



THE MIX



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Our Say – Re-thinking church

There are many ways we can usefully and legitimately think of the Second Vatican Council. Perhaps the most fundamental and important way for us to think of it, however, is as an historical event. The full meaning of the English word "event" is implied here: from the Latin roots "e", meaning "out", and "venire", meaning "to come". An event is a moment in which reality breaks out, comes forth in some new way. What was hidden is now revealed, what was bound up is now set free, what was impossible is now possible.

The Council is also integrally part of history; it emerged from an historical context and manifests particular historical dynamics. In turn, the Council plays its part in shaping history. As an event of history it has consequences – some intended, some not intended.

The Council documents are part of the event, but not the whole of it. It would be wrong to expect the documents, for example, to give us the answers to questions which have only begun to emerge since the

Council. Furthermore, the very style of the documents suggests that, far from being complete, the work of the Council has only just begun.

Catholics carried a certain kind of thinking about Church into the middle of the twentieth century. This is not the place to attempt a description of that thinking. Suffice it to say that the Council saw fit to put it under the spotlight and invite us to re-think our understanding of Church. That re-thinking process has barely begun.

At the recent National Forum, Fr Joseph Komonchak briefly pointed to three examples of re-thinking initiated by the Council. Firstly, the Council adopted a far more positive attitude towards the modern world, in dialogue and discernment, acknowledging what is good, recognising that God's truth is operative also outside the Church. This called into question Catholic identity and strategy in relation to the world.

Secondly, the Council promoted *aggiornamento* (ie updating) which engendered a

significant tension. Internal renewal was sought for the sake of fidelity to the Gospel, and adaptation for the sake of pastoral effectiveness. A self-examination and criticism that had not been part of modern Roman Catholicism became legitimate.

Thirdly, the Council emphasised that the whole Church of Christ is present in the local Churches, which must take more responsibility for themselves. This change of perspective broke with the pattern of centralism and uniformity that had dominated Catholicism for 150 years. Thus, for example, the use of vernacular in the liturgy bespeaks a Church concretely catholic, not in spite of cultural differences but precisely in and through them.

Each of these three points implies multiple other points. The re-thinking suggested by the above should not be over-estimated, nor should it be under-estimated. Catholics who seek the renewal of the Church must individually and corporately learn to think anew of what it means to be Church and therefore what it means to be Catholic. □

This journal is one of the works of
the Sydney-based group
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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)

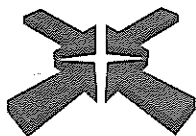
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The Four Arrows and the Cross symbolise diversity
giving rise to communion in and through the Paschal
Mystery. Those who are diverse by nature and culture,
in and through Christ find life-giving unity.

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
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Not all the opinions expressed in *The Mix* are those
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THE HUMAN FACE

My name is Marcelle Mogg and I was
brought up in Moonee Ponds, which
was a great place to grow up in. It is mostly
known to people around Australia for one
of two reasons: as the home of Edna
Everage, the Moonee Ponds housewife, or
for Moonee Valley Racecourse, home of the
Cox Plate. For me it was simply home.

My mother has lived there all her life,
my grandparents were married in the parish
church not long after it was built, and my
cousins lived a few streets away. As a
consequence, there were few families in the
area we didn't know one way or another —
especially if they were Catholic.

During my time at school in the 1970s
and 80s, the mix moved from a
predominantly Anglo-Celtic community to
one that reflected the changing face of
Melbourne. Children of Italian and Greek
families enrolled at the school, as did
Lebanese and later Vietnamese children.
As kids, however, we were attuned to other
matters. We quickly mastered new names,
incorporated one another into friendship
groups and got on with the business of
learning.

The backdrop for all of this was the
parish church.

My parents were heavily involved in
parish life and, as a consequence, so were
we. Mum and Dad helped out at fetes,
served on various committees and were up
to their ears in the parish tennis club. And
so we grew up with the understanding that
Church was something you got involved in.

There was much work to be done, and it
relied on good will, cooperation and
volunteering your time and energy.

As editor of *Australian Catholics* for
Jesuit Publications, I have the odd day
when I wonder why on earth I am working
for the Church. I think the answer lies in
the above. The community of Catholic
people is my home.

It is a community that continues to
undergo change — at times rapidly, at
others, painfully slowly. It is a community
that is growing in its cultural diversity. It is
a community wrestling with issues of
participation and identity. It is a
community keen to respond to the
challenges of life in Australia.

At its best, the Church is a place where
all are welcome at the table of Christ.

In his recent visit to Australia, John
Wilkins (editor of *The Tablet*) said that in
terms of forgiveness and communion, the
Church will never fail you. I think that
there is truth in the spirit of what John says.
I think that as a Church we are still to grow
fully into this statement. Forgiveness and
communion in Christ are the principal

treasures the Church offers the world. As
such it should never qualify its giving.

The God of my life is indeed abundant
and generous. Finding God in all things has
been a tangible source of life and hope.

I have never understood those who
would seek to limit the ways through which
we might encounter this most loving and
merciful God. The deceptively simple
invitation of Jesus, 'Come, follow me,' is
an invitation to participate in a life-
changing journey.

My response has been to endeavour to
follow with a faithful heart, attuned to signs
of life and the people and places marked by
the spirit.

I don't always 'get it right'. And I've
stopped worrying about 'getting it right'.
That's not the point. The request is simply
to follow, look and listen.

The journey is so much bigger than me,
or my life, or my work. I am learning to live
in freedom.

In my work with *Australian Catholics*, I
am pleased to be able to seek out stories of
faith and life. Such stories are intended to
encourage readers to find traces of the spirit
within the stories of their own lives.

Building communities founded on life in
the spirit is one of the key challenges facing
the Church in Australia today. People are
seeking places of connection and welcome.
People are looking for a community that
nurtures life, offers hope and sustains a
search for meaning.

If there is a crisis in the Church today, it
is not that people don't want to belong, but
that there is no community to which they
feel they can belong.

The challenge to be a welcoming, life-
giving community belongs to each one of
us.

It is a challenge I welcome.



Marcelle Mogg

Your Say – Reflection on World Youth Day

Anne Maree Fagan

Twelve hundred young Australians, including 30 indigenous Australians and 46 young people from Parramatta Diocese, were among 500,000 young people from all seven continents who participated in the World Youth Day week from July 22-28, in Toronto, Canada. Anne Maree Fagan, Diocesan Field Officer for Youth and Young Adults in Parramatta, reflects on her experiences.

As with any journey, there are things that change and shape your experience that you can never anticipate, nor can you be totally prepared for what is to happen. I had heard so many stories about World Youth Day in Rome; some were tales of euphoria, but for many WYD was an experience to be less than desired. I had wondered whether I would feel blessed or cursed, but I knew that whatever happened, I would return to my home environment changed.

Before reaching Toronto, we had experienced church with each other. Our Parramatta pilgrimage had travelled across the Rocky Mountains to prepare for the World Youth Day week. Many had questioned this approach and asked, "Why the Rocky Mountains?" After we explained it was a pilgrimage and not a tour, many replied with the usual sarcasm, "Yes, we know, a 'pilgrimage'. Have fun, guys." It is true that the mountains are beautiful, and fun was a consequence of our travels, but we also marvelled at the God within the unexpected.

As pilgrimage leader, I wanted to take advantage of our natural surroundings and underpin our pilgrimage with an eco-theological theme — a fairly foreign concept to many of our 'churched' pilgrims. Although it was challenging to be without Catholic shrine or religious relic to aid us, we were compelled to find God in our relationship with the earth and with each other. The Canadian wilderness became the centre stage of our spiritual quest. Just as Jesus was led into the desert by the spirit, we tapped into our own wilderness, coming directly into contact with our limitations, fears, questions and unexpected achievements.

Our morning and evening prayers focused on 'Dadirri', the Australian indigenous term for listening to the Holy Spirit within ourselves amidst our natural surroundings.

With such a fortunate ten days in the Rockies, our next challenge was to open

ourselves up to the global church, in all its jubilation and controversy. From the pristine waters, silent forest corridors and nonchalant wildlife, we crossed over to engage with the rest of the world in the crush of the crowd, in the roar of voices singing and chanting and in the emotionally charged liturgies.

As we lined the barricades and scrambled onto shoulders to await the Holy Father at the Papal Welcoming Ceremony, we began to realise that we were about to be changed through the presence, words and actions of one of the most influential figures of 20th century history: Pope John Paul II. Together we stood alongside those from Canada, the United States, Central and South America, Asia, Oceania, Europe and Africa and heard the Pope's vision of true happiness. "Jesus did not limit himself to proclaiming the Beatitudes, he lived them!"

After such a refreshing start, the mission and purpose of his visit became clearer later at the Saturday evening solemn vespers and at the Papal Mass on the Sunday morning, where he urged us to build a new historical era on love. "Is it enough to rely on the technological revolution taking place, which seems to respond only to criteria of productivity and efficiency, without reference to the individual's spiritual dimension or to any universally shared ethical values?"

He then continued, "On what foundations, on what certainties should we build our lives and the life of the community to which we belong?" The crowd began to chant and encourage him to continue as he took a moment's rest to regain his breath. "Only Christ — known, contemplated and loved — is the faithful friend who never lets us down, who becomes our travelling companion, and whose words warm our hearts." In no uncertain terms, his deliveries were genuine and personal, concentrating on the life-giving messages of the Gospel.

He showed a sense of fun, tapping his hand on the podium in time with the well-known mantra, "John Paul II, we love you."

Later during the Papal Mass, the Pope addressed the scandals of priests and religious and acknowledged his deep regret. "The harm done by priests and religious to the young...fills us all with a deep sense of sadness and shame." He then encouraged us to consider the vast majority of religious and clergy who only wish to do good and asked us to support them.

Coming from a man who has lived

under totalitarian regimes, we felt more empowered to believe him. Perhaps our light might actually be effective, perhaps it is possible to outshine the shadows of darkness that have caused such disappointment and doubt about the trustworthiness of the clergy.

One of the key issues that faced our pilgrims was trying to discover how they as young people can find a space in the church and where they belong or 'fit'. Watching the array of different expressions of spirituality among the crowd, reading literature that spelled out how a woman should dress and behave in relationships, and seeing some religious and clergy in outfits that clearly belonged to another place and time, long before Vatican II, was a little disconcerting. These people seemed almost to be in opposition to the spirit of the Pope's deliveries.

The catechesis sessions also presented their challenges, with unnecessary comparisons being made between abortion and sex abuse and reconciliation being explained in rather insufficient terms: "It's like cleaning your house regularly, dumping the garbage regularly or changing the oil in your car." It was a shame that such topics could not be addressed in more comprehensive detail.

Some of the scheduled activities were cancelled, and many opportunities were missed to exchange faith experiences between nations. There was too much choice and not enough group-processed activities, such as finding out what is really happening in parishes in South Africa who face the AIDS crisis on a daily basis.

The hype and euphoria of the teenagers tended to lose effect when all the younger pilgrims wanted to do was 'trade' badges and t-shirts, without being open to any meaningful discussion.

However, if anything, the festivities of World Youth Day stirred us, and we had many a topic to discuss at debriefing each night within our group. We also began to feel that we had truly begun our mission to be salt and light, especially on the buses and trains in conversations with the city dwellers who commented, "It has been a great thing for this city to have you here".

Despite being aware of the continual challenges we face as Catholics, we also gained much inspiration from the Pope's visit, from being exposed to the global church and through our group pilgrimage. I can humbly say that I have been challenged, inspired and changed by the people, the places and primarily by my God, my travelling companion.

Essay – Some thoughts on church dialogue

by Edward B Clancy

The Editor approached a number of people, including bishops, to write a small piece for *The Mix* apropos the fortieth anniversary of the commencement of the Second Vatican Council. The following is contributed by Cardinal Clancy, former Archbishop of Sydney.

George Weigel, in his book *Witness to Hope*, speaks of the Second Vatican Council under the heading, *The Gamble of Vatican II*. He writes:

"He (pope John XXIII) envisioned an open conversation in which the world's bishops would relive the experience of Christ's apostles at Pentecost. The Second Vatican Council, in the Pope's mind, would renew Christian faith as a vibrant way of life; it would engage modernity in dialogue; it would issue no condemnations; it would try to give voice again to the pure message of the Gospel. It would, in the now-famous phrase, open the Church's windows to the modern world." (p.154)

The Pope certainly had the highest hopes for his Council, and given the forces at work in the world at the time, it is not unreasonable to refer to it as a gamble. But, be that as it may, the calling of the Council was in fact an act of great faith on the part of Pope John.

There were many in the Curia who were vehemently opposed to the idea. Engagement with the modern secularist world was probably the cause of greatest concern among the Council's opponents, and forty years on, it is a matter of debate as to whether the Church or the world holds the initiative. Many, I think, would put the world well ahead.

Whether it was recognised at the time or not, it was inevitable that to enter into dialogue with the world was to invite dialogue within the Church itself. Dialogue has been proceeding on both fronts throughout these forty years.

As a general assessment, one would have to say that the quality of much of the dialogue in both cases has been disappointing. I do not restrict my remarks to structured or organised dialogue. Such is the climate today that virtually anything that is said or written publicly about the Church is a contribution to a Church-wide dialogue.

Dialogue involves both speaking and listening – and with an open mind in both of these activities. At the very least it

also requires of each party respect for the other.

Where the Church is concerned, it requires more – it requires love, love of God, love for the Church, love for one another.

Dialogue is perhaps easiest between equals, but dialogue does not always take place between equals. For example, dialogue between a father and son is authentic and potentially fruitful only if the son acknowledges – as the bottom line, so to speak – the father's authority and greater experience. That does not mean that the father is necessarily, and *a priori*, right in any given issue, but the recognition of his status will have an important bearing on the tone and the prospects of the dialogue. It goes without saying that all dialogue should be conducted according to the conventions of elementary courtesy.

All our dialogue should be clearly characterised by those three great theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and should be accompanied by fervent prayer.

The Holy Father has led the way in the Church's dialogue with the secular world, and in doing so has set the example for all who would participate in dialogue. One by one he has taken up every issue over which the Church and the world are in dispute, providing a calm and closely reasoned explanation of the Church's position, and inviting a response in kind from those who would speak for the world.

He has readily acknowledged the errors of the Church in the past, and apologised on behalf of those who in the Church's name have wronged others. The world, unfortunately, has been unwilling to take up the Pope's challenge. A rock-hard secularist ideology has not been open to dialogue.

Pope John Paul has adopted the same approach towards dialogue within the Church. It is claimed, however, that at a certain point, he put the brakes on post-conciliar developments among the People of God, and inhibited the thinking of that time in favour of a more conservative and centralised stance. This was, and still is, interpreted as a retreat to a pre-conciliar outlook.

What is generally not mentioned in this context is that excesses of all kinds, both in

theory and in practice, had been taking place throughout the Church. The excesses were claimed to be "in the spirit of the Council", and some, feeling that we had moved on beyond Vatican II, were not calling for Vatican III!

I believe that the Pope did certainly put the brakes on, and with good reason, but nobody with any knowledge of his thinking could accuse him of being pre-conciliar.

The Pope, however, is not the only one to speak authoritatively from inside the walls of the Vatican. Indeed, the various Pontifical Congregations, Councils, etc., have provided the official voices on most occasions, and have from time to time entered into dialogue without prejudice to their authority.

Not without reason, these have frequently been criticised for their failure to meet the canons of true dialogue, and a great deal of frustration has resulted.

We need to recognise, however, the difficulties that these bodies face. Firstly, they cannot of themselves pronounce the last word – that always rests with the Holy Father.

Secondly, they have been issuing decrees and pronouncing judgments without fear of contradiction from the rank and file within the Church for 2000 years, and against that historical background true dialogue is a very difficult art to master.

Thirdly, they have to speak from the perspective of a universal Church with a billion members and countless different cultures.

And fourthly, their dialogue partners frequently fail to recognise and appropriately respect their unique status and authority.

There has been fault on both sides. Rome has sometimes betrayed an apparent insensitivity to concerns within the wider Church. And, of course, entrenched mentalities foreign to the spirit of dialogue are to be found everywhere.

The freedom of all the people of God, even of the lowliest station in life, to voice their perceptions about the Church is one of the welcome features of the post-conciliar Church. However, there are pitfalls and much learning still to be done in order to facilitate fruitful dialogue.

There are many whose outspoken criticism of the Church is not motivated by love for the Church, but by resentment over

some Church teaching that touches them personally, as, for example, the Church's teaching on the indissolubility of a valid marriage, or on contraception. Others are driven by particular ideologies, such as the ordination of women, a married clergy, or inter-Communion.

Some such issues may well be legitimate subjects for dialogue, but they need to be set in a broader context that makes the good of the Church the focus of the discussion.

Then there are those who get carried away by one or other of the modern theologians – a Kung, a Gutierrez, or a Ruether – and propose visions of the Church that ignore the boundaries set by authentic ecclesiology and the Church's Tradition. If we venture into deep theological waters, we need to know how to swim. And – to change the metaphor – we should always keep our emotions on the short leash of reason.

I have been labouring the downside of dialogue in and by the Church. I would not wish to deny, however, that a great deal of good dialogue has taken place at a variety of levels, and that much has been achieved.

The Church has certainly set up structures for dialogue. Notable among these is the Synod of Bishops, about which, however, there is much dissatisfaction. This is in part due to the immense complexity of a dialogue that involves so many people, from so many different parts of the world, to be conducted in a very limited time-frame. Most, however, would complain that there is excessive "management" of Synod discussions and resolutions.

It is also appropriate here to point out that dialogue is more than an exchange of ideas – it also involves a mutual analysis of those ideas.

There are other structures, too, at the local level, such as parish councils. Some such councils function very well, others not so well, and the reasons, in most cases, are readily identifiable.

Dialogue is a new experience for the Church, and it is going to take a long time to establish the right structures and to use them effectively.

Appropriate structures, however, are not the complete answer, and are no substitute for the inadequacies of the dialogue *mentality*.

I have already mentioned the need for a genuine love of the Church, and a caring reaches beyond one's own personal problems and difficulties. An adequate knowledge of the Church's teaching and

claims about itself is also necessary. Knowledge can be expected to grow with the dialogue (if properly conducted), but an effort should be made to acquire sufficient knowledge at the very outset if one expects the dialogue to be fruitful and constructive. Dialogue conducted on the basis of avoidable misunderstanding or ignorance is, at best, a waste of time.

It goes without saying that all dialogue should be conducted according to the conventions of elementary courtesy.

Some exercises in dialogue treat the Church as if it were a (commercial) company, and the dialogue participants its shareholders – a far cry from the concept of the Mystical Body. We are all called to be perfect, to be Christ-like, and it is remarkable just how many paragraphs of the New Testament writings are devoted explicitly to driving that message home.

Christ founded his Church to assist us in the work of personal salvation and in promoting the salvation of the world. This thought should be uppermost in our minds whenever we engage in dialogue, whether within the Church, or with our separated brothers and sisters of other faiths or traditions. All our dialogue should be clearly characterised by those three great theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and should be accompanied by fervent prayer.

At the time of the Council, it was freely said that it takes one hundred years for an ecumenical council to bear its ultimate fruit. I do not think that any of us really believed it at the time. Looking about us forty years later, it seems much more credible.

Much has been achieved – and we should not underestimate it – but we still have a long way to go before we realise Pope John's hopes for the Gospel to become a vibrant way of life for all the world, and for all to hear the pure message of the Gospel in the teaching of the Council.

Towards that end, however, we must continue to work and pray, entrusting ourselves to the unfailing guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The proceedings of the National Forum – "Vatican II: Unfinished Business" – are currently being gathered for publication. The following is an excerpt from the presentations of Fr Joseph Komonchak.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "CHURCH"?

I would like to urge reflection on the two words – "The Church" – and to ask you what enters your mind as you hear that title. What is the referent of the word "Church"? Is it the Pope? The hierarchy? Bishops? Priests? Did you think automatically of what some people call "the institutional Church"? If so, did you and do you think of that phrase as in the third person? Did you and do you include yourselves in the term?

In other words, are you thinking of it in the first person, singular or plural? About yourself, and the whole group of you? Were you prepared to undertake a reflection that involves you, about opportunities and challenges facing you? Or did you and do you expect to hear about some third party?

Does your spontaneous image of the Church respect the fact that 99% of the Church are lay people? And under "Church" did you mean the great big thing – the universal Church? "THE CHURCH!"

Under that name, in its largest sense, come all the community of believers, the ones the Fathers spoke of, "the Church from Abel on": all the people, from Abel the just to the last of those who will be gathered into the Kingdom, whose number is known only to God.

"But we are talking about the Church here on earth, in history, facing opportunities and challenges. But where does that Church exist? Somewhere else? Well, yes, of course; it exists in Africa and Asia, in Europe and in the Americas. And it exists only in all those places. There is not some universal Church, in the singular, apart from all the local Churches of which it is the communion; and if that is the case, then to talk about the prospects of the Church is to talk about the prospects of the Churches.

What a different set of reflections would have to arise if one were to ask about the opportunities and challenges facing the Church that is in Bangladesh, in Rwanda, in Kosovo, or, to bring things closer to home, in Australia, and within this archdiocese, the Church that is in a rural parish or an inner-city parish!

I have to work at getting the students to reflect on what comes spontaneously to mind when they hear the word "Church", and I often find that they think of it, first, in terms of what they annoy their professor by referring to as "the institutional Church", which almost always means something apparently apart from themselves. □

Words for a Pilgrim People

'Whatever you ask for in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13)

□□□

If prayer is the "soul" of ecumenical renewal and of the yearning for unity, it is the basis and support for everything the Council defines as "dialogue." This definition is certainly not unrelated to today's personalist way of thinking. The capacity for "dialogue" is rooted in the nature of the person and our dignity. As seen by philosophy, this approach is linked to the Christian truth concerning human beings as expressed by the Council: human beings are in fact "the only creatures on earth which God willed for themselves"; thus we cannot "fully find ourselves except through a sincere gift of ourselves" (Gaudium et spes, 24)). Dialogue is an indispensable step along the path toward human self-realization, the self-realization both of each individual and of every human community. Although the concept of "dialogue" might appear to give priority to the cognitive dimension (dia-logos), all dialogue implies a global, existential dimension. It involves the human subject in his or her entirety; dialogue between communities involves in a particular way the subjectivity of each. This truth about dialogue, so profoundly expressed by Pope Paul VI in his Encyclical Ecclesiam Suam, was also taken up by the Council in its teaching and ecumenical activity. Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way it is always an "exchange of gifts" (Lumen gentium, 13).

□□□

I am what I am or I am nothing. My first elementary lesson of duty is that of resignation to the laws of nature, whatever they are; my first disobedience is to be impatient at what I am, and to indulge an ambitious aspiration after what I cannot be. (John Henry Newman, A Grammar of Assent, Image Books, 1955, 272f.)

□□□

One very good way to begin to understand Jesus is to look at those moments when he got angry. There are, in fact, many such occasions recorded in the Gospels – perhaps more than we would care to recognise. Apart, perhaps, from Matthew 16:23 – when he said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan" – every expression of anger is focused on the religious leaders – "the scribes and the Pharisees" or "the chief priests and elders" or "the Jews".

On the 26th Sunday of the Year (Year A), the Church throughout the world meditates on one such example – Matthew 21:28-32. It is a particularly pointed and blunt exchange. "The chief priests and the elders" question his authority; Jesus outwits them by asking them to declare their opinion on John the Baptist's authority; He then asks their opinion on two types of people: the one says "Yes, I will" but does not do what was asked, the other says "No, I will not" but does do what was asked. As if the point is not clear enough, Jesus adds: "The tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you".

... one very good way to begin to understand Jesus is to look at those moments when he got angry.

What is this conflict telling us about Jesus and his teaching? One suggestion: "The chief priests and elders" are primarily concerned about the rules, laws, customs and doing the "right thing"; what they offer people – indeed, demand of people – is conformity to a human system, albeit under the guise of "God's will". Jesus is primarily concerned about God's liberating love; he wants to see people open their minds and hearts and receive this life-altering love. And he exposes and condemns those who stand in the way of God's love, especially when they erect obstacles in the very name of God. □

The Tradition – Staying in focus

The scribes and Pharisees, chief priests and elders of the New Testament, on the face of it, were extremely committed, dutiful, faithful servants, utterly obedient, if you reduce morality to conformity. But whom or what did they serve? To whom or what were they obedient? They quite simply missed the point and tried to force others into missing the point. And, yes, they pretended to be God's chosen agents. They forgot what mattered. Their lives bore witness to a human system rather than God's love and God's intentions.

And this is constantly the story of the Christian community through the ages, though it is not the stuff of the authentic tradition. It takes constant vigilance and generous effort to maintain our focus on what really matters. The Second Vatican Council sums it up well, at a time in our history, it must be acknowledged, when we had largely forgotten this part of the authentic tradition: "... (the Church), at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, always follows the way of penance and renewal" (*Lumen gentium*, 8).

The 14th century Dominican guide, Meister Eckhart, represents the tradition well when – reminiscent of Matthew 13:44 – he writes: "[To] The man who has once for an instant looked into this (inmost) ground, a thousand marks of red minted gold are the same as a brass farthing. Out of this inmost ground, all your works should be wrought without *Why*. I say truly, as long as you do works for the sake of heaven or God or eternal bliss, from without, you are at fault. It may pass muster, but it is not the best. Indeed, if a man thinks he will get more of God by meditation, by devotion, by ecstasies or by special infusion of grace than by the fireside or in the stable - that is nothing but taking God, wrapping a cloak round His head and shoving Him under a bench. For whoever seeks God in a special way gets the way and misses God, who lies hidden in it. But whoever seeks God without any special way gets Him as He is in Himself, and that man lives with the Son, and he is life itself. If a man asked life for a thousand years, 'Why do you live?', if it could answer it would only say, 'I live because I live.' That is because life lives from its own ground, and gushes forth from its own. Therefore it lives without *Why*, because it lives for itself. And so, if you were to ask a genuine man who acted from his own ground, 'Why do you act?', if he were to answer properly he would simply say, 'I act because I act'." □

Out of this inmost ground, all your works should be wrought without *Why*.

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

www.communities.ninemsn.com.au/

SpiritualityinthePub

NSW and ACT – 7.30-9.00pm unless specified:

° **Albury** – New Albury Hotel, Kiewa St October 9 “Where have all the (good) religious artists gone?” (Info: Fr Glenn 6026 5333).

° **Alstonville** – (Info: Anne 6628 6428)

° **Bowral** – The Grand Bar and Brasserie (Info: Julian 4861 4649).

° **Campbelltown** – Campbelltown Catholic Club September 11 “The Spirituality of Australians” Fr Eugene Stockton & Rev John Bleyerveen (Info: Rosemary 9603 2975).

° **Canberra** – Whatever happened to Vatican II The Southern Cross Club Woden September 25 “Liturgy – How authentic?” Veronica Rosier & Laurie Haloran (Info: Rita 6260 6737).

° **Engadine** – NEW – Engadine RSL, Old Princes Highway, September 11 “Peace-making” Fr Frank Brennan & Susanna; October 9 “Spirituality in Australia Today” Geraldine Doogue & Fr Tony Doherty (Info: Elizabeth 9520 0617 or Annette 9548 2475).

° **Five Dock** – Pathways to God The Illinois Hotel, Cnr Parramatta Rd & Arlington St September 25 Prof Larissa Behrendt & Phil Glendenning (Info: Noeline 9797 8862).

° **Jamberoo** – Vatican II The Jamberoo Hotel September 9 “Vocations in Crisis” Sr Maria Casey rsj & Fr Glenn Boyd (Info: Anne 4232 1062 or Gabrielle 4232 2735).

° **Kincumber** – Rekindling the Light – The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive September 3 “Social Morality the only Morality?” Jeff Gambin & John Nevin; October 1 “Are Refugees really our Neighbours?” Fr Nguyen Van Cao sj & Dr Xuyen Tran (Info: Robbie 4390 0370 or Clair 4344 6608).

° **Lismore** – Mary Gilhooley's Pub Club September 18 “Experience & Belief – Do my experiences count?” Fr Gerard Hall sm (Info: Lynne 6625 1195).

° **Newcastle** – The Mary Ellen Hotel, Glebe

Merewether (Info: Lawrence 4967 040)

° **Northern Sydney** – Australia: An Open Hearted Country? Union Hotel, Cnr Pa-

cific Hwy & West St, North Sydney September 16 “Revenge & Retribution OR Reform & Rehabilitation?” Pat O'Shane & Terry O'Connell (Info: Michelle 9958 5963).

° **Paddington** – Unfinished Business for the People of God The Bellevue Hotel October 2 “Freedom & Conscience” Geraldine Doogue & Fr Michael Whelan sm (Info: Marea 9387 3152).

° **Penrith** – Golf Club October 23 “Spirituality and Addiction” Michelle Mulvihill & Br Peter Burke (Info: Sue 9760 2324).

° **Rouse Hill** – The Mean Fiddler on Windsor Rd Oct 1 “Social Morality – the Only Morality?” (Info: Maria 9680 2220 (H))

° **Rydalmere** – Responding to Change – The Family Inn Hotel, Cnr Park & Victoria Rds September 10 “Social Morality” Margaret Hinchey rsm & Graham Neist (Info: Kerry 9630 2704).

° **Waitara** – Put Out Into Deep Water The Blue Gum Hotel on the Pacific Hwy September 18 Dr Graham Marlin & Mal Ralston (Info: Kathryn 9402 7842).

VIC:

° **Ballarat North** – North Star Hotel, Lydiard St, Second Wednesday each month 12.30-2pm (Info: Kevin 5332 1697).

° **Clayton** – Vatican II: Vision & Reality 40 Years On - The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm September 10 “Interfaith dialogue – foundation for peace” Sr Kath Murphy op & Fr Ken Petersen OCarm (Info: Yvonne 9700 7340 or Joyce 9700 1250).

° **Collingwood** – The Church of the Future – Where are we Going? – The Vine Hotel, Cnr Wellington & Derby Sts, 8pm-9.30pm (Info: April 9391 0787).

° **Geelong** – (Info: Denis 5275 4120).

° **Heidelberg** – Tower Hotel, 838 Heidelberg Rd, Alphington, 8pm-9.30pm (Info: Susie 9859 6184).

° **Mordialloc** – Vatican II – Unfinished Business – The Kingston Club, 7.30pm-9pm October 23 “Future Directions” Val Noone & Maryanne Confoy rsc (Info: Maria 9579 4255).

° **Mornington** – The Royal Hotel, Victoria Room, 770 The Esplanade, 8pm-9.30pm September 25 “Tomorrow's Church – Pipe Dream or Nightmare?” Mary Cameron & Fr Maurie Cooney (Info: Ange 9787 8178 or Carole 5976 1024).

Other States

° **Devonport (TAS)** – 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 & Lake Sts, Northbridge 7.30-9.10pm, 4th Wednesday of month (Info: Fr Tom 9388 0912).

° **Macclesfield (SA)** – Three Brothers Arms, Venables Street October 1 “Spirituality & Leadership: Muslim & Christian Perspectives” Pat Secker & Ali Vathorali (Info: Michael 8388 9265).

° **The Talking MIX** is now available on tape. Annual subscription: \$40. For further information contact Pauline on 02 9816 4262.

Other Matters and Events

° **Life Teen Conference, Castle Hill, October 11-13, 2002** – Leading teens closer to Christ. (Info: Peter on 02 9634 2622).

° **Mount St Benedict Centre, Pennant Hills, September 28 – October 4** “What are you Seeking?” with Verna Holyhead sgs (Info: 9484 6208).

° **Catholic Adult Education Service Adelaide** – 40th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, CTC, Brooklyn Park, September 10 Sr Pat Fox rsm (Info: Sr Liz Morris (08) 8210 8162).

° **St Mary's Towers Retreat Centre** Douglas Park September 27-October 3 guided retreat “See I make all things new”; October 4-12 Life's Healing Journey; October 18-24 Spirituality of Ageing; October 28-November 5 directed retreat (Info: Sr Joan 4630 9159).

° **Thomas Merton Retreat** October 4-6 St Joseph's Spirituality Centre, Kincumber (Info: Beth or Sr Colleen 4368 4807).

° **Reading the Classics in Philosophy** “John Stuart Mill's On Liberty” Catholic Institute of Sydney, Strathfield, Five Tuesdays October 15 – November 12, 7pm-9pm with Neil Brown (Info: 9752 9500).

° **Meditative Prayer** September 11, 7.30pm; **Reflection Evenings in Spirituality** with Kate Englebrecht, October 14, 21, 28, November 4, 4-6pm, Loreto College Normanhurst Cost \$30 (Info: Kate 9487 3488).

° **Taize Pilgrimage of Trust** September 8 St James Parish Hall 1pm; September 10 Loreto College Normanhurst 7.30pm; **Symposium – What Hope of Unity – The Mission of the Church** September 14 Salvation Army Training Centre, Bexley North (Info: Sr Trish 9299 2215).

° **Reflection Morning with Bede Heather** – Marist Centre, Hunters Hill, Sept 14 (Info: Pauline 02 916 4262)

Recommended

Congregations for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Starting Afresh from Christ: A Renewed Commitment to Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium* (2002), St Pauls Publications, 79 pages, endnotes, pb, \$6.50.

In 1994, the IXth Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome focused on consecrated life and its mission in the Church and the world. Pope John Paul II, gathering the material from that assembly, wrote his Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*. Five years after the publication of that Apostolic Exhortation, the Congregation given oversight of religious life in the Church has published this document. It draws heavily – and very appropriately – on both *Vita Consecrata* and *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. This is a document of substance and positive outlook. To begin with, the emphasis on Christ is much more inspiring than an emphasis, for example, on a particular lifestyle. And the inclusive language makes it more readable. For example: “Consecrated persons ... have as their mission that of making Christ’s way of life shine through the witness of the evangelical counsels, thereby supporting the faithfulness of the whole body of Christ”. *Starting Afresh* seems alert to the challenges, limits and possibilities of the times in which we live. For example: “Particular attention must be given to a cultural formation in line with the times and in dialogue with the research of the meaning of human life today”. This document deserves careful attention.

David Ranson, *Across the Great Divide: Bridging Spirituality and Religion Today*, St Pauls Publications, 2002, 92 pages, bibliography, endnotes, \$19.95.

The advent of the Schools in the twelfth century gave birth to the institutional process that we now see manifest in the modern-day universities. There is a double irony in that. In the first instance, the universities, for the most part, eschew any knowledge of or debt to those earlier Schools where theology was the most important science taught. In the second instance, theology within the Christian – particularly Catholic – tradition similarly eschews its roots in and ultimate dependence on spirituality, which was the whole point of study prior to that time. It should not surprise us, therefore, that our contemporaries get confused about “religion” and “spirituality” – many of our modern, Catholic theological institutions are confused. Ranson makes a useful contribution to the conversation we must have on this matter. The theological project does not make sense except as an expression of a lived spirituality. *Across the Great Divide* is at times a little abstract and occasionally dispersed, but the variety of sources quoted and thoughts presented should give the serious reader something substantial for further reflection. The student of spirituality is encouraged – along with a generous commitment to practice – to read this little book and follow the trails it sets down. As Ranson argues, “without intellectual accountability, ‘spirituality’ is adrift”.

June Boyce-Tillman, *The Creative Spirit: Harmonious Living with Hildegard of Bingen*, Canterbury Press, 2000, 203 pages, pb, endnotes, bibliography, discography.

One of the potentially very fruitful movements of our time is the re-discovery of spiritual classics. Much scholarly work has been done since the Second Vatican Council to make available for popular readership the writings of hitherto unknown guides. Our Catholic tradition is immensely rich in this regard. Boyce-Tillman offers us a good introduction to one of the great women mystics in this most readable edition. Hildegard is not to everyone’s taste. However, she does represent an authentic expression of the Christian life – an expression that was largely absent from the Church during the post-reformation years. Hildegard was a twelfth-century woman of extraordinary talent. Apart from being an abbess, she was a musician, a poet, a visionary and a dramatist. *The Creative Spirit* situates Hildegard in her historical context – a time of immense change in the life of the Church and world of Europe. It then looks at her concept of justice, the prayer life of her monastic community, her application of the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament, her visionary experience and her medical writings. Boyce-Tillman quotes extensively from Hildegard’s writings and suggests a number of exercises to draw the reader into the creativity of Hildegard. This is a practical and readable book, one which could prove particularly useful for group study.

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