



THE MIX



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Our Say – Servants of the truth

St Thomas Aquinas is commended for his intellectual courage. He committed his whole life to the pursuit of truth. For example, St Thomas borrowed a form of commentary on Aristotle from the Muslim philosopher, Averroës (1126-1198). But he also disagreed with Averroës when he stated that something could be false in philosophy but true in religion. The truth is seamless.

In the mind of St Thomas, the believer has nothing to fear from the truth. If something is true it will not undermine genuine faith but enhance and confirm it. He accepts Jesus' claim that the truth liberates (cf John 8:32). He also believes the truth ultimately leads to the Truth Himself.

In 1936, Fr Yves Congar OP preached a panegyric on St Thomas. Congar noted:

It can be said that a determination to be the servant of the truth permeates St Thomas' whole life; it forms its spiritual essence.

Congar went on to note that the service of

truth, specifically as a theologian, so guided St Thomas that he chose to eschew anything that might prove a distraction:

He was later offered high ecclesiastical positions; in particular, after his family had been ruined as the result of its fidelity to the pope, he was offered, as a means to its assistance, the archbishopric of Naples, or the abbacy of Monte Cassino. Finally, at the end of his life, when he had left Naples and was on that unfulfilled last journey to the Council of Lyons and already gravely ill, his companion and friend Reginald expressed sorrow, for he had hoped, he said, that the pope would reward the services of Brother Thomas Aquinas (as he had those of St Bonaventure) by making him a cardinal. Thomas replied, 'Have no regrets about that, for among the petitions I have made to God – and I thank him that they have been heard – is a request that I may be taken from this world in the same humble state of life in which I now am, and that I may be given no dignity or office that would change it.'

St Thomas Aquinas has long been revered in the Catholic Church as a trustworthy guide in matters of theology and phi-

losophy. He is, for example, the only person explicitly named in the 1917 Code of Canon Law, with the injunction that the clergy should receive their philosophical and theological instruction "according to the method, doctrine and principles" of Aquinas.

Whatever we might learn from St Thomas, we should never forget that his whole life stands as a testimony to the power of truth over against the lie. There is no future in evading the truth, whatever explicit or implicit form the evasion might take. The recent corporate collapses, both here and abroad, that have followed the presentation of fraudulent balance sheets, bear testimony to that. So too do the tragic consequences of the way we have dealt with sexual abuse within the Catholic Church.

So what are we afraid of? Of all people, we have least to fear from seeking the truth and most to gain from searching it out and promoting it. The task of renewal includes, as a *sine qua non*, a vigorous pursuit of the truth. □

This journal is one of the works of
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We are believers who are attempting to establish
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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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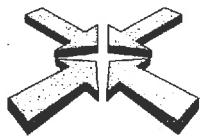
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The Four Arrows and the Cross symbolise diversity
giving rise to communion in and through the Paschal
Mystery. Those who are diverse by nature and culture,
in and through Christ find life-giving unity.

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 Aidan Carvill. I grew up in
Dublin, Ireland, one of seven children
of Catholic parents. My dad was from
Northern Ireland, my mum from Dublin.
Between the orange and the green, I've
been mixed up ever since!

Seriously, my dad's family had
experienced discrimination in Belfast. So,
like anyone besieged, he was a 'fighting'
Catholic, who sometimes thought his dear
wife was "far too liberal".

Post-war, and still-recently independent,
Ireland was in general strong in faith and
nationalism, socially conservative and
culturally lacking in confidence. I grew up
in that mould and, as a lad, was naturally
inclined to my dad's way of being a
Catholic.

I tended to be secure, confident, dogmatic
and rigid.

It took seven years of Marist seminary
training and fifteen years of ministry (most
of it in Fiji) to loosen up a bit, to move
beyond a unilateral understanding of things.
Two experiences were significant in that
change.

The first was that of the "Parish Renewal"
program (out of the Chuck Gallagher
Marriage Encounter stable). I attended a
training course on it in Ireland and led
many renewal weekends in my parish in Fiji
over the next three years.

Those weekends led me to deeply
appreciate the value of a genuine
collaborative ministry with my people, and
the changed perceptions of all of us brought
tremendous vitality and grace to our little
church community.

The second experience involved a mid-
life crisis over several years in the mid-
eighties and, in the healing process, the
discovery of a whole new way of being. I
attribute that discovery very largely to
reading Michael Whelan's *The Call to Be*
and to later following a course of studies
with him in the Science of Human Life
Formation.

This experience was both liberating and
personally challenging.

In summary, when I was younger I had
more answers and greater certainty, but
over the following twenty years, was led to
where I "did not wish to go", only to
discover a place of great beauty and peace.

The black-and-white certitude of youth
had dissolved into the grey of a pilgrim who
knows where he wants to go, but is not
always sure of every step on the road.

I had fewer answers indeed, but had — at
a level beyond intellect — a far richer
appreciation, confidence and hope in God's
love, desires and plans for me.

In my ministry nowadays, I am more

concerned with preaching Gospel values
than with what "the Church says". This is
not out of any disdain for the wealth of the
tradition that inspires me, but more (I hope)
from a realistic understanding of who and
what the church is. I now accept my
responsibility as a constitutive element of
that church (an essential piece of the jigsaw
as Bishop Hurley of Port Pirie puts it).

And so I like to regard myself as a loyal
and loving critic of that wonderful Body to
which I belong. (A parishioner teased me
recently for sounding "slightly seditious"!)

In my sermons I try to give people hope. I
think we priests have in the past challenged
people too much, tended to moralise
excessively, avoided any suggestion of
weakness in ourselves, be that in knowledge
or behaviour.

We — and I plead guilty also — have
thus taken too literally Shakespeare's line
that "all the world's a stage", one in which
we had a starring role. I have long felt that
it was time for us to "get off the stage!"
And it was time to *be* and to *talk* good news
to people.

Now I am filled with tremendous hope for
the future. This is not in spite of the ills that
beset us as church, but because of them.
The "system" I grew up in is breaking
down.

What I regard as encrustations that belong
to another age and another place (and
perhaps *never* were appropriate for the
church) will drop off like the shell of
chrysalis. And we, the new People of God,
"one in Body, one in Spirit" which the Lord
called us to be, will slowly emerge.

I can see the cocoon already beginning to
crack. Some of my friends tell me that I am
also cracked! Thank God.



Aidan Carvill, SM

Your Say – The Curia and the Synods

John Wilkins

This is a short extract from an address given at the National Forum, 13 July, 2002 by the editor of *The Tablet*. The full text will appear in the Proceedings, to be published early next year.

The Roman Curia, the papal civil service, wanted the [Second Vatican] Council over by Christmas. Then the bishops – “those people from outside”, the Curia called them – could go home and everything would return to normal. But it wasn't going to be like that. That became clear when the initial draft documents prepared by the Curia began to be thrown out, one after another, by the bishops. Now they took hold of proceedings and made it their Council...

The Church has changed out of all recognition under the impact of the Council.

So why is it that I, thinking back to the vision of those years when all things seemed possible, why is it that I feel, nevertheless, a sense of a shortfall, of unfinished business?...

“You know”, (Cardinal Bernadin) said, “they treat us like altar boys here”.

I've been present at just about all [the synods of bishops] in Pope John Paul II's reign... The trouble about journalists is that they want to know what is really going on. Attending the Asian or Australasian synods, for example, they note the consistent pleas of some of the bishops for the ordination of married men to be considered in some circumstances. Then they find out that the final lists of propositions sent to the Pope from those synods to help him compose his concluding document contain no such reference. How come?

Some time ago I published a letter in *The Tablet* which answered that question. It came from a former Mill Hill Missionary vicar general in India, John Wijngaards. The letter recounted how his friend, Fr Amalorpavadass, who tragically died in a car crash, had shared “frustration and anger” with Wijngaards. Amalorpavadass was one of India's best-known theologians, and had functioned as one of the two official general secretaries to the synod of bishops on evangelisation held in Rome in 1974 – in the time of Pope Paul VI.

He told Wijngaards that on arrival in

Rome he went to the synod office. There he found shelves upon shelves of consultation documents sent in by national bishops' conferences from all around the world. Little of this original material had been used by the Vatican committee that prepared the basic discussion papers for the synod.

Later, in their discussion groups, the participating bishops opened new avenues, Amalorpavadass said. But when it came to compiling the final document, this material was largely dropped, and a document *that had already been prepared in advance* was presented as the document that synthesised the bishops' own suggestions.

Amalorpavadass was appalled, and protested... He was told to comply “for the good of the Church”. He said he could not, in conscience. He was then told by the leading cardinal: “Do you realise this means that you will never be made a bishop?”

Amalorpavadass was determined not to give up. The doctored document was to be presented to the synod next morning. He set about preparing an alternative one based on the true interventions and conclusions of the bishops' working groups. The work went on through most of the night. Then he went to meet leading cardinals, archbishops and bishops, giving them copies of the alternative document and explaining what the Curia was intending to do. He got a shock. Many of them, though upset to hear about the Vatican's plan, were unwilling to challenge it.

A few bishops, however, did speak out at the plenary session next morning. The result was that the session was suspended and the synod did not adopt a document at all. Two years later, Paul VI produced his encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, which was one of the finest texts of his pontificate.

It seemed as though the small rebellion by a core group of bishops had paid off. But the Curia was the real winner. Since that synod it has been assumed that no synod of bishops can produce its own document. All they are allowed to do now is to submit confidential suggestions...

I remember once in Rome going to see the late Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, who was visiting. “You know”, he said, “they treat us like altar boys here”.

Cardinal König, emeritus Archbishop of Vienna, (noted in an essay in *The Tablet*): “Church leaders should not be afraid of too great a diversity. Over the years their fears in this respect have led to an excessive and defensive centralism and bureaucracy...”

Could the next Pope tackle the “excessive centralisation and bureaucracy” criticised by Cardinal König? That would mean bringing the papal civil service, the Curia, back where it belongs – as the servant of the Pope, not as the master of the bishops.

There are good and holy men in the Curia, and without it the Pope couldn't function. But like any civil service, it tries always to have the upper hand... Many bishops and cardinals are likely to think that this highly centralised papacy has given the Curia too much power.

Sooner or later a pope will surely move to make the synods less of a rubber stamp. “I need my brothers around me”, he will say. “I can't, like Atlas, hold the world on my shoulders. It is an immense task which I cannot carry out by myself. My fellow bishops must take more of the load. I must govern with the synod.” Which would mean giving it some deliberative power.

Since Vatican II an enormous amount of reform has been carried out.

The practical steps which might be taken to fulfil this intention were recently suggested by a regular *Tablet* contributor, Professor Nicholas Lash of Cambridge University. He envisaged a pope who would establish a commission to draw up proposals for the transfer of governance in the Church from Pope and Curia to Pope and bishops. The transfer would be achieved through the establishment of a standing synod composed of diocesan bishops. The Roman Curia would provide the administration, not the government.

Professor Lash ended his lecture with a typical flourish:

The centralised control from which we suffer, and which has contributed so greatly to the present crisis of authority, was built up in less than 100 years. It could, I believe, be put into reverse in less than ten.

If that could happen, what else could happen? Perhaps, in due course, (we might also see) the election of bishops, as they used to be for 1,000 years, and the establishment of regional councils, according to the ancient tradition:

An enormous amount of reform has been carried out. The Church has been renewed. But there has been a counter-movement of hesitation and opposition. We haven't gone as far as we should... □

Essay – Shame: The sentinel of our moral horizon?

by Tom Ryan

Tom Ryan SM is a Marist priest who is Lecturer and Coordinator of External Theological Studies in the College of Theology of the University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle, WA. He is also Chaplain at the Catherine McAuley Centre, Wembley, WA. Tom wrote this article at the invitation of the Editor.

Start worrying. Details to follow', is the Apocryphal Jewish telegram cited by novelist Lily Brett in *Life's Like That*. The 1950s Catholic version could well have run 'Start feeling guilty. Details to follow' [it may still strike a chord].

Vatican II and the 1960s initiated the shift from a Christian morality based on guilt and avoiding sin to one built on personal responsibility and growing in love. Today we appreciate better individual conscience, the boundaries of guilt and its healthy and unhealthy forms.

But, let's test the wind. While the inflated sense of guilt has been contracting, today is the sense of shame expanding? Is there an increasing influence of shame in public, social and Catholic life in Australia? Does this indicate a broadening and sensitizing of our moral horizon especially in social responsibility?

Let's take three questions:

- How are guilt and shame related as building blocks of conscience?
- Is there evidence of shame's increasing role in Australian culture and the Church both as a lever of social change and as a mirror of self-understanding?
- What are the implications of this for us as citizens, Christians, Catholics?

Perhaps we can easily restrict having a 'troubled conscience' to 'feeling guilty'. In the TV program *2000 Acres of Sky*, Kenny remarks that 'shame and guilt are like twins. Sort of like guard-rails to keep you on the road.' Shame, like guilt, is one of conscience's warning flares. As Willard Gaylin notes, guilt and shame are 'noble emotions essential for the maintenance of civilized society' (*Feelings: Our Vital Signs*, p. 4). They shape and inspire us to love, generosity, duty, self-sacrifice.

How do shame and guilt differ? Guilt is predominantly personal. It is about 'me being out of sync with me'. Feeling guilty is certainly uncomfortable, but it has a positive aim. It alerts us that something is amiss. Healthy guilt is always specific. I am aware that, in some way, I have failed, am at fault, that I have 'damaged a relationship with a friend, with God, with [my] own

best hopes and deepest values' (J. and E. Whitehead, 'Good Guilt Bad Guilt', *Inform*, 27, p.1).

True guilt also seeks exposure. It moves towards acknowledging one's fault, seeking forgiveness, making amends. It guards both *my* goodness and *our* relationships.

Shame, conversely, has a different trajectory. A sense of shame is mainly social, linked to the values and survival of the group. It helps establish socially acceptable behaviour. Shame requires an audience. It is the fear of being publicly exposed. Unlike true guilt, shame makes me want to hide from others and their judgments. Shame, then, reinforces common standards; it is a form of social control.

However, while 'shame-as-disgrace' reminds us we are social beings, 'shame-as-grace' has a positive personal role. It protects the boundaries of the self, of one's worth and values (J. & E. Whitehead, *Shadows of the Heart*, p. 93-4).

A sense of shame is mainly social, linked to the values and survival of the group. It helps establish socially acceptable behaviour.

Shame seems to be present in three spheres. Firstly, through the media and their search for the truth in the public arena. Verbs like 'expose', 'dig', 'probe', 'disclose' are used by media personnel of themselves. In 2001, the ABC's retrospective on forty years of *Four Corners* saw the media portrayed as the 'watchdog' of society and its institutions.

Causing embarrassment or loss of face are standard techniques especially on TV. Whether it is to uncover self-serving motives, political advantage, 'rotting' the system, immoral or criminal behaviour, the multi-purpose tool used is shame and its avoidance.

The truth about what is really going on finds safety in secrecy, hugging the darkness and avoiding the light. Who wants to lose face? Be shamed into telling the truth?

The sense of shame induces those on the public stage to be accountable and transparent. Certainly, embarrassment and shame help drive the race for ratings and readership and can appeal to our venal and voyeuristic tendencies.

Nevertheless, embarrassment and shame can also have a constructive role. Investigative journalism and programs such as *The*

Moonlight State remind us that media exposés help ensure that such things as political, judicial and police corruption are uncovered and addressed.

Again, the Catholic community we wide, especially its leaders and its system of governance, is being called to account, particularly through the media, for its attitudes to and handling of sexual abuse. Injustice and damage done to victims and their families are paramount. But all the faithful are affected. This is not just about wrongdoing. It is a violation of what is sacred. And it has so often been enveloped by a culture of secrecy. Is there any Catholic who does not feel in some way hurt, alienated, ashamed?

Shame, then, can prompt, even accelerate, change for a better world. It can also reflect and question the standards and values that define us as a community.

The second area where shame has a role is that of reconciliation. Here, Robert Manne and Raymond Gaita have clarified the vexed questions of collective guilt/responsibility and historical shame/regret.

Where guilt concerns blame or fault, shame is about loss of face with others. More importantly, shame is that sense of not measuring up to one's best self, whether of an individual, a group, a nation or a Church community. For instance, someone in my family is found guilty of a crime. Should we feel guilty (by association)? No. My family will understandably feel ashamed. Just as, 'by association,' I can feel pride in a family member's success, so I can feel shame in someone's failure. Shame touches both how others see us and how we see or 'stand before' ourselves. Our sense of worth, our 'best selves' have been diminished.

The question of reconciliation can embrace the Aboriginal people or any groups who suffered past injustice. In that context, shame can be the platform from which past injustices and hurts can be regretfully acknowledged today without bearing the guilt of yesterday. Just as *I* say sorry because I am ashamed of the behaviour of someone in my family, so *we* can say sorry because of our common shame in being associated with past injustices.

Shame, then, highlights the fact that, like it or not, we share in the patrimony (whether good or ill) from our forebears. For that reason, we carry a responsibility that the truth be named, that past injustices not be allowed to continue, that healing occurs.

Shame, seen in this positive light, binds

together present, past and future inhabitants of this land. It reflects a nation's 'best self', an expanding social vision for a better Australia and motivates us to achieve it.

As Michael Whelan says of shame (see *Catalyst Suggestion Sheet #21*), it can be a voice reminding us of our 'divine destiny' and 'human possibilities'. It is both a 'dark' moment and a grace of heightened awareness of complicity in social evil. It summons us to change the structures of our minds (prejudice), hearts (dispositions) and behaviour (social arrangements and practices) that underlie injustice.

Recently, as a nation we have had an insistent reminder of this with the presence of asylum seekers. Again, within the community, shame is a lubricant in the healing and remediation effected by restorative justice.

The third area where shame seems to have a function today is within the Church with the Third Rite of Reconciliation.

Neil Brown, in 'The Communal Nature of Reconciliation', (see *Australasian Catholic Record*, 77:1, 2000, p. 3-9) cites Raymond Barglow's view that contemporary industrial societies are characterised by the sense of the 'self' as imperiled. Responsibility, then, is not concerned with individual acts but in making sense of the direction and pattern of a person's life (p.6). Brown links this with shame understood as how one sees oneself, one's self-concept. As Brown notes:

Associated with the different categories of 'shame' are typically modern ailments such as failure in relationships, depression, conformity, and aggressive competitiveness, the cult of the body, eating disorders, and feelings of personal inadequacy. Shame is about the whole self, not particular acts, and is associated with trying to forget or conceal painful experiences and with personally restricting defensive attitudes (p. 6).

Shame also has difficulties with disclosure. Capps, cited by Brown, points out that, whereas guilt, if acknowledged and communicated, can bring feelings of relief, doing so with shame is more difficult. Telling another of one's shame, rather than alleviate it, can actually increase it (p. 7).

Brown has raised some helpful insights. Shame can be better addressed and healed in 'a communal context where the encouraging support of others is experienced at first hand' (Brown, p. 7).

Can we take this a bit further? Is the popularity of the Third Rite of Reconciliation really a sign of avoidance or of a decreasing sense of sin? Arguably it could indicate that people's consciences are expanding beyond their actions to the sources of their behaviour, to the sort of person one

is and desires to become and this within a community. Perhaps the attraction to this communal rite and the shame it addresses are symptoms of Christian growth rather than regression?

The pressure to stretch our moral horizons is evident in the wider context of recent events and their call to the Church community to take on-going conversion seriously. Perhaps James Keenan's comments in an article 'The Purge of Boston' in *The Tablet* of March 30 this year are very pertinent:

Here in Boston, we have lived through an incredible Lent. The scandals are enough to place us all in sackcloth and ashes. If Lent cultivates a communal sense of shame, then this has been the most fertile Lent in my 50 years; no other disposition captures what we Catholics feel about our Church and its leadership in this revolting and disgraceful tragedy.

One could suggest three implications. Firstly, overall, the increasing presence of shame may well indicate a shift in how we understand ourselves. It is not true that we are simply autonomous individuals and that individual rights always come first. We live in a network of interdependent relationships. Shame points towards our need of, and accountability to, others, society and the Church. It supplements rather than supplants individual guilt. Further, it provides an important lever for growth in culture, society and the Church.

... the Catholic community worldwide, especially its leaders and its system of governance, is being called to account ... for its attitudes to and handling of sexual abuse.

Secondly, perhaps we need a broader view of culture. Shame-based culture is characterised by roles and status that are socially established, where behaviour is governed by social conformity. The group comes before the individual. A guilt-based culture (as emerged in Europe in the early middle ages) is built on the importance of the individual. In this culture, personal autonomy is central. Goals are chosen. Status is achieved rather than inherited. The individual precedes the group.

Is shame emerging in Australian life as an inevitable consequence of a world increasingly built on interdependence, where networks of communication are exploding both nationally and internationally? We are being forced to reconsider society as a collection of autonomous individuals, each

pursuing a life-project even if done together.

We need to review the connection between shame and guilt cultures and the claims [and benefits] of the community in relation to the individual.

Within the Church, the Third Rite of Reconciliation reminds us that salvation is as much communal as personal. A time such as Lent is a regular and needed reminder that individually and together we have much about which we should have a sense of shame.

Finally, there is the nature and role of shame itself. It can be destructive and foster pettiness, immaturity and conformism. But it can also be a positive ingredient in personal, social and cultural life. Shame underlines that effective change is built on transformed attitudes, not just new laws.

In examining fifth century Greece BCE, the philosopher Bernard Williams notes an important distinction (J. & E. Whitehead, *Shadows of the Heart*, p. 111-2). A servile form of shame was concerned with public approval and conformity. Alternatively, a healthy shame had its roots in personal conviction and a sense of worth.

For Williams, this form of shame is about who we are rather than about actions based on gaining approval or avoiding disapproval of an authority figure, i.e., society.

Williams links healthy shame with interiorisation – the personal appropriation of values and standards handed on to us from others. It is embodied in conscience, our interior guide, which draws on the best values we have inherited and made our own. As Sidney Callahan explains in *In Good Conscience* (p. 164):

In our internalized memory, we can carry our inner, unseen audience of beloved and admired moral tutors and exemplars, whom we do not wish to disappoint or morally betray, by betraying the standards of worth they have imparted to us.

Shame, in this sense, is a virtue, a praiseworthy emotion. For Aquinas, a good person would feel ashamed when doing something dishonourable. Aquinas sees shame as a sentinel of moral sensibility and integrity.

Vatican II triggered a better understanding of my individual conscience and of guilt. Forty years later, the task may be to appreciate more that shame is both a sentry and an antenna of our moral horizon. Perhaps we are being reminded that this is true not only of a nation but also of a believing community.

The Bible – The greatest commandment

Words for a Pilgrim People

Jesus said to them, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets too'. (Matthew 22:37-40)

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The Church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all humankind. (Lumen gentium, ("Dogmatic Constitution on the Church"), 1; see also 9 & 48 of the same document)

□□□

It follows for the Christian churches that they must fulfil further their old task of employing the Word of the cross to destroy religious idolatry and personal fetishism and to spread the freedom of faith into the very hovels of the obscure. Its new task then will lie in struggling against not only religious superstition but also political idolatry, not only religious alienation of man but also his political, social and racial alienation in order to serve the liberation of man to his likeness to God in all areas where he suffers from inhumanity. In this sense, I think, it would also be the task of the churches today to develop "social critical freedom" in institutions. I say "also" because man is basically enslaved by anxiety, and liberation from anxiety happens in the first place through faith – not through social improvements. (Jurgen Moltmann, "Political Theology", *Theology Today*, 28 (1971), 20.)

□□□

When you visualized a man or a woman carefully, you could always begin to feel pity -- that was a quality God's image carried with it. When you saw the lines at the corners of the eyes, the shape of the mouth, how the hair grew, it was impossible to hate. Hate was just a failure of imagination. (Graham Green, *The Power and the Glory*, Penguin, 1971, 131.)

□□□

On the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A), we meditate on the reason for our existence – to be in love. Each of the three synoptic Gospels records the Great Commandment slightly differently. For example, Luke (10:25-28) has Jesus invite a lawyer to speak it, while Matthew (22:34-40) and Mark (12:28-31) reserve that role for Jesus himself.

The three accounts do have some significant details in common. Firstly, the issue arises in the context of the ongoing conflict with the Jewish authorities. We know something of their focus – law, ritual and custom. Like all conscientious agents of the system their first priority is to preserve the system. If unchecked, such a focus on maintenance invariably leads to a situation wherein the end is subverted by the means – *the means becomes the end*. And this is precisely why there is the conflict with Jesus.

Jesus – as far as we can gather – was quite at ease with law, ritual and custom. In fact he affirms the tradition. Thus he quotes the traditional prayer – the Shema – "You must love the Lord your God etc." (cf Deuteronomy 6:5). The faithful Jewish man said this prayer each morning noon and night.

The Exodus story is recalled, the Covenant is brought into central focus: "God has loved you into freedom, live it!". For good measure he reaches in the Book of Leviticus, to a section teeming with powerful statements about social justice, and adds: "Love your neighbour as yourself!"

Means only have value and validity in so far as they serve their proper ends. Laws, rituals and customs only have value and validity in so far as they promote love. They are fraudulent otherwise. The community of disciples is not to be an end in itself but an expression of the Covenant of love. Could there be any other reason for its existence? □

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The Tradition – The mystery of love

One of the most powerful statements of the genius of the Catholic tradition comes from one of the most unlikely places. Graham Greene, for all the reservations one might have about his life, wrote with uncanny insight into the human condition. In his best known novel – *The Power and the Glory* – he is able to cut through the incidental features of the Catholic tradition and go to the heart of the matter.

Greene's main character, the "whisky priest" – a man who finds his faith and his priesthood only when he seems to have utterly lost both – bears testimony to the one thing that matters. The lieutenant – about to be his executioner – taunts the priest, accusing him of fabricating stories about the love of God to trap the poor and the unsuspecting. The priest, from the ashes of his broken life, speaks most beautifully of the one thing that matters in the end: "'Oh,' the priest said, 'that's another thing altogether -- God is love. I don't say the heart doesn't feel a taste of it, but what a taste. The smallest glass of love mixed with a pint pot of ditch-water. We wouldn't recognize *that* love. It might even look like hate. It would be enough to scare us – God's love. It set fire to a bush in the desert, didn't it, and smashed open graves and set the dead to walking in the dark. Oh, a man like me would run a mile to get away if he felt that love around.'"

God is love. God cannot help but love infinitely. There is nothing you and I can do to make God love us more or less. God loves each of us infinitely, no matter what. We will not begin to understand the commandment to love God and our neighbour as ourselves unless we are know this truth with our guts. And the tradition would go on to suggest that the typical way in which we come to this knowledge is through our own brokenness. The light shines through the cracks. Jean Vanier puts it beautifully: "When I discover that I am poor, that I am confused, that you call me by my name, that you love me, then there is the moment of transformation." I cannot possibly love others until and unless I have been drawn into the mystery of love at work in me. □

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Bulletin Board

Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

SIP Meetings

♣ **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 October 23 “Music and Spirituality” Alan Beavis & Edwin Galea (Info: Julian 4861 4649).

° **Campbelltown** – Campbelltown Catholic Club (Info: Rosemary 9603 2975).

° **Canberra** – Whatever happened to Vatican II? The Southern Cross Club, Woden October 30 “Signs of the Times – Vatican 3, Calcutta 1 or Nairobi 1??” Morag Fraser & Frank Brennan (Info: Rita 6260 6737).

° **Engadine** – NEW – Engadine RSL, Old Lances Highway, 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 October 30 Chris Sidoti & Paul Falzon (Info: Noeline 9797 8862).

° **Jamberoo** – Vatican II The Jamberoo Hotel (Info: Anne 4232 1062 or Gabrielle 4232 2735).

° **Kincumber** – Rekindling the Light – The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive October 1 “Are Refugees really our Neighbours?” Fr Nguyen Van Cao sj & Dr Xuyen Tran; November 12 “Celebration Dinner – Let’s Come Gather around a Borree Log” Les Murray (Info: Robbie 4390 0370 or Clair 4344 6608).

° **Lismore** – Mary Gilhooley’s Pub Club (Info: Lynne 6625 1195).

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

° **Northern Sydney** – Australia: An open-Hearted Country? Union Hotel, Cnr Pacific Hwy & West St, North Sydney October 21 “Arts & Entertainment – Shaping the Country’s Heart” Morag Fraser & Justin

Fleming (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 November 12 TBA (Info: Maria 9680 2220 (H))

° **Rydalmere** – Responding to Change – The Family Inn Hotel, Cnr Park & Victoria Rds October 8 “Young People and the Church: Is it ours?” Anne Maree Fagan & “Balancing Career and Religion” Doris Younane (Info: Kerry 9630 2704).

° **Waitara** – Put Out Into Deep Water The Blue Gum Hotel on the Pacific Hwy October 16 Dorothy McRae-McMahon & Kerry Brettell (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 November 12 “Eucharist: Sacrament for Sinners” (Info: Yvonne 9700 7340 or Joyce 9700 1250).

° **Colac** – The Union Club Hotel November 1 “Changing Church” Barry Ryan (Info: Winsome 5235 3203).

° **Collingwood** – The Church of the Future – Where are we Going? – The Vine Hotel, Cnr Wellington & Derby Sts, 8pm-9.30pm (Info: April 9327 4433).

° **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 November 27 (Info: Ange 9787 8178 or Carole 5976 1024).

Other States

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

° **Hobart North (NEW)** – The Mustard Pot Hotel Moonah 7.30-9pm October 17

“Responding to Injustice: Is the Gospel still relevant?” Fr Brian Gore & Sr Gabrielle Morgan pbvm (Info: Gwayne 6228 2679).

° **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: Andrew 0422 305 742).

° **Macclesfield (SA)** – Three Brothers Arms, Venables Street November 6 “Spirituality, Dreaming & Being” Ngitji Ngitji Mona Tur & Rev Alison Andrew (Info: Michael 8388 9265).

BEQUESTS

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

Other Matters and Events

° **Women’s Night of Spirituality**, St Mary’s Church, Nth Sydney, Thurs Oct 24, 7.30pm.

° **St Mary’s Towers Retreat Centre** Douglas Park November 8-10 Taize retreat; November 11-17 Guided retreat “Awaiting the one who comes”; November 22-24 Advent prayer weekend; November 28-December 6 Directed retreat (Info: Sr Joan 4630 9159).

° **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** Sept 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).

° **Weekend Retreat “Discovering Thomas Merton”** Nov 8-10, Fr Laurie Mooney osa, St Clement’s Redemptorist Monastery, Galong (Info: Wendy 6386 7214).

° **Ama Samy Jesuit priest and Zen Master** – Public talk ‘Enlightenment & Conversion’ Monday November 25, 7pm, Buddhist Library 90 Church St, Camperdown; **Zen Sesshins** November 28-December 1 & December 1-5, Canisius College, Pymble (Info: Peter 9453 5995 AH).

° **“The Carlson Chorale”**, Mt St Benedict, Pennant Hills, Nov 24, 3pm (Info: 9484 6208).

Recommended

Morris Berman, *The Twilight of American Culture*, W W Norton & Company, 1999, 204 pages, pb, endnotes, index, \$11.16(US) from amazon.com.)

Morris Berman says: "One of my intentions in writing (this book) was to create a kind of guidebook for disaffected Americans who feel increasingly unable to fit into this society, and who also feel that the culture has to change if it is to survive." The culture "has lost its moorings", argues Berman; it is more a "caricature of culture, a parade of mental theme parks". Berman pleads for a "monastic option", a life of greater renunciation and a recovery of the better aspects of the Enlightenment. He also speaks of a "New Enlightenment". *The Twilight* is a serious little book by a genuine thinker. It is also a hopeful book, as Berman is obviously convinced of – and confident in – the "vital core within us all that hungers for reality". Many readers will – justifiably – see shortcomings in Berman's so-called "monk" and his "monastic option", his apparent faith in "superego" and his failure to recognise the necessity of good spirituality. He has much in common with John Ralston Saul – for better and worse. Berman, like so many analysers of culture, is much better at pointing to the problem than he is at articulating a coherent and well-grounded response. Berman is, however, to be thoroughly recommended for his thoughtful analysis of the problem. He will make you think about matters you might otherwise take for granted.

Tony Castle, *Meeting Christ in the Supermarket*, St Paul's Publications, 2001, 143 pages, pb, \$30.95.

Tony Castle is a Pastoral Lay Assistant in a parish in England. In *Meeting Christ*, he presents the reader with 20 readable and down-to-earth reflections on various aspects of Christian living. The theme of "meeting Christ" is traced through the mundane aspects of our everyday lives. Castle speaks of meeting Christ in "the ordinary", "the community", "children's books", "the family" and "the surgery"; meeting Christ at "the war memorial", "the party", "school" and "death". The language and style are straightforward as befits the themes. At the end of each reflection there is a short reading and a prayer. The author is inspired by the Second Vatican Council's vision of "the universal call to holiness: "... it is chapter 5 with its theme of the call to holiness 'through, with and in Christ' which is the axis on which the whole Constitution on the Church revolves". The author is, conversely, struck by the fact that of the one thousand or so canonisations of the past twenty years, "ordinary mums and dads and single people" never seem to be acknowledged, even though they constitute 99% of the Church. Castle is right to note this stark anomaly and his little book is a useful contribution to furthering the vision of *Lumen gentium*. When we speak of the unfinished business of Vatican II, the effective recognition of all the baptised – especially the so-called "lay faithful" – must rate highly.

Peter van Breemen, *The God Who Won't Let Go*, Ave Maria Press, 2001, 158 pages, endnotes. Available at \$29.95 from John Garrett Publishing, 39 Glenvale Cresc, Mulgrave, 3170, Tel: 03 9545 3111.

Peter van Breemen is well-known for simple but rich writings on the spiritual life – for example, *As Bread that is Broken, Called by Name* and *Let All God's Glory Through*. This latest book is based on a retreat he gave to the Benedictines of St Hildegard Abbey in Bingen, Germany in 1998. The themes are foundational biblical themes. Chapter headings include "Wait there for me", "We all need more love than we deserve", "What I do I do not understand", "Attentiveness – the foundation of love" and "The risen Lord". Van Breemen reminds us of one of the basic rules of the spiritual life: You tend to end where you begin. If you begin with yourself and what you must do for God, that is where you will end; if you begin with God and what God has done for you and wants to continue doing for you, you move into the infinite horizons of God's never-ending love. The willfulness and functionalism of generations of teachings on the Christian life, bereft of the riches of the mystical tradition, often led people – good and conscientious people – to focus on themselves, especially their sins. Bernard of Clairvaux had noted in the 11th century: If you seek God, know that he . . . long since been seeking you. Read van Breemen slowly and savour the many prayerful moments he evokes.

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