



THE MIX



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Our Say – Vatican II and subsidiarity

On October 3, 2001, at the recent Synod of Bishops in Rome, the President of the US Catholic Bishops Conference, Joseph Fiorenza, addressed the gathering. In his presentation, he focused mainly on the issue of subsidiarity. (See page 5 of this issue of *The Mix* for further information on the text of Bishop Fiorenza's intervention.)

Fiorenza was not the only participant to raise the issue. The debate over subsidiarity apparently generated some of the liveliest interchanges of the whole Synod. John Allen of the US Catholic weekly, *National Catholic Reporter*, observed: "The fate of the principle of subsidiarity, and the decentralization it implies, is very much an unresolved tension."

Put most simply, the principle of subsidiarity says that decisions should be made at the lowest level possible. Put another way, it means that a decision should not be made by a higher authority when a lesser authority is able to handle it. Subsidiarity, properly applied, will complement the general exercise of authority within the system;

the proper authority of those who have the role of governance at various levels will be respected and never pre-empted.

This principle was, *de facto*, operative in the early centuries of Church governance. This is indicated by the fact that the laity routinely exercised authority in many spheres of Church life until the 5th century. It is also suggested by the fact that, for example, in St Augustine's time there were almost seven hundred bishops in North Africa – one was ordained, on average, each week. These men had real authority and they exercised it.

The Council of Nicaea had such high regard for the bishop and his relationship with the local church that it forbade bishops to move from one see to another. Such a move was likened to adultery.

St Thomas Aquinas had spoken of subsidiarity as a general principle of social organisation. Pius XI, in 1931, was the first pope to explicitly affirm the principle as applied to the governance of the Church.

Then Pius XII and Paul VI both re-affirmed Pius XI's teaching; the Preface to the 1983 Code of Canon Law says the principle of subsidiarity is to be given "careful attention"; the Synods of 1967, 1969 and 1985 each brought it into particular focus, the latter recommending that a special study be made of its application to church governance; John Paul II publicly accepted this recommendation when addressing the Roman Curia on June 28, 1986.

Bishop Fiorenza noted in his Synod presentation: "I am not aware if the study was made, or, if it was made, whether the results were made public." Whether or not such a study was made does not really matter now; what matters is the effective application of subsidiarity in the Church, since it lies at the heart of the Second Vatican Council's call for collegiality and its recognition of co-responsibility in the Church – with the implication of both rights and responsibilities – and the shared vocation of all the baptised. □

THE HUMAN FACE

This journal is one of the works of
the Sydney-based group
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We are believers who are attempting
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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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My name is Morag Fraser. I am a
religious hybrid — like so many of us
in this country. My mother is an Australian
Catholic, part Irish, part German, my father
a Scots Presbyterian. I remember my father
in church only twice — at my wedding and
at his funeral. No doubt there were other
occasions — an extended family produces a
succession of rituals — but those two are
indelible.

The funeral was an ironic rite of passage
for us both.

The only church people my seafaring
father knew well in this, his adopted
country, were Catholics. With his full
consent, we buried him from my mother's
church, a two-minute stroll from their home
in Adelaide. No one pretended that he was
anything other than a Presbyterian. The
priest/uncle-in-law who said the Requiem
Mass knew my father too well to attempt
any post-mortem sectarian snatch.

In any case, my father was about as
unconvertible as a Mount Rushmore
sculpture. He was also half of my genetic
inheritance and I wouldn't have wanted
anyone messing with the formidable
cultural baggage that I'd worked so hard all
my life to understand. And at his wake the
priests and my Irish uncles knew where to
find his (very) small hoard of whisky, so
honour (and a decent malt) was served.

At my Brigidine school Mother Agatha
used to pray for my father's conversion, or
so she told him. It was another ritual,
almost courtly. I liked their badinage. It was
token of a deeper human respect. They
liked one another as human beings, face to
face, and in doing so, being so, they left me
with gifts and obligations of which I am
sure they were scarcely aware. Good gifts,
proper obligations.

What mattered to me then, and what
mattered so much at my father's funeral,
was the unheralded but easy ecumenism of
the church in which I grew up. I am not
speaking for the institution, but of the
people (priests included) closest to me who
were very distinct in their beliefs and their
practices, but broad and free in their
sympathies. I can sing 'Gentile or Jew,
servant or free, woman or man' with the
conviction that I have known this necessary
levelling, seen it lived out. And it has
worked — in a very Australian way.

My mother, well she's another story. We
have been so close for so long now that we
plait in and out of one another's thoughts
and beliefs. My Catholicism is hers —
sceptical, critical, jubilant, and intimately
bound up with music. When we give up on
the rigidities of a male hierarchy, we can
still sing and play together.

Don't think I am talking pious daughter
stuff here. She was the piano teacher to my
feckless adolescence. In the front room we
became pupil and teacher. That was
something to survive. But she was good —
more interested in the music than in
chastising me. She won't believe that I
learned dispassion from her, but I did, at
least a little.

When I became a teacher myself, it w
useful memory — how to be full-blooded
about what you are doing without tearing
strips off others who are trying to do it too.

I have been extremely lucky: no scars
from my convent schooling, no wounds
(joy, mostly) from family, and much of the
richness of liturgy, of ritual, of intellectual
tradition in Catholicism put my way.

None of that inheritance blinds me to the
injustices and distortions of an institutional
church that clings to power and wastes the
best energies of so many of its lay people,
its women — and indeed its men.

I grow weary of cramped, doctrinaire,
centralised authoritarianism. But in the life I
live, married to an agnostic who is a
profound and good man, working with
Jesuit priests I love and respect, surrounded
by children and grandchildren who brook
no insincerity and who would chortle if ever
I turned pious, the institution is a light
shadow to have walking beside me.

And I don't wish to repudiate even that
shadow. Couldn't, I don't think, even if I
tried.

My church has been simple, tolerant
complicated, monastic, opulent, mu
filled and fallible. It is full of knotty faces I
know and love. Their doors have always
been open to my family. They have laughed
when I have — always with open throats. I
cherish and am sustained by that.



Morag Fraser

(Morag is the editor of *Eureka Street*)

Your Say — Vatican II: what we've gained, what we've lost

Margaret B. Owen-O'Hearn

Life changes all of us. Age gives insight. Reflection brings new vision. The weight of the years brings forbearance and tired tolerance. So it is that what I think about such events as the Second Vatican Council evolves as time goes on. What I thought about it before the horror that was unleashed on New York is less focused today in the light of the burden now on all of us. Similarly the significance of the Vatican Council is of little importance to those who did not experience at some cognitive level what was significant before that event.

My parents' marriage was celebrated behind the altar of a Catholic church without the witness of their family and friends, my father being a baptised and full communicant of high church Anglicanism. The deference with which our very Catholic mother and we children were treated by the Catholic parish and school left no doubt where we stood as children of a 'mixed marriage'. In other words, the type of denomination you ascribed to (a feeling of belonging was another matter) mattered greatly in the community. Catholics identified with each other and patronised Catholic businessmen. There was a definite Catholic identity, which even excluded its own when not 'completely in'.

We participated enthusiastically in a new experience and vision of an emerging concept of church.

Our children, on the other hand, grew up in a very different world — except they went to Catholic schools. Their experience was widened constantly by membership in other church groups and exposure to multi-cultural art, music, cuisine and friendship.

The Second Vatican Council was not a topic of conversation around our table. We, their parents, were so relieved with the loosening of the narrow and un-Christlike manner of the past, we encouraged and participated enthusiastically in a new experience and vision of an emerging concept of church. Unfortunately, we were badly let down by the education offered by the schools during the '70s and '80s. Academically, the children all did well, no regrets there. However the education in faith, religion and church history was not just poor, but absent.

We, as parents, now know we relied on the school to provide what, at that time in church history, it did not, and in fairness,

probably could not provide. Our faith and work and interest in church, as well as incidental teaching, were their only education in matters of Catholicism.

So are our children different from their peers? Not really. They are a generation of adults who are claimed by the Church, yet have not been well served by that Church; at the same time, the Church dropped all manner of marks that identified it as a unifying social body. Try to find one hymn, devotion or prayer that could be sung/said in unison by all of us ...

The Second Vatican Council led us to new horizons in hope. Hope of leadership in collegiality, shared responsibility and equality. Of interpretations of the Gospel in the light of knowledge — knowledge which in itself is God-given and reveals the wonder of the Creator. Of new and exciting exegesis of scripture to throw light on the scientific and changing social order in which we were living.

Now our early hope has been near-fatally dimmed by desperate efforts from powerful Church leadership to return to earlier and less informed interpretations of what Jesus is trying to say to us in this very complex world. We are frustrated by leadership which has little touch with the reality of the daily grind of insecure employment, the changing roles of women, wide-reaching education and knowledge that outstrips our capacity to keep up.

The mismatch in our hopes and current experience widens as we are instructed not even to discuss what is of importance to the baptised, and the Church centralises its authority to overrule local decisions to meet local need. The Church has returned to a fortress mentality, where preservation of authoritative structure and purity of dogmatic teaching are paramount. Yet it seems to me that Jesus' teaching came from his clarity in meeting and challenging the practices of the day.

Our clear frustration and disappointment do not help our adult children to understand the value we place on Church. Indeed they are left wondering at our high level of energy and angst, as they neither see nor experience the value of the Church. Our amazement is that they are irregular Mass-goers and maintain enquiring minds on most matters of faith.

Another difficulty seems to me that the biggest, most immediate and obvious changes in the early post-council years were merely peripheral. They were the liturgical changes, which took away, with-

out any consultation or adequate explanation, what generations had held precious and very important. Yet these very hurtful changes, which have caused a quiet, silent mourning among many, were and remain of less importance to the major vision of the men who gathered under Pope John XXIII and the invocation of the Holy Spirit.

One of the things that these changes did was take away the sense of mystery that surrounds religious rituals in any religion around the world. They shook the sense of the sacred and replaced it with seeing all, and hearing all, and leaving little for people to engage with at a deeply satisfying level of mystery. This is what many mourn and of which our under-40s have had no experience. And the mourning has been ignored or downplayed.

If indeed these changes had led to a wider understanding and inclusion in ministry, and sacramental ministry in particular, then at least some of them could be justified, leading to better understanding of the breadth of the Council vision. Instead, after some brief explanations, they became ends in themselves.

The mismatch in our hopes and current experience widens...

We have gained permission to be readers and students of scripture. Our theological institutes have been opened to all, and the laity, particularly women, have welcomed the opportunity. We have developed broader and more loving images of God. We have certainly enjoyed a better relationship with Christians of other denominations, though that is variable and unsure. We have been given permission to celebrate the liturgy in more locally meaningful ways. Some ministries are open to some, though still to less than half of the baptised. There is asked of all of us more transparency in our dealings with each other and other organisations.

My experience, though, is that any increase in the number of laity involved in the Church is more through a desire to prop up a failing structure than a desire for real change from the hierarchical leadership of the Church. It is, in other words, a back-door entrance to more inclusive ministry, rather than a celebratory herald of a new truly post-Second Vatican Council Church.

Margaret B Owen-O'Hearn is a member of Catalyst for Renewal, a family educator, a wife, mother and grandmother.

Essay – Vatican II: unfinished business

by John Heaps

John Heaps is a retired bishop, former auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Sydney; he wrote this piece for *The Mix* at the request of the Editor.

In 1951, my second year at St Columban's Seminary, Springwood, a Passionist priest, Father Placid, conducted our retreat. The thought of joining a Religious Order kept coming to my mind. The desire came from the spiritual theology of the day and from my naivety. I wanted to do what God wanted. I was told that obeying my superiors was doing the will of God. All I had to do, then, was to join a Religious Order, keep the rule, go where I was sent and do as I was told and I would be on a direct track to God. My own fallibility would not be a danger in leading me astray.

I shared my thoughts with Father Placid. The wise man said, "You are here now. There must be a good reason for that. Until there is an obvious reason that you should be elsewhere, stay where you are." I was 23 years old, hardly a child, but like many Catholics of the time, I accepted what my authorised teachers taught.

This personal incident is an example of where we came from in our journey through, with and from the 2nd Vatican Council. The big change was in the approach to responsibility.

In so many ways we depended on authority. In matters of Church law we didn't attempt to discern the best way or the most charitable way to respond to embarrassing or difficult situations. We asked an authorised person for a dispensation or permission. In a vital matter, the education of children, parents were required to obtain the permission of the parish priest to send their children to a State School. His judgement took precedence over theirs. Permission was required to attend a wedding of a family member or friend if it was not celebrated in the Catholic Church. People embarrassed their hosts by rejecting a carefully prepared meal because it contained meat and it was a Friday. The priest was presumed to know better than I whether the lenten fast was appropriate in my circumstance. He could dispense me from my obligation. I could shift my responsibility on to another person and be alleviated from guilt. People far away decided what was dangerous for me to read.

"It is finally through the gift of the Holy Spirit that we come by faith to the contemplation and appreciation of the divine plan" (Gaudium et Spes No 15).

What a contrast! What a worry!

The 2nd Vatican Council gave supreme authority to conscience:

"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. Conscience frequently errs from invincible ignorance without losing its dignity" (Gaudium et Spes No 16).

The same paragraph stresses the importance of right conscience and integrity.

The Council called us to a fuller life as members of the Body of Christ, as People of God: a fuller life with responsibility for our actions, participation in the liturgical worship of the Church and its life of prayer, in the teaching role of the Church and in Church administration and governance.

Unfortunately, we did little to prepare people to come from a state of dependence on authority for answers and direction even in small matters. For many, not having a specific law meant having no obligation at all.

One time I was asked why the Church was becoming weak in its demand for penitential acts. Abstinence on Fridays, lenten fast, eucharistic fast as we knew them were all gone. It seemed to make little impression when I suggested that it required deeper spiritual qualities to discern when, where, how we could best respond to life in an unselfish and serving way that would inevitably call us to self-sacrifice and almsgiving. It was a contrast between obedience to outside laws and obedience to conscience and the voice of the Spirit in daily life.

It wasn't easy to help people take responsibility for their moral choices. I remember pointing out options based on different reliable opinions and the consequences and implications of each choice. After some time and effort I was asked, "What will I do?" "I have tried to point out as clearly as I can the options open to you, the choice is yours", I replied. This evoked resentment and anger. Obviously I was meant to give the desired answer and dispense the person from personal responsibility and guilt.

The Church gave conscience its rightful place, but through lack of sound teaching

on the one hand and little desire to learn on the other, freedom of conscience was much misunderstood. For some it was doing what had the most appeal, for others it was obeying the law because it is the law.

"Our human 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" (Gaudium et Spes No 17).

The Council's teaching on responsibility was not confined to individual responsibility, because Christianity is not merely about my personal relationship, as an individual, with God. Authentic Christianity calls us to a relationship with God and therefore with God's other children. Thus the teaching on co-responsibility was developed.

The classical definition of the Church had begun with the words, "The Catholic Church is that monarchical and hierarchical institution". The Council stated that the Church was more than that. The Church is the People of God, worshipping in spirit and truth, living in communion and service. It is the sacrament of God's presence in the world. Each member has dignity, each has gifts to contribute, each has responsibility. These things are not by courtesy of another human being, but flow from baptism in the Body of Christ.

From the development of this doctrine came the changes in the liturgy in posture, language and participation. All of these changes reflected a people in communion, sharing gifts and exercising responsibility.

The sign of the priest facing the altar, back to the congregation, was that of the leader with his people behind him following where he led. It expressed the theology of "that hierarchical institution". The priest and congregation gathered around the altar, sharing common language, participating actively and sharing ministries, expressed the theology of Church as communion, as people of God.

The Council reminded us of our role in the teaching and believing Church. It affirmed our responsibility and our dignity as the teaching Body of Christ. The expression of authentic Christian doctrine is not the prerogative of a few. Authentic doctrine is expressed by the sense of faith of the People of God.

"The People of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office ... the entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief. They manifest this special

property by means of the whole people's supernatural discernment in matters of faith when, from the bishops down to the last of the faithful, they share universal agreement in matters of faith and morals" (Lumen Gentium No 12).

If we want to discern true doctrine, here is the Church's own reference point.

This teaching of the Church on authentic doctrine seems to have been ignored. The spirit of search, journey and discernment released in the Church by the Council has been stifled by central control. The 2nd Vatican Council reminded us that there are gifts both hierarchical and charismatic. When an exclusive few claim to be the full voice of the Church, the life-giving breath of the Holy Spirit is stifled. (Jesus warned us that the sin against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven. It seems to me that this is so simply because it is not seen as sin. If no sin is recognised, no repentance is necessary and no change seems necessary).

We should not forget that it is not only through the sacraments and Church ministries that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the People of God, enriching them with virtues.

"Allotting his gifts to everyone according as he wills, he distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank" (Lumen Gentium No 12).

To come from this sublime concept to a point in Church life where theologians are forbidden to discuss unresolved matters is surely stifling the Holy Spirit.

The Council called us to a fuller life as members of the Body of Christ, as People of God: a fuller life with responsibility for our actions, participation in the liturgical worship of the Church and its life of prayer, in the teaching role of the Church and in Church administration and governance. We are called to be responsible in a mature way. We clergy, religious and laity are called to be co-responsible in decision-making and in the implementation of decisions. We have a responsibility for the distribution and administration of the Church's spiritual and temporal gifts.

The style of the liturgy before its reform, as priest teaching a people who followed behind, was the style of leadership mostly exercised in the Church prior to the Council. It was the responsibility of the clergy to make decisions and the responsibility of the laity to obey. The Council gave a different model of leadership. We were to be co-responsible on all levels.

"It is highly desirable that in each diocese a pastoral council be established over which the diocesan Bishop himself will preside and in which specially chosen clergy, religious and lay people will participate. The function of this Council will be to investigate and weigh matters which

bear on pastoral activity, and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them" (Christus Dominus No 27).

It is interesting to note that the above quotation is from the *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops*. It is instructing Bishops on how to exercise their ministry. Unfortunately, some Bishops don't seem to have sufficient leadership skills and perhaps even trust in others to make a Pastoral Council work effectively. Members and prospective members of Pastoral Councils were given little or no opportunity to understand and accept their role. Thus we hear that Pastoral Councils have been tried and failed or that they are an invitation to division and trouble or a waste of time and effort for both Bishops and members.

It is also unfortunate that some Bishops still work out of a law mentality. Since the decree does not say "must" but "it is highly desirable", they see no obligation in the matter. Yet the whole climate of the Council was not of law but of spirit. The question is not one of obligation from an external law but obligation from an inner desire to follow the call of the Holy Spirit speaking through the highest Church authority.

The 2nd Vatican Council was this gentle, yet profoundly forceful response in love.

The Council Fathers saw the wisdom of co-responsibility on all levels. Parish priests should consult, listen, take advice and set up structures which would facilitate these things. The concept of collegiality between Popes and Bishops was affirmed. Structures to facilitate this were developed. Yet how many authentic Pastoral Councils exist? Is real collegiality evident?

So while the 2nd Vatican Council was a glorious, liberating, exhilarating breath of fresh air, it has yet to achieve its objectives.

The great difference between the 2nd Vatican Council and other Councils of the Church was that it was not called to react to error or address an agenda coming from a perceived adversary. It was called to look at the needs of the Church and the World and to respond to these.

The outcome from reaction in defence is quite different from the results of a response in love and care. The reactions were determined by the agenda, not by perceived opponents and cast in theological and philosophical language and perceptions of the day. They should be seen and interpreted in that way.

Genuine truth, truth conducive to life and love, co-operation and growth in unity comes more from a gentle response than it does from a violent reaction. The 2nd Vatican Council was this gentle, yet profoundly forceful response in love. I pray and hope that its spirit will re-emerge.

SUBSIDIARITY

Bishop Joseph Fiorenza

The following are a few excerpts from Bishop Fiorenza's intervention at the October 2001 Synod in Rome. Bishop Fiorenza is President of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. The full text is available – send one long, stamped, self-addressed envelope with 4 other stamps to cover photocopying. (While 'subsidiarity' was the main focus, Bishop Fiorenza also spoke of the need for inter-religious dialogue.)

"For ecclesial solidarity to be genuine and effective, it must incorporate appropriate subsidiarity. At the June meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops ... (t)here was general agreement ... that this synod should discuss appropriate means for recognizing that particular churches or regional churches can make specific decisions which relate to local issues. If such a recognition is recommended by this synodal gathering, it could be based on the principle of subsidiarity, ... Both Pope Pius XII and Pope Paul VI have referred to subsidiarity within the church either explicitly or implicitly, with due caution about its proper application. ...

"In the course of synodal interventions, subsidiarity was invoked frequently enough that in the 1969 synod the delegates were asked to express their opinion on the principle. It received a large majority of votes.

"In the 1985 synod subsidiarity was discussed in four language groups. Two groups found merit in subsidiarity in the life of the church and recommended a further study on its appropriate application within the church. Two other groups questioned its applicability in the church and warned against its misinterpretation that could lead to an expression of the autonomy of particular churches or regional churches. The final report of the synod recommended that a study of subsidiarity be made concerning the meaning it can have in the church and to what degree. John Paul II, addressing the Roman Curia on June 28, 1986, accepted the idea of a special study. I am not aware if the study was made, or if it was made, whether the results were made public." □

Words for a Pilgrim People

The Word became flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14.)



The supreme commandment of love leads to the full recognition of the dignity of each individual, created in God's image. From this dignity flow natural rights and duties. In the light of the image of God, freedom, which is the essential prerogative of the human person, is manifested in all its depth. Persons are the active and responsible subjects of social life (Cf. Gaudium et Spes, 25).

Intimately linked to the foundation, which is our dignity, are the principle of solidarity and the principle of subsidiarity.

By virtue of the first, human beings with their sisters and brothers are obliged to contribute to the common good of society at all its levels (Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Mater et Magistra (1961), 132-133). Hence the Church's doctrine is opposed to all the forms of social or political individualism.

By virtue of the second, neither the state nor any society must ever substitute itself for the initiative and responsibility of individuals and of intermediate communities at the level on which they can function, nor must they take away the room necessary for their freedom (Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Quadregesimo Anno (1931), 79-80; John XXIII, Encyclical Mater et Magistra (1961), 138; Encyclical Pacem in Terris (1963), 74). Hence the Church's social doctrine is opposed to all forms of collectivism. (Libertatis Conscientia, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, March 22, 1986, 73.)



It is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater or higher association what lesser and subordinate organisations can do. (Quadregesimo Anno (1931), Pius XI.



Each of the Gospels has its own approach to the details of Jesus' life. Neither Mark nor John give any details of the birth or early years as such; both Matthew and Luke give considerable details about the birth and early years, though their details differ. The approach in each instance must be considered carefully. Let us reflect on the part of Matthew's account (2:13-15, 19-23) as proclaimed within the liturgy of the Sunday after Christmas.

Matthew situates the details within the history of the Covenant: "I called my son out of Egypt" (2:15). In these words he echoes the Book of Numbers 23:22 and the prophet Hosea 11:1. We are reminded of Joseph being sold into slavery in Egypt – in this way *Israel herself* becomes a slave; we are reminded, further, of the great Exodus and God's liberating intervention – Israel is set free, she journeys out of Egypt, through the desert and into the promised land. "My son," identifies Jesus with Israel and the Exodus journey. Thus, Matthew's Gospel begins with intimations of how the story will end.

Lest the reader think this story is purely symbolic, a mythological narrative, or perhaps a merely theological statement without historical foundation, Matthew is at pains to remind us of the humanity of it all – there are real historical figures, real threats, real places. The baby is born into human history; God is enfleshed – the fullness of the flesh. The story, as told by Matthew, carries an ominous sense of vulnerability and danger, a sense of tension in the possibilities, risks and limits, a sense of expectation in the courage, generosity and fidelity of the child's parents. The story of God and the story of humanity are now inextricably linked; we have a shared destiny.

The enfleshing of God is the pattern of the fully human journey, in all its promise and threat, its danger and opportunity. God does not urge us *out of* our humanity but *into* our humanity. The journey of Christian discipleship is the journey into the depths of liberated humanity. We make that journey through Him, with Him and in Him; he awaits us in the humanity of it all. □

The enfleshing of God is the pattern of the fully human journey.

The Tradition – Meeting God in the flesh

Christian history is possessed of an amazing, indeed frightening, ambivalence concerning the Incarnation. On the one hand, there is a constant and consistent affirmation of God in the flesh – Jesus is truly a human being. This was one of the first of the great Christological truths to be affirmed. And it implies a truth concerning the Christian life: Our following of Christ is itself an incarnation – our human fulfillment is found through Him in the flesh. Yet, history would suggest that we find it extraordinarily difficult to accept this twofold teaching. The great St Clement of Alexandria (150-211), for example, represents a view that we have never been quite able to purge from the Christian consciousness: "(Jesus) ate, not because of bodily needs, since his body was supported by holy power, but so that his companions might not entertain a false notion about him" Such an impoverished view of the incarnation inevitably leads to a distortion of human life in general and bodily life in particular, and vice versa. The Jansenism of latter centuries is perhaps the best-known example of this.

... our human fulfillment is found through Him in the flesh.

The 2nd century martyr, St Ignatius of Antioch, writing to the Christians in Ephesus, counters this disincarnational view when he writes: "The things you do in the flesh are spiritual since you do them all in Jesus Christ". In this statement Ignatius represents the early Church and subsequent authentic tradition well. The human person is created as a whole. In our fallen state we recover that original uprightness in and through Jesus Christ, God-enfleshed. Any dualistic or fragmented view of the human person not only runs counter to authentic Christian teaching, it runs counter to the essential human search for integrity of life.

The 12th century guide, St Bernard of Clairvaux, sums up: "When the truth shines out in the soul, and the soul sees itself in the truth, there is nothing brighter than the light or more impressive than that testimony. And when the splendour of this beauty fills the entire heart, it naturally becomes visible, just as a lamp under a bowl or a light in darkness are not there to be hidden. Shining out like rays upon the body, it makes it a mirror of itself so that its beauty appears in a man's every action, his speech, his looks, his movements and his smile".

Bulletin Board

Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

SIP Meetings

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:

- ° **Albury** – New Albury Hotel, Kiewa St – Resumes 2002 (Info: Fr Glenn 6026 5333).
- ° **Alstonville** – Federal Hotel - Resumes 2002 (Info: Anne 6628 6428)
- ° **Boorowa** – The Boorowa Hotel - Resumes 2002 (Info: Michael 6385 3351 or Marty 6385 3196).
- ° **Bowral** - The Grand Bar and Brasserie - Resumes 2002 (Info: Julian 4861 4649).
- ° **Campbelltown** – Campbelltown Catholic Club - Resumes 2002 (Info: John 4647 3528).
- ° **Canberra** - The Southern Cross Club Woden - Resumes 2002 (Info: Rita 6260 6737).
- ° **Five Dock** – The Illinois Hotel, Cnr Paramatta Rd & Arlington St - Resumes 2002 (Info: Noeline 9744 8141).
- ° **Jamberoo** – The Jamberoo Hotel - Resumes 2002 (Info Anne 4232 1062 or Gaye 4232 2735).

° **Kincumber** – The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive – Resumes 2002 (Info: Robbie 4390 0370 or Clair 4344 6608).

° **Lismore** Mary Gilhooley's Pub, Cnr Woodlark & Keen Sts - Resumes 2002 (Info: Lynne 6625 1195).

° **Lower North Shore** – Union Hotel, Cnr Pacific Hwy & West St, North Sydney – Resumes 2002 (Info: Michelle 9958 5963).

° **Newcastle** – The Mary Ellen Hotel, Glebe Rd, Merewether - Resumes 2002 (Info: Lawrence 4967 6440).

° **Paddington** The Bellevue Hotel - Resumes 6 March 2002 "Unfinished Business for the People of God" (Info: Marea 9387 3152).

° **Penrith** - Golf Club - Resumes 2002 (Info: Dennis 4773 5521).

° **Rouse Hill** - The Mean Fiddler on Windsor Rd - Resumes 2002 (Info: Maria 9680 2220 (H)).

° **Waitara** The Blue Gum Hotel on the Pacific Hwy - Resumes 2002 (Info: Kathryn 9402 7842).

Other States:

° **Ballarat (VIC)** – Golden City Hotel, Cnr Sturt St & Dawson St South – Resumes

2002 (Info: Kevin 03 5332 1697).

° **Clayton (VIC)** – The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm – Resumes 2002 (Info: Yvonne 9700 7340 or Joyce 9700 1250).

° **Collingwood (VIC)** – The Vine Hotel, Cnr Wellington & Derby Sts, 8pm-9.30pm – Resumes 2002 (Info: April 9391 0787).

° **Geelong (VIC)** – Resumes 2002 (Info: Denis 03 5275 4120).

° **Mordialloc (VIC)** – The Kingston Club Hotel, 7.30pm-9pm – Resumes 2002 (Info: Maria 9579 4255).

° **Spirituality Café, Rosanna (VIC)** – Resumes 2002 (Info: Marian 9459 4403).

° **Devonport (TAS)** - Molly Malone's Irish Pub, 7.30pm-9pm – Resumes 2002 (Info: Graham 6424 8286).

° **Fortitude Valley (QLD)** – Dooley's in Patrick's Bar First Monday of month – Resumes 2002 (Info: Madonna 3840 0524).

° **Perth (WA)** - The Elephant and the Wheelbarrow, cnr Francis and Lake Sts, Northbridge, 4th Wednesday of each month February-October 7.30pm-9pm – Resumes 2002 (Info: Michael 9448 2404).

° **Macclesfield (SA)** – Three Brothers Arms, Venables Street, First Tuesday each month – Resumes 2002 (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.

TWO FACES OF HOPE

By Sr Maryanne Confoy rsc The text of Sr Maryanne's presentation at the sixth Catalyst Forum for the Future is now available in small booklet form. \$5 per booklet + \$2 p/p.

THE CHURCH, BIOETHICS AND SOCIETY TODAY

Tape of the 7th Catalyst Forum for the Future is now available \$10 + \$2 postage. Written text of Fr Anthony Fisher op available – please send stamped addressed envelope.

Other Matters and Events

° **The Aquinas Academy** adult education centre, 141 Harrington St Sydney runs a series of programs, day and evening, with a special emphasis on spirituality. Michael Whelan SM is the Director (Info: Patricia on 02 9247 4651).

° **Mount St Benedict Centre**, Pennant

Hills, December 15 to 22 "Preparing for the Christmas Feast" Directed/Private Retreat (Info: 9484 6208).

° **Spirituality Courses Mary MacKillop Place**, North Sydney, (Info: Sr Jeanette Foxe on 8912 4887).

"VATICAN II: UNFINISHED BUSINESS A NATIONAL FORUM"

Remembering the 40th anniversary of the commencement of Vatican II

JULY 12, 13, 14, 2002

St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill with

Fr Joseph Komonchak

(Catholic University in Washington DC)

John Wilkins

(Editor of *The Tablet*)

Australian Catholic thinkers

Including

Bishop Geoffrey Robinson,

Mr Robert Fitzgerald,

Fr Michael Whelan SM

Ms Geraldine Doogue

Morag Fraser

Frank Brennan SJ

And many others.

Archbishop George Pell

will celebrate the Eucharist

CATALYST ANNUAL APPEAL FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

We have launched our Third 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 in the past and we are hoping to raise a similar amount through this Third Appeal.

As of November 13, this Appeal had raised **\$27,800**.

We continue to ask for your generous support.

BEQUESTS

Friends of Catalyst for Renewal may wish to consider leaving a bequest to CFR. Please contact our office for the suggested wording of a clause for inclusion in your will.

Recommended

Carlo-Maria Martini, *Saving Beauty: Cardinal Martini's Vision for the New Millennium*, St Pauls, 2000, 61 pages, endnotes, appendix, pb, \$14.95 from **Pauline Book & Media**.

This is a pastoral letter from Cardinal Martini to the people of Milan. Martini offers an meditation on the transfiguration presented as "three separate 'moments': the ascent of the mountain, the revelation on the mountain and the descent from the mountain". Martini then goes on to explain: "Dominating all this is, of course, the theme of the beauty of the revelation of the Trinity". The "beauty" about which he speaks is no abstraction: "The beauty that will save the world is the love that shares the pain". This "beauty" is the manifestation of God, it is never our invention but our discovery, never our possession but our gift. Martini manages to accomplish a paradoxical end in this little text. On the one hand, he avoids moralisms and strategies and plans of action for renewal; on the other, by speaking so plainly about the action of God in and through Jesus Christ, he invites the reader into a world of radical challenge and high possibilities, a world that promises freedom and fulfilment. Martini urges the reader to approach this text after the manner of the ancient art and skill of *lectio divina* (cf *The Mix*, 6:9, 6). To aid this process he offers an Appendix with "Some Questions for a Personal and Community 'Review of Life'". Highly recommended for personal or group meditation.

Michael Paul Gallagher, *Dive Deeper: The Human Poetry of Faith*, Darton Longman and Todd, 2001, 128 pages, pb, \$31.90 from **Pauline Books & Media**.

This book begins with a beautiful quotation – St Thomas Aquinas quoting St Augustine: "Make humanity your way and you shall arrive at God. It is better to limp along that way than to stride along some other route." Gallagher then says: "To evoke our human adventure is the aim of this book. Its purpose is to make Christian faith more real through exploring our ordinary but deep experiences". And he is wonderfully successful. Too easily we get lost in doctrine and law, moral injunction and creedal formula, and lose the human ground of our spirituality. *Dive Deeper* is about recovering that human ground. Apart from the first two mentioned above, Gallagher calls on the wisdom of many well-known people, such as Hans urs von Balthasar and Flannery O'Connor, some surprising people, such as D H Lawrence and Friedrich Nietzsche, and some people who are not so well known, such as Eva Brann and Jean Sullivan. All of them, in the hands of Gallagher, are sources of wisdom for Christian spirituality. The style is very readable, even captivating, the content is very rich, leading to an effect that is both stimulating and contemplative. Gallagher speaks words of wisdom and common sense, words of substance for the hungry soul. This book is for those who have learned from hard experience that we do not live on bread alone.

Mary Ann Getty-Sullivan, *Women in the New Testament*, Liturgical Press, 2001, 269 pages, footnotes, bibliography, pb, \$22.95 from **John Garrat Publishing**, Private Bag 400, Mulgrave VIC, 3170. Tel: 03 9545 3111.)

One of the great joys of contemporary biblical scholarship is found in the perspective brought by serious women scholars. Scholars such as Mary Ann Getty-Sullivan bring to light people, events, themes and insights that have remained hidden for too long. *Women in the New Testament* has six chapters, including the following: "Women of Expectant Faith", "Women Changed by Jesus/Healed by Jesus", "Women of Prominence" and "Women and Discipleship". The author has a remarkable ability to let these women of the New Testament speak for themselves. The text is very readable, the footnotes enable rather than obstruct, the scholarship is used to make the presentation more simple rather than more complex. The reader is drawn meditatively into the lives of these women and thereby into the life of the early Christian community. At no point does the author drift into either pious claims or ideological declarations. The discipline of exegesis prevents this. And the author's own evident love for her subject also prevents it. *Women in the New Testament* is a fine book, equally well suited for personal reflection and study as it is suited for group reflection and study. It combines the prayerful and the scholarly in a way that is rare.

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