I have lived in a Church and society of extraordinary change.

After my initial teacher training at Mt St Mary's Teachers' College at Strathfield, I went on to university and to teach in four secondary schools in Sydney. I have held various positions of responsibility and have learnt many valuable lessons from the students I have taught.

My years in Catholic Education have been satisfying and fulfilling. It remains a real challenge to invite students into our religious tradition, while respecting and understanding the 'world of meaning' that each generation adopts.

During the early 1990's, I studied at the Catholic Theological College at Hunters Hill where I completed a Masters degree in Theology. I owe a great deal to the Marist Fathers who ran the CTU. As with many of

my fellow students, this was a very enriching time in my life - in developing friendships and in strengthening an informed and living faith. Through these studies, I developed a deep knowledge and respect for the distinctive genius of the Catholic Tradition, and I have sought to share something of this through my work.

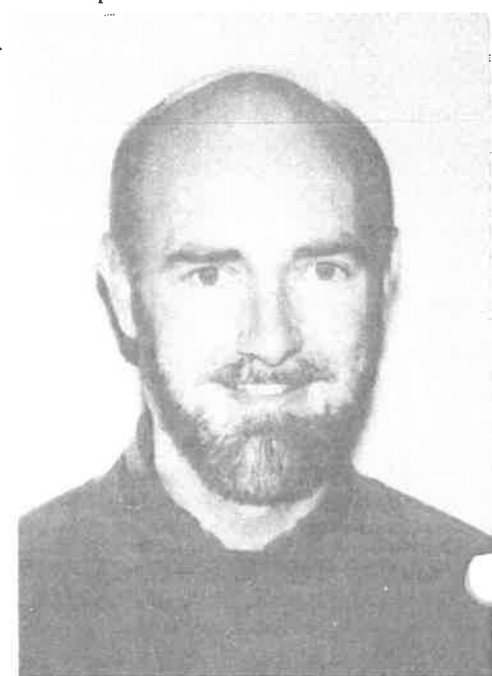
In my current role in Catholic Education, I have had the privilege and challenge to lead and implement the project "*A Sense of the Sacred*", a Values Integration Project across all the key learning areas. It is a project that seeks to illuminate all knowledge with the light of faith, and seeks to bring faith into dialogue with the life, learning and contemporary culture of youth.

Along with worship in my parish and my work in Catholic education, I am involved in the Christian Meditation Network [where members support one another in the practice of simple Benedictine prayer and meditation] and in 'Think Globally, Act Locally' [where a group of volunteer teachers and Caritas workers provide opportunities for Peace and Justice education and outreach for young people].

These two involvements support both the 'journey inwards' and the 'journey outwards'.

This year I have been invited to be part of 'Catalyst for Renewal'. I value being part of a group which promotes all that is essential and life-giving in the Catholic tradition, while seeking to be a forum for honest and respectful dialogue. This is a worthy idea, given the diversity and pace of change within our own Church and the broader society.

In the midst of change, I am mindful that it is God's creation, and it is our place to be attentive and responsive to the mystery of God's spirit at work in our lives.



Paul Durkin

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

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

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

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## DIVORCE: THE AFTERMATH

"Annie"

(Full name and address supplied)

What dreams young girls dream! I know that my dreams were to marry, have a family and live happily ever after. That's how it generally was for most of my peers who were married in the late sixties. The feminist movement was there, but in our group it tended not to touch us in any significant way. We were not far removed in our thinking from that of a decade earlier, where the woman's place was in the home and there she could find a safe haven.

As life has many twists and turns, a safe haven can become a place of suffering through alcohol, violence or mental abuse — to name a few. One of these was my suffering and, after many years of counselling, the marriage came to an end.

First the separation and then the divorce courts. When all has been finished and the last of the signatures have been placed, the real lessons of life start. After a year, you receive a piece of paper that says all has finished, and many years of marriage have ceased. You think you can then get on with your life.

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**The break-up may have been handled in a dignified way, but guilt continues to rise and fall at unexpected times.**

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This is where you get the law versus the human condition: The law says you are not married, but the human heart is full of many emotions.

The divorce never ends. The faces of the children caught in between remind you that, ultimately, they are the victims. They have to face the anger of both parents towards each other. They sometimes have to contend with the confusion of living in two places in rotation. They also have to deal with the competition of the parents trying to outdo each other for affection and in material ways, too.

The list goes on and, when these children grow up and finally make their own way, they then have to face the many celebrations that go with life: graduations, marriages and then maybe christenings. All the time they have to balance things with both parents, trying not to give more to one than the other.

For many couples one area that hurts the most is the guilt. The break-up may have been handled in a dignified way, but guilt continues to rise and fall at unexpected times. Offering moral assistance to the children can be one of these times. This can make many couples feel impotent, as they feel inadequate in their own lives.

The pain of divorce is enormous and insidious, for it never seems to go away. Just when you think it has all settled down, some other problem arises.

I know I have painted a very disturbing picture, but these are the facts. Some people are definitely better off after their divorce, especially those without children but, for the majority of those with whom I share, it is the same story: the pain never seems to go away.

The dreams of all couples — to live happily ever after and to see their old age out together — is a good one and well worth fighting for. But for those of us whose dreams did not eventuate, I believe our hope is to be found in the acceptance of what is. There is nothing we can change about the past, but much can be done about the present.

It has been ten years since my divorce, and I have had much time to reflect. I remember the first words my sister spoke to me on finding out I was divorced: "Well, now you will be a marginal person".

Those words stung deeply for some time, until I stopped and thought: "Well, what if I am a so-called 'marginal' person? So be it. At least I can understand and empathise with a great number of people". That in itself has humbled me.

In my acceptance of the divorce, I have found great peace with God and, in time, I have developed my sense of worth. This in turn has brought me closer to my children. I now have the energy and enthusiasm to pursue my interests.

The divorce took its toll on me and will do so in a lesser way as time goes on, but I'm also aware it will be with me till the day I die.

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**There is nothing we can change about the past, but much can be done about the present.**

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Perhaps it is right to call divorce a form of death, but Christ's resurrection has given me great hope of healing, forgiveness and new life. The dreams I had as a young girl were right for those times, but I have big-

ger and greater dreams now and much living to do!

## "LORD, YOU SEDUCED ME"

Patrick Sharpe, MSC

In a letter published in *The Tablet* in February this year, Fr Jeff Cridland wrote, "Priesthood is a mystery. I think most enjoy it." Perhaps this touches the deep reality of what it means to be a priest. I know that some people have expressed surprise at the quotation from Jeremiah on the card I have prepared to mark this point in my priestly life: "Lord, you seduced me and I let myself be seduced. You overpowered me and you prevailed, for you were the stronger (Jer. 20:7).

The path to Orders was not an easy one. There were times when I seriously considered leaving. The road since Orders has also not been a highway. There have been rough bits, dirt roads, sidetracks that have made the journey difficult. Both as a student and a priest, I have seen others leave — others, whom I considered much better suited to be a priest than I am. But the seduction continues, and they have left, yet I am still here. The mystery deepens.

My ordination card has a very 1950s picture of Jesus imparting a blessing. Across it are the words, *Vobiscum sum*, "I am with you". Not, "will be", but "am". The present tense. The presence of Jesus in all our lives is a "now" reality. It is not a promise about the future, but about now. Perhaps, in some unknown way, it is the promise on that card that has kept me going, especially through those difficult times, when giving up might have been the easier thing to do. ...

Priesthood is not introspective, but a ministry of service to others and, as a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, it is very much about capturing people in the net of Jesus' love. ... Seduced by that love myself, I can't but accept the invitation of Jesus to help others be seduced by that same love.

Besides the teaching and parish apostolates to which I have been officially appointed, there are many other fields in which I have been able to bring the love of Christ to others. ...

Yes! Priesthood is a mystery. And yes! I think I am still enjoying it. Seduction can be just so enjoyable.

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*Excerpts from a speech by Fr Sharpe on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.*

# Essay – Born me – why scorn me?

by Patrick Bishop

The following are the notes used by Pat Bishop for his presentation at Spirituality in the Pub, The Union Hotel, North Sydney, April 9, 2001.

How does the Catholic Church deal with homosexuality. Three stories that, I believe, are pertinent:

The first: Each year, Rev. Fred Nile and his followers stand near the starting point of Sydney's Mardi Gras Parade, carrying placards announcing to gays and lesbians that they are damned to hell for being homosexual. About four years ago, I was getting ready to march in the Parade with the Quakers. We carried placards that read "Ignorance → Fear → Violence".

A member of one of the other Church groups came up to us and invited us to join their response to Fred Nile's group when the Parade got under way. They planned to stop and sing out "We're praying for you, too, Fred!" After the man had left, the Quaker leader said, "No, we won't do that: it's not the Quaker way. When we get to Fred, we can stop, turn our placards towards his group in silence – then turn back and keep going". We did just that – and I was impressed with the real dignity and authenticity of the Quaker response and the scorn of their "Christian" violence.

The second story? It's how, as a fearful Catholic priest, I did violence to a gay man. About 25 years ago, a priest-friend in Melbourne asked me if I'd talk with a young gay Catholic man about his problems with his sexual orientation and the Church. I agreed with much trepidation – my own same-sex orientation was well and truly hidden. The young man came and, in hope, poured his heart out to me. In reply I told him that there was little I could do to help him – except to "advise him spiritually" – a cop-out if ever there was one!

I have never forgotten the disappointment, sense of betrayal and anger on his face as he got up and left. And I'm still ashamed of the cold violence my fear had visited on him.

The third tale: Anzac Day 1997 was a showery day in Sydney and I was staying in to watch the Parade on TV with another priest. The screen showed returned service men and women marching along George Street. The other priest said "Don't they look wonderful – not like those depraved sodomites in that Mardi Gras procession thing!"

I was gob-smacked. For several years, I'd been trying to decide whether to walk away from the Church because of its inability to help me, as a gay man, to find life.

And here, unprovoked and out of the blue came this lethal remark. He followed it with another: "I hope they don't walk over the same ground that's befouled by those Mardi Gras degenerates!" And all I could say was "No, they don't: the Mardi Gras follows a different route".

What solace could I or any other gay person possibly find in the face of that violence born of ignorance? I went off and wrote him an, "open letter", defending the encouraging presence of hundreds of "straight" people in each year's Mardi Gras Parade – they march to support their homosexual sons, daughters, parents and friends. But I lacked the courage to give it to him – he'd been one of my teachers in earlier years. So, with the names changed, I sent it to Australia's newsletter for priests. The editor replied sympathetically, but told me that, while they'd like to publish it, the matter was very sensitive and they might wait awhile. To my knowledge, it's still in his "In-tray".

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**So, homosexual people can be excused for thinking that the Church looks down on them and abuses their basic dignity as human beings. One could forgive them for seeing the Church as denying their fundamental human need for love and intimate friendship.**

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Clearly, the Church can be an instrument of dignified support for homosexual people. On the other hand, where it is governed by ignorance and fear, it simply works to attack the integrity and human dignity of men and women who desperately want to live as honest human beings. Ignorance surely does lead to fear and that, in turn, begets violence.

Homosexuality is a phenomenon. It is a complicated phenomenon. Other than for shorthand purposes, there is little value in the usual dichotomy between "straight" and "gay" – no binary system does justice to reality; there's always more to life than black and white! As Alfred Kinsey indicated (in 1948), human sexuality presents as a spectrum: from absolute heterosexuality through to absolute homosexuality. Every one of us experiences our sexuality as dynamic (i.e. more or less evident at different moments) and also as predominantly other- or same-sex oriented.

Homosexuality is not an illness. When first studied, it was viewed either as a form of arrested development or as an aberration. It is patently not in itself arrested development: homosexual people are often far more humanly "developed" than their heterosexual counterparts. It is not an aberration from a norm: after all, heterosexual people are not necessarily "normal", just more common.

Within the last thirty years, psychiatry has finally concluded that homosexuality is not an illness: its repression and rejection can lead to illnesses, but the underlying "condition" is just as capable of being healthy as is the underlying "condition" of heterosexuality.

Homosexuality is not a morally bad condition. As a phenomenon it is no less good or bad than heterosexuality. Yet this is where we encounter opposition from the official Catholic Church. The Church admits that people who are same-sex oriented are worthy of respect, compassion and sensitivity. It tells us, however, that homosexuality is an "objectively disordered" condition (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* Para 2358): in other words, it is an aberration. Which, in actual fact, simply makes the initial positive statements sound patronising and insincere.

So, homosexual people can be excused for thinking that the Church looks down on them and abuses their basic dignity as human beings. One could forgive them for seeing the Church as denying their fundamental human need for love and intimate friendship. Further, they may well be justified in saying that the Church is speaking in contradiction of its own express teaching (cf. Vatican II on the ultimate inviolability of the individual conscience).

In this same area of moral judgment, the official Church states that homosexual genital activity is "fundamentally disordered". That is a straightforward general moral judgment. On what is it ultimately based? A crude and solely biological approach to sexuality ("It's about making babies" and "The parts have to fit" – cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Para. 2357).

However, we all know that there's far more to any human situation than the mere physical facts: before we make a moral judgment on that situation, we need to take other factors into account as well. It's the same with sexuality: its morality can't be judged solely in terms of genitalia and conception. What about relationships? Personal growth and development? Intimacy?

Love? The Church's moral judgments about sexuality are too narrowly based to have much validity either for homo- or hetero-sexual activity.

The official Church judges that homosexual activity "does not proceed from genuine affective complementarity" (ibid.) and so it is wrong. But such a judgment flies in the face of reality and facts: same-sex relationships demonstrate again and again an authenticity and genuineness that complements both partners. Why deny that? Because, I believe, the Church has a poor and truncated view of all sexuality, whatever its orientation. Homosexuality is the presenting challenge for all types and aspects of sexuality in Catholic ethics and moral science (cf. James Hanigan: *Homosexuality: the Test Case for Christian Sexual Ethics*, Paulist NY 1988).

Homosexuality is the topic that immediately calls in question the Church's biological basis for sexuality and its expression. The Church has simply been caught in a web of its own making – and so is all too often ignorant, fearful and violent – "scornful" – towards men and women who can bring so much richness and warmth of living and relationship to society.

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### ... the Church can be an instrument of dignified support for homosexual people.

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Two hundred years ago, women were occasionally labelled as "witches" and were murdered. Why? Because they appeared to be different, "other", mysterious (and were thought to possess occult power). Sixty years ago, Nazi-governed Germany committed horrible atrocities on Jewish people. Why? Because they were different, "other", mysterious (and, often, powerful). Forty years ago, black people in the USA were still enduring rejection, injustice, killing. Why? Because they were different, "other", mysterious (and might become powerful).

Always, it seems, the bug-bear is the people who challenge our accepted boundaries and who are perceived as threatening to our possession of power. I wonder if that is not one of the root-causes for the Catholic Church's fear of "the body" (including sexuality) – it is a perceived threat to power and social influence.

I believe that recent sexual scandals that have embarrassed the Catholic Church – cases of sexual abuse, paedophilia and unjust discrimination against employees – are a direct result of the Church's failure to engage openly and honestly with sexuality

in the past. Homosexuality is only one aspect of the far larger subject of sexuality (which, surely, includes women, the feminine principle, relationships, integrity – to name just a few areas). The Church scorns homosexuality at its peril.

For the last few years, on my own spiritual journey, I've used as a sort of motto the saying, "If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space". I was born homosexual and grew up to become a man who is gay. If I don't go on exploring that path and living towards God through my whole being – my homosexuality included – then I will be refusing the invitation given me to be fully alive (cf. Irenaeus of Lyons: "The glory of God is humankind fully alive").

The exploration ("Pilgrimage"?) has so far led me away from formal ministry within the Church – though I believe that my life and work continue to be essentially priestly. Where the road leads for me is in God's hands. Where it leads for homosexual Catholic men (many priests among them) and women, lies fairly and squarely in the hands of the official Church.

Can the Church learn to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with its God (cf. Micah 6:8)? One might hope so. Meantime, it is as clear as day that scornful ignorance does lead to fear and that, in turn, leads to violence. And none of these leads to life.

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*Pat Bishop lives in Sydney, NSW.*

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## REMEMBERING VATICAN II

### "Freedom and Conscience"

"... the focal point of our total presentation will be the human person as such, whole and entire, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will." (*Gaudium et Spes* "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World", n.3

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"It is, finally, through the gift of the Holy Spirit that we come by faith to the contemplation and appreciation of the divine plan (cf. Sir 17:7-8)." (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.15)

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"In the depths of our consciences, we detect a law which we do not impose upon ourselves, but which holds us to obedience. Always summoning us to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to our hearts: do this, shun

that. For we have in our hearts a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of the human person; according to it we will be judged (cf. Rm 2:15-16). Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of the human person. There we are alone with God, whose voice echoes in our depths (Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra*, May 15, 1961: AAS 53 [1961], 417). In a wonderful manner, conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbor (cf. Mt 22:37-40; Gal 5:14). In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of humanity in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the lives of individuals from social relationships. Hence, the more right conscience holds sway, the more persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and strive to be guided by the objective norms of morality. Conscience frequently errs from invincible ignorance without losing its dignity. The same cannot be said for those who care but little for truth and goodness, or for a conscience which by degrees grows practically sightless as a result of habitual sin." (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.16)

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"Only in freedom can we direct ourselves toward goodness. Our contemporaries make much of this freedom and pursue it eagerly, and rightly to be sure. Often, however, they foster it perversely as a license for doing whatever pleases them, even if it is evil. For its part, authentic freedom is an exceptional sign of the divine image within the human person. For God has willed that human beings remain 'under the control of their own decisions' (cf. Sir 15:14) so that they can seek their Creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to God. Hence, our dignity demands that we act according to a knowing and free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within, not under blind internal impulse nor by mere external pressure. We achieve such dignity when, emancipating ourselves from all captivity to passion, we pursue our goal in a spontaneous choice of what is good, and procure for ourselves through effective and skillful action, apt helps to that end. Since our freedom has been damaged by sin, only by the aid of God's grace can we bring such a relationship with God into full flower. Before the judgment seat of God each of us must render an account of our own lives, whether we have done good or evil (cf. 2 Cor 5:10)." (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.17)

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### Words for a Pilgrim People

*The mystery is Christ in you.* (Colossians 1:27 - RSV.)

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*Abbot Mark once said to Abbot Arsenius: It is good, is it not, to have nothing in your cell that just gives you pleasure? For example, Once I knew a brother who had a little wildflower that came up in his cell, and he pulled it out by the roots. Well, said Abbot Arsenius, that is all right. But each man should act according to his own spiritual way. And if one were not able to get along without the flower, he should plant it again.* (Thomas Merton, **The Wisdom of the Desert**, New Directions, 1960, 67-68)

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*Our greatest protection is self-knowledge and to avoid the delusion that we are seeing ourselves when we are in reality looking at something else.* (St Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Canticle, Sermon 1* in Jean Danielou and Herbert Musurillo, **From Glory to Glory: Texts From Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings**, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961, 159)

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*Whether I am a child or an adult, a simple person or a hero, a prisoner or a free citizen, I am always a potentiality for transcendence in many ways. If I were to 'freeze' myself into one mold by repression of the aspiration to transcend what I currently am, I would die to authentic living. The most sordid crime against our humanity is to destroy what we basically are: transcendent selves.* (Adrian van Kaam, **The Transcendent Self**, Dimension Books, 1979, 167f)

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*It was when Lucifer first congratulated himself on his angelic behaviour that he became the tool of evil.* (Dag Hammarskjöld, **Markings**, Alfred A Knopf, 1964, 140)

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On the 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C) the Church proclaims a thorny Gospel passage – Luke 13:22-30. In response to the question, “Sir, will there be only a few saved?”, Jesus says, “Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed”. He then speaks of “locked doors”, “not knowing” those who seek entry and “weeping and gnashing of teeth” of those locked out. It does seem a little ironic to say, having proclaimed such words, “This is the Good News of the Lord”. If this is the good news, better not tell us the bad news! What are we to make of such warnings and judgments, both here and in other places in the Gospels?

When such words are read – and then preached upon – without due regard for the intentions of the author, and the general historical context, the results can completely misrepresent the words and their possible meanings. In particular, when this process is dominated by a moralistic consciousness – all too prevalent in recent centuries of Catholicism – the outcome can be most destructive. While the warnings and judgments do carry a radical moral import for us today, they are not primarily moral injunctions aimed at the modern reader; they are rather, first and foremost, a polemic – in fact, a fierce polemic – against the contemporaries of Jesus and the

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**There is so much that we think and do that places us “outside” of reality.**

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later contemporaries of the first followers of Jesus. In the spirit and tradition of the prophets, condemnation is passed, without apology, on those who resist God's liberating action on behalf of Israel. True Israelites will let nothing come between them and the will and work of Yahweh, for outside the realm of Yahweh's liberating love is “nowhere”, “no people” – utter meaninglessness and desolation, darkness. This applies to the children of the New Israel as surely as it applied to those of the Old Israel.

The Gospels are theological dramas constructed from actual historical events; they are accounts of what God has done, is doing and will do in and through history. Thus, in attempting to understand this passage from Luke, we must read it in context. Jesus is “the one” through whom Israel's long exile will come to an end. But we should not miss the profound irony manifest in the reality of Jesus: Central to the liberation on offer is the death of old religious forms, old ways. This entails a monumental struggle, one in which Jesus is pitted against the religious authorities. We will find this same struggle within ourselves, if we are willing and able to pay attention. There is so much that we think and do or refuse to think and do – that places us “outside” of reality; in our anxiety and confusion we cling to so many pretenses, pursue so many ways that alienate us from ourselves and each other, behave in ways that oppress rather than liberate. Look around you, listen carefully, do you not see and hear the “weeping and grinding of teeth” in the darkness? □

## The Tradition – Self-awareness

The great guides of the authentic tradition were aware that we all possess at least one genius – the genius for self-deception. Seemingly without any training or practice, we are all capable of stunningly brilliant feats of self-deceit. This can turn our best efforts into tragic irony. For example, under the rubric of “fidelity” or “commitment” or “truthfulness” or “goodness” we can, in fact, perpetrate the most dastardly things on ourselves and others. Hence the great guides emphasise listening, attentiveness and a commitment to self-awareness. St Teresa of Avila puts it well:

“I don't know if this has been explained well. Knowing ourselves is something so important that I wouldn't want any relaxation ever in this regard, however high you may have climbed into the heavens. While we are on this earth nothing is more important to us than humility. So I repeat that it is good, indeed very good, to try to enter first into the room where self-knowledge is dealt with rather than fly off to other rooms. This is the right road and if we can journey along a safe and level path, why should we want wings to fly? Rather, let's strive to make more progress in self-knowledge. In my opinion we shall never completely know ourselves if we don't strive to know God. By gazing at His grandeur, we get in touch with our own lowliness; by looking at His purity we shall see our own filth; by pondering His humility, we shall see how far we are from being humble.” □

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**“... nothing is more important to us than humility.”**

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# Bulletin Board

## Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

### SIP Meetings

**SIP Promoter** – Terry O’Loughlin on (02) 9816 4262 or (02) 9816 5091.

Email: [terry\\_catalyst@hotmail.com](mailto:terry_catalyst@hotmail.com)

**NSW and ACT – 7.30-9.00pm unless specified:**

◦ **Albury** – New Albury Hotel, Kiewa St (Info: Fr Glenn 6026 5333).

◦ **Boorowa** – The Boorowa Hotel (Info: Michael 6385 3351 or Marty 6385 3196).

◦ **Bowral** – The Grand Bar and Brasserie August 22 “How Young People see their Relationship with God” Several Young Speakers (Info: Julian 4861 4649).

◦ **Campbelltown** – Campbelltown Catholic Club August 8 “Is there life after the Olympics/Paralympics?” Speakers tba (Info: John 4647 3528).

◦ **Canberra** – The Southern Cross Club (Info: Rita 6288 4715).

◦ **Five Dock** – The Illinois Hotel, Cnr Parramatta Rd & Arlington St August 29 “Blessed are the pure of heart .. not those who act like angels but those whose life is transparent” Sean & Kerrie McArdle (Info: beline 9744 8141).

◦ **Jamberoo** – The Jamberoo Hotel September 10 “Cries of the Human Heart: To Learn from Life’s Experiences” Lucy Limbers & John Menadue (Info Anne 4232 1062 or Gaye 4232 2735).

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

◦ **Kincumber** – Seeds of Wisdom The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive August 7 “Just Hug Me” Pat Killelea & Ron Barr; September 4 “Remembering” Dennis Farrar & tba (Info: Robbie 4390 0370 or Clair 4344 6608).

◦ **Lismore** – Crossroads. The Lismore Workers Club August 15 “Male Spirituality” Br Tony Hemenstal cfc & Brian Grant (Info: Lynne 6625 1195).

◦ **Lower North Shore** – Union Hotel, Cnr Pacific Hwy & West St, North Sydney August 13 “Ecumenism – On the Same Journey” Rev Grahame Ellis & Sr Mary Cresp (Info: Michelle 9958 5963).

◦ **Newcastle** – The Mary Ellen Hotel, Glebe Rd, Merewether (Info: Lawrence 4967 6440).

◦ **Paddington** – Crossroads The Bellevue Hotel, August 1 “Crossroads for education in our schools” Trish Hindmarsh & Chris Faisandier; September 5 “Can we make

Christian claims in an inter-faith world? – Religion at the crossroads” Rabbi Apple & Sr Mary Leahy rsj (Info: Marea 9387 3152).

◦ **Penrith** – Golf Club August 22 “Reconciliation” Tom Uren & tba (Info: Dennis 4773 5521).

◦ **Rouse Hill** – The Mean Fiddler on Windsor Rd September 4 “Is addiction replacing spirituality?” Fr Chris Riley & tba (Info: Tim or Margaret 9634 2927 (H)).

◦ **Waitara** – Things You Learn Along the Way The Blue Gum Hotel on the Pacific Hwy August 22 Bernice Moore & Fr Jim McKeon (Info: Kathryn 9402 7842).

◦ **Wollongong** – Mt Kembla Hotel, Mt Kembla.

### Other States:

◦ **Ballarat (VIC)** – Spirituality and the Past Month Golden City Hotel, Cnr Sturt St & Dawson St South (Info: Kevin 03 5332 1697).

◦ **Clayton (VIC)** – Does Religion Have a Future? The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm September 4 “Has religion failed in stewardship of the earth?” Wendy Chew (Info: Yvonne 9700 7340 or Joyce 9700 1250).

◦ **Collingwood (VIC)** – The Vine Hotel, Cnr Wellington & Derby Sts, 8pm-9.30pm (Info: April 9391 0787).

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

◦ **Mordialloc (VIC)** – The Kingston Club Hotel, 7.30pm-9pm August 22 “Our search for meaning in Community” Mary Crooks & Jacques Boulet (Info: Maria 9579 4255).

◦ **Spirituality Café, Rosanna (VIC)** (Info: Marian 9459 4403).

◦ **Devonport (TAS)** – The Seven Deadly Sins – Molly Malone’s Irish Pub, 7.30pm-9pm (Info: Graham 6424 8286).

◦ **Fortitude Valley (QLD)** – Dooley’s in Patrick’s Bar First Monday of month (Info: Madonna 3840 0524).

◦ **Perth (WA)** – The Elephant and the Wheelbarrow, cnr Francis and Lake Sts, Northbridge, 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month February-October 7.30pm-9pm (Info: Michael 9448 2404).

◦ **Macclesfield (SA)** – Three Brothers Arms, Venables Street, First Tuesday each month (Info: Michael 8388 9265).

◦ **The Talking MIX** is now available on tape, thanks to the generosity of several volunteers. For further information contact Pauline on 02 9816 4262.

### Other Matters and Events

◦ **Mount St Benedict Centre**, Pennant Hills, September 29 to October 5 “For me to live is Christ” (Info: 9484 6208).

◦ **The Centre for Spiritual Formation North Sydney** offers courses in Spiritual Direction (Info 8912 4881).

◦ **Quest for Life Centre** Residential programs designed specifically to meet your needs (Price Reductions); The Petrea King collection of Tapes & Books (Info 4883 6599).

◦ **An Invitation to an Outback Experience “Cathedral” Station, Winton** to explore the evolution of the Australian psyche with Morrie Dando, Elaine McEwan OA, Richard Magoffin & Nev Hunt September 15-16 (Info: John 07 4741 8716).

### FORUM FOR THE FUTURE Sunday August 12 2001 2-4pm

#### “The Church, Bioethics and Society Today”

With

Fr Anthony Fisher op, Dr Malcolm Fisher & Mrs Bernadette Tobin

The MacKillop Campus,  
Australian Catholic University,  
Edward Street, North Sydney.  
Entry by Donation

### Spirituality in the Pub

A live-in weekend for members of organising committees –share resources, help new people set up their SIPs, learn about making your venue more successful. November 24/25 2001. Watch this space for more information.

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

#### AN AUSTRALIAN CHURCH FORUM

celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the commencement of Vatican II

July 12, 13, 14, 2002

at

St Joseph’s College, Hunters Hill  
with

Fr Joseph Komonchak  
as keynote speaker.

Watch this space!

## Recommended Reading

Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A Komonchak, Editors, *History of Vatican II (Volume I)*, Orbis, 1995, index, footnotes, 527 pages, hb, c.\$180 (or \$80(US) through amazon.com).

In the late 60's, Herbert Vorgrimler edited a fine 5-volume work entitled *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*; in the late 80's René Latourelle edited a fine 2-volume work entitled *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspective – Twenty-Five Years After (1962-1987)*. The Alberigo-Komonchak work will be 5-volumes that will add substantially to our understanding of the Second Vatican Council as a watershed event in the life of the Catholic Church. Only 3 of the 5 volumes are available in English at this time – the fourth will be available in October and the fifth before the fortieth anniversary of the commencement of the Council on October 11, 2002. The cost of these volumes effectively puts them out of reach for most, but they will certainly be available in any decent tertiary institution library. They represent the work of an international group of scholars who began in 1988 to collate as much of the concrete historical data about the Council as they possibly could. They have done an outstanding job. The essays – for the most part – are surprisingly readable; they are at times even riveting. One catches there something of the urgency and excitement, the lobbying and counter-lobbying, the complexity and simplicity – and even, at times, the comedy – of it all. Marvellous stuff!

CD-ROM, *Destination Vatican II – An Interactive Exploration of the Second Vatican Council*, Resources for Christian Living (Thomas More Publishing), 200 E Bethany Drive, Allen, TX 75002, USA, c \$120 (or \$50(US) through amazon.com).

The wonders of modern technology bring the Vatican Council alive in a most accessible and enjoyable way – enjoyable, that is, for those who are at home with computers. On this CD-ROM you will find five major categories for exploration: 1) Texts – containing the documents of the Council in English; *Letters from Vatican City* by Xavier Rynne (a popular journal of the Council proceedings and previously available as a 4-volume work); *Vatican II in Plain English* by Bill Huebsch (a simple overview of the Council with annotated bibliography and previously available as a 3-volume work); *The Council Day Book* (1965) (a matter-of-fact presentation of proceedings with certain speeches and previously available as a 3-volume work); 2) People (names, photographs etc); 3) Destinations (archival photos and film with commentary); 4) Themes and 5) Timelines. This is a marvellous resource, probably best approached as a starting point for a more serious consideration of the Council. It will surely serve that end extremely well, complementing the more serious and extensive works, such as those of Alberigo and Komonchak – the latter appearing quite a bit on the CD. It is a simple program to use and will be valuable for many years.

Peter Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII: Pope of the Council (Revised Edition)*, Harper Collins, 1984/1994, bibliography, 550 pages, pb, c \$50.

The past gives birth to the present and the present is redolent with the past, even as it, in turn, is giving birth to future possibilities. We cannot fully understand either the present reality of the Catholic Church or the future possibilities if we are ignorant of the past. The late Peter Hebblethwaite brings the recent past alive in this extraordinary book about an extraordinary man. John was almost 77 years of age when he was elected Pope in October 1958 – a simple old man who would, it was thought by many, be a quiet interim Pope. Ninety days later – on January 25, 1959 – he surprised everyone by calling a general Council. The Catholic Church and the world were quickly to discover that this humble Italian peasant was also a prophet with an astonishing and liberating vision for the Church and the world. John remains, for all that we have come to know of him, something of a lovely enigma. He was able to transcend boundaries and point to the goodness and beauty that connect human beings. He was, indeed, a good man. And Hebblethwaite introduces him to the reader as no one else has ever succeeded in doing. Read this book and you will have not only entered the mysterious bowels of Catholicism lurching towards a new way of being in the world, you will have spent time with a human being who is unmistakably a saint. Read it again!

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