



THE MIX



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Our Say – Reactions and responses

In 1985, Bishop Augustine Harris, a retired bishop from England, visited Australia. He shared with a group of us one of his biggest frustrations. He said people would often demand that he sort things out. They would write letters, for example, complaining about this one or that thing. He said he had a terrible time trying to get these people to enter into conversation with him and/or those they complained about. His job, according to them, was simply to fix it! After all, was that not his role as bishop?

The bishop cited an example that is at once amusing, sad and very instructive. A point of common complaint was the changes in the Mass. "Why don't we still say Mass as Jesus gave it to us?" To which Bishop Harris made an obvious reply: "You mean reclining in the upper room, speaking in Aramaic, with only men present?"

We are all faced, at different times and in different ways, with the uncontrollable. Living is like that, and the Christian story is about living.

Life is not what happens to us but how we respond. Bishop Harris was inviting a considered response from people who could not or would not move beyond their reactions.

Bishop Harris was, in fact, acting according to the paradigm suggested by Pope Paul VI in his first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964). Pope Paul spoke of our lives unfolding within *colloquium salutis*, "the conversation of salvation". This "conversation" sets the pattern for the whole of our living. By implication, it sets the pattern for the way we handle the challenges of life, such as change within the Church.

It is not surprising that the bishop experienced frustration in trying to engage his people in good conversation. If we human beings can frustrate God in this pattern – and we are doing it all the time – we will not think twice about frustrating a bishop!

Without doubt, by far the greater majority of our Australian bishops are of

a similar mind to Bishop Harris. They seek to serve in the spirit of mutuality and conversation. They invite their people to move beyond mere reactions into thoughtful responses governed by the person and teaching of Jesus and the circumstances at hand.

It must also be said, however, that not all our bishops are of this mind. In fact, there are a few who are authoritarian and even bullying in their style. Since they hold the systemic power, their people find themselves frustrated, as Bishop Harris was frustrated in his expectations.

Such frustration can give rise to the rage of impotence. This rage may be a healthy reaction, but it is not a healthy response. We must be careful we are not seduced into words and actions that are more about "winning" than promoting the Kingdom. The media loves us to merely react. The authoritarian reactions and bullying of the person in charge demand a thoughtful and faith-filled response. "The conversation of salvation" must set the context. ■

This journal is one of the works of
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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. Names must be supplied though, for good reason, the Editor may publish a submitted text without the writer's name being made public. 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 Clarice Cummins. I was born in 1933, the eldest of four children.

My mother and her German mother were the main influences in my childhood. They gave me a love of music, singing, family and a flair for cooking.

My teenage years were influenced by the Sisters of Mercy. I greatly admired the Irish Sisters for leaving home and country, never expecting to see their loved ones again.

When I entered the Sisters of Mercy in 1951, my mother was concerned that I'd become a lay Sister, because of my love of cooking.

For my part, I was amazed to find that many of my companions could not cook, and showed no desire to learn.

During my postulancy and novitiate, I often expressed doubts as to my vocation. The Novice Mistress simply said, 'Feelings don't count'.

After the Novitiate, I trained as a teacher. I enjoyed teaching and choir work with children.

When the time drew near to my making Final Vows, I wrote to a priest who'd given a retreat. He replied that God would give me a vocation if I didn't have one, when I made Final Vows.

The greatest sacrifice for me was knowing I'd never have children. I knew how babies were conceived, but I had no idea that sexual intercourse gave emotional and physical pleasure to husband and wife. I was in my early thirties before I realised this.

Vatican II was held in the 1960s. I discovered that the religious habit I wore was never meant to be a penance.

Imagine what it was like being clothed in three widths of black serge, as well as having one's head swathed in starched linen, in temperatures that often reached 100 degrees Fahrenheit! – or more, in the Outback's summer!

My health began to deteriorate. I therefore took twelve months' leave from the Sisters.

I'd spent nearly twenty-four years in religious life, most of them in the Outback. My cooking skills had been put to good use in the smaller communities during this time, as well as my teaching.

I left with \$600 in my pocket. An appointment had been arranged by the Mercy Sisters with the Brigidine Sisters at St Ives, for me to be interviewed for a teaching position.

I did not accept the employment offered, but joined the staff at St Joseph's, Belmore, thanks to my cousin, who was already teaching there.

Sister Imelda, a Brown Josephite nun, was the Principal and the kindest Sister I've ever met, especially if one were ill.

I can recall whilst a Mercy Sister, being sent to school when I had the mumps, my Superior saying that the coif would hide the jaw swellings.

I can also recall having a tooth extracted by the Flying Doctor at Wilcannia, Aboriginal people waiting for medical and dental care.

In December 1975, I signed papers annulling my Vows. I married in 1979, fell pregnant but miscarried.

During the last four years of my marriage, I studied part-time to upgrade my teaching qualifications. I gained my B.Ed just one week before my husband's sudden death.

In 1992 I remarried and retired from teaching in 1994. Being retired and still breathing is great! I've joined St Patrick's Chorale and the Sydney U3A choir. I'm very grateful that I still have the ability to sing.

I owe a great deal to my family members, who have supported me in so many ways during my life.

From events I witnessed while teaching in the bush, I came to realise that our diocesan priests should not be compelled to be celibate.

I believe the Orthodox Church has the right idea: celibacy for monks and marriage before Ordination for parochial clergy.

I hope and pray for the future of the Church. I pray that the next Pope will have a spirit akin to the late Bishop John Heaps and Pope John 23rd.

This would mean that changes would take place which would further God's Kingdom on earth.



Clarice Cummins

Your Say – The ‘primacy of conscience’ question

François Kunc

The following is the text of the opening remarks by François Kunc at the Catalyst for Renewal Forum for the Future, focusing on conscience, held at St Patrick’s Church (Sydney) 5 August 2004. The speakers were Liz Hepburn IBVM and Andrew Hamilton SJ.

In 1961, the future Archbishop of Hobart, then Father Eric D’Arcy, published his book *Conscience and its Right to Freedom*. In the same year, Hans Küng published *The Council, Reform and Reunion* in anticipation of the commencement of the Second Vatican Council.

In his book, Küng identified a list of issues under the heading “Catholic steps towards positive fulfilment of the valid demands of the Reformers” in talking of what he described as “genuine Catholic renewal”.

This list included “a growing understanding in moral theology of the claims of the individual conscience (also expressed in the canonisation of Joan of Arc) and of the ever-varying situation of the individual”.

Sure enough, the theme of conscience went on to play an important part in a number of the conciliar documents, perhaps most famously in the *Declaration on Religious Liberty*.

Writing immediately after the Council in 1966, Karl Rahner SJ gave a privileged place to conscience in his vision of the implementation of the Council itself:

It is up to us, each one of us, each of us in the ordinariness of our lives and in the last single decision of conscience, to accomplish the meaning of the Council in the royal freedom of the children of God” (*The Church after the Council*).

Two years later, in 1968, the incipient lines became firmly drawn with the publication of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. In that year, Bishop Christopher Butler (probably the most able theologian of the English Council fathers) wrote a little book entitled *In the Light of the Council*. He devoted two chapters to the question of conscience, the titles of which identified the critical points around which the debate has since flowed: “responsible freedom” and “conscience and authority”.

By 1968 Bishop Butler was able to write:

At the present time, the rights of conscience on the one hand, and the claims of authority on the other, are being canvassed with unparalleled vehemence amongst us. What I find unfortunate is the exaggerations which emanate from both sides of the debate, and the assumption, so dangerously gaining ground, that conscience and

authority are conflicting notions, so that one can only flourish at the expense of the other” (p 100).

The debate has bubbled away since then... Here in Sydney, at Catalyst for Renewal’s Vatican II Conference in 2002, Bishop Geoffrey Robinson’s presentation was entitled, “Conscience – doing the right thing and taking responsibility for it”.

Then, between 2002 and 2004, Cardinal George Pell, in a series of speeches – most notably to Catalyst’s Bishop’s Forum last year on 30 May 2003 – has articulated his own strongly held views on the place of conscience in contemporary Catholic moral life and, in particular, that what is generally referred to as “primacy of conscience” should play no part in it.

Cardinal Pell’s speeches have drawn responses from, among others, Andrew Hamilton SJ in *Eureka Street*, Father Frank Brennan SJ in a speech at the Australian Catholic University on 10 June 2004 and a strong critique by (formerly Father) Paul Collins in his recently published book, *Between the Rock and a Hard Place – Being Catholic Today*.

The issue [regarding conscience] is about something that is central to our identity as Catholic Christians today.

St Bernard of Clairvaux wrote that “on the one hand truth, on the other hand blindness, give the soul its sincerity”. Claims and assertions of truth and blindness, expressed in varying degrees of civility, seem to have characterised Catholic talk about conscience, not just in Australia, from at least the time of the Council.

I suggest that the issue has aroused such local interest, especially in the last couple of years, because it is about something that is central to our identity as Catholic Christians today.

Morris West wrote that “once you accept the existence of God – however you define him, however you explain your relationship to him – then you are caught forever with his presence in the centre of all things” (*The Clowns of God*).

For any serious Catholic, engagement with conscience is engagement with the

presence of God in the centre of our lives and therefore our decision-making.

“Our boast”, said St. Augustine, “is this: the testimony of our conscience”.

In trying to follow the debate, I have been greatly assisted by a book on conscience in the Catholic tradition written by Dr Linda Hogan, of Trinity College, Dublin. In trying to contextualise any discussion of conscience, I think her analysis is very helpful to bear in mind:

The Catholic approach to conscience is deeply ambiguous. On the one hand conscience is regarded as the most fundamental and directly personal way that the individual apprehends moral goodness and truth. The Church’s constant but little publicised teaching is that conscience must be obeyed. However, there is also an expectation that the judgments of conscience will be in agreement with the Church’s teachings.

As a result there is an immediate and inevitable tension between conscience and the other moral authorities in Catholicism. (*Confronting the Truth: Conscience in the Catholic Tradition*).

What has been happening over the last two or three years in Australia bears out the accuracy of Dr Hogan’s analysis.

The editor of the *Cathnews* website suggested a couple of months ago that “some might argue that this has been the most interesting, stimulating, and possibly invigorating debate to go on in the Catholic church in Australia for more than 40 years” (“Cardinal’s ‘Primacy of Conscience’ comments still drawing flack”).

I think there is much truth in that. However, in the view of *Catalyst for Renewal*, it is a debate which must be conducted as a mutually enriching conversation.

On 21 April 2004, in launching the book, *Faith and Reason: Friends or Foes in the New Millennium?*, Cardinal Pell referred to the re-run of a debate between Professors J J C Smart and John Haldane in their best-selling book, *Atheism and Theism*. His Eminence remarked that “this is the sort of intelligent and respectful debate between people of widely diverging views that we used to find in Catholic circles, and that we so much need again today”.

Catalyst endorses that comment and offers an example of exactly that kind of intelligent and respectful conversation which the Cardinal rightly says we need. ■

Essay – Toward an understanding of sexuality

by Angela Ryan CSB

The following is much of the presentation given at the Catalyst Dinner of July 23, 2004 by Sister Angela Ryan CSB, Executive Officer of the National Committee for Professional Standards. The complete text with notes may be obtained from the Editor (send SSA envelope).

It probably seems a strange choice to ask a celibate religious to address this topic and also someone who is currently involved in walking with many whose understanding of sexuality has been tarnished in their early years and who are left with the serious consequences of sexual abuse.

Let me begin with my own experience – I am the oldest of five girls and the last two were born during my secondary school years. While I do not recall all the details, I obviously was given a very healthy sense of the area of sexuality involving God's creative gift to my mother and father and that the new life was a real blessing and we thanked God for his gift. So strong was my positive sense that in my last year in school I asked one of the nuns, 'Where is the sin in all this sexuality stuff?' I forget the answer, but my impression was that it was not right when the sexual act was performed out of wedlock. I do not think that I ever received the impression that sex was bad or dirty, only wrong in some circumstances and I think this is a different perception.

Admittedly, it was a very immature sense of sexuality, but it allowed me to enjoy the company of boys and young men with the freedom of shared interests. I attended the local boys' school as the only girl in the Applied Mathematics class with a simplicity of shared interests and without any concerns about attracting them or any thought of being attractive to them, and I had little or no sense of the wider scope of sexuality.

Anyway, I was going to enter the Convent and I was not married, so sex was not an issue to me. Also, when as a teenage girl it was necessary to claim a 'boyfriend', my interest was in a young man 6 or 7 years older than I was, with whom I shared many of my interests and whose company and conversation I enjoyed. As an aside, the novice mistress eventually told my father to stop giving me news of this young man in his letters!

How different was my introduction to the understanding of sexuality from that of those with whom I walk, those who have been sexually abused as children and especially when that abuse was perpetrated

by a priest, brother or sister from the church. They are aware that something is not right – the constant expressions are that they are the ones who feel dirty, guilty or bad.

Introduction to sex in this way destroys any sense of the sacred and destroys trust in people and generally creates an abhorrence for church. On-going contact and dialogue with a number of these who have been abused within church reveals that they possess a deep search for spirituality, not for church.

Often people in deeper conversation will speak of being 'violated' and the strength of expressions such as this may well be touching on the loss of the sense of the sacred in their sexuality. They seem never to be able to capture what was lost in their youth and will speak differently of sexuality and of sexual activity from those for whom there is love, trust and fulfillment. The sad part is that there are so many people in the world who are sexually abused by those whom they trust, in family, in church or in society.

... "complementarity of the feminine and the masculine is more fruitful for all."

Donald Goergen in *The Sexual Celibate* raises the question of what it means to be a sexual person. He states that it means 'being first a person; then it means being affective, genital, feminine, masculine, heterosexual, homosexual, attractive and relational. Being celibate... is not a question of uprooting sexuality but of being sexual in a different way'.

For me, and I am sure for many in religious life some years ago, my exploration of sexuality and any connection between the sexual and the sacred took a backwards leap in the Novitiate and early years in community. We were not to be concerned about ourselves as persons, we were to subordinate that to the group. At the time when we should have been developing a strong and flexible self-identity and establishing firm self-delineation, the opposite was happening. It was wrong to be 'singular', to be different. ...

As for relationships called 'particular friendships' they were truly bad. Little did I think that the novice mistress was talking about lesbianism. I thought that if I was especially friendly to one, it meant that I was lacking in charity to the other. Also,

being clothed in yards of black material destroyed any sense of being 'feminine, heterosexual, homosexual or attractive'. And being so busy and so bent on 'being perfect' left no opportunity to be 'affective or relational'. Let me say that it was not only the human and the sexual that went backwards for me at this time, it was also prayer, because we lived in a time when one type of prayer was thought to be right for all of us.

Many things have happened in my life since the Novitiate years. As I reflect, the search to be a person was central, as was the need to understand what it means to live a full and creative life as a celibate person.

Being male or female is intrinsic to our humanity and our sexuality. There are associated cultural and personality traits and stereotypes and, at different stages, we explore the implications of these for ourselves in our own lives.

At one time I was influenced by the movement Women and the Australian Church, which gave me a new way of looking at Scripture and prayer from a feminine perspective and a heightened consciousness of the male focus in our church and in society. This consciousness of the maleness of the church was profoundly tempered about fifteen years ago by the words of a clerical religious who spoke of the deep sense of aloneness and sadness he felt as a celebrant of the Eucharist at that time. I came to see that a feminism which seeks for domination is no answer for any of us. The complementarity of the feminine and the masculine as expressed in the study, 'Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus', is more fruitful for all.

For each of us, it is a life-long process to develop this balance of the masculine and the feminine characteristics. Currently, as part of the supervision in my work, I am being encouraged to develop more feminine aspects and to learn to acknowledge my feelings and thus to be more fully human, to be freer and more able to express love and to reach out to others in love and with compassion. Our Brigidine motto is *Fortiter et Suaviter*, one translation being *Strength and Gentleness*, and thus our goal is to be at once both strong and gentle in all our interactions.

One part of my awareness of myself as a sexual and relational person came from the opportunity to attend workshops on both the Enneagram and the Myers Briggs Personality Profiles. This gives me

a realisation that we all think and respond to situations differently. It was right to be different and I gained a sense of myself as a person with a full range of different perceptions and responses and an appreciation of others as being themselves. There was a richness in this mosaic of people, each of whom reflected some aspects of the Gospel and of the infinite depths of God.

One aspect of human sexuality is our genital sexuality and our acceptance of all that this implies. As a scientist I marvel at the wonder of creation and the intricacy of creation highlighted in the human person, in all the functioning of the human body and especially in the beauty and love of the male and female in bringing a new life to birth. The questions and the thoughts can be profound. For example: What does it mean to be made in the image of God? Then, how can humanity, sexuality, life be anything but good? God has made us human, woman or man, loving, creative and free.

It was my father who reflected for me a major change in the Catholic teaching and an acceptance of the sense and understanding that was strong and integral to Catholic people. Having studied the documents of Vatican II, my father said to me, 'Dear, the most significant statement in all the documents is in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. There it states that 'Marriage to be sure is not instituted solely for procreation' and this statement is coupled with a repeated emphasis in the same chapter on the centrality of conjugal love.'

This goes counter to the consistent message that had been received within the Church, that genital sexuality is necessary for procreation and not more, and the general message that sex is somehow connected with sinfulness and with guilt

The natural human urge for a genital expression of sexuality was brought home to me very starkly a number of years ago during a nurse's strike at Kew Cottages, an institution for those with severe mental disabilities. After school several members of the community and the school staff answered a call for help. It was a very confronting experience as we spent time locked in the unit with the men with severe emotional and psychological disabilities for recreation, at the evening meal and in toileting and settling to bed. At the end of the evening I found a number of the men were groping at me and struggling with me, looking for a genital expression of sexuality despite the fact that I was head to toe in black material! Fortunately there were senior boys from a grammar school who saw the situation and came to my rescue.

This opened my mind to many of the issues related to what are the rights and the needs for genital sex for men and women who have mental disabilities. How does society balance their rights and needs with the potential for reproduction and the rights and responsibilities for any children? I have never fully resolved this for myself and note with concern articles in the news at times where people take one or other side of this question in a very self-righteous way.

It was in the area of coming towards an understanding of genital sexuality that proved very difficult for me. Questions about 'what I had given up' were highlighted when my sisters were having children, when friends from within the community were leaving, when religious life was changing and losing its security, when University studies involved new friends and relationships. This was part of a lonely and difficult search to find meaning and a real sense of the human for me. It was a challenge and more so because there were very few people with whom I felt comfortable to talk about the questions that were very confrontative.

At this same time and in the unconscious need for someone to listen, I was searching for and struggling with the affective aspects of sexuality. Carroll and Dyckman in *Chaos or Creation* suggest that 'the most basic human need is for intimacy...'

"It was my father who reflected for me a major change in Catholic teaching..."

One of the current challenges in church and in society is the need for an appropriate response to the intimacy of homosexual couples. There would appear to have been a movement from denial and rejection towards a pastoral and private recognition of the fact that 'responsible intimacy is an important part of maturing for the homosexual Christian ... with the need for planning of pastoral conferences on the topic ... (and) the scheduling of retreats for gay and lesbian Christians'.

There is a growing awareness for me to respect the sexual orientation of others and I am conscious, for example, that in my time on our Provincial Council, I did not always consciously take this into account in the formation of communities in the Province, in the way that I have been asked to work with many congregations at this present time.

Current trivialisation of the meaning of intimacy was evident in a paragraph in the Sunday Telegraph headed, "Internet Intimacy", stating that '... almost one third of people in NSW have dated someone they met online and two thirds of us know someone who's done it'. I wonder how and by what age our young people today will come to a mature understanding of intimacy.

Reflection on my own growth in intimacy as a celibate religious covers community life, ministry and my personal life. Sean Sammon says that 'community is not a family, not a therapeutic community but a group of adults who have come together to live the Gospel'. It is where Heinz Kohut's three needs of adults — validation, affirmation and connectedness — can be met.

I believe that I have found this within my religious community. It has been, in general, a very positive experience for me and has been part of my development towards an understanding of sexuality, but community has not fully satisfied the search for intimacy.

Turning to ministry, I would define my relationships as professional. In many cases there were positive professional friendships and there have been very rare glimpses of partial intimacy. I hope that I have been able to act with respect for the dignity and worth of each person with whom I have walked life's journey, either as a co-worker or in a role of pastoral ministry.

I have resonated with the principle enunciated in *Integrity in Ministry*, a Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia:

It is healthy for religious and clergy to develop relationships beyond those of their pastoral relationships wherever that is possible, so that pastoral relationships do not bear the burden of providing affirmation and affective support to the minister.

At the personal level the opportunity for intimacy in relationships has presented itself at different times. There have been and are people with whom I can be fully myself and who share with me at the same level. Some are within my own Congregation, some in other Congregations and some who have no connection with religious life.

The honesty, the challenges, the new perspectives gained from these regular or intermittent interactions have enriched my life and opened me to freedom and love. They have touched me at the core of my being, touched the sacred place in me as person. They have touched me variously as human, woman, religious, as an affective, sexual and sacred person. As a result I see myself growing towards wholeness and with a deep inner peace. ■

Words for a Pilgrim People

"You created my inmost self, knit me together in my mother's womb. For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders." (Psalm 139:13-14)

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*"The glory of God is a living human being; and the life of the human being is the vision of God. For if the manifestation of God in creation gives life to all who live on earth, much more does the revelation of the Father through the Word bestow life on those who see God". (St Irenaeus of Lyons, **Against the Heresies**, 4,20,7).*

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*"It may seem a somewhat startling leap to make, but to the great spiritual masters of the undivided Church, the revealed doctrine of man as having been made in the image of God universally inspires this feeling of glad recognition. They go on, in fact, to take it seriously for what it claims to be, a long-lost memory of their true selves, and from that all the rest they have to say follows. Their doctrine is concerned to arouse in their disciples a sense of the implications of a memory they believe could not have been initially reawakened without a divine intervention." (Aelred Squire, **Asking the Fathers**, SPCK, 1973, 15.)*

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*(The Cambridge historian, Eamon Duffy, reflects here on his personal experience of recovered faith after a deep spiritual crisis:) "There was no miraculous conviction. Perplexities and pain remained. I had and I have fewer certainties than before, and there are many areas of the faith that I gratefully and wholeheartedly accept which are opaque to me, like the idea of life after death. But now I know that faith is a direction, not a state of mind; states of mind change and veer about, but we can hold a direction. It is not in its essence a set of beliefs about anything, though it involves such beliefs. It is a loving and grateful openness to the gift of being." (A talk given at Great St. Mary's Cambridge on 19 February 1985 as part of the teach-in for members of the university and published in **New Blackfriars**, 66 [1985], pp.208-216.)*

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Chapter 17 of Luke's Gospel contains a cryptic reference to an interchange between "the apostles" and Jesus. They ask Jesus: "Increase our faith". Luke then says: "The Lord replied, 'If you had faith like a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it would obey you'" (17:5-6. This echoes similar references in Matthew 17:20 & 21:21; Mark 11:23.) On the face of it, Jesus seems not to have heard their request or at least not addressed it. In fact, Jesus invites his followers into a remarkable vision.

The reader is forced to wonder about this thing called "faith". The question seems to imply that faith is a means to an end, that a strong faith is in fact a way of making things happen in accord with our wishes (and of course our wishes are the same as God's wishes). Understood in this way, faith would be something that I could "possess" or "have", much as I have intelligence or know-how or some other personal ability. Jesus' response suggests they are asking the wrong question or perhaps asking the question on the basis of wrong assumptions. Jesus points to a whole new way of being.

Faith is knowing in your bones that the promise, "I am with you", is being fulfilled in every moment; it is knowing in your heart that you are loved with an everlasting love; it is knowing in your guts that, despite evidence to the contrary, Life, Love, Goodness and Truth will win out. Faith is seeing the deeper logic and laws that are unknown to the human mind; it is a consciousness that allows us to turn up for life each day with the conviction that it is worth it. Faith is being present to the creation of the world now.

The request, "Increase our faith", may be reasonably understood as one of those times when the disciples did not know what they were actually saying. In effect they were asking, not for some instrumentality that would help them get the job done, but for a whole new way of being. The request might be understood: "Lord, open our minds and our hearts; may we begin to awaken to the stirrings of the God-life deep within our beings, the divine traces of our origins; may we become aware of the calling that is ours, that we are called to be as you are, heirs of the divine life through your mighty Spirit." This is a faith that engenders hope. It is also the place from which authentic charity is born. ■

Faith is knowing in your bones that the promise, "I am with you", is being fulfilled in every moment

The Tradition – Divinization

One of the most significant themes of the tradition has almost slipped out of our awareness in the West. It is the theme of the divine destiny of the human person. The early Fathers used the Greek word *Theosis* to describe it. The nearest English word is a clumsy one, divinization. The belief is that human beings, by the grace of God, become like their Creator, divine. It is difficult to even find any references to this teaching in the history of Western spirituality. It is, however, a prominent theme in the East. In the West, the emphasis on rational analysis and right behaviour, accompanied by a suppression of the mystical element in our tradition, has left Western Christianity in a seriously debilitated condition. Nothing short of a wholesale recovery of the mystical heart of our faith can redress this situation.

"The human being is an animal that has received the vocation to become God."

When Gregory of Nazianzus (330-390) was preaching the eulogy at the funeral of his friend Basil of Caesarea (330-379), he quoted Basil himself: "The human being is an animal that has received the vocation to become God". Basil's brother, Gregory of Nyssa (335-395), says this of our human vocation: "If humanity is called to life in order to share in the divine nature, it must have been suitably constituted for the purpose". While Gregory is keen to affirm human nature in this process of divinization, Irenaeus of Lyons (c 140-c 202) wishes to affirm the essential role of Jesus Christ and the Incarnation: "The Son of God was made human so that human beings might become sons of God".

The monastic guides encourage us to seek an honest self-awareness. In true self-knowledge we will know both our need for God and God's liberating mercy. ■

Jesuit Communication Centre, Ireland, *Sacred Space. The Prayer Book 2005*. John Garratt Publishing, 2004, 374 pages, pb, \$24.95.

It is highly likely that *The Mix* readers are familiar with the Irish Jesuit website "Sacred Space". This site (www.jesuit.ie/prayer/) has assisted many wanting and seeking a daily spiritual focus for their lives. This current book will now also assist those who do not have internet access and who also want something more than the newspapers to give their daily lives meaning. With this small book the Jesuits have provided a wonderful text that will suit all people who want to pray under guidance and to do so daily. The method provided here is simple and effective. The reader is invited to devote a little time daily to contemplate and pray. There is first a thought for the week, something to mull over all week. Then we are given six focus points to be taken up: The presence of God; Freedom; Consciousness; The Word; Conversation; Conclusion. The Word is an extract from the Church's reading of the day; sometimes this is the Gospel, at other times it is the Hebrew Scripture reading. The five other focus points are integral to the prayer and so the text leads the reader beyond the saying (praying) of words to a much deeper understanding of the sacred in our daily lives. This is a book for all people who want guidance in their prayer life and who want to come to a fuller understanding of the relevance of scripture to our times. It begins with the new liturgical year, so get it before 28 November.

Paul Collins, *Between the Rock and a Hard Place. Being a Catholic Today*, ABC Books, 2004, 243 pages, pb, \$29.95.

The rock is a symbol of steadfastness, immobility, and hardness. The rock is also the symbol of the Church, and when one is caught between the rock and a hard place, where does one go? Paul Collins continues his many writings on the contemporary Church with humour and a fair amount of personal feeling. He has, after all, been a priest actively striving for change; he now continues the attempt to bring about change in the Church that he loves. This is far from being an angry book. Paul makes clear that he intends staying in the Church and gives his reasons for this. He provides his own insights into the current Australian Church in particular, looks at what he describes as the Catholic imagination, ecology, and a critical assessment of fundamentalism. Within these chapters he also narrates many personal stories to capture the imagination. He is never bitter, although always critical of what he sees as shortcomings. This is an easy read; the language is engaging and the generalisations have enough truth in them to have readers agree, knowing that there will be others who will claim that he gets too personal at times. There is, too, a good deal of theology, and it is to the writer's credit that he can make it so clear. Despite what he sees as the problems, Paul has great hope for this Church; he takes the long view and he is fundamentally an optimist. *Mix* readers would have liked him to have included *Catalyst for Renewal* in the Index, as he does quote from some of its activities.

Edward Clancy, *Walk Worthy of Your Vocation. A Spiritual Journey with St. Paul*. St Paul Publications, 2004, 95 pages, \$15.

Cardinals are often perceived as Church rulers, or perhaps as liturgical figure rather than, as in the case of the current author, scholars. This small book is the second by the recently retired Cardinal of Sydney, Edward Clancy. It is meant as a popular way into Paul's faith journey rather than as a deep study of his theology. It is a book of reflections on selected texts and has a focus on Paul's belief in Christ, the one whom he had been persecuting and the one whom he preached to the Gentiles after the Damascus conversion. Paul came to understand that he had been persecuting Christ. The Cardinal then traces Paul's journey of awareness and his deep faith and conviction as he made amends for his past actions. Throughout the text there are references to and reflections on Paul's letters. At times the focus is on the power and significance of individual words; at times the focus is on a concept, "mystery" for example; at times the focus shifts to the gifts of the Spirit. At all times the central theme of journey and the pursuit of holiness are before the reader. The 'vocation' of the title is one of holiness, to which we are all called. The reader is given the opportunity to reflect on some of the longer Pauline passages that are used as well as being encouraged to follow the text's ten short chapters. This is a book for reflection: on Paul himself, on conversion to Christ, on faith, on journey, and especially on holiness in our daily lives.

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CONVERSATION**

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LUMEN GENTIUM: 1964-2004

At the end of the Third Session of the Second Vatican Council, in November 1964, "The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" was published. Different words and images are used in this document to describe the Church, reminding us that it is a mystery and defies any final definition. However, a concept that has gained particular strength over the past forty years is that of "communion". The Church is "established by Christ as a communion of life, charity and truth" (#9). The word "communion" is used in this sense more than 20 times in the document. In an Appendix it is stated: "*Communion* is a notion which is held in high honor in the ancient Church (and also today, especially in the East). However, it is not understood as some kind of vague *disposition*, but as an *organic reality* which requires a juridical form and is animated by charity". Pope John Paul II, in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001), observes: "The domain of communion (koinonia), ... embodies and reveals the very essence of the mystery of the Church" (#42). Again: "To make the Church the home and the school of communion: that is the great challenge facing us in the millennium which is now beginning, if we wish to be faithful to God's plan and respond to the world's deepest yearnings. ... we need to promote a spirituality of communion, making it the guiding principle of education wherever individuals and Christians are formed, wherever ministers of the altar, consecrated persons, and pastoral workers are trained, wherever families and communities are being built up" (#43).

Michael Whelan SM

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>

NSW and ACT – 7.30-9.00pm unless specified:

° **Albury** New Albury Hotel, Kiewa St October 12 “Managing Risk” John Tudor & tba (Info: Joan 6021 6880).

° **Armidale** Wicklow Hotel (Info: Jenny 6772 6516).

° **Ballina** Paddy McGinty’s Pub (Info: Anne anne@ballinacatholicchurch.org.au)

° **Bowral** The Grand Bar and Brasserie October 27 “Spirituality of Marriage” Judge George Palmer & Kelly Palmer (Info: Julian 4861 4649).

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

° **Canberra** – **Currently suspended** – awaiting the formation of a new committee. Anyone interested contact Terry as above.

° **Engadine** – Engadine RSL October 20 “Is poverty anyone’s fault?” Hugh Mackay (Info: Elizabeth 9520 0617 or Annette 9548 2475).

° **Five Dock** The Illinois Hotel, Cnr Parramatta Rd & Arlington St October 27 “A Seachange – A risk or a time of growth?” Peter Harrington & Robyn Johnson (Info: Susanna 9798 8071).

° **Goulburn** Soldiers Club November 9 “Restorative/Real Justice” Anne Burton & Barry Bell (Info: Tony 4822 2636).

° **Jamberoo** The Jamberoo Hotel November 8 “Intersecting Roads – Jewish/Christian Journeys” Susan Bures & Dr Marianne Dacy (Info: Gabrielle 4232 2735).

° **Kincumber** The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive November 9 Catalyst Dinner “What are our kids looking for?” Prof Charles Burford (Info: Clair 4333 7117 or Sue 4334 3174).

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

° **Newport** – Newport Arms Hotel October 28 “Acquisition & Materialism” Geraldine Doogue & Fr Michael Whelan (Info: Terry 9973 1192).

° **Northern Sydney** Union Hotel, Pacific Hwy & West St, North Sydney October 18 “Caring the Spirit” Michael Paxton & Catherine Hammond (Info: Michelle 9958 5963).

° **Paddington** Bellevue Hotel **Recommence 2005** (Info: Marea 9387 3152).

° **Penrith** Golf Club October 20 “Being Catholic Today” Martin Teulan & Wilga & Bill Casey (Info: Sue 9760 2324).

° **Rouse Hill** The Mean Fiddler on Windsor Rd November 9 “Creative Connections” tba (Info: Maria 9680 2220 (H))

° **Rydalmere** – Rydalmere Bowling Club “Search for the Sacred” (Info: Janice 9684 4109).

° **St George** Kings Head Tavern South Hurstville October 27 “God or Allah?” Sr Pauline Rae smsm & Stewart Mills (Info: Ken 9580 1183).

° **Waitara** – The Blue Gum Hotel October 20 “Where is: the Life we have lost in living? the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? the knowledge we have lost in information?” Patty Fawkner sgs & Monsignor Tony Doherty. (Info: Carmel 9477 4824).

VIC:

° **Ballarat** North Midlands Golf Club, Heinz Lane, Second Wednesday each month 12.00-2pm (Info: Kevin 5332 1697).

° **Bendigo** Boundary Hotel (Info: Helen 0409 212 009).

° **Clayton** The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm November 16 “Mixing Politics & Spirituality” Anna Burke & Bob Stensholt (Info: Jo 9807 1912).

° **Colac** Central Hotel-Motel (Info: Clare 5236 2091).

° **Darebin** Olympic Hotel, Cnr Bell & Albert Streets, Preston (Info: Gordon 9895 5836 & Margaret 9374 1844).

° **Echuca** The power of my story through the window of ... PW Bar at the Star Hotel November 23 (Info: Carmel 5482 1342).

° **Fitzroy** Pumphouse Hotel, 128 Nicholson St, 8pm-9.30pm (Info: Denise 9816 3001)

° **Goulburn Valley** Terminus Hotel (Shepparton) 7.30pm-9pm October 25 “Women in the Church – Patriarchy vs Equality” Mary Jo Fortuna & John Collins (Info: Kerry 0408 579 904).

° **Heidelberg** Tower Hotel, Alphington, 8pm-9.30pm October 13 “Jesuit Spirituality” Speakers from Campion House (Info: Susie 9859 6184).

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

° **Southern Finbar’s** Irish Pub, Cnr Bay & New Streets, Brighton, 7.30pm-9pm October 27 “Powerless in a Free Society: Living the pain & changing the focus” Bill Firman & Katharine Massam (Info: Kevin 9776 2705).

° **Western Victoria** on Hyde, Yarraville 7.30pm (Info: Anne 9312 3595).

° **Woodend** Holgate Brewhouse-Keatings Hotel, October 12 “Where does God walk with us?” John Stuart & Dianne Moore (Info: Marg 5429 5907).

Other States

° **Devonport (TAS)** Molly Malone’s Irish Pub, (Info: Graham 6424 8286).

° **Hobart** North Moonah Café Bar & Bistro November 11 “Spiritual Poetry & Music” (Info: Gwaine 6228 2679).

° **Brisbane (QLD)** – **Currently suspended** – awaiting the formation of a new committee. Anyone interested contact Terry above.

° **Perth (WA)** The Elephant and the Wheelbarrow, cnr Francis & Lake Sts, Northbridge 4th Tuesday of month 7.30-9.10pm (Info: Andrew 0422 305 742).

° **Adelaide (SA)** Criterion Hotel, 137 King William Street (Info: Michelle 8278 6353).

° **Mylor (SA)** Warramong Earth Sanctuary, Stock Rd November 2 tba (Info: Gerald 8388 5957).

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).

° **St Mary’s Towers Retreat Centre**, Douglas Park, Oct 15-17 Taize prayer weekend; Oct 20-26 Spirituality of Ageing; Nov 5-7 prayer weekend; Nov 15-21 guided retreat; Nov 24-Dec 2 directed retreat (Info: 02 4630 9159).

**Bishops Forum with
Bishop Chris Toohey
Thursday November 25, 2004,
6pm – 8 pm
Crypt of St Patrick’s
The Rocks
Entry by donation
Further information 9816 4262**