



# THE MIX



JOURNAL OF CATALYST FOR RENEWAL INCORPORATED

Circulation of 2000 in Australia and overseas

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 3

May 2003

---

## Annette Loughlin-Smith

The human face 2

---

## William Morris

Peace on earth – a challenge of the heart 3

---

## David Tacey

What can religion do? 4

---

## The bible

The good shepherd 5

---

## The tradition

The imagination 6

---

## Our Say -- Beyond categorisations

A recent issue of *The Tablet* (March 22, 2003, 16-17) carried a review of a book on the history of Ireland entitled *Christianity in Ireland: revisiting the story*. The reviewer – Brendan Smith, Senior Lecturer in History in the University of Bristol – reminds us of the ambivalences and biases that often attend our reading and writing of history. History, like life, is always more than it seems. Human categorisations never capture the full reality.

One contributor to the book – Jesuit sociologist, Noel Barber – makes an observation that has relevance for us all. He reminds us of the roots of our faith that have been firmly planted in history and culture, yet transcend both. Barber writes:

The humiliation of decline and the experience of powerlessness may well so change the focus and character of the Church as to lead to an inner transformation. It is only when it is purified and transformed that the Church will be able to devise a strategy to respond to the spiritual needs of the age.

Among the many challenges facing us in the Catholic Church today, one of the most critical has to be that of the divisiveness that results from the unrealistic – and at times arrogant – claims of different groups.

Part of the genius of Catholicism is found in its ability to embrace extraordinary divergences. Yet that very genius arises from the fact that the Church is grounded beyond the ideologies, the rules, the dogmatic statements, the cultural customs and the political allegiances about which we so often form alliances and oppositions.

The way to renewal will not be via the victory of this or that faction. Renewal of the Catholic Church does not belong to the “conservatives” any more than it belongs to the “liberals”. It belongs to us all and is the responsibility of all.

Is it being suggested here that we must set aside all categories such as “conservative” and “liberal” or that we should not critique what we believe to be erroneous or that we should even pretend to like each

other’s opinions? Not at all. It is simply being suggested that the way ahead lies not *in* or *through* such categorisations – relatively useful as they might be – but *beyond* and *beneath* such categorisations.

While our knowledge of, and meetings with each other, are confined to such categorisations, we will never actually get to know or meet each other. The categories will keep us at bay. Some people might like it that way. However, it can never be accepted by those who seek genuine renewal of the Church, the Body of Christ.

We must – as the late Cardinal Bernadin said in 1996 when he launched the Common Ground Initiative in the United States – find our common heritage, our common faith and explore that together. What is the genius of Catholicism that grounds it beyond such categories? Where and how can we meet those who are not members of our faction or our worldview?

A focus on achieving good conversation rather than the dominance of my category may contribute much to renewal. □

Annette Loughlin-Smith



single moment, to show me that love was possible again. This little life went a long way to melting my heart and awakening my soul to God again.

I have been able to continue working with Catholic Mission at home on a part-time basis and also run a freelance design business for mostly church and charitable clients.

As well, I have recently taken on a "pioneering" role at my local parish as a fundraising/community relations person for one day a week. (But anyone who has worked at the parish level knows there is no such thing as one day a week!)

I also manage, somehow, to do promotional and design work pro bono for a few church groups I'm associated with.

So my whole working life has been in the church, which might not be very appealing on the resume to large corporations, but for myself it stands as a commitment to giving something back to God in my professional life.

At times, working in the church has been the most disillusioning experience for my faith. As with any big institution, politics and power struggles are inherent - it comes from our own human weakness. But I think it's harder to tolerate in the church because of all that the church is meant to stand for - compassion, understanding, justice, peace, love!

But generally, my experience of God in all this has been in the most ordinary moments of life. I have experienced him in the faces and actions of people I have had the opportunity to meet and work with, and these experiences have left me with the knowledge that we are more than ordinary and have the capacity for greatness.

I am often renewed spiritually by my experience of "church" and for that, I am blessed!

**M**y name is Annette Loughlin-Smith and I was born at Penrith, west of Sydney. I spent the first 22 years of my life living with my parents, three sisters and a brother in Mt Druitt which, at the time, had earned itself a bad reputation.

This was mostly due to poor planning that resulted in disproportionate housing commission in the area, and excessive media attention on a few negative events.

Despite the bad reputation of my neighbourhood, or maybe because of it, I was raised with good Christian values and a healthy sense of social justice, instilled in me by my committed Catholic parents, and further encouraged by the activities and hobbies of Mt Druitt's parish priest, Fr Paul Hanna (although I didn't recognise that at the time).

After completing a degree in Communications and spending some 12 months looking for a job, I was offered a fulltime position with Catholic Communications in Sydney. I gladly accepted it, because after some work experience there, I felt I was finally doing something worthwhile again.

I had also agreed to marry my longtime boyfriend, Craig, and needed the money!

With just a team of three people, we at Catholic Communications managed to do an incredible amount of work. We were integral in the media handling of some significant events and issues - eg: the Woods Royal Commission, the euthanasia debate and the ordination of women, to name a few.

But we also managed to touch the lives of some very "ordinary" people by producing their service booklets for their loved ones' funerals, and in the process, they touched ours!

I later accepted a position at Catholic Mission as their media officer. Trying to "sell" mission to metropolitan newspapers who thought it wasn't very "sexy" was a hard slog!

But I was often rewarded in the job by just listening to the stories of visiting missionaries, who were the practical face of Jesus out in the far-off reaches of the world.

In October 1999, I lost my dad very suddenly and this single experience shook my faith to its absolute core. I found it extremely difficult to comprehend what happened or why it happened, and I spent a great deal of time struggling with wanting to acknowledge God at all, let alone be in relationship with him.

In December 2000, I gave birth to my daughter Jordan, who was able, in one

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

These are the current Members:

Maria Baden, Marie Biddle RSL, Glenn Boyd, Jan Brady, Kevin Bures, Kevin Burke, Rosalie Carroll, Aidan Carvill SM, Mary Conlan, Maria Contempree, Birgit Cullen, Susanna Davis, Marea Donovan, Geroldine Doogue, Paul Durtkin, Peter Dwight, Julie Fewster, Maria George, Denys Goggin, Margaret Goggin, Catherine Hammond, Andrew Howie, Mary Kirkwood, Patrick Kirkwood, Francis Kunc, Maryellen McLeay, Marcella Mogg, Chris Needs, Michelle O'Brien, Margaret O'Hearn, Tim O'Hearn, Margaret Rigotti, Roy Rigotti, John Robinson, Louise Robinson, John Smart, Vin Underwood, Ruth van Herk, Carmel Vanny, Michael Whelan SM, Carole Wilson, Jane Wood

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)

The Patrons are:

Mr Robert Fitzgerald AM  
Mr Gerald Gleeson AC  
Prof Francis J Moloney SDB, AM  
Dr Richard J Mulhearn OAM  
Bro Paul O'Keefe  
Most Rev Geoffrey Robinson

This journal is published ten times each year, March to December. It is sent to all Friends of Catalyst for Renewal.

(See coupon on back page for Friends Application)

The Editorial Committee is:

Michael Whelan SM, Geroldine Doogue, Catherine Hammond and consultants

Registered by Australia Post  
Publication No: 255003/02125

Address all correspondence to:  
PO Box 139, Gladesville, NSW 1675, Australia  
Tel/Fax: +61 2 9816 4262

Web site: [www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au](http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au)  
[Catalyst-for-renewal@tpg.com.au](mailto:Catalyst-for-renewal@tpg.com.au)

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.

All items submitted for publication in *The Mix* should reach the Editor no later than the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month previous to publication.

All original work in *The Mix*, unless otherwise indicated, is the work of the Editor.

Printed by Serge Maritch-Osteman  
Printing and Publishing Pty Ltd, Annandale

THE HUMAN FACE

This is a shortened version of the talk by Bishop William Morris of the Toowoomba, Q. diocese, at the "World Peace Forum", Darling Harbour, Sydney, on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2003. For the full text, please send a SSA envelope to the Editor.

There is a great need at this moment in the history of Australia and of the globe to bring together communities and promote understanding between cultures, nations and religions. Through this forum, we can adopt its theme, "Peace, ethics and sustainability", as our watchwords in working to heal the wounds of our world.

In the first years of this new millennium, we face challenges that threaten the common bonds of humanity and tear at the fabric of our national and global society. Each day there is no shortage of tragic stories of global poverty and hardship, racial hatred and war. The terrorist attacks in the United States created a wave of fear that flowed into 2002, and continues to flow. This was heightened by the bombing in Bali and the war on Iraq. As a nation we've struggled in different ways to come to terms with the kind of tragedy we are used to seeing in other parts of the world. We have mourned the loss of life through prayer, memorials, and fundraising efforts for victims of terrorism in Bali.

**Pope John Paul II has said that war is not inevitable, but that it is always a defeat for humanity.**

Each day there is no shortage of tragic stories of global poverty and hardship, racial hatred and war. The terrorist attacks in the United States created a wave of fear that flowed into 2002, and continues to flow. This was heightened by the bombing in Bali and the war on Iraq. As a nation we've struggled in different ways to come to terms with the kind of tragedy we are used to seeing in other parts of the world. We have mourned the loss of life through prayer, memorials, and fundraising efforts for victims of terrorism in Bali.

In response to this question – "What difference can I make?" – let me refer to the words of Pope John Paul II and his predecessor Pope John XXIII regarding *Peace on Earth*.

In answering the question "What difference can I make?" I firmly believe that the pervasive maxim of the environmental movement which calls us to "think globally and act locally" lends itself to the challenges of peace in our world. As a rallying call, it has successfully transformed the overwhelming and seemingly inevitable challenge of ecological disaster into matters of personal commitment and social change.

In his recent World Peace Day Message on New Year's Day, [Pope John Paul II devoted his attention to John XXIII's *Peace on Earth*], John Paul calls us to think globally and act locally for peace. The challenge is to think outside the square of 'global war' that some political leaders and the media portray as an inevitability.

We must start where we can. We can walk the paths of peace with family and friends through our neighbourhoods and this will have an impact across the nations and throughout the world.

But this call involves more than a personal commitment to peace. The call requires us to enter a personal relationship with all who are vulnerable or exposed to violence.

In his State of the World address in mid-January, Pope John Paul II said he was "personally struck by the feeling of fear which often dwells in the hearts of our contemporaries" in the face of terrorism and the threat of war. He said that war is not inevitable, but that it is always a defeat for humanity.

He spoke of the need for the peoples of the earth and their leaders to say "NO TO WAR!"

Teaches that peace must have a four-fold basis. It must be "founded on truth, built according to justice, vivified and integrated by charity, and put into practice in freedom."

Peace rallies that become violent do nothing for peace. Peace rallies are only impressive when they are based in peace and made of the essential ingredients of truth, justice, charity and freedom. The message to our political leaders from such demonstrations is that there is no place for fear and frustration in our hearts – only peace.

The challenge of the call to peace is this: We are called to think globally and act locally. We are called to inform ourselves of peaceful alternatives in world affairs and to start where we can. Our 'gestures of peace' show that we are a peaceful people with no place for fear or frustration in our hearts. We have formed a relationship with those who are threatened by war – we have formed a solidarity with them.

The encyclical *Peace on Earth* has been regarded as Pope John's last will and testament. So too are these words of the great Mahatma Gandhi, which capture the essence of peace as a challenge of the heart. He said:

Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away.

□

And now we are considering reviving the arms race brinkmanship of the Cold War by constructing a defensive missile shield to fortify Australia.

In this fearful environment, there has been a sudden increase in race-hate crimes. Religious sites have been vandalised and Islamic and Jewish communities have been harassed. Innocent people have been threatened and spat on. Women wearing the Hijab have been a focus of racially motivated verbal and physical abuse. That the 'terrorism'

And now we are considering reviving the arms race brinkmanship of the Cold War by constructing a defensive missile shield to fortify Australia.

And now we are considering reviving the arms race brinkmanship of the Cold War by constructing a defensive missile shield to fortify Australia.

And now we are considering reviving the arms race brinkmanship of the Cold War by constructing a defensive missile shield to fortify Australia.

And now we are considering reviving the arms race brinkmanship of the Cold War by constructing a defensive missile shield to fortify Australia.

And now we are considering reviving the arms race brinkmanship of the Cold War by constructing a defensive missile shield to fortify Australia.

The following is most of the text of David Tacey's talk at the inaugural Catalyst Dinner in Melbourne, held at Xavier College on September 14, 2001.

religion.

By clinging to the past, we not only lose sight of the present but we fail to allow the future to be born. If we risk cultural form in the name of the Spirit, renewal can take place. We might almost say, in an adaptation of scripture: He who has his faith shall lose it, and he who loses his faith for the sake of the Spirit shall find it again.

In the past, one was simply born into a religious tradition at birth, and that was that, so long as we obeyed certain practices, conventions, and observances. Faith was conceived as a sort of fragile family monument, like a precious vase or chalice which was handed down through the generations. But at some point in our recent history, this fragile vase was dropped, and the precious object of inherited faith shattered into pieces. W.B. Yeats wrote that as the modern condition took us out of the enclosure of faith into uncertainty, our world of symbolic meaning tumbled into chaos: 'Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the earth'.

However, it is important to look beyond the organisational response to this crisis, which looks mainly at performance-based factors, and becomes depressed at declining numbers. A prophetic or spiritual response might find in this crisis an opportunity for new thinking, new ways of doing religion, and new ways of being religious.

The demise of the old forces us to contemplate new directions, but there is in religious structures enormous resistance to discovering the new. This is understandable, because if religion already contains sacred revelation and the holy, then why must it change? There is a tendency in religion to treat reformers and thinkers as trouble-makers and rebels, because it is felt that religion is already perfect, fully revealed, and complete.

But religion is not perfect, or complete unless it is communicating effectively with the world. Any other kind of perfection is simply theoretical, technical, or potential. Religion may ensnare what is eternally true, but if religion does not successfully communicate this truth to the world, we have to think again about the religious enterprise.

Religious authorities must not suppose that refined dogma, wonderful liturgy, or even committed social service, are the bases of a 'successful' religion, because a religion that fails to communicate its message, and that subsequently fails to transform the world by its spiritual message, is a religion that has to examine itself deeply, and adopt a self-critical attitude.

Only the rediscovery of the Mystery, and the sharing of the Mystery with the world, can ensure any real future. The community will always be receptive to Mystery if it can be expressed in valid and contemporary ways, because the community never loses its spiritual thirst, even if it has inherited faith can be restored to its former shape and beauty?

But there is another way of doing things, and this way is what I have spent recent years exploring in my writings. We have to acknowledge the brokenness of the old religious vessel and search within our community and ourselves for the new vessel. We must acknowledge that the old vessel, it seems to me, is to shift from external performance of rituals, or automatic church attendance. Rather, this new experience of faith is based on an existential grappling with the reality of the living God. Our God is not some static figure or some vague theistic background to our lives. God seeks continual and dynamic incarnation in creation, society, and consciousness.

I sometimes imagine that the so-called 'demise of religion' has been orchestrated by the Holy Spirit itself. The present challenge, it seems to me, is to shift from extrinsic to intrinsic faith. This deeper experience of faith is not based on unconscious family inheritance, religious routine, or automatic church attendance. Rather, this new experience of faith is based on an existential grappling with the reality of the living God. Our God is not some static figure or some vague theistic background to our lives. God seeks continual and dynamic incarnation in creation, society, and consciousness.

God is serious about incarnation, and never content with mere 'eternity', but wants to risk an adventure in time and space. There is urgency and force in God's direction toward the world, and if religion is no longer successful in carrying forward this divine power into the world, then God may well be behind the so-called demise of religion. God may be saying to us: I will take away the traditional vessels from you, and see what creativity might arise.

It is critical that religious traditions take this challenge seriously, and do not attempt to hide from it. I often find religious traditions are in various states of denial; they see the collapse and fragmentation of religion in society, but continue to operate in a mood of celebration, and to insist on the health and well-being of the church. I think, on the contrary, it might be more instructive to face the crisis and mourn the collapse of the old.

What must we do? Must we get down on the ground and collect the broken shards and myriad fragments, so that the holy vessel of inherited faith can be restored to its former shape and beauty?

What must we do? Must we get down on the ground and collect the broken shards and myriad fragments, so that the holy vessel of inherited faith can be restored to its former shape and beauty?

What must we do? Must we get down on the ground and collect the broken shards and myriad fragments, so that the holy vessel of inherited faith can be restored to its former shape and beauty?

Religion is good at ritual, and it should develop rituals to help us come to terms with our repressed or denied grief. The great poets have been mourning the den of the old religious world since Matthew

David Tracy is Associate Professor of Arts at La Trobe University in Melbourne, and his most recent book is "The Spirituality Revolution" Sydney: Harper Collins, 2003.

The challenge before us is to allow all people to see they are the chosen people of God, and to show ordinary people that the sky under which they live and love and labour is a sacred canopy, embodying their actions by a divine presence. For those who so choose, the holy sanctuaries will be ready and available, not only for devotional worship, but for quiet reflection, conversation, and spiritual direction. In so many ways, the task ahead for religion is to get connected with the spirit of the time and the spirit in the individual, showing people how and why religion is relevant to their lives.

When religion gets into a new relationship with the spirit, it will cease to be experienced as burden, and begin to be experienced as liberation. We will be liberated from our personalism, and our isolating secularism, and enter again into the joy of worship, but for quiet reflection, conversation, and spiritual direction. In so many ways, the task ahead for religion is to get connected with the spirit of the time and the spirit in the individual, showing people how and why religion is relevant to their lives.

Christ did not direct everyone into sacred buildings or structures, but rather he moved out into the world, going to the people, healing their ailments, and binding their secular lives to the sacred. The way of the future will be the way of the founder: not to expect the world to submit to clerical authority, but to transform the world by showing it the presence of God where it least expects to find it, in the everyday and in the ordinary.

My guess is that much of the hype about popular spirituality is deliberately masking the yearning of the human heart for fellowship and community. The fact is that the ship and community. The fact is that the community and fellowship. The spirit is not our personal possession; we might experience it as a reality, 'within' us, but it is not private. Rather, it is our intimate experience of the universal love and power of God. It is this innate human need for community that will build up religion again, but meanwhile, with this lack of fit between spirit and religion, our world falls into fragmentation, and religion and spirituality do not converse with each other.

But religion will only be experienced as a positive boon in society when it manages to 'reconnect' with people's experience. This boon is hard-won, difficult, but it is surely worth striving for. The very term 'religion' means to 'bind back' or 'reconnect with', and we can only hope that religion will live up to its name and perform this vital reconnection.

Arnold wrote 'Dover Beach' (1867), and Yeats wrote 'The Second Coming', and Eliot 'The Waste Land'. But religion itself is largely in denial, and is perhaps even choking on its own unwept tears.

Instead of being seen as burden, religion would then be seen as a resource for spirituality. A creative religion has much to offer, and religion has failed to speak to the personal experience of the spirit.

When religion gets into a new relationship with the spirit, it will cease to be experienced as burden, and begin to be experienced as liberation. We will be liberated from our personalism, and our isolating secularism, and enter again into the joy of worship, but for quiet reflection, conversation, and spiritual direction. In so many ways, the task ahead for religion is to get connected with the spirit of the time and the spirit in the individual, showing people how and why religion is relevant to their lives.

But with the collapse of belief in the fictional image of God, we have to find God in a new place, and the most convincing place of all will be our own human hearts. This does not mean that God will be a merely personal experience, but rather that the discovery of God in our interiority will be the basis for a new appreciation of God in the world, in creation, and in the wider universe of meaning. As Meister Eckhart wrote, when God disappears from culture, we have to learn to give birth to God in the soul.

Another way to put this is to say that religion has to shift from moralism to mysticism; with less emphasis on the God 'out there' and more emphasis on the God within. Perhaps in the past we did not need to relate personally and intensely to the God within, because the God without was wholly convincing, powerful, mighty, self-evident and this God focused our attention.

But today, we must first find God before we can worship him (or her); and so our spiritual journeys that are so popular in the wider community are very often journeys into isolation, despair and fragmentation. Many people won't admit this pain, because what religion is about. The sacred challenge they then might have to revise their views about individualism, which is the sacred cow of secular society.

Religion has to make itself more spiritual, and change its churches from places of devotional worship to centres of existential spirituality. When society was more stable, when we all felt we knew what God was and signified, then devotional worship was appropriate, and the correct form of sacramental life.

Religion has to make itself more spiritual, and change its churches from places of devotional worship to centres of existential spirituality. When society was more stable, when we all felt we knew what God was and signified, then devotional worship was appropriate, and the correct form of sacramental life.

Another way to put this is to say that religion has to shift from moralism to mysticism; with less emphasis on the God 'out there' and more emphasis on the God within. Perhaps in the past we did not need to relate personally and intensely to the God within, because the God without was wholly convincing, powerful, mighty, self-evident and this God focused our attention.

But today, we must first find God before we can worship him (or her); and so our spiritual journeys that are so popular in the wider community are very often journeys into isolation, despair and fragmentation. Many people won't admit this pain, because what religion is about. The sacred challenge they then might have to revise their views about individualism, which is the sacred cow of secular society.

Religion has to make itself more spiritual, and change its churches from places of devotional worship to centres of existential spirituality. When society was more stable, when we all felt we knew what God was and signified, then devotional worship was appropriate, and the correct form of sacramental life.

Religion has to make itself more spiritual, and change its churches from places of devotional worship to centres of existential spirituality. When society was more stable, when we all felt we knew what God was and signified, then devotional worship was appropriate, and the correct form of sacramental life.

# The Bible - The good shepherd

On the Fourth Sunday of Easter, the Church meditates on perhaps the best known image of Jesus: "The good shepherd" (John 10:1-18). There is an immediate theological reference here that would not have been lost on Jesus' hearers. Ezekiel 34:1 records that God, himself the "shepherd" of his people, will choose a "shepherd" for them in the messianic age. In John's Gospel Jesus is clearly identified as that "shepherd" - ie the Messiah.

**The first thing to note is that the shepherd is nothing without the sheep. The shepherd's very identity is found in relation to those that he cares for.**

But what of the image itself - "shepherd"? Set aside the theology for a moment, hold at bay the sentimental images that have often been given us as part of "Christian art". What is the essence of the shepherd's life? What are the shepherd's dispositions? How does a shepherd behave? What are the shepherd's pre-occupations?

The first thing to note is that the shepherd is nothing without the sheep. The shepherd's very identity is found in relation to those that he cares for.

14). Secondly, the shepherd has all the time in the world for the sheep. His patience is infinite, he knows how to wait and watch over them. After all, this is his life. Thirdly, he knows that sheep are sheep, and they must be treated as such. He has no other expectations of them. When they behave like sheep and get caught in briars or wander off, he does not punish them. It is in his interests that they thrive to their best potential.

This is an extraordinary image to apply to the infinite One. It is also an image that is utterly at odds with any form of moralism, dogmatism or legalism. Through this image we are drawn into a relationship of care and compassion. God is the One who is there for us. More than that, God is strangely defined in terms of a relationship with us. This image is a scandal - like the Cross.

## The Tradition - The imagination

The American poet, Robert Frost, writes: "A poem ... begins in delight and ends in wisdom ... a clarification of life ... For me the initial delight is in the surprise of remembering something I didn't know I knew ... This is a glad recognition of the long lost" ("The Figure a Poem Makes"). Reading the Sacred Scriptures can be compared to the creation of a poem. It is a graced process that depends more on imagination than any other faculty. The Book of Genesis - like all the other books of the Bible, but more than most - is a work of immense imagination. You cannot begin to comprehend it unless you have a well developed imagination. Catholic short story writer, Flannery O'Connor, said: "The writer should never be ashamed of starting" (*Mystery and Manners*). Neither should the reader be ashamed of "starting". Can you read and begin to comprehend the Gospels without a highly developed imagination? What sense can the parables of Jesus make if we do not know how to imagine or, as Flannery O'Connor puts it, "stare"?

**Reading the Sacred Scriptures can be compared to the creation of a poem. It ... depends more on imagination than any other faculty.**

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries there was a tension between the schools of Christian teaching in Alexandria and Antioch. The former placed more emphasis on imagination. For example, it gave a special emphasis to the allegorical interpretation of Sacred Scripture. The allegorical interpretation - from the Greek word *allegoria*, meaning "another (higher) reading of the text" - reads the texts as holding a richer, implied meaning - as St Paul does, for example, in Galatians 4:22ff. The two best representatives of the Alexandrian school are Clement (150-215) and Origen (185-254). Allowing for the fact that some people can get carried away with their imaginations, it must be said that the richest literature and the most beautiful expressions of the Christian tradition rely heavily on imagination.

The purely rational mind can take us so far. But the urgings of the human spirit demand that we travel further. The best vehicle for such a journey is the imagination. Only the imagination can give us the symbols that allow us to live creatively with the ambiguities, the paradoxes and the sheer incomprehensibility of the ultimate human journey.

### Words for a Pilgrim People

God, being rich in faithful love, through the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our sins, brought us to life with Christ - it is through grace that you have been saved - and raised us up with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-6)

(Literature) too is a little incarnation, giving body to what had been before, invisible and inaudible. (C S Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms, Harcourt, 1958, 5)

It is terrifying that the world doesn't wake up to the irony: that at a time when all our desire is nothing but to have pleasant sensations and avoid painful sensations there should be almost more pain, and suffering and brutality and horror, and more helplessness to do anything about it than there ever was before! (Thomas Merton, journal entry of June 25, 1940. Run to the Mountain: The Journals of Thomas Merton, Volume One 1939-1941, Patrick Hart, editor, Harper, 1995, 233.)

God and humanity are like two lovers who have missed their rendezvous. Each is there before the time, but each at a different place, and they wait, and wait, and wait. He stands motionless, nailed to the spot for the whole of time. She is distraught and impatient. But alas for her if she gets tired and goes away. ... The crucifixion of Christ is the image of the fixity of God. God is attention without distraction. One must imitate the patience and humility of God (Simone Weil, "The Things of the World" in G. A. Panichas, ed, The Simone Weil Reader, David McKay Company Inc., 1977), 424f.)

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

http://groups.msn.com/SpiritualityinthePub

NSW and ACT - 7.30-9.00pm unless specified:

Albury New Albury Hotel, Kiewa St

June 11 "What Defeats Family?" Judy

D'Astoli & Neville Powles (Info: Fr Glenn

6026 5333).

Alstonville Catalyst Dinner May 17

discouragement or sign of hope?" Fr Bill

O'Shea (Info: Anne 6628 6428)

Bowral The Grand Bar and Brasserie

(Info: Julian 4861 4649).

Campbelltown Campbelltown Catholic

Club May 14 "Women in the Church: Part-

archy vs Equality" Bernice Moore &

Geraldine Doogue (Info: Rosemary 9603

2975).

Canberra - When Christ freed us, he

meant us to remain free The Southern

Cross Club Woden May 28 "Is our God a

'tribal God' or the 'God of the nations'?" Fr

Cyril Halley & Rev Elaine Farmer (Info:

Rita 6260 6737).

Engadine - Pathways to God Engadine

RSL May 21 "How C(c)atholic is the Aus-

tralian Church?" Bernice Moore & Bishop

Geoffrey Robinson (Info: Elizabeth 9520

0617 or Annette 9548 2475).

Five Dock - Challenges in a Changing

Community The Illinois Hotel, Cnr Par-

ramatta Rd & Arlington St May 28 "Profit

Before People" Peter Caldwell & tba (Info:

Susanna 9798 8071).

Jamberoo - Search for the Sacred The

Jamberoo Hotel May 12 "Search for the

Sacred - Creation: God's Work of Art" Fr

Greg Burke & Sue Emelius (Info: Gabrielle

4232 2735).

Kincumber - Out of the Chaos Came ...

- The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive June

3 "Tending and Betending - a Feminine

approach to Ministry" Rev Penny Jones &

Judi Taylor (Info: Clair 4333 7117 or Mar-

Young Adult Spirituality" Br Graham Nel-

son (Info: Lynne 6625 1195).

Newport - Newport Arms Hotel (Info:

9973 1192).

Northern Sydney - Prayer, Faith &

God Relationship Union Hotel, Cnr Pacific

Hwy & West St, North Sydney May 19 "My

Church, My Treasure" Marea Donovan &

May 28 "Who is my Neighbour? The Real-

ity of Isolation and the loss of Community

support" Bernie Geary & Ann Halpin pbvm

(Info: Colleen 9775 2163 or Carole 5976

1024).

Other States

Devonport (TAS) Molly Malone's Irish

Pub, 7.30pm-9pm (Info: Graham 6424

8286).

Hobart North The Mustard Pot Hotel

Moonah 7.30-9pm (Info: Gwayne 6228

2679).

Fortitude Valley (QLD) Dooley's in Par-

rick's Bar First Monday of month - (Info:

Madonna 3840 0524).

Perth (WA) - Towards Joy The Ele-

phant and the Wheelbarrow, cnr Francis &

Lake Sts, Northbridge 7.30-9.10pm May 27

"Celebrating the Spirituality of the Every-

day" Sr Lucy Kessell & tba (Info: Andrew

0422 305 742).

Macclesfield (SA) Three Brothers Arms,

Venables Street June 3 "Sniffing out Real

Life" Phillip Carter & Motra Joyce (Info:

Michael 8388 9265).

The Talking MIX is now available on

tape. Annual subscription: \$40. For infor-

mation contact Pauline on 02 9816 4262.

Other Matters and Events

Mount St Benedict Centre, Pennant

Hills, "The Road to the Cross in Mark's

Gospel" September 27 - October 3 "Arise

and Come Away" (Info: 9484 6208).

St Mary's Towers Retreat Centre

Douglas Park" 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 Di-

rected retreat; June 6-9 Life's Healing Jour-

ney; June 13-15 Prayer weekend Centering

Prayer; June 17-23 guided retreat "St Paul

to the Romans"; June 27-29 Men's retreat

(Info: Sr Joan 4630 9159).

Halfax-Portal Lectures May 13 Dr Ber-

nadette Tobin; May 20 Rev Andrew Cam-

eron; May 27 Dr Gerald Gleeson, Lidcombe

Catholic Club 7.30pm (Info: 9390 5168).

Reflection Morning with Virginia

Bourke rsj May 24, 9.30am-12.30pm Mar-

ist Centre 1 Mary Street Hunters Hill 9.30.

Eremos Institute June 14 Retreat day at

Yaraandoo, near Dural 10am-4pm (Info:

Kate 9674 1216).

Bishops Forum May 30, Archbishopop

George Pell "Vatican II: Unfinished Busi-

ness?" Crypt St Patrick's The Rocks (Info:

Pauline 9816 4262).

Madette Tobin & Michael Smith (Info: 1024).

Paddington - Of Human Life The Belle-

vue Hotel, June 4 "Being Engineered" Ber-

nadette Tobin & Michael Smith (Info:

Marea 9387 3152).

Penrith - Making a Difference Golf

Club June 18 "Law and Order: Beyond

9760 2324).

Rouse Hill The Mean Fiddler on Wind-

st George Kings Head Tavern South

Hurstville May 28 "What's Worth Fighting

for?" Fr Brian Gore & Kate Englebrect

(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 May 21 Trish Hind-

marsh & Fr John Crothers (Info: Carmel

9477 4824).

Bendigo Boundary Hotel June 11 "This is

what I think" Rev Tim Costello (Info: Helen

0409 212 009).

Clayton The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm

June 24 "The recent treatment of Asylum

Seekers in Australia and the Politics of

Fear" Ros Leary & David Spitteler (Info: Jo

9807 1912).

Colac The Union Club Hotel September 6

"Our Song, Our Story, Our Spirit" Maria

Forde (Info: Winsome 5235 3203).

Collingwood The Vine Hotel, Cnr Wel-

lington & Derby Sts, 8pm-9.30pm June 4

tba (Info: April 9327 4433)

Echuca - The Power of my story

through the window of... May 21 Fr Tink

& Phillipa Kirk (Info: Carmel 5482 1342).

Geelong - (Info: Denis 5275 4120).

Heidelberg Tower Hotel, 838 Heidelberg

Rd, Alphington, 8pm-9.30pm May 14 tba

(Info: Susie 9859 6184).

Mordiallo The Kingston Club, 7.30pm-

9pm June 25 "Sustaining the Earth so the

earth will sustain us" Kim Healy & Trevor

Parton (Info: Maria 9579 4255).

Mornington The Royal Hotel, Victoriana

Pauline 9816 4262).

David Tacey, *The Spiritual Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality*, Harper Collins, 2003, 250 pages, index, bibliography, endnotes, pb, \$27.95.

This is a very good little book - probably David Tacey's best yet. It is insightful and well grounded in experience. Tacey writes of his intentions: "My main interest here is to reach behind the clashing ideologies and fundamentalisms that threaten to dehumanise and destroy the world, and access a mystical source from which all belief systems emerge". Tacey knows how to listen to of our best talents, without imagination the full service with this book. Along with the

many brief reflections on various aspects of the subject by such people as G K Chesterton, C S Lewis, Flannery O'Connor, Jacques Maritain and J R R Tolkien, he has gathered many quotations from an array of other authors. The gathering of texts is more than just a juxtaposition of more or less relevant pieces. It is coherent and leads the reader fairly easily into an exploration of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

Norwich and Catherine of Siena (*Medieval Era*), Catherine of Genoa, Teresa of Avila and Madame Guyon (*Modern Era*). These of Lisieux, Edith Stein and Simone Weil (*Contemporary Era*). The books are in a very attractive format, one that entices you to pick them up and browse. Put them in your bedside table, in your briefcase or pocket and read them when you get a chance. This set would also make a beautiful gift for the right person.

produces us to it here very well. stream of life in Australian culture. He in-Tacey has discovered a potentially rich year, 90 in the next and 120 in the next. Passage". It attracted 70 students in that in 1999 called "Spirituality and Rites of seeking "something". He started a course (city), he came across many young people and a post-religious institution (the univer-literature", "The Christian imagination", "Beauty and the creative impulse", "On Topics include: "Thinking Christianly about literature", "The Christian imagination", and a post-religious institution (the univer-ple. In an apparently post-religious culture experiences working with university-age peo-of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

ground stream". Tacey speaks of his ex- the reader fairly easily into an exploration of imagination, literature and the Gospel. Topics include: "Thinking Christianly about literature", "The Christian imagination", and a post-religious institution (the univer-ple. In an apparently post-religious culture experiences working with university-age peo-of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

marked by Chapter 3: "Going to the under- less relevant pieces. It is coherent and leads the reader fairly easily into an exploration of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

joyable. This reader was particularly fasci- more than just a juxtaposition of more or other authors. The gathering of texts is

*Revolution* is not only informative, it is en- gathered many quotations from an array of theologians ever did get to the heart of the matter. If the

is said and done, the mystics were the ones who got to the heart of the matter. If the

overlook this historical fact. For, when all possibilities for renewal, we should not

current state of the Catholic Church and the mystical path. When thinking about the discouraged from being too interested in the

mark. Leland Ryken has done us a wonder- full service with this book. Along with the

many brief reflections on various aspects of the subject by such people as G K Chesterton, C S Lewis, Flannery O'Connor, Jacques Maritain and J R R Tolkien, he has

gathered many quotations from an array of other authors. The gathering of texts is

more than just a juxtaposition of more or less relevant pieces. It is coherent and leads the reader fairly easily into an exploration

of imagination, literature and the Gospel. Topics include: "Thinking Christianly about literature", "The Christian imagination", and a post-religious institution (the univer-ple. In an apparently post-religious culture

experiences working with university-age peo-of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

ground stream". Tacey speaks of his ex- the reader fairly easily into an exploration of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

marked by Chapter 3: "Going to the under- less relevant pieces. It is coherent and leads the reader fairly easily into an exploration

of imagination, literature and the Gospel. Topics include: "Thinking Christianly about literature", "The Christian imagination", and a post-religious institution (the univer-ple. In an apparently post-religious culture

experiences working with university-age peo-of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

ground stream". Tacey speaks of his ex- the reader fairly easily into an exploration of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

marked by Chapter 3: "Going to the under- less relevant pieces. It is coherent and leads the reader fairly easily into an exploration

of imagination, literature and the Gospel. Topics include: "Thinking Christianly about literature", "The Christian imagination", and a post-religious institution (the univer-ple. In an apparently post-religious culture

experiences working with university-age peo-of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

ground stream". Tacey speaks of his ex- the reader fairly easily into an exploration of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

marked by Chapter 3: "Going to the under- less relevant pieces. It is coherent and leads the reader fairly easily into an exploration

of imagination, literature and the Gospel. Topics include: "Thinking Christianly about literature", "The Christian imagination", and a post-religious institution (the univer-ple. In an apparently post-religious culture

experiences working with university-age peo-of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

ground stream". Tacey speaks of his ex- the reader fairly easily into an exploration of imagination, literature and the Gospel.

marked by Chapter 3: "Going to the under- less relevant pieces. It is coherent and leads the reader fairly easily into an exploration

of imagination, literature and the Gospel. Topics include: "Thinking Christianly about literature", "The Christian imagination", and a post-religious institution (the univer-ple. In an apparently post-religious culture