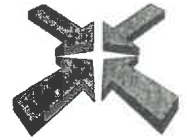




THE MIX



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Our Say – The complex issue of same-sex unions

It is the stated aim of Catalyst for Renewal to promote conversation for the sake of renewal within the Catholic Church. It is not our aim to campaign for this or that particular outcome, except the general outcome of renewal.

Catalyst members may or may not agree about the most desirable outcome in specific circumstances. They will agree, however, that intelligent, open and honest conversation in the service of renewal is essential.

Concretely, this means that Catalyst will constantly put matters on the table – or back on the table – for conversation. In the Church, as in other human organisations, sometimes complex, difficult and troubling issues are inadvertently or even deliberately brushed off the table. We will pick them up off the floor and put them back on the table as often as is necessary. This may be necessary when an issue seems to have been dealt with but in fact has been treated in a less creative manner. Typically, when good conversation has been bypassed, the outcomes are not the best.

For some time now, pressure has been growing for the civil recognition of same-sex unions. Recently, in Canada, civil laws have been enacted recognising same-sex unions. The matter is a most complex one. It demands a Christ-like response.

The Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) gave its response on July 31 2003: "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons." *The Tablet* (July 19, 26 and August 9 2003) offers thoughtful pieces, taking the initiative, as usual, in promoting good conversation. We note particularly Cardinal Murphy O'Connor's support for the Archbishop of Canterbury (*Tablet* July 26).

We might wonder whether the CDF statement would have had a different focus, perhaps a more sensitive manner, if members of the Congregation had entered into serious and open conversation with homosexual people. Might it not be useful, for example, for the Catholic Church to set up forums where we could all listen honestly,

carefully and respectfully to human experience on *all* matters pertaining to human sexuality?

Perhaps one of the crucial issues to be addressed in this conversation is, as yet, unstated. The Covenant, by its very nature, begins and ends with relationships. In the Christian life, rules and regulations, dogmas and injunctions, find their validity and meaning in and through relationships. Jesus saved some of his most severe judgments for those who reduce the Covenant to "doing the right thing".

It is relatively easy to say what is right or wrong when you remain at the level of principle and abstraction. It is infinitely more difficult to enter the complex and messy world of human relationships and discern what is actually right and wrong there. But this is precisely where the wisdom and power of the Gospel becomes manifest. Good conversation can take us there, and in that conversation, if it is genuine, we shall learn what we must learn. □

This journal is one of the works of
the Australian 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 Robert Borg, and when I took up my appointment at Asquith Berowra Parishes in June this year, a parishioner greeted me with, "Who would have thought that the young boy I saw serving Mass at St Patrick's Church, Church Hill, would now be my Parish Priest?!" Our Catholic Family is not just restricted to one parish or diocese, but is truly universal!

The nurturing of my faith came from my family. My mother Betty was born and bred in Millers Point. Mum married Dominic, who emigrated to Australia from Malta after WWII. Mum was an Anglican and dad a Catholic.

Born on 3 June 1955, I was baptised, not in the parish church, but in St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, where my parents were married. My schooling was at Christian Brothers High School, St Mary's Cathedral, after attending St Brigid's Primary School and Fort Street Public School.

From the time I celebrated my First Holy Communion and began serving Mass, I had always desired to be a priest. One of the Marist Fathers, Fr L. Bourne SM, took time to be not just a priest to me and others in the parish, but a teacher and friend.

As priest he was there to lead us in prayer. As teacher, he was up to date with the liturgical changes that were taking place after the Second Vatican Council. As friend, he and other priests like him became part of our own family and were welcomed to call in at any time — and they did!

It was Fr Bourne's love of liturgy that started me on my interest in the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. All through my life I have tried to inculcate the various aspects of the liturgical life of the Church and to share that within the communities in which I lived.

Even as a schoolboy this was the case. This was enhanced by my being at St Mary's Cathedral High School. Being involved in serving for Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and Priests as well as meditating on the liturgical music that the Cathedral choir sang in its ministry, all drew me toward dedicating my life to the priestly vocation.

Meanwhile, our local church at Millers Point was fast becoming a liturgical trendsetter. My friends and I were nicknamed 'the God Squad'!

As I was coming to the end of my secondary education, I needed to make a decision on what I would do in life, and so as a family, we spoke about the priesthood. I was given some good advice and decided to go to work for a while to see what my final decision would be.

Well, four years later, I headed for St Columba's College Springwood to start my studies for the priesthood, and I was ordained on 20 August 1983.

I have had good and bad experiences in the parishes that I have served. I was appointed to Pennant Hills, then to Pymble, then as Parish Priest to Terrigal and afterwards to Chatswood, and now I am Parish Priest of Asquith and Berowra.

I have also been privileged to be of a position in the Diplomatic Corps of the Holy See. At that time I was the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Broken Bay and had to use all my diplomatic skill to say no to the request.

As a priest I have found great joy in witnessing my sister Vicki's marriage to Chris and to baptise my nephew, Matthew, and niece, Kate. They keep me on an even keel so that my life as a priest is not immune to family ups and downs.

My sister is a flight attendant with Qantas and, if Chris is not able to pick up the kids from school, the emergency call comes through and off Uncle Rob goes and stands in the playground with parents who look and say, "You look just like our parish priest!"

As Parish Priest of Asquith and Berowra, I have been asked to begin dialogue with the two parishes to see what the future holds for them. Will the two parishes become one and retain their identities? Will they share resources in a spirit of cooperation as did the early church? Who knows?

I pray that I will be able to call from the community those gifts that are necessary for us to make this decision.

Who would have thought that young boy serving Mass at St Patrick's, Church Hill, would be doing what he is doing today? Not me!



Robert Borg

Your Say - Nourishing priestly life

Peter Maher

A few years ago at the age of 49, sensing illness, deep disquiet and a fear of early deafness, I visited my doctor. The doctor assured me of healthy ears, but upon reading my blood pressure, broke the news to me, for fear I would have a heart attack or stroke.

Brought on by stress, not only from work, but also the realities of becoming orphaned by a dying father (my mum having passed away earlier), the doctor said I had high blood pressure, while avoiding naming the figure of 210/95 — a sure sign that being in a funeral fund would be to the advantage of my next of kin.

He calmly asked were there stresses at the moment, and would I please refrain from all salt, pork, and many other goodies and return the next week for further tests, secretly hoping I would not have a stroke before then. I took this gentle alarm seriously enough to reduce my blood pressure to "hold the coffin" status.

I have since kept my blood pressure in check through daily walks, sensible diet, omega3 pills, cereal each morning and a fresh juice most days. I also have decided to take some issues less seriously and enjoy life a little more with a sense of play and humour and to develop personal relationships and outside interests.

Priestly life in these challenging days for the church is under great stress. Many priests are experiencing greater burdens of office in an ageing priestly population. I know of no scientific research, but anecdotal evidence would suggest that the prominence of coronary bypass surgery, heart attacks, strokes, stress leave and other illnesses would indicate a key concern for those entrusted with the pastoral care of priests: the new situation that impacts so seriously on their lives.

So I read with interest the latest document from the Vatican Congregation responsible for priestly life and pastoral care — *The Priest, Pastor and Leader of the Parish Community* (Congregation for the Clergy). Not only is there no reference to the issues surrounding the health of priests (which now interests me greatly), but there is little mention of old age provisions, in which I am now interested, because I intend to have one.

Of more importance is the omission of a proper and serious treatment of formation and ongoing development of the priest spiritually, theologically and as a fully formed human being. The new document predictably repeats the classic aspects of priestly life and spirituality. While recognising the impact of secular culture, it

recommends avoiding it by retreating into Eucharistic devotion, Mass, Penance, Divine Office and the Rosary.

These may be recommended aspects of priestly spirituality, but they are far from helping me deal with terminal blood pressure and, indeed, could contribute to it if I took the threatening tone of the document seriously....

The present document is so keen to emphasise the difference between the ministerial priesthood and the role of the laity, it forgets to underline the essential commonality of all Christian spirituality, which is the Word of God, particularly the gospels.

The irrelevance and negativity [of the latest document from the Congregation for the Clergy] will probably mean it is ignored. Another sadness.

The *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* (1965) makes strong points about the importance of ongoing development in all aspects of spirituality and ministry, and *The Ministerial Priesthood* (1971)... gives practical attention to the priest's ongoing formation and education in a truly diverse way and to the issues of personal health; it gives wider, not narrower encouragement of outside interests.

In contrast, apart from the simple repetition of traditional priestly practices, the present document simply neglects all the above by a superficial treatment or no reference at all.

My concern is that this document, devoid of imagination and creativity, defensive in tone and characterised by judgementalism and selectivity, will be counterproductive for priests addressing seriously the real concerns of their ministry and life in these troubled times. Of course, its irrelevance and negativity will probably mean it is ignored. Another sadness.

There are priests about to visit their doctors, spiritual directors and ongoing formation advisers who deserve better guidance from the Congregation.

Once again they will have to depend on their own resources, old documents written in more enlightened and less fearful times and make decisions which will probably mean fighting for their needs and hopes, rather than being encouraged to explore and dream.

This problem won't be solved by repeating old tired notions, no matter how true. Priests and lay people need something to encourage creative thinking to address real hopes and dreams they want to keep alive, not fear-filled instructions on how to stay good priests.

After 33 years with the diocese I would like to be encouraged to take serious sabbatical time. At the moment we are reminded that the guidelines of the diocese will allow only two months sabbatical. Spiritual, intellectual, pastoral and, indeed, physical health seem to be worth no more. This insults the priest, but more so the people who expect professionalism from their priests.

I am happy to report that my concerns about this document are in stark contrast to my experience of the practice of many diocesan support persons and bishops whom I have found personally very concerned and very helpful in times of seeking renewal or when in health distress.

This document, however, is discouraging to priests and gives less pastorally caring bishops and diocesan decision-making bodies ammunition to drown the hopes of legitimate time and resources for spiritual, intellectual, personal and pastoral renewal.

I believe the Congregation should be writing documents which encourage priests to explore broadly their development as men of prayer, care and action. We need to be fired by a hope that the Church trusts us and encourages us to face the new millennium with courage.

No matter how normalising the seminary training was supposed to be, we have become a diverse group of men with diverse interests, experiences, spiritualities, theologies, methodologies and practices for pastoral care and personal renewal — just as God planned it.

When will the Congregation foster and nourish that for the good of the whole church?

Peter Maher is parish priest of St Joseph's, Newtown and chaplain at the University of Technology, Sydney.

To the editor:

Thanks for your approach... Hope you can keep the conversation alive. Cheers!

*Mary Pirrotta Jackson
Wooloowin Queensland*

Essay – Peace – our hope, our right, our responsibility

by Mark Raper

The following is part of the text of a presentation given by Mark Raper SJ at the Catalyst Dinner in Hunters Hill, April 4 2003.

“If the times are bad, then let us be better; then the times will be better, for we are the times.” St Augustine

“... Start seriously thinking about making peace or the world will soon be a mess for everyone. Peace in the world is everyone’s right as well as everyone’s responsibility. We do not have a choice. It is a crucial time.” Kofi Annan

May I first pay respects to the indigenous people of this land. Theirs is the oldest living human culture in the world. In these difficult times, the indigenous leader Pat Dodson, a great advocate of reconciliation in our country, helps us with his words:

“You can... retreat into the trenches as a Catholic and hope that the catechism is going to save you, or you can face up to the world and deal with the challenges.”

Catalyst for Renewal was formed to implement Vatican II. Bryan Hehir, an astute interpreter of the Church’s social ministry, argued that:

“...the decisive contribution of Vatican II was to provide a description of the church’s role in the world which was properly theological and ecclesial in tone and substance.”

Catalyst for Renewal was founded by people who want to face the world as community. You “...prompt open exchanges among the community of believers, mindful of the diversity of expression of faith in contemporary Australia.”

Tonight we talk of peace in a context of war. Indeed, this war is the tragic human consequence of the failure, despite all our resources, sophisticated technology, and media means, to negotiate a path to peace. It is the victory of militarism and aggression over the respect for humanity and human rights. It is the product of a type of multilateralism that renders the UN powerless. We feel in our hearts the failure of dialogue, and negotiation. ... War is: “... always a defeat for humanity” (John Paul II). It is: “...a defeat of reason and of the Gospel!” (Cardinal Roberto Tucci).

In such a context we risk becoming detached, cynical, and powerless to respond in any meaningful way. Yet, as Pope John Paul II pleaded:

“When war threatens humanity’s destiny, as it does today in Iraq, it is even more urgent for us to proclaim with a loud and decisive voice that peace is the only way to build a more just and caring society. Violence and arms can never solve human problems.”

How much we do need catalysts for renewal of our faith and of our hope!

Forty years ago this month, on Holy Thursday, April 11 1963, only 2 months before his death, Pope John XXIII released *Pacem In Terris*, an encyclical written for a world that was also greatly divided. The Berlin Wall was just constructed and the Cold War was gathering momentum, there was the brinkmanship of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the struggles between colonialism and independence, and the growing divide between rich and poor nations. Now is a good moment to renew our spirits in the good pope’s enduring message of hope.

If there is human cause, then human response is called for. This world needs artisans of peace.

On the question of war – its morality, its legitimacy, its efficacy – *Pacem in Terris* is clear. It rejects war and violence:

It must be borne in mind that to proceed gradually is the law of life in all its expressions; therefore in human institutions, too, it is not possible to renovate for the better except by working from within them, gradually. Pius XII proclaimed: “Salvation and justice are not to be found in revolution, but in evolution through concord. Violence has always achieved only destruction, not construction; the kindling of passions, not their pacification; the accumulation of hate and ruin, not the reconciliation of the contending parties. And it has reduced people and parties to the difficult task of rebuilding, after sad experience, on the ruins of discord. (162)

Pacem in Terris denounced the build-up of arms in the world, even for defensive purposes:

Everyone, however, must realize that, unless this process of disarmament be thoroughgoing and complete, and reach men’s very souls, it is impossible to stop the arms race, or to reduce armaments, or...ultimately to abolish them entirely. Everyone must sincerely cooperate in the effort to banish fear and the anxious expectation of war from men’s minds. But this requires that the fundamental principles upon which peace is based in today’s world be replaced by an alto-

gether different one, namely, the realization that true and lasting peace among nations cannot consist in the possession of an equal supply of armaments but only in mutual trust. (113)

Just a year ago I returned to Australia after twenty years of accompanying, serving and defending the rights of refugees. The past twenty years have been marked by cruel conflicts, by violent and massive disrespect of human rights, and by the forced displacement of millions of people. This violence stems from disrespect for the dignity and rights of the human person.

Yet the corollary should also be true. From the respect of people will come peace. Or, where people are respected, there will be peace. As we learn from the Old Testament, the treatment of the orphan, the widow and the stranger is the criterion of authenticity of our faith. *Pacem in Terris* laid a ground plan for peace. But who will teach us how to traverse this territory? Who are the real artisans of peace?

“The city of the merely human is built on love of self at the expense of the other. Whereas the city of God is built on the love of the other at the expense of the self.” (St Augustine)

May I give two examples of women refugees, themselves artisans of peace, who have inspired me.

In 1981 I was asked to initiate the Jesuit Refugee Service in Asia. Soon after, I went to stay a few weeks on Indonesia’s Galang Island, where there were then 12,000 Vietnamese people. With the people at that time was Father Gildo Dominici, an Italian Jesuit and former missionary in Vietnam, who died just a few weeks ago in Rome.

One day when a woman came to see him, Gildo asked if she would tell me her story. I call her Nguyen Thi Lan for the moment. She and her husband had planned to leave Vietnam with their two children, a boy and a girl, but just before leaving, she discovered that she was pregnant. Her husband therefore left first, with their oldest child, a boy. When his boat arrived safely in Malaysia, he sent word for her to leave. So when the second child was born, a girl, she bought a passage on another small boat for herself, her two daughters and her sister.

The boat was not well provisioned, and the leader was no sailor. After some days they ran out of fuel and drifted without power. Her own stock of water and food was soon exhausted, but the boat leader would not share what he had brought. The

woman pleaded for the sake of her children who were melting in the heat. He refused. He kept what supplies he had for his own family. Finally her children died in her arms and ultimately her sister, too, died of thirst and exhaustion.

Eventually they touched land and were brought to the camp. Lan was safe, but carried only one thought in her mind:

venge. She would come in the night, with a knife or any other means, to kill the man who had murdered her children and her sister. For weeks she lived in total grief, mad with the desire for revenge. She talked sometimes to Father Gildo, but he saw that she was unable to listen.

Then one day, with a different face, open and determined, Lan came to the priest and announced that she would forgive the man. "Very well," said Father Gildo, "the Lord accepts your change of heart, and you can put this matter behind you." "No", she said, "I want everyone to know that I forgive him." So she brought that man in the middle of the Sunday prayers — though he was not Christian and she was only then discovering what faith is. She said, "I forgive you."

It was a liberation for her. And what a liberation for him! Everyone knew him as a killer. And what a change took place in the life of the whole camp! Many people took courage from her action.

My encounter with Nguyen Thi Lan in that first refugee camp was a revelation. This event and others like it have been for what the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor must have been for the disciples. During the past twenty years of working with refugees in many places, the courageous example of that woman has reminded me that reconciliation is possible, not only for an individual person but also for a community.

Earlier this year, just before he died, Gildo wrote to me to give me the last address he had for Thi Lan. Until now I haven't found her, but she and her husband were re-united here in Sydney, and they had several more children.

The second example is of a Cambodian woman. Soon after I met Thi Lan, I met a Cambodian woman in Phanat Nikhom camp in Thailand, Anne Noeum Yok Tan. There she was looking after unaccompanied children while awaiting her resettlement in France. Ten of Noeum Yok Tan's children had died under the Pol Pot regime.

One by one, her husband wrote a little poem or reflection on the back of each child's baptismal certificate. When he, too, was killed by a Khmer Rouge cadre, she gathered the precious folios together and fled. On the way, in the jungle, she met by

chance with her two surviving children, and proceeded to the border. Ultimately, the collection of poems was published in a book dedicated to the martyrs of the Cambodian Church, called *Veilleur, ou en est la nuit?*, or "Watcher, What of the Night?" and subtitled, "The Little Book of the Dead". In her introduction she wrote the following words.

With this book I have given you what is dearest to me. My life is not easy now, but I do not despair. I hope in God. I believe God is my Father and will not abandon me. One day I shall join my husband and my children and we shall be all together again. Ten of my children are dead, and my husband has been killed, but I do not hold it against anyone. I have no spite against anyone at all. Nor did my husband hate the Khmer Rouge. He did not want to avenge himself for the evil they had done. I am like him. If I meet the one who killed my husband, I will not hate him, for I have no hate in my heart: I have accepted to strip myself of everything. In any case, I am not the only one to suffer. It is a whole people, a whole country that suffers as well. But one day, I am sure, Cambodia will once again know happiness.

From the respect of people will come peace. Or, where people are respected, there will be peace.

Meeting these two women so early in my time of working with refugees was providential. What precious lessons they demonstrated for me! They taught me how valuable it is to accompany and listen to the refugees. But also they taught me that women are natural artisans of peace.

Among all the reasons for war, one cannot easily cite bad luck. We witness not simply natural disasters, but tragedies created by the hands of people. If there is human cause, then human response is called for. This world needs artisans of peace. The signs and needs of our times invite us to this response.

Refugees demonstrate the worst in human society, and the best: the willingness to oppress others and the willingness to assist. Refugees are drenched in human value. Only a society without values will ignore refugees.

It is in our national interest that Australia treats refugees justly. The suffering of refugees is a 'shameful wound of our time', 'a wound which typifies and reveals the imbalance and conflicts of the modern world', said John Paul II.

Refugees are not new. For as long as intolerance and oppression have been part of human history, there have been refugees. And there will continue to be refugees as

long as conflicts continue. In this era of globalisation, it is ironic that although most wars are internal, the forces of globalisation make refugees too a global matter. The modern means of transportation and communication, as well as the dramatic flows of capital and the shifting needs for labour forces, all tend to globalise the refugee problem.

Tonight over dinner we are reminded of the humble beginnings of the conversation which planted the seed for your movement. Your promise to one another, your mission, the promotion of communication across peoples, beliefs and cultures, is ever more urgent today. Your vision, the way you connect the integrity of your own lives with that of your local communities and with the universal church, gives you an immense privilege and an immense responsibility.

'Think globally and act locally', the saying goes. But I would also say, think and act globally. Every action, even the smallest one, has value in the wider framework.

Secondly, pray. You may be helped as I was by this prayer of Michael Leunig:

Dear God, We pray for balance and exchange. Balance us like trees. As the roots of a tree shall equal its branches, so must the inner life be equal to the outer life. And as the leaves shall nourish the roots, so shall the roots give nourishment to the leaves. Without equality and exchange of nourishment there can be no growth and no love. Amen.

Thirdly, live what you pray. Listen to St. John Chrysostom:

Would you honour the body of Christ? Do not despise his nakedness; do not honour him here in church clothed in silk vestments and then pass him by unclothed and frozen outside. Remember that he who said, 'This is my body', and made good his words, also said, 'You saw me hungry and gave me no food', and, 'in so far as you did it not to one of these, you did it not to me'. In the first sense the body of Christ does not need clothing but worship from a pure heart. In the second sense it does need clothing and all the care we can give it... Learn to be discerning Christians and to honour Christ in the way he wants to be honoured. It is only right that honour given to anyone should take the form most acceptable to the recipient not to the giver... So give God the honour he asks ... □

Fr Mark Raper SJ is currently Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Australia. The text above represents about 50% of the complete text of Fr Raper's talk. If you would like a copy of the full text, please send a stamped, self-addressed long envelope with four further stamps to the Editor with your request.

The Bible – The triumph of the cross

Words for a Pilgrim People

Since in the wisdom of God the world was unable to recognise God through wisdom, it was God's own pleasure to save people through the folly of the Gospel. While the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, we are preaching a crucified Christ: to the Jews an obstacle they cannot get over, to the gentiles foolishness, but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is both the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1Corinthians 1:21-24)

□□□

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 mankind 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" (Prayer before the second lesson for Holy Saturday, as it was in the Roman Missal before the restoration of Holy Week). (Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 1963, 5.)

□□□

*Wherever you come across someone who is dying, you find me, the one dying on the cross. The climax of history that makes known its meaning and the victorious finality of its goal within history itself is the cross, the death and resurrection of Jesus in one event. Here God's 'Yes' to the world and the world's to God become historical, unambiguous, and irrevocable ... This cross is the salvation of the world. (Karl Rahner, **Opportunities for Faith: Elements of a Modern Spirituality**, The Seabury Press, 1970, 27 & 29f.)*

□□□

On the feast of the Triumph of the Cross (September 14) we turn to the Gospel of John. John is unique in his presentation of the Cross. He presents the Cross as the moment in which Jesus is exalted. We must avoid the obvious mistake of thinking that John is suggesting there is something wonderful about suffering and death as such. We must also listen carefully to John's assertion that this was no ordinary event of suffering and death.

Jesus is the Word made flesh, "he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). In the enfleshed Word, the loving, saving presence of God is made visible. John has three early references to the glory of God being manifest in Jesus – at Cana (2:11) and twice in association with the raising of Lazarus (11:4, 40). However, in one of these references – 11:4 – he suggests the ultimate moment of glorification is elsewhere: "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it". The raising of Lazarus has set in train the process whereby Jesus will be arrested and ultimately crucified: Jesus must die for the nation, and not for the nation only but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad (see 11:49-52).

John does not invent the facts of Jesus' death and resurrection. John describes that event, however, and interprets it in his own special way. He situates it within the context of the Exodus. Just as "Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him" (3:14). This connection is highly significant. The people complain against Moses for bringing them out into the place of death (see Numbers 21:5). It is precisely there, in and through that place of death, they will be saved. The glory of God is manifest in that place for those who believe (see John 3:15). The Cross, therefore, is the exaltation of Jesus the faithful one. Through his complete self-giving, God's saving love is given to the world. □

The Tradition – The cross in our days

Protestant theologian, Jurgen Moltman, writes: "Today the church and theology must turn to the crucified Christ in order to show the world the freedom he offers" (*The Crucified God*). 1 is a central tenet of our faith that only the Cross brings the ultimate freedom for which the world longs.

If we take the Cross seriously, we will be radically counter-cultural. The renowned scripture scholar, English Anglican N T Wright, says it is typical of humans to keep evil in circulation. Wright then goes on: "But the divine way is different. Jesus takes temptation, hatred, curses – the bitterness of a bitter world – and he absorbs it into himself on the cross. Jesus, pronounced guilty as a blasphemer, for claiming to be the Son of God, demonstrates on the cross that he was speaking the truth, by doing what only the Son of God could do – loving his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end, the bitter end. And this pattern, acted out uniquely on the cross, becomes then for

us, by the Spirit of Jesus working within us, the pattern we are commanded to live out, as we give back good for evil, blessing for curse, prayer for persecution. One might say that this is the vocation of the Church: to take the sadness of the world and give back no anger; the sorrow of the world and give back no bitterness; the pain of the world and not sink into self-pity; but to return forgiveness and love, blessing and joy. That is what Jesus was doing on Calvary. He drew onto himself the sin of the ages, the rebellion of the world and humankind, the hatred, pain, anger, and frustration of the world, so that the world and humankind might be healed, might be rid of it all" (*The Crown and the Fire*).

Wright is not inviting willful, moralistic striving. He is reminding us of the vocation that is ours and the power that comes with that vocation. Do we dare be followers of Jesus? What a different world it would be if we lived the fullness of our baptism – people baptized into Christ, baptized into his death (see Romans 6:3)! Maybe G K Chesterton was correct when he said that Christianity has not failed, it just has not been tried. □

Through his complete self-giving, God's saving love is given to the world.

Maybe G K Chesterton was correct when he said that Christianity has not failed, it just has not been tried.

Bulletin Board

Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

SIP Meetings

SIP Promoter – Terry O'Loughlin on (02) 9816 4262 or (02) 9816 5091.

Email: terry_catalyst@hotmail.com

<http://groups.msn.com/SpiritualityinthePub>

SW and ACT – 7.30-9.00pm unless specified:

° **Albury** New Albury Hotel, Kiewa St October 8 "Sexuality and Christianity: Mutually Exclusive?" Clare Grogan & David Leary (Info: Fr Glenn 6026 5333).

° **Alstonville** September 9 "Faith in the Future: Spirituality in our Children" Anne Graham (Info: Anne 6628 6428)

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

° **Campbelltown** Campbelltown Catholic Club September 10 "Peace: Is it Possible?" Kate Scholl & John Ferguson (Info: Rosemary 9603 2975).

° **Canberra** The Southern Cross Club Woden September 24 "East and West - Integration or Disintegration" Kirill Nourzanov & tba (Info: Rita 6260 6737).

° **Engadine – Pathways to God** Engadine RSL September 17 "Does God have a sense of humour?" Graham English & tba (Info: Elizabeth 9520 0617 or Annette 9548 2475).

° **Five Dock** The Illinois Hotel, Cnr Parmatta Rd & Arlington St September 24 "Church: Hope or Hindrance?" Bishop Geoffrey Robinson & Geraldine Doogue (Info: Susanna 9798 8071).

° **Goulburn** Soldiers Club September 9 "Aussie Justice, Fair Dinkum, Fair Go" Bishop Pat Power & Betty Dixon (Info: Tony 4822 2636).

° **Jamberoo** The Jamberoo Hotel September 8 "A Search for the Sacred: A Story to be shared" Michael Whelan sm & Debra Way (Info Gabrielle 4232 2735).

° **Kincumber** The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive October 7 "Challenging Ministries of our Time" John Buggy & James McGillicuddy (Info: Clair 4333 7117 or Margaret 4382 2753).

° **Lismore** Mary Gilhooley's Pub (Info: Lynne 6625 1195).

° **Newport** – Newport Arms Hotel October 30 "Catholic school enrolments up but church attendance down. What's going on?" Speakers: tba (Info: Terry 9973 1192).

° **Northern Sydney** Union Hotel, Pacific Hwy & West St, North Sydney September 15 "Learning as Treasure" Liz Guy & John armody (Info: Michelle 9958 5963).

Paddington – Of Human Life The Belle-

Bellevue Hotel October 1 "On Being Land Lovers & Sea Carers" Les Higgins & Grace Mumbler (Info: Marea 9387 3152).

° **Penrith** Golf Club October 22 "The Environment: Are we Rubbishing our Children's Heritage?" Br Graham Neist (Info: Sue 9760 2324).

° **Rouse Hill** The Mean Fiddler on Windsor Rd October 7 "Emmaus – the Church on the Road in Between" Michael Whelan sm (Info: Maria 9680 2220 (H))

° **Rydalmere – Responding to Change** – Rydalmere Bowling Club September 9 Ven Tenzin Choyi & Chris Forbes (Info: Kerry 9630 2704).

° **St George Kings Head Tavern** South Hurstville September 24 "Why we do what we do" Louise Reeves rsj & Tony McDonnell (Info: Ken 9580 1183).

° **Waitara – Act justly, Love tenderly and walk humbly with your God** The Blue Gum Hotel September 17 Therese Vassarotti & Vanda O'Donnell (Info: Carmel 9477 4824).

VIC:

° **Ballarat North** Midlands Golf Club, Heinz Lane, Second Wednesday each month 12.30-2pm (Info: Kevin 5332 1697).

° **Bendigo** Boundary Hotel November 19 "Being an Editor!" Marcelle Mogg (Info: Helen 0409 212 009).

° **Clayton** The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm September 9 "Diocesan Councils: giving voice to the people of God" Fr Max Vidola (Info: Jo 9807 1912).

° **Colac** The Union Club Hotel October 3 "Lighthouse Ministry" Tanya Widdicombe (Info: Winsome 5235 3203).

° **Collingwood** The Vine Hotel, Wellington St, 8pm-9.30pm (Info: April 9327 4433)

° **Echuca – The Power of my story** The Harvest Hotel November 25 Morag Fraser & Fred Schultz (Info: Carmel 5482 1342).

° **Heidelberg** Tower Hotel, Alphington, 8pm-9.30pm October 15 "Revelation" Speakers: tba (Info: Susie 9859 6184).

° **Mordialloc** The Kingston Club, 7.30pm-9pm October 22 "The Role of the Media in our Lives" Marcelle Mogg & Martin Flanagan (Info: Maria 9579 4255).

° **Mornington** The Royal Hotel, Victoriana Room, 770 The Esplanade, 8pm-9.30pm September 24 "Dealing with Grief: What happens when we are confronted with death of loved ones and other losses?" tba (Info: Colleen 9775 2163 or Carole 5976 1024).

Other States

° **Devonport (TAS) – Spirituality in the Workplace** Molly Malone's Irish Pub, (Info: Graham 6424 8286).

° **Hobart North** The Mustard Pot Hotel Moonah (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 September 23 "Towards Joy – The Power of Forgiveness" Patricia Michalka & Michael Dillon (Info: Andrew 0422 305 742).

° **Macclesfield (SA)** Three Brothers Arms, Venables Street October 7 "Writing a Life" Lolo Houbein & Eva Sallis (Info: Michael 8388 9265).

° **The Talking MIX** on tape. Annual subscription \$40 (Info: 02 9816 4262).

Other Matters and Events

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

° **Eremos Institute** Bishop Spong Lecture October 15 7.30pm, UTS, Lindfield (Info: Kate 9683 5096).

° **Stephanie Dowrick – Day of Spiritual Encouragement & Renewal** October 19 9.30-5, Naamaroo Conference Centre, Chatswood West (Info: Alexandra 9958 4402).

° **St Mary's Towers Retreat Centre**, Douglas Park Sept 26-Oct 2 guided retreat "Centred in love: themes from St John of the Cross"; Oct 3-11 Life's Healing Journey; Oct 17-23 Spirituality of Ageing; Oct 31-Nov 6 guided retreat "Receiving God's Gifts" (Info: 02 4630 9159).

° **Mount St Benedict Centre** Pennant Hills September 27 – October 3 "Arise and Come Away" (Info: 9484 6208).

° **Catholic Institute of Sydney** "Augustine's 'The Confessions'" October 15 – November 12 (Info: 9752 9500).

CATALYST AUDIO TAPES

Archbishop George Pell:
"Vatican II: Unfinished Business?"
and
Gerald O'Collins SJ:
"Easter Faith"

Cost: \$10 including postage.
Catalyst for Renewal
PO Box 139
Gladesville NSW 1675

Recommended

Roberta C Bondi, *Memories of God: Theological Reflections on a Life*, Abingdon Press, 1995, 205 pages, hb, available on Amazon.com for \$US11.90 + postage.

Roberta Bondi is a graduate of Oxford University and is Professor of Church History at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, in Atlanta, Georgia. She brings a depth of scholarship to a popular style of writing. This was already evident in her two earlier very fine little books, *To Love as God Loves: Conversations with the Early Church* (1987) and *To Pray and to Love: Conversations on Prayer with the Early Church* (1991). Bondi comes out of a strongly evangelical tradition to discover the riches of the great spiritual writers – especially the Desert Fathers. Her evident delight and freedom in this discovery is infectious and will remind Catholics of a tradition they too frequently ignore. In *Memories of God*, Bondi uses the art of storytelling to bring the reader through some of the more common demons we face in our attempts to be Christians today, to a gracious and liberating encounter with the God of Jesus Christ revealed in the Gospels and, paradoxically, in and through some of those darker human encounters. This book is personal and — in the beginning at least — deceptively simple and ordinary. The reader is encouraged to proceed carefully and with a listening heart – as St Benedict would advise. Both men and women will find this gentle book deep and hope-filled. It would make a lovely gift.

Raymond A Schroth SJ, *Dante to Dead Man Walking: One Reader's Journey Through the Christian Classics*, Loyola Press, 2001, 242 pages, annotated bibliography, pb, available from John Garratt Publishing for \$37.95 – Tel: 1300 650 878.

One of the pleasing and necessary developments of recent years has been a renewed interest in the classics of the tradition. Renewal in the present requires an honest and realistic openness to both the past and the future. In this book we encounter familiar people, like St Augustine, Thomas à Kempis and Thérèse of Lisieux; we also encounter literary creations, such as those of Graham Greene and Shusaku Endo, Willa Cather and Flannery O'Connor. The fifty chapters are brief, readable and informative. Schroth not only offers a thumbnail sketch of many people significant to Christian history, he variously delights, surprises, challenges and affronts the reader with those whom he presents. He notes at the beginning of this book: "My definition of *spiritual* is broad. The books that follow are spiritual classics in that, with the exception of a few published within the last decade, they have worked their magic on centuries and generations of readers. They speak to the human spirit, to that divine gift by which we transcend the limitations imposed by our self-absorption, our narrow-mindedness, and our moral cowardice." Schroth opens doors, doors to ancient wisdom and contemporary insight. This book is both challenging and enjoyable.

Anthony J Gittins, *A Presence that Disturbs: A Call to Radical Discipleship*, St Pauls, 2002, 171 pages, endnotes, pb, \$27.95.

Fr Gittins draws on the pioneering work of Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist, Viktor Frankl, to sustain a practical and insightful reading of the Gospels. Frankl's logotherapy promotes three principles for living: "To live you must choose; to love you must encounter; to grow you must suffer." Although the seven chapters of this book grew out of different pastoral experiences, there is a coherence and development that leads to depth. The pastoral roots of the material also ensure that the book never loses touch with human experience. As the title suggests – *A Presence that Disturbs* – this book focuses on the living God. It also assumes that the "Christendom" of a bygone era has not endured – it has, in fact, died the death. The road ahead is not going to be found through anxious restorationism or cynical and despairing deconstructionism. God is with us – what say we? Gittins writes: "Every authentic religious epiphany or encounter, every true experience of God in whatever form, makes a person less insular, less complacent, and less isolated – and more restless, more inspired and more engaged with the world and humanity." This book issues – in contemporary format and with contemporary references – the age-old call: Stop the evasions and pretenses, open yourself to the living God and generously embrace what comes of that.

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