



THE MIX



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Our Say – The emerging neo-conservatism

Freedom is a wonderful burden. For Fathers of the Catholic tradition, like the 4th-century bishop Gregory of Nyssa and the 12th-century Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux, freedom is the pre-eminent sign that we are made in the image and likeness of God. The fullness of freedom is manifest, paradoxically, in our willingness and ability to be and do what we must be and do.

Freedom is also about our ability to respond with integrity to the demands of life. It is, in other words, about response-ability and accountability. And there is the rub! Immature people, unprepared for freedom, become anxious in the face of serious decision-making. It will always be a matter of conjecture, therefore, just how long any human system can live with high levels of freedom before equally high levels of anxiety take over and demand “solutions”.

The Western world today is witnessing the emergence of a significant demand for “solutions” in both politics and religion. This demand is generating a new kind of

conservatism that is confident to the point of arrogance, with an agenda that will brook no opposition; it is ready to be authoritarian and even ruthless in enforcing its “righteous” vision. It has the “solutions”!

Of particular concern is the emergence of this neo-conservatism within the Catholic Church. Colleen Carroll’s *The New Faithful: Why Young Adults are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy* (see “Recommended Reading” on page 8 of this issue of *The Mix*), suggests something of this movement in the Catholic Church of the United States.

Conservatism – in the more aggressive form in which we are finding it today in both politics and religion in the West – tends to shift the focus from relationships towards rituals, rules and dogmas. Genuine conversation is not prized because it demands openness to other possibilities.

This neo-conservatism promotes reductionistic thinking – the complex issues of life tend to be reduced to straightforward matters that have simple right/wrong solu-

tions; ambiguities are dismissed, confusion and uncertainty mocked; in particular, in neo-conservative Christianity, the Gospel is reduced to a moral program, Jesus is reduced to a teacher of right behaviour.

Participation in systems dominated by this neo-conservatism tends to be more about conformity than community; excessive emphasis is placed on simply doing as you are told, and those in leadership positions are given – or claim – inordinate control over the lives of the participants.

This neo-conservatism, at its worst and despite its devout protestations to the contrary, is at odds with the Gospel. The Covenant – definitively expressed in the Cross – invites us into a relationship of unmerited and unmeasured love.

One of the biggest challenges for renewal in the Catholic Church today lies here: How do we engage the neo-conservatives in conversation? And that question demands that we address another at the same time: How do we deal with the anxiety? □

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 reserves the right not to publish a submitted text. Not all the opinions expressed in *The Mix* are those of Catalyst for Renewal Incorporated.

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THE HUMAN FACE

My name is Andrew Hamilton. I was
born in suburban Melbourne. My
father was a general practitioner and the
home was also the medical practice. My
early life revolved around the practice and
also around the church: accompanying Dad
on his medical rounds meant visiting the
many convents that he served gratis.

His life was one of demanding service;
partly for that reason, I decided from an
early age that I was not going to be a
doctor.

I joined the Jesuits after education in a
Jesuit school, where study of Latin and
Greek literature shaped my interest in
writing well. My earliest Jesuit years were
spent at Loyola, Watsonia.

The most significant fruit of the time
was incidental to the main programme. On
Thursdays, we used to walk up to thirty
miles or so into the surrounding
countryside. From this I gained a love of
nature, habitual ways of prayer, the
recognition that important learning comes
through the soles of the feet, and the
conviction that what is most important and
deep escapes formulation in
philosophies and theologies.

Vatican II was held during my
university years. Its significance for me lay
less in revealing a grand vision of the
Church than in baring the reality of the
Catholic world in which I had grown up. It
now seemed to offer a narrow version of the
Gospel, in its exclusive focus on the
Catholic Church and claim to privileged
knowledge.

I responded to the more inclusive vision
of the Council, and to its expression in the
rhetoric of retreats salted with reference to
contemporary literature, to saints of the
present day and to hope for a more
equitable world. But I was unable to
ground this rhetoric in any significant
practice.

By the time of my ordination, I
recognised that I would like to
teach and had some gifts for it. I went to
Oxford for post-graduate studies, working
on Athanasius and the fourth-century
Church. The time was valuable. The
rigours of thesis writing and the quality of
buildings, libraries and academic traditions
expressed a commitment to serious
scholarship and named its standards.

At the end, though, the experiences that
remain with me were incidental to my
study: pastoral work in village
communities, playing cricket on the
Blenheim Palace lawn, cycling through the
English countryside.

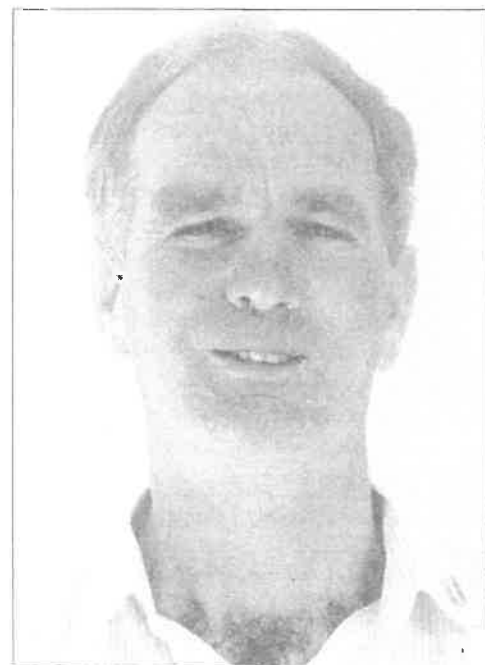
In the twenty-five years since my return
from England, I have taught theology. The
most significant experience of this time has

again been incidental to my main work.
After I had spent some time in Cambodian
refugee camps over a number of summers,
my rhetorical commitment to a more just
world took on a human face and made a
personal claim. Continuing relationships
with asylum seekers and refugees have
offered a measure for theologies: they are
worth exploring if they illuminate the life of
refugees and promise freedom.

My interest in refugees has also shaped
the way in which I look at the Catholic
Church. Refugees have been much helped
by dedicated Catholic volunteers who are
supported by local churches and
congregations. The vitality and evangelical
faith of the Church, therefore, are not a
matter of indifference. It is vital to find
ways of forming and supporting young
volunteers in their faith.

So in recent years I have welcomed the
opportunity to meet groups of committed
young adults, particularly through the
Marist Young Adult Ministry and the
Christian Life Communities. Now I am
also publisher at Jesuit Publications, a
privileged position that has brought me into
contact with people of vision like Michael
McGirr, Morag Fraser and Marcelle Mogg,
who have a nose for good faith and good
writing.

In my life, the important events have
been incidental to the main game. The
flowers have grown in the cracks of the
great edifices. This consistent experience
has contributed to a natural lack of regard
for what is planned, controlled and given
publicity. It has also confirmed my hope
that on the most unpromising of roads can
be found some broken space in which seeds
can be planted and nurtured. The Church
has the fluidity and robustness of
conversation.



Andrew Hamilton, SJ

Your Say – A letter to the prime minister

Andrew Murray

The following is an open letter to the Prime Minister of Australia. It comes from Andrew Murray SM, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the Catholic Institute of Sydney. Andrew may be contacted: apmurray@cis.catholic.edu.au.

March 11 2003

Dear Mr Howard,

I write to you in order to withdraw my support of the Commonwealth, the current Federal Government and yourself in all matters to do with the apparently imminent war in Iraq.

I do this so that when future generations of Australians look back in shame at our generation, who, if the war goes ahead under the present circumstances, will have led Australia into its first unprovoked war of aggression against another nation, they will know that some Australians at this time rejected what you and your government are doing on our behalf.

This is not to say that I do not support United Nations efforts to ensure the disarmament of Iraq in respect of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. I do, and I also recognise the need of military backing of those efforts. I reject totally, however, the hasty move towards a war that can only be called 'Bush's War'.

Following considerable reflection, I am of the view that the war proposed at this time is unjust in most respects. It lacks legitimate authority both at the international level and also, particularly in Australia and the UK, at the level of democratic and parliamentary support for the war. There is immense confusion about Bush's intentions, which seem to change from day to day. With such confused intentions and with inspections proceeding successfully, in the absence of actual aggression by Iraq, there are no grounds on which to claim just cause.

Given the American way of waging war, we can expect great loss of life and severe damage to Iraqi infrastructure, which will result in further death and displacement, for gain that it is hard to imagine will be commensurate with this amount of human damage.

Although one can expect that American forces will be successful militarily, we should be dubious about the ability of the US to put anything back in place of what they destroy, so that it is likely that the venture will be judged unsuccessful in the long run. War at this time will certainly be nothing like an act of last resort.

The war, I might add, will remain unjustified even if the US manages to bludgeon and bribe sufficient numbers of smaller states on the Security Council to accept a resolution pointing to war. Such a speculative adventure would need broad international support, not merely a forced accession to formality.

I do not make the distinction of opposing the war and supporting our service men and women. I oppose what they may be made to do, because I believe that it is immoral. I will, however, be prepared to support any who fall into my ambit after they come back knowing, as many of them already believe, that they have engaged in unjust war. They will have enormous burdens of conscience, and to that I will be compassionate.

Your own behaviour, Mr Prime Minister, has been extraordinary in this whole affair. There is a general perception abroad in the community that you have acted not as Prime Minister of Australia but as an agent of the United States.

I think that that perception is correct. Whether you are hoping for some gain such as trade advantages or simply being on the side of the strongest power in an unsettled world or whether your mind has simply been captured by the murky and esoteric world of intelligence, I do not know. Your public statements and argument however, are slippery and shallow and have failed to convince me and many others that Australia has any reason to go to war at this stage.

Yours sincerely,

Rev Dr Andrew Murray sm

On February 24-25, 2003, the joint committee of the Permanent Committee of Al-Azhar for Dialogue with the Monotheistic Religions and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, held its annual meeting, hosted this year by Al Azhar al-Sharif, in Cairo. Those present were Sheikh Fawzi al-Zafzaf, Dr. Ali Elsamman, Dr. Mustafa al-Shak'a, Nabil Badr, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, Archbishop Marco Dino Brogi, Msgr. Khaled Akasheh, Msgr. Jean-Marie Speich and Daniel Madigan SJ (Australian Jesuit).

The following is excerpted from the text of a joint statement the group published on March 1, 2003. It echoes remarks made by the Holy Father to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, on January 13, 2003 and repeated by him to an Indonesian delegation –

including Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists – at the Vatican on February 20: "War is always a defeat for humanity."

1. The main topic for discussion was the phenomenon of terrorism and the responsibility of religions to confront it. The following points were stressed:

- The two religions, Islam and Christianity, reject oppression and aggression against the human person, as also the violation of every person's legitimate right to life and the right to lead that life in security and in peace.

- The sacred texts in both religions must be understood in their proper context. Isolating passages from their context and using them to legitimize violence are contrary to the spirit of our religions.

- Care must be taken to distinguish between the sacred texts and teachings of our religions on the one hand and the behavior and actions of some of their followers on the other hand. It is the duty of religious authorities to provide an authentic explanation of the sacred texts and in so doing to safeguard the true image of each religion.

- Given the importance of the correct understanding of each other's religions, it is proposed that meetings be arranged for lecturers in comparative religion to provide contextualized experience of the other religion and to enable common reflection on the teaching of a religion that is not one's own. Such meetings could also be occasions for public conferences.

2. The current situation made it necessary for the joint committee to reflect on the likely consequences of the war threatening Iraq. The committee condemned recourse to war as a means of resolving conflicts between nations.

- War is a proof that humanity has failed.

- We strongly affirm that double standards are to be avoided. Peace, which is inseparable from justice, requires the fulfillment of all international obligations. This principle applies generally and is therefore applicable to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The resolution of this conflict would contribute to resolving many of the outstanding problems of the Middle East.

◇◇◇

Contemporary Catholicism is often plagued by ideological rhetoric rather than robust debate when it comes to discussing the significance and implications of the Second Vatican Council. Two conflicting and controversial views often prevail. The first view, expounded by traditionalists, is that the Council was “too much, too soon”. They believe that it was a giant and unnecessary program of reform that was instituted suddenly and with insufficient preparation. They believe that the questions associated with the rapid development of human history following World War II would not have intruded on the Church’s life had it not been for the Council.

One gains the distinct impression that many of these traditionalists wish the Council never took place.

The second view, expounded by more liberal voices in the Church, believe that the “spirit of the Council” has slowly been rescinded by the power of the Roman bureaucracy, particularly during the pontificate of John Paul II. These advocates often feel a sense of disenchantment with the Church and long for the day of the Third Vatican Council in the hope of recreating at some future time what was done in the excitement of the early 1960s. Their sense of disenchantment is sometimes mixed with deep feelings of nostalgia.

Much of the debate centres around the figure of John XXIII and the sudden and extraordinary change which he instituted. However, it was not change for the sake of change. Pope John wanted the Church to discern the signs of the times and renew itself in the light of the Gospel. To do so required a certain amount of *aggiornamento* (updating), that somewhat ambiguous and politically divisive word which is at the heart of the ideological turbulence so evident in the Church from the very moment the Council was announced. It is a term intimately and controversially linked with the memory of John XXIII.

I suggest there are two important and sometimes overlooked factors here. The first is that *aggiornamento* has firm pastoral and intellectual foundations in the tradition of the Church and was incredibly formative in the life of Pope John himself.

Secondly, the Catholic Church had in fact begun a very slow and subtle process of *aggiornamento*, particularly in the areas of liturgy, biblical scholarship and the lay apostolate, long before John XXIII called

the Council in 1959. The present controversies about the Council are fundamentally about John XXIII and the politics of change, its necessity, implementation and most importantly, the way change is interpreted in the history of the Church.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, change was not on the agenda of Pope St Pius X (1903-14). In fact, he was an anti-intellectual fighter against many changes which he considered evil. Pius X ensured, by his unrelenting crusade against Modernism, that the fortress-like structure of the Catholic Church would resist any form of change. He placed suspect writings on the *Index of Prohibited Books* and condemned many modern propositions from historico-critical methods in theology to liberal democratic principles in politics.

In his encyclicals, *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi*, both issued in 1907, Pius X used strong words of condemnation and gave orders that all dioceses were to establish a Council of Vigilance and all priests were to take an oath disavowing Modernism.

As a young seminarian in Rome, Angelo Roncalli embraced with enthusiasm the study of history, archaeology, secular and religious art.

There was a flood of suspicion and reprisal. Liberal Catholic periodicals were suppressed, and seminary teachers and academics were disgraced and dismissed. According to the eminent Catholic historian, Eamon Duffy, the impact of the Modernist crisis on Catholic intellectual life was catastrophic (*Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes*, Yale University Press 1997, 251).

However, in one of the great ironies of history, a number of developments in the life of the Church had in fact set Catholicism on the path of *aggiornamento*. Pius X is best and somewhat fondly remembered for lowering the age for first communion and encouraging frequent, even daily, communion by the faithful. According to Owen Chadwick, this amounted to a revolution in the liturgical practice of worship:

Historians, in hindsight, if asked which act of which pope did most to affect the Church since 1800, would put their finger on this change of

1905-6, the encouragement of frequent, even daily communion, and the receiving of it by children (*A History of the Popes: 1830-1914*, Oxford University Press, 1998, 362).

This development also coincided with the beginning in Europe of what came to be known as the liturgical movement, which began with small groups of scholars who promoted dialogue Masses, vernacular translations of sacramental rites, lay participation and the study of the history and spirituality of the Church’s public worship.

Despite opposition to these liturgical developments, Rome encouraged such lay participation. This was the beginning of restoring the organic unity and sacramental integrity of the liturgy, which had been weighed down by excessive rubrical encumbrances since the Council of Trent.

If Pius X can be recognised for initiating liturgical changes, then Pius XI (1922-39) deserves the credit for encouraging the rapid expansion of Catholic Action, a major effort by the Church to organise, encourage and develop the participation of the laity in the mission of the Church. This development was the cornerstone of what the Second Vatican Council came to articulate as the unique and indispensable place of the laity in the life of the Church, the universal priesthood of all believers and the universal call to a life of holiness in the world.

The apostolate of Catholic Action flourished in Europe through the efforts of the Belgian priest, Joseph Cardijn, and those who joined him in his efforts.

He established the Young Christian Workers (YCW) and encouraged the discussion and dissemination of Catholic social principles according to the real life situation of the participants, through his well-known model: ‘See, Judge and Act’. The aim of the YCW was to bring Christian moral principles to bear on modern industry and to keep the young of the working classes within the life of the Church by forming them as peer leaders in their own right and not merely as delegates of the clergy.

In Australia, Catholic Action began tentatively in 1931 with the formation of the Campion Society at Melbourne University. The suffering of the Depression sparked the beginnings of a new social and philosophical awareness among members of a group of young Catholic intellectuals and university students. This group included

men such as Denys Jackson, Frank Maher, Kevin Kelly and BA Santamaria. They established the highly successful Catholic Worker newspaper and were instrumental in the formation of the Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action. (See Bruce Duncan's *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*, UNSW Press, 2001.)

The enhanced role of the laity continued to take shape during the long pontificate of Pius XII, who authorised a number of further significant developments in the life of the Church. These were relatively creative for their time and continued the process of *aggiornamento*.

On 29 June 1943, the Pope issued the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (On the Mystical Body of Christ). This represented a move towards a more organic and sacramental definition of the Church rather than a strictly juridical one that treated the Church only as a hierarchical and entirely supernatural institution.

In a similar way, *Mediator Dei* (On the Sacred Liturgy), published on 20 November 1947, addressed issues such as the vernacular in the liturgy and the active participation of the lay faithful. In addressing the issue of enhancing public worship in the life of the Church, this encyclical gave birth to the more modern liturgical movement which, in 1955, was instrumental in reforming the entire Holy Week cycle and restoring the liturgical prominence of the Easter Vigil.

As a young seminarian in Rome, Angelo Roncalli embraced with enthusiasm the study of history, archaeology, secular and religious art. His preference was Patristics. At twenty years of age he wrote:

I do not hold critical thinking in contempt and I will guard against having sinister thoughts about critics or lacking in respect for them; quite the contrary, I like critical studies and I will enthusiastically follow the latest results of research; I will keep up with new systems, with their constant development, and I will study their tendencies; critical investigation is light and truth for me: and truth is holy, and there is only one truth ...I shall take comfort in the fact that God arranges everything for the sacred treasure of his Revelation to become ever clearer and purer (Loris Capovilla, *John XXIII: Witness to the Tenderness of God*, Mediaspaul, 2001, 25).

In the midst of the great anti-Modernist crusade of the early twentieth century, Roncalli began lecturing in ecclesiastical history at the local seminary in Bergamo, northern Italy. He was sympathetic to those writers

and intellectuals who attempted to reconcile faith and reason. He was particularly fond of Antonio Rosmini (1797-1855), priest, patriot and philosopher who devoted his life to reconciling Catholicism with modern political and scientific thought.

Roncalli was also fond of Cesar Baronius (1538-1607), the father of ecclesiastical history. In a lecture at the Bergamo seminary in December 1907 to commemorate the third centenary of the death of Baronius, Roncalli began to speak a language that would later become the hallmark of his pontificate and an essential intellectual framework of the Second Vatican Council.

In speaking of Baronius, Roncalli defended historical criticism and claimed that Baronius had quite rightly been hailed as the founder of this scholarly method. It meant that Roncalli could cautiously assert that the Church had been the first in the field of historical criticism.

.... *aggiornamento* has firm pastoral and intellectual foundations in the tradition of the Church and was incredibly formative in the life of Pope John himself.

This was a clever move of tactical brilliance. According to Roncalli, the general renewal of Catholic scholarship promoted by Baronius was still on the agenda, despite the Modernist controversy which had begun to engulf the Church in a tense atmosphere of suspicion, fear and ecclesiastical sanction. (On becoming pope in 1958, he visited the Holy Office and asked to see his personal file, which contained details of his early career. It was marked: "Suspected of Modernism". See Paul Johnson, *Pope John XXIII*, Hutchinson & Co, 1974, 37.)

Soon after his time as a lecturer in ecclesiastical history, Roncalli was appointed secretary to the Bishop of Bergamo, Giacomo Radini Tedeschi. This appointment would have a profound influence on the future pope. He was Tedeschi's secretary from 1905 to 1914.

Tedeschi was both mentor and father-figure to Angelo Roncalli. From this unique vantage point, Roncalli accompanied Tedeschi as he re-organised the diocese, issued pastoral letters, organised Catholic Action and major congresses, revised the seminary curriculum and undertook the patient and time-consuming task of parochial visitation. Roncalli described the

Synod of 1910 as the most solemn and important event of Tedeschi's episcopate.

There had been no synod in Bergamo since 1742. At the Synod of 1910, local customs and laws were brought into line with the needs of modern times and altered circumstances. (A. Roncalli, *My Bishop: A Portrait of Mgr Giacomo Maria Radini Tedeschi*, Geoffrey Chapman, 1969, 92.)

Another undertaking of a more academic nature would make an enormous pastoral impression on the future pope. As a young history lecturer Roncalli became very interested in the life of St Carlo Borromeo (1538-84), the brilliant and distinguished Archbishop of Milan, who undertook major reform in that diocese after the Council of Trent. Roncalli undertook the monumental task of translating all the pastoral decrees, spiritual exhortations and synodal instructions issued by Borromeo and publishing them in a five-volume series, the last of which was completed soon after his election as pope.

In Borromeo, Roncalli found an intelligent and zealous pastor. In order to reform the diocese, Borromeo undertook meticulous pastoral visitation, followed by an extensive diocesan synod. He convoked six provincial councils and eleven diocesan synods.

Roncalli adopted Borromeo's belief that the diocesan bishop is the authentic agent of pastoral renewal in his diocese and not some Roman bureaucrat. Following his election to the papacy in October 1958, Roncalli insisted that the papal coronation take place on 4 November, a Wednesday rather than the traditional Sunday. It was the feast of St Carlo Borromeo.

The influence of Borromeo was clearly evident when Roncalli convoked the diocesan synod of Venice in 1957, following an extensive round of pastoral visitation throughout the diocese. It was a year before his election to the papacy. In his pastoral letter to the priests and people of Venice, he wrote:

You've probably heard the word *aggiornamento* repeated so many times. Well, Holy Church who is ever youthful wants to be in a position to understand the diverse circumstances of life so that she can adapt, correct, improve and be filled with fervour. That in brief is the nature of the Synod, and that is its goal (Peter Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII: Pope of the Council*, Harper Collins, 1984, 264).

Fr Max Vodola was ordained for the Melbourne archdiocese in 1997 and is currently pastor at St Joseph the Worker, North Reservoir, Vic.

The Bible – The darkness that is light

Words for a Pilgrim People

"I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ... Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ... I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:1-6)

□□□

*(Moses) shone with glory. And although lifted up through such lofty experiences, he is still unsatisfied in his desire for more. He still thirsts for that with which he constantly filled himself to capacity, and he asks to attain as if he had never partaken, beseeching God to appear to him, not according to his capacity to partake, but according to God's true being. Such an experience seems to me to belong to the soul which loves what is beautiful. Hope always draws the soul from the beauty which is seen to what is beyond, always kindles the desire for the hidden through what is constantly perceived. Therefore, the ardent lover of beauty, although receiving what is always visible as an image of what he desires, yet longs to be filled with the very stamp of the archetype. ... The divine voice granted what was requested in what was denied, showing in a few words an immeasurable depth of thought. The munificence of God assented to the fulfilment of his desire, but did not promise any cessation or satiety of the desire. ... he who thinks God is something to be known does not have life, because he has turned from true Being to what he considers by sense perception to have being. ... This truly is the vision of God: never to be satisfied in the desire to see him. But one must always, by looking at what he can see, rekindle his desire to see more. Thus, no limit would interrupt growth in the ascent to God, since no limit to the Good can be found nor is the increasing of desire for the Good brought to an end because it is satisfied. (Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, Paulist Press, 1978, par. 230-39; Abraham Malherbe and Everett Ferguson, translators)*

□□□

The liturgical cycle brings us each year to meditate on the central event of Christian history: The saving death and resurrection of Jesus. We call it "the paschal mystery". In Year B, we turn to Mark's Gospel for that meditation.

Throughout the Gospel of Mark, we have what scholars have called "the messianic secret". Mark frequently has Jesus forbidding people to say who he is. For example, when Jesus cures a man of leprosy (1:40-45) he "immediately sent him away and sternly ordered him, 'Mind you say nothing to anyone'". He even forbids "the devils" to speak when he casts them out (see 1:32-34). It seems reasonable to suggest that the real "secret" is to be revealed on Calvary. The cures and various miracles are potentially a distraction from Jesus' true vocation. If the people focus on those miracles, how will they cope with the dereliction of the cross?

In fact Mark records a cry of dereliction from Jesus himself: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (15:34 – quoting Psalm 22:1). By any reading this is, on the face of it, a dark moment. The cross stands for all time as a contradiction to the "normal" ways of redemption and liberation. Consider, for example, the way redemption is achieved in the typical movie – and most movies are about redemption, implicitly or explicitly. We ought not be surprised if we experience the cross as a scandal – in fact, we ought to be surprised if we do *not* experience it as a scandal. The face of God's love may appear diabolical at times, just as the face of the devil may appear "godly" at times; God's presence is more typically and genuinely experienced as absence. As the great Father of Christian mysticism, St Gregory of Nyssa, reminds us (see "Words for a Pilgrim People, this page), we "know" God through "not knowing". If we take God's love seriously, Gregory suggests that we will be drawn into a "luminous darkness". The cross is the most luminous expression of God's love we will know this side of the grave. □

The Tradition – The cross, our freedom

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy from the Second Vatican Council states: "The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming humankind and giving perfect glory to God. He achieved his task principally by the Paschal Mystery of his blessed passion, resurrection from the dead and the glorious ascension, whereby 'dying, he destroyed our death, and rising he restored our life'. For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth 'the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church'." (#5)

Walter Kasper writes: "If we take the testimony of the New Testament consistently as our starting point and if we make this testimony the basis for the speculative development of our faith in Christ, then we must take seriously the fact that the Gospels are passion narratives with extended introductions (M Kähler). The cross is then not simply the consequence of the earthly ministry of Jesus but the very goal of the incarnation; it is not something adventitious but the very meaning and purpose of the Christ-event, so that everything else is ordered to it as a goal. God would not have become truly a human being had he not entered fully into the abyss and night of death." (*The God of Jesus Christ*.)

Protestant theologian Jürgen Moltmann observes: "The death of Jesus on the cross is the centre of all Christian theology ... All Christian statements about God, about creation, about sin and death have their focal point in the crucified Christ. All Christian statements about history, about the church, about faith and sanctification, about the future and about hope stem from the crucified Christ." (*The Crucified God*) Hans Kung writes: "The cross is not only example and model, but ground, power and norm of the Christian faith." (*O-Being a Christian*). Kung again: "The cross ... is the element which radically distinguishes Christian faith and the Lord who is the object of this faith from other religions and their gods." ("What is the Christian Message?") □

The cross is then not simply the consequence of the earthly ministry of Jesus but the very goal of the incarnation.

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.

Mail: terry_catalyst@hotmail.com

...p://communities.ninemsn.com.au/

SpiritualityinthePub

NSW and ACT – 7.30-9.00pm unless specified:

° **Albury** New Albury Hotel, Kiewa St April 9 “Catholics don’t have a monopoly on guilt – they’re just the number one manufacturers of it!” (From film ‘Mass Appeal’) Fr Paul Purcell op & Dr Penny Vine (Info: Fr Glenn 6026 5333).

° **Alstonville** Catalyst Dinner May 17 “Young People and the church – sign of discouragement or sign of hope?” Fr Bill O’Shea (Info: Anne 6628 6428)

° **Bowral** The Grand Bar and Brasserie April 23 Bishop Peter Ingham (Info: Julian 4861 4649).

° **Campbelltown** Campbelltown Catholic Club April 9 “Resurrection: What does it mean to us?” Bishop Peter Ingham & Sr Mary Gregory (Info: Rosemary 9603 2975).

° **Canberra** – When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free The Southern Cross Club Woden April 23 “Being in solidarity with the poor” (Info: Rita 6260 7).

° **Engadine** – Pathways to God Engadine RSL April 16 “Families – a pathway to God?” Trish Hindmarsh & Michael Whelan sm (Info: Elizabeth 9520 0617 or Annette 9548 2475).

° **Five Dock** – Challenges in a Changing Community The Illinois Hotel, Cnr Paramatta Rd & Arlington St April 30 “Ecumenism – Does that include Muslims?” Sr Pauline Rae & Metin Mustapha (Info: Susanna 9798 8071).

° **Jamberoo** – Search for the Sacred The Jamberoo Hotel May 12 “Unlocking Religious Imagination” Fr Pat McKenna & tba (Info Anne 4232 1062 or Gabrielle 4232 2735).

° **Kincumber** – Out of the Chaos Came ... – The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive May 4 “My God of Surprises” Michael Marsden & Lyn McGettigan (Info: Clair 4333 7117 or Margaret 4382 2753).

° **Lismore** – I have Come that You may have Life Mary Gilhooley’s Pub April 30 “Social Justice – Refugees” Fr Jim Carty sm (Info: Lynne 6625 1195).

° **Devonport** – Newport Arms Hotel (Info: Terry 9973 1192).

° **Northern Sydney** – Prayer, Faith & God Relationship Union Hotel, Cnr Pacific Hwy & West St, North Sydney April 28 “Wealth and Success” Brian Stoney (Info: Michelle 9958 5963).

° **Paddington** – Of Human Life The Bellevue Hotel, May 7 “Being obedient” Bishop Geoffrey Robinson & Kate Englebrecht (Info: Marea 9387 3152).

° **Penrith** – Making a Difference Golf Club April 23 “Respecting Differences: My Story, Your Story, Our Story” Michael Whelan sm & Julie McCrossin (Info: Sue 9760 2324).

° **Rouse Hill** The Mean Fiddler on Windsor Rd May 6 “Restorative Justice” Terry O’Connell (Info: Maria 9680 2220 (H))

° **Rydalmere** – Responding to Change – Rydalmere Bowling Club April 8 Andrew Howie & John Buggy (Info: Kerry 9630 2704).

° **St George Kings Head Tavern** South Hurstville April 23 “Bridging the Gap” David Ranson & Anne-Marie Fagan (Info: Ken 9580 1183).

° **Waitara** – Act justly, Love tenderly and walk humbly with your God: How do we meet this challenge in our world today? The Blue Gum Hotel April 16 Bishop Geoffrey Robinson (Info: Carmel 9477 4824).

VIC:

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

° **Bendigo** Boundary Hotel June 11 “This is what I think” Rev Tim Costello (Info: Helen 5443 2377).

° **Clayton** The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm May 6 “Fear in the Church Community” Terry Curtain & Michelle Kennan (Info: Yvonne 9700 7340 or Joyce 9700 1250).

° **Colac** The Union Club Hotel May 2 “Current Refugee Crisis” Sr Carole McDonald (Info: Winsome 5235 3203).

° **Collingwood** 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 May 14 tba (Info: Susie 9859 6184).

° **Mordialloc** The Kingston Club, 7.30pm-9pm April 23 “The Spirituality of Sexuality – Failure and Signs of Hope” Sr Angela Ryan & Terry Monagle (Info: Maria 9579 4255).

° **Mornington** The Royal Hotel, Victoriana Room, 770 The Esplanade, 8pm-9.30pm (Info: Colleen 9775 2163 or Carole 5976 1024).

Other States

° **Devonport (TAS)** Molly Malone’s Irish Pub, 7.30pm-9pm April 30 “The Miracles of Life & Death” Ruth Forrest & Stephen Parry (Info: Graham 6424 8286).

° **Hobart North** The Mustard Pot Hotel Moonah 7.30-9pm May 6 “Where is God in the Story of the Universe?” Angela Cameron pbvm & Dr Nick Cooling (Info: Gwayne 6228 2679).

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

° **Perth (WA)** – Towards Joy The Elephant and the Wheelbarrow, cnr Francis & Lake Sts, Northbridge 7.30-9.10pm May 27 “Celebrating the Spirituality of the Everyday” Sr Lucy Kessell & tba (Info: Andrew 0422 305 742).

° **Macclesfield (SA)** Three Brothers Arms, Venables Street (Info: Michael 8388 9265).

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

Other Matters and Events

° **The Aquinas Academy** adult education centre, 141 Harrington St Sydney, day and evening, emphasis on spirituality. (Info: Sue on 02 9247 4651).

° **Mount St Benedict Centre**, Pennant Hills, “The Road to the Cross in Mark’s Gospel” April 12 10am-4pm; Retreat “Seasons of Hope” April 7 – 14 (Info: 9484 6208).

° **St Mary’s Towers Retreat Centre** Douglas Park April 11-13 Prayer weekend; April 13-19 guided retreat “Gifts of Holy Week”; April 21-27 guided retreat “See, I make all things new”; May 2-31 Sabbatical retreat “Life’s Journey Experience”; May 2-10 “Spirituality of Journey” retreat; May 12-20 Life’s Healing Journey; May 22-30 Directed retreat (Info: Sr Joan 4630 9159).

° **Reflection Morning** with Patrick Kirkwood April 26 “The Life of the Spirit and the Media”. Marist Centre 1 Mary Street Hunters Hill 9.30am-12.30pm.

° **Eremos Institute** April 11-13 Intensive Journal Workshop, Drummoyne (Info: Kate 9674 1216).

° **Bishops Forum** May 30, Archbishop George Pell “Vatican II: Unfinished Business?” Crypt St Patrick’s The Rocks (Info: Pauline 9816 4262).

° **A Day with Terry O’Connell** either April 12 or 13 at Marist Centre, Hunters Hill (Info: Sue 02 9247 4651).

Recommended

Colleen Carroll, *The New faithful: Why Young Adults Are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy*, Loyola Press, 2002, 320 pages, index, endnotes, hb, \$54.95 from John Garratt Publishing – 03 9545 3111.

Colleen Carroll – a journalist in the USA – has done an impressive amount of research to present a slice of Catholic life in her country. Her subject is young adults, her conclusions are optimistic, her style is eminently readable, the result is a thought-provoking book. She describes a growing number of young adults seeking out “orthodoxy”. She asks: “Why, in a society brimming with competing belief systems and novel spiritual trends, are young adults attracted to the tradition that so many of their parents and professors have rejected?” She goes on to surmise that we are witnessing “the heralds of something new”. The picture she paints is relevant to our own situation in Australia – *mutatis mutandis*. This book reminds us that many of the young are defying the prevailing materialism and seeking mainstream religious engagement via the devotional forms of traditional Catholicism. It also suggests a worrying trend towards neo-conservatism. Carroll’s constant reference to “orthodoxy” seems to name a search for religious forms – eg, eucharistic adoration and one-to-one confession are emphasised – rather than a genuine attempt to face the great mysteries of the faith in the modern world. Pastors, teachers and parents can gain much from a critical reading of this book.

Robert Royal, *The Catholic Martyrs of the Twentieth Century: A Comprehensive World History*, 2000, 430 pages, index, endnotes, photographs, hb, \$38.95 from John Garratt Publishing – 03 9545 3111.

In these days of religious fundamentalism and violence perpetrated in the name of God, we can easily be seduced by the popular myth that religion is the source of all violence. We tend to forget that the most violent and destructive human beings in the history of the world have been people who are explicitly atheistic and anti-religious. Josef Stalin comes quickly to mind. This is not to deny that much violence is perpetrated in the name of religion – even by those calling themselves “Christians”. (However, there is nothing in the Gospels to support such behaviour.) Many thousands of Christians have been – and continue to be – victims of violence, simply because they are Christian. Robert Royal focuses particularly on some of those who have been killed for their faith in the twentieth century. This is a sobering book, one that presents us with stories and facts that are at once inspiring and deeply challenging. Death is a hard subject for a culture such as ours, so committed to denying death. Martyrdom will too easily be interpreted in gross and twisted ways. The affluent West must keep it at bay because it will demand that we change the way we live. *Catholic Martyrs* is objective and factual rather than pious or hagiographical. We all should read this book and listen carefully.

Michael Higgins and Douglas Letson, *Power and Peril: The Catholic Church at the Crossroads*, Harper Collins, 2002, 440 pages, index, endnotes, bibliography, hb.

Both the authors spent some time in seminary studies, both are married and have worked many years as teachers and administrators in the Roman Catholic milieu at university level in Canada. They say of their book: “This study is not an exercise in deconstruction; it is a summons to hope. It is a primer for a new time”. The epigraph to the book contains the words of Timothy Radcliffe, former Master General of the Dominicans: “What most afflicts us in the Church today is a ‘fear of debate’”. *Power and Peril* limits itself to a few significant topics: The papacy, the Church in the world – especially through health care and education – sex and marriage, clericalism and spirituality. A rich variety of sources is cited and the authors manage to maintain a personal touch throughout. The reader is left with the enduring impression that it is people who matter, people who make the difference. The even-handed approach, together with the good referencing, enables the authors to say some hard things without being harsh. Their approach is that of conversation rather than confrontation. There are rich pickings in this book and they are presented in a style that any reasonably well-read adult will find most accessible. The chapters can be read independently. Because of its substance, this book will also be relevant for some time.

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