



# THE MIX



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## Our Say – The human rights movement

The French writer and Minister of Culture, André Malraux, declared some 40 years ago: “The twenty first century will be either religious or not be.” Some of the signs of the times might already suggest Malraux is right, though in ways that are, to some, quite disappointing. For example:

The re-emergence of religious discourse seems to have caught many of us on the hop: baffled, irritated and uncomprehending. For over 250 years, Western democratic thinking has argued, and even fought for, the secularization of the public domain and the political arena .... By the second half of the last century, indeed, one might have thought the battle was won .... What I see instead is a faltering, a loss of faith, in the whole Enlightenment project. (Sara Maitland, April 2004)

Both of the above references are given in “Religion and the Human Rights Movement,” by Jean-Paul Marthoz and Joseph Saunders. Their essay is part of “Human Rights Watch World Report

2005.” Implicit in the statements by Malraux and Maitland are some very serious questions that the essay helps to bring into focus. “This ‘new frontier’ (of human rights) is colliding with the ‘return of the religious’ in many societies,” Marthoz and Saunders claim.

The “re-emergence” of religion is a significant, complex and multilayered fact of our time. Another fact of our time is the similarly significant, complex and multilayered human rights movement. This movement has its roots in the Enlightenment and its concise formulation in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948. The UN called upon all member-countries to publicise the text of the Declaration and

to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or

territories.

Sadly, within the Catholic tradition, we have been slow to emphasize human rights. This is also ironic, because at the heart of the human rights movement is a belief in the dignity of the person. To that extent, it expresses the Gospel. We have, however, taken some substantial steps in the direction of explicitly and formally affirming human rights in recent times. A good example is Vatican II’s “Declaration on Religious Freedom.” We have also stopped thinking “error has no rights.”

Much work has yet to be done. The human rights movement may be represented by some in a way that is hostile to religion. On the other hand, religion may be represented by some in a way that is hostile to human rights. This does not have to be the case. The Church actually has a vested interest in the human rights movement prospering. The last thing we want is a false dichotomy, one in which the Church is perceived as opposing human rights. ■

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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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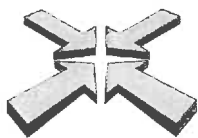
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The Four Arrows and the Cross symbolise diversity giving rise to communion in and through the Paschal Mystery. Those who are diverse by nature and culture, in and through Christ find life-giving unity.

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 Roy Rigotti. I was born in London in 1934, the only child of Francesco and Francesca Rigotti. My first language was Italian until I started school. My mother, who had received only four years of education, had a simple faith which sustained her throughout her life and it was she who faithfully took me to mass each week even through the months when the *blitz* was at its greatest intensity.

For some years, we attended High Mass at Westminster Cathedral where someone with his back to us muttered interminably in a foreign language, punctuated by the ringing of bells and clouds of incense smoke. Later we transferred to our parish church which was operating out of some rooms on the ground floor of a mansion because the church building had been destroyed by the bombing. There I was invited to become an altar boy and soon mastered the Latin responses and the intricacies of turning the pages of the missal to the correct page for Father to read.

My father gave up the practice of his faith on leaving school and only returned to regular church-going when it became necessary for him to drive mum to mass because of her bad leg.

Leaving behind the memories of wartime Britain and escaping from the gathering turmoil in Europe foreshadowed by the Cold War and the Wall, the family came to Sydney in 1949 and I was enrolled at the Marist Brothers College at Bondi Beach.

I found the atmosphere at school much more relaxed than that at my London school and the Religious Instruction threw up some interesting differences. For example, I discovered, to my chagrin, that eating meat on Fridays was a 'mortal' in Australia but only a 'venial' in England. How could it be that I could go to hell for eating a meat pie in Sydney but only receive a wrap over the knuckles in purgatory in London? This experience engendered a certain scepticism about church pronouncements but also triggered a continuing interest in learning about the Church, its history, its teachings and spirituality.

I met my wife, Margaret, in a parish Young Adults group. We shared the same faith and the same profession (pharmacy) and our marriage set us upon the adventure of raising a family and nurturing their faith amid the radical changes flowing from the Second Vatican Council.

A 'Copernican revolution' occurred for me when I attended a Cursillo weekend in 1972 where ordinary laymen shared their faith experience and I discovered that the clergy were not the exclusive transmitters of the faith and that the non-ordained had

equal right and responsibility for spreading the Good News.

This was reinforced two years later when Margaret and I attended a Marriage Encounter weekend which forcibly brought home the power of the marriage relationship to model gospel values. From that time, we resolved to work as a couple whenever we could. This led us to the presentation of a 'Matrimony' program in high schools for several years, then to act as adult leaders for the Antioch Youth Movement in its early years where we learnt a great deal about our own faith as we helped the young people prepare their faith-based talks for their communities.

Over a period of fifteen years we presented the 'Evenings for the Engaged' program to groups of three to six couples. In these talks we shared the story of our relationship as well as real life stories of people we knew (we called these our 'John and Mary' stories to preserve anonymity). The feedback we received demonstrated again and again the power of story and personal experience to teach important messages and as an evangelising force. Currently we are members of Catalyst for Renewal and serve on the Executive Committee.

Although I sometimes become exasperated with some of the proclamations emanating from the official Church, I remind myself that these men (sic!) are all trying sincerely to express the inexpressible Truth, to give words to that Mystery which is beyond words. I see faith as a reality to be explored and not as a destination (*Eamon Duffy* calls it a 'direction'), and faith itself is really an act of hope. John of the Cross writes '[My God] I shall rejoice: you will not delay, if I do not fail to hope...'



Roy Rigotti

# Your Say – The gift of speaking freely

Andrew Hamilton SJ

**This article, by Andrew Hamilton SJ, Editor of Eureka Street, is reprinted with permission. It has been abbreviated. If I want the full text, please contact Eureka Street – 03 9427 7311.**

In anxious times, the free exchange of ideas is an early casualty. Lines spun at parties contract to the Party Line.

In some English-speaking Catholic Churches, the last decade has been notable for the sporadic restriction of free speech. Some bishops have excluded from their churches speakers who enjoy good standing in their own diocese. Others have forbidden priests and religious to address meetings of which they disapprove. It is not uncommon to exclude from adult education programs and bookshops material that does not reflect a narrow theological perspective. Diocesan newspapers are often discouraged from treating difficult issues, like sexual abuse by clergy, and sometimes may not carry letters critical of the policy or practices of the local church. In a restrictive climate, it is also common for church groups to restrict the topics they discuss and the speakers they invite.

Critics of the Catholic Church are not surprised by this. They see in it an expression of the totalitarian mind. I see it as a more complex and interesting set of responses to a changing Catholic world. These are some of its salient features.

The Catholic Church today is generally declining in numbers, and the priests and religious who have sustained it are ageing. There are few places in which it forms a sub-culture that shapes its adherents' imaginative world. Those to whom the Catholic Church remains of central importance often have sharply opposed images of what church should be.

In this world of loose association, few Catholics look to Catholic media in order to find an agreed understanding of Catholic faith and life. They more often derive their information about the Catholic Church and its policies from the secular media, and form their judgments on the strength of the reports they find there. These reports naturally emphasise conflict and scandal and offer an outsider's view.

Over the last 40 years, the central issue touching the Catholic Church has been the relationship between ordained ministry and laity. It shows itself in arguments about the relationship between authorities, and particularly between the central and congregational levels. Recently, the moral authority of clergy, including bishops, has been much

weakened by scandals of sexual abuse, and the claims of consultative and decentralised leadership have become correspondingly attractive.

In such a church, no one could seriously hope to control what Catholics read and hear. The gestures at limiting conversation should be seen rather as having symbolic value. They make statements in response to different aspects of the Catholic Church's predicament.

When you exclude reputable theological books from libraries and speakers of good reputation from church premises, for example, you are saying that only one of the many ways of thinking and acting common among fervent Catholics is truly Catholic. Exclusion reflects and extends polarisation.

If you prevent church newspapers from treating unpleasant or controverted aspects of church life, and decline to publish letters critical of church policy and practice, you usually express the desire for a quiet life. Your preferred conversation about the Catholic Church will be conducted in idealised and abstract terms, perhaps liberally quoting the Pope. In this way you can avoid confronting a messy reality.

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## **"Teachers need free speech in order to teach with authority."**

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When you draw lists of people who may and may not safely speak on church property, and of authorised and proscribed events, you are usually engaged in an exercise of authority. The boundaries drawn are a symbol of clerical authority over Catholic conversation.

The heart of the Catholic Church is the living faith of Christians. That is the gift where Christ is understood to be present, and where the Holy Spirit to be working. At this level, there is no distinction between different classes of Christians. At the level of living faith, too, all Christians, teachers and those taught, are weak. In their grasp of Christ's love and their response to it, they are always limited. The Spirit works to encourage a fuller faith and fuller Christian life.

The importance of teaching and pastoral leadership lies in the need to enlarge narrow minds to believe more fully, and constricted hearts to live more generously by faith. This requires both authoritative teaching and open conversation.

Unconstrained conversation is important, because it is the ordinary way in which we are converted to a fuller form of faith and of Christian life. When tinny ideas have license to speak themselves, they may initially be attractive. But their deficiencies soon appear when set against something better. When they are suppressed, they seem daring and attractive.

If they are to encourage people to live more fully by faith, teachers need a climate of open conversation. For you can only encourage people to a better mind if you know how they are living, how they imagine the world, and how they relate their faith to their world. Without the understanding that comes from easy conversation, your pastoral strategies will inevitably be flawed.

Teachers also need to encourage free speech to complement their own limitations. Because of the weakness of their own faith, their responses to people and their pastoral strategies will inevitably be influenced by prejudices and cultural conditions as well as by faith. Conversation is the normal way through which the Holy Spirit leads us to examine our conscience.

Encouragement of open conversation and its authoritative declaration are two sides of the same coin. The risk of marking out authoritative boundaries to conversation is that it suppresses self-criticism. One comes to stand over and not under the Gospel. For this reason, the restrictions on conversation in any church should be as narrow as possible. To remove issues like clerical abuse, Eucharistic hospitality and women's ministry from conversation hinders teachers from encouraging a fuller faith. They fly blind, with answers to questions that are not being asked, but without words to address the questions that are being asked.

Because it so respects living faith as Christ's gift, the Catholic tradition typically celebrates a breadth of devotional expression, of theological perspectives, and of forms of Christian life. Where people whose lives and words are respected in their own churches are excluded from speaking in other churches, there is a breach of universality and of communion. Where the refusal is based on the exclusive preference for one among many legitimate expressions of Christian life, whether radical or reactionary, Augustine's harsh words about the Donatists, the sectarians of his day, form sufficient comment: 'The heavens proclaim the glory of God, and these frogs squat in their marsh and croak, "We are the only Christians"'.

# Essay – Being with others, being with me, being with God.

Gerry Iverson

The following is the text of a talk given at Spirituality in the Pub at Penrith in June 2004.

All authentic human life is about relationships. “Being *with*” takes us into the heart of relationships, the heart of all life.

In the Trinity we confront the mystery of God’s inner life. Our Christian concept of God, the source of all life, is the mystery of one divine life shared abundantly between three divine Persons.

While it is easy to distort the mystery by conflating the philosophical idea of Person (uniquely subsistent) with our more modern psychological idea of personality, it still remains true that our deepest insight into God’s own life comes through the idea of relationships. God is vibrantly alive, not some desiccated divine nomad, but three persons so intimately and lovingly related to each other that their very being is shared in common.

And we are fashioned, so Genesis tells us so beautifully, in the image and likeness of God, and then immediately adds: and male and female he made them! Why? Just to underline that both woman and man are equally in God’s image? Maybe. Or is it because the interaction, the attraction, the relationship between male and female brings out the divine in us?

I strongly believe that marriage between man and woman, pursued faithfully over the years as both partners grow and change, is God’s highway for bringing the majority of us human beings into the most profound sharing of his own life. Marriage is the school of love, the daily challenge for two complementary persons to grow in compassion and understanding, in Christ-like self-giving, and so reach the heart of God. I strongly believe that no other forms of loving relationships, no matter how life-giving or committed, should be called marriage. Not only because it is the ideal crucible in which new human life is born and nurtured, but also because it offers the enrichment of those two ways of being human, male and female.

But while marriage remains the paradigm, we know it is far from being the only life-form of deeply loving relationships. Otherwise what am I doing wasting my life as a celibate! And where would that leave all those adults today who happen not to be married, or for whom marriage has failed or ended by death of a partner, let alone those or who can’t marry because

they are gay? So all other forms of genuine friendship take on something of the power of marriage to mould us in the divine image, and lead us closer to God.

More and more adults today choose to live as singles, sometimes after a failed marriage, sometimes through fear of making such a commitment because they have seen so many become disasters. I think the Church has to offer much more support and vision to single men and women to underline the God-like potential of friendships, of work seen as a true vocation, and of the opportunities for service of the community that a single life style can make uniquely possible.

I believe it is tragic that our church currently refuses to hear the lived experience and spirituality of deeply committed gay couples. There are many that I know personally who find in their relationship a parallel to the most profound challenges of marriage. And they exhibit the same growth as the best of married couples in coming to a love that is “patient and kind”, “ready to forgive”, and all the other qualities that Paul describes in Corinthians.

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**“...until we have come to love ourselves adequately we cannot enter in any depth into real love for another...”**

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For the Church to call such relationships sterile, “intrinsically disorientated”, and “objectively evil” seems to me a refusal to recognize the lived reality, to start from theoretical presuppositions rather than the actual experience of those who in fact do grow closer to God not despite their relationships but because of the challenges and grace they find there. So I pray for the day when the Church will be able to recognize the God-given gift of life in such relationships, and celebrate it with openness, with sacred ritual and with gracious thanksgiving.

So wherever we find ourselves at this moment of our journey: married, single, widowed, separated, gay, lesbian, God asks us the same questions: What’s the quality of my daily relationships? How life-giving are they? How other-centered? Do they lead us to lives of generous service of our community?

If I can answer a whole-hearted “yes”,

then I believe I’m on the track where God, through Jesus and the grace of the Spirit, can mould my daily life to become a better image of his, and prepare me for the day when he can welcome me to the ultimate goal of all life, an eternal sharing in the life of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It’s a psychological truism that before I can enter into healthy intimacy with another, I need to have come to a healthy love and acceptance of myself. Jesus was ahead of modern psychology in calling us to love one another as we love ourselves. This is not to make all love self-centered, but simply to recognize that until we have come to love ourselves adequately we cannot enter in any depth into real love for another.

While Eriksson and the growth psychologists describe this as the essential stage that precedes intimacy in our life cycle, they also remind us that we constantly revisit and revalue and redefine our self-image and acceptance.

In my own growth I can recognize many turning points – what Ira Progoff calls “stepping stones” in the journey of my life. One of them occurred in the seminary at Springwood when I discovered that I had a talent for long-distance running, winning the cross-country championship by beating the friend who trained me. Until then my adolescent life was quite unhappy and insecure. I knew I had a good level of academic skills, but was hopeless at sport, hated public-speaking and debating, and in general was a very immature and shy young lad. I often said in later years to my students at Manly seminary that had I been Rector of the Springwood seminary in those days I would have turned Gerry Iverson away at the door and told him to go away and grow up first! God knows what pattern my life would have taken had that happened to me. So paradoxically seminary life in the 1950s, almost despite itself, helped me discover other talents to further my growth in confidence and self-liking.

A second turning point came a few years later when I discovered the writings of Pere Teilhard de Chardin. So much of our spirituality at that time was based on renunciation, mortification, self surrender and penance. I found it hard to reconcile this with growth, with loving oneself and identifying and developing talents.

In a simple but profound essay in his *Le Milieu Divin* I found the balance that gave my life new energy and direction. Teilhard’s thesis is that our fundamental challenge as human beings is to develop to the

full all the potentialities and creative energies that God has given us. In us, God's creation becomes conscious, we take on a share in his work of fashioning our world, and to this task we must develop all the gifts of grace and nature with which he has equipped us. So our prime thrust is growth, seizing life.

But then, Teilhard adds, from the very beginnings of our life a parallel process of diminishment and surrender occurs. Life intervenes with many moments that cut across our growth, like accidents, death of loved ones, doors that close off the goals we were seeking. At such moments Teilhard says we simply say to God: these are your gifts, Lord, not my creation. I always stand ready to give them back to you whenever you require. And when the final time comes, all I am and have become and have made, indeed my very life, I let go of, I give it all back to you.

In the meantime I continue to choose life, and love, and every opportunity for furthering the growth of the divine in and around me. I believe this concurs neatly with Jesus' words in John: *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.* So fortified by such a vision I believe I have tried to embrace life in its many dimensions, of body, and mind and spirit. This has led me to try to keep a balanced lifestyle and dialogue with my body, making time to continue running until my knees started to complain and then taking up kayaking in more recent years to continue the harmony of body and spirit. It has also enabled me to decide while I was still physically able to travel to some exotic places like Tibet and the Antarctic, fulfilling some of my childhood dreams.

It has led me in my mid-life years to do further studies as a kind of review and re-orientation of my life. I deliberately chose areas of study that wouldn't fit me for any particular specialist role in my home diocese, especially education – so what did God do? Call me a few years later to be Rector of Manly Seminary! But it was a wonderful experience to update my theology and Scripture, to gain some new pastoral skills, to integrate insights into my sexuality, so that I could do the classic mid-life task of growing to a more realistic self-acceptance and comfort at being me.

So Being with Me entails an awareness of my relationship to self, to my sexuality, to my bodily needs and desires for rest, for exercise, and above all for friendship and companionship in which I have been singularly blessed over the years. Many, but by no means all, of these friendships have arisen within the priesthood with men I have been working closely with, whose love and support have continued long after our

working relationships have finished. I have also been blessed with many close women friends who have both loved me and challenged me in a truly feminine way.

I'm glad the creators of this topic put God at the end! All I have said so far relates to this final section, especially friendships, and Teilhard's *diminishments*. Being with God is not in some separate category, but arises in and through being with others and being with my true inner self. Both these other modes of being take me further and more explicitly along the journey to God.

If I was giving this talk 20 or 30 years ago I think I would have spoken with more confidence about forms of prayer and moments of grace when God has been real to me. The older I get, the less sure I become! I'm certainly not charismatic in the sense of having had numerous "spiritual" experiences where God has been clear and palpable. Such moments have been very rare and not very certain in my story.

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**"Being with God ... arises in and through being with others and being with my true inner self."**

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But I take courage from a talk by Cardinal Basil Hume, one of my spiritual heroes. While he was Abbot at Ampleforth, his predecessor as Abbot confided in Basil that he had never in his long life had any consolation in prayer. Basil was amazed because he regarded the old Abbot as the holiest monk he had known. So when I read that, I thought there is hope for me!

I remember doing the Ignatian exercises during my studies in Chicago in my early forties. All around me I could see my fellow retreatants going through the emotional highs and lows of the journey through Jesus' public life, his passion and death, to resurrection and Easter joy. But I seemed to remain on a plateau that was not very emotional. I did find prayer much easier, but not in the sense of deep moments of either *consolations* or *desolations* in Ignatius' language. When I entered this retreat house at Guelph I remember saying to God: here's your chance to really turn me on, to inspire me with great thoughts and experiences. My previous attempts to find a spiritual home in the charismatic renewal had been uneventful, so I naively told God this was his great chance to zap me! Of course God didn't fall for the bait.

He laughed at my efforts to control him, as he always does – or should I say she – I'm sure there's more of the feminine in God at such moments!

Anyway I came away from that retreat with the deep-seated conviction that I wasn't going to find God in many "peak" experiences, but in the ordinary challenges and relationships of each day. I have been content to settle for a lower-level kind of relationship, but one that I believe is truly authentic for me.

That means in practice, I still try to find time for personal prayer each day, although the times I fail are often as frequent as the times I succeed. My best prayer seems to come from the Ignatian method of Examination of Conscience, where I review the day or week from the perspective of my relationships: with friends and work companions, with myself, and with God. What moments have I missed? Even more importantly, what moments can I give thanks for to the God who has been present in so many real but non-remarkable ways. Identifying the finger of God in my daily life, thanking him for it in the deepest meaning of Eucharist, and trying to be awake to the moments that tomorrow will bring – this is what it means for me to live a life of Being with God.

I want to finish by contrasting two quasi-prophetic figures in my life. One was a mission priest in Wagga many years ago who preached that seven out of ten people you would encounter in Wagga's main street were going to hell! Perfectly logical if you accepted his premise it was almost impossible to make an act of perfect contrition, so we Catholics, and only we Catholics, had the second plank of Confession! It seems incomprehensible now, but that was what some of us, in good conscience used to preach then!

The second prophetic figure was a man I never met. His name was Bert Facey, his book and TV series, *A Fortunate Life*. Looking back on eighty years of life that included virtual slavery in his childhood, survival at Gallipoli but with life-long lung damage, and fifty years of happy marriage, Bert exclaimed: what a fortunate life I've had! Most of us would have said what a hard life. But then he added: I don't believe in God, religion is the opium of the masses. My reaction to reading this was: how could Bert have come to such a serene and hopeful reflection on the tortuous pattern of his life without God? But then I realized he didn't. God was as truly present in every step of Bert's life journey as he is in ours, with the one exception, that Bert didn't recognize it. When and if I make it to heaven I expect to be welcomed by Bert Facey, and if I find my old parish mission preacher there too it will be a bonus. ■

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## The Bible – Those who are sick

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### Words for a Pilgrim People

*“Take heart it is I; have no fear.”*  
(Mark 6:50)

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*“If he submitted to human misery so that he might not simply know of it, but experience it as well, how much more ought you not make any change in your condition, but pay attention to what you are, because you are truly full of misery. This is the only way if you are to learn to be merciful. If you have eyes for the shortcomings of your neighbour and not for your own, no feeling of mercy will arise in you but indignation. You will be more ready to judge than to help, to crush in the spirit of anger than to instruct in the spirit of gentleness.”* (St. Bernard of Clairvaux, **The Steps of Humility and Pride**, III, 6.)

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*“The most subtle and unreachable problem of politics, and one of the profoundest seats of evil, is therefore self-righteousness, which sometimes produces more terrible results than realpolitik. It is even a mistake if academic people - or liberals of a second generation who have not really felt the toughness of the world - take to painting their enemies as too vile in their wickedness, or sincerely feel them to be so. Too easily one overlooks the amount that can be achieved by the kind of thought which reconciles. And though the promotion of benevolent causes is an important thing, this does not vindicate the kind of people who hate the capitalists more than they love the poor. The essence of the fight between good and evil is something that happens at a different level altogether inside every one of us.”* (Herbert Butterfield, **New York Times**, January 3 & 4, 1973).

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*“It was not because God needed human beings that he first formed Adam; he was simply looking for recipients who might receive his benefits.”* (St. Irenaeus of Lyons, **Against the Heresies**, Bk 4, 13, 4.)

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On the Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A) Catholics throughout the world will be invited to meditate on one of the most challenging themes in the Gospels: Jesus' association with “tax collectors and sinners.” The text is taken from Matthew: “As he sat at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’” (9:10-11. See also Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32, 15:1-2 & 7:34.) Are we to assume they came into the house uninvited? Perhaps they felt so at ease with Jesus that the normal courtesies were bypassed? And why did the Pharisees ask the disciples rather than Jesus himself? And what could Jesus possibly mean when he says, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick”?

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**“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick”**

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What if we were to imagine that this whole scene reflects our own inner worlds? We all carry “tax collectors and sinners within.” We demand “payments” on our petty resentments, we collect “rent” from those with whom we live, out of a sense of entitlement we “tax” the world with our selfishness, our moodiness and our lack of care. In this way we keep evil in circulation in the world.

There is only one effective response to evil and that is love. And the greatest love is to die. Which brings us to the other characters lurking around inside us. Jesus is there. So are the Pharisees. And the disciples are there too. When I catch the “tax collector and sinner” in me taking charge, how do I respond? Like Jesus? Like the Pharisees? Do I invite “the tax collector and sinner” to sit at table with me? Do they feel enough at ease with me to do that? Am I rather punitive and harsh, overwhelmed by my sense of self-failure and the embarrassment that I too am capable of sin?

What if we were to think of ourselves as those who need the physician? Each of us has his or her own particular neediness. But in all of us there is a self-hatred that needs healing. The reason we cannot love others fully and freely is that we do not love ourselves fully and freely. And there is a huge paradox in this. The wilful, mastery type acts as if love is a matter of strong will, self-discipline, and sound strategies. Such an approach disguises and represses self-hatred and, in the end, compounds it. We must begin by embracing the self-hatred, for *there* is a real “tax collector and sinner,” one in great need. And that embracing is grace, pure grace, for which we work and wait and pray, all the time returning to the table of the Lord with the other “tax collectors and sinners.” ■

## The Tradition – On loving God

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Both the Bible and tradition are clear about the primacy of love. We can become confused, however, about putting this into practice. Too often, love is seen as a means to an end. For example, “if you behave in a loving way, God will love you etc.” This is the very opposite of sound teaching. The best writers of the tradition remind us of two practical principles. Firstly, that God is the source of all love, and any love we are able to show is a share in God's love. St Bernard of Clairvaux writes: “You must look for higher goods in the higher part of yourself, that is, the soul. These higher goods are dignity, knowledge, virtue. Our dignity is our free will, which is the gift by which we are superior to the animals and even rule them (Genesis 1:26). Our knowledge is that by which we recognize that we possess this dignity, but that it does not originate in ourselves. Our virtue is that by which we seek eagerly for our Creator, and when we find him, hold to him with all our might.” (St Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Loving God*, II, 2.)

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**... love is, of its nature, unconditional, true love seeks no reward.**

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Secondly, love is, of its nature, unconditional, true love seeks no reward. Again, St Bernard writes: “God is not loved without reward, even though he should be loved without thought of reward. True charity cannot be empty, but it does not seek profit, “For it does not seek its own benefit” (1Corinthians 13:5). It is an affection, not a contract. It is not given or received by agreement. It is given freely; it makes us spontaneous. True love is content. It has its reward in what it loves.” (*On Loving God*, VI, 17) Failure to recognise this wisdom is a significant obstacle to the experience of God's love. ■

# Bulletin Board

## Catalyst Calendar

(Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262)

### SIP Meetings

**SIP Promoter** – Terry O’Loughlin on (02) 9816 4262.

Email: [terry\\_catalyst@hotmail.com](mailto:terry_catalyst@hotmail.com)

[www.catalyst-for-](http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm)

[renewal.com.au/news.htm](http://renewal.com.au/news.htm)

## NSW and ACT – 7.30-9.00pm unless specified:

° **Albury** New Albury Hotel, Kiewa St **Survival Today** June 14 “Where is your survival community?” Dr David Hunt & tba (Info: Joan 6021 6880).

° **Alstonville** Pioneer Tavern June 6 “Spirituality, Religion and Faith: What’s the Difference for Youth?” Kate Craig (Info Cathy 6628 5168)

° **Batemans Bay** Mariners Hotel Sunday June 5 “Why are our schools full and our churches empty?” Sr Noelene Quinane & Max Griffith (Info: Viviane 4471 1857).

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

° **Campbelltown** Campbelltown Catholic Club June 8 “Youth and the Church: Our Future or Our Past?” Graham West & Lee Bromley (Info: Rosemary 9603 2975).

° **Engadine** – Engadine RSL June 15 “Youth and the Church” Robyn Gallagher Peter Northey (Info: Elizabeth 9520 0617 or Annette 9548 2475).

° **Five Dock** The Illinois Hotel, Cnr Parramatta Rd & Arlington St **A Just Society** June 29 “A Wave of Justice” tba (Info: Susanna 9571 7769).

° **Goulburn** Soldiers Club **Love your neighbour as yourself** July 12 “Other Spiritualities” Kerry Hashmi & Br Graham Neist (Info: Tony 4822 2636).

° **Jamberoo** The Jamberoo Hotel July 11 “Healing a Broken World – Tending the Wounded Spirit” Sr Veronica McCluskie & Dorothy McRae McMahan (Info Gabrielle 4232 2735).

° **Kincumber** The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive **From Small Beginnings...** July 5 “Love and Intimacy” Dr Michael & Trish Casey (Info: Clair 4333 7117 or Sue 4334 3174).

° **Newport** – Newport Arms Hotel August 25 “Who are the prophets today?” Fr Tony Doherty & Sr Patricia Faulkner (Info: Terry 9973 1192).

° **Northern Sydney** Union Hotel, Pacific Hwy & West St, North Sydney June 20 “Reconciling with our families – love one another as I have loved you” Andrew McPhee & Margaret O’Hearn (Info: Michelle 9958 5963).

° **Paddington** Bellevue Hotel **Our Place at the Table** July 6 “Freedom to be ..?” Julie Morgan & Michael Whelan sm (Info: Marea 9387 3152).

° **Penrith** Golf Club June 22 “Realising the vision, living the reality” tba (Info: Sue 9760 2324).

° **Rouse Hill** The Mean Fiddler on Wind-sor Rd June 14 “Fundamentalism – How serious is God?” tba (Info: Maria 9680 2220 (H))

° **St George** Kings Head Tavern South Hurstville June 22 “Living in the Moment” Elaine Spillane & tba (Info: Greg 9546 2028).

° **Waitara** – The Blue Gum Hotel **“I have a dream. I have a dream today..?”** June 15 Patrick Bishop & Wendie Wilkie (Info: Carmel 0418 451 549).

## Victoria

° **Alphington** Tower Hotel, **Marketing Jesus** 8pm-9.30pm June 8 “Marketing Jesus in our schools: where we’ve been and where we’re going” tba (Info: Susie 9859 6184).

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

° **Bendigo** Foundry Arms Hotel 8pm-9.30pm June 8 (Info: Helen 0409 212 009).

° **Clayton** The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm July 19 “Social disadvantage & Spirituality” Fr Peter Norden sj & Ann Cantwell Baryl (Info: Jo 9807 1912).

° **Colac** Central Hotel-Motel June 15 “Australian Spirituality” Jack Stuart (Info: Clare 5236 2091).

° **Darebin** Olympic Hotel, Cnr Bell & Albert Streets, Preston July 20 “Culture Vultures and Other Idols: Where are We Heading?” Douglas Smith & tba (Info: Gordon 9895 5836 & Margaret 9374 1844).

° **Fitzroy** Pumphouse Hotel, 128 Nicholson St, 8pm-9.30pm August 3 (Info: Denise 9816 3001)

° **Goulburn Valley** Terminus Hotel (Shepparton) 7.30pm-9pm (Info: Kerry 0408 579 904).

° **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 June 28 “Reconciliation – one long journey” tba (Info: Kevin 9776 2705).

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

° **Woodend** Holgate Brewhouse-Keatings

Hotel June 7 “Refugees & Australia” Stancea Vichie (Info: Marg 5429 5907).

## Other States

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

° **Hobart North – Health of Body, Mind & Spirit** Moonah Café Bar & Bistro July 13 “Disability & Spirituality” John Coleman & tba (Info: Mary-Anne 6228 6000).

° **Perth (WA)** The Elephant and Wheelbarrow, cnr Francis & Lake Sts, Northbridge 7.30-9.10pm **Relationships in the Contemporary World** June 28 (Info: Deborah 0419 939 864).

° **Adelaide (SA)** German Club, 223 Flinders St (Info: Michelle 8278 6353).

° **Mylor (SA)** Warrawong Earth Sanctuary, Stock Rd June 7 “Search for Deeper Purpose in Art” Rosalba Clemente (Info: Gerald 8388 5957).

## Other Matters and Events

° **John Thornhill SM** will present the 4<sup>th</sup> Aquinas Academy Diamond Jubilee Lecture in the Crypt of St Patrick’s Church, The Rocks, Wed June 8, 6pm-8pm: **“The Event of Vatican II: The Real Promise.”** These Lectures will be published as a book early in 2006. There is a substantial discount on all pre-publication orders for this book before November 30 2005. (Info: Sandra on 02 9247 4651).

° **St Mary’s Towers Retreat Centre**, Douglas Park, June 10-13 & 10-18 Life’s Healing Journey; 10-18 directed retreat; 24-26 men’s retreat; July 1-7 guided retreat; 8-16 directed retreat; 22-24 prayer weekend (Info: 02 4630 9159).

° **Mount St Benedict Centre** Pennant Hills, June 7-13 “Centred on Love” with Yvonne Parker sgs (Info: 9484 6208).

### REFLECTION MORNING

**Dr Chris Needs**

**“Pain & Suffering:  
A Search for Understanding”**

Marist Centre,

1 Mary St, Hunters Hill

**Saturday August 20**

9.30am – 12.30 pm.

All welcome. Entry by donation.

### ESTHER DE WAAL S AUSTRALIAN VISIT 2005

**Sydney: July 13 – 16**

**Melbourne: July 18 – 19**

**Adelaide: July 21 – 23**

**Darwin: July 26**

**Info: Sandra on 02 9247 4651**

## Recommended

Andrew Murray, *What Can The Church Say? Politics and Religion in Contemporary Australia*, St Pauls Publications, 2005, 104 pages, pb, endnotes, bibliography, \$19.95.

“The purpose of this book is to raise questions about the relationship between politics and religion and to ask how the church might engage in public discussion of issues that are called political.” We should welcome this little book. It deals with the kinds of public conversations that underlie and potentially shape – for better or for worse, depending on the process and content of the conversations – the direction we may move as a society. We must refuse the seduction of facile and uncritical condemnations or approbations. Murray writes in a measured, logical and clear way about concrete matters of fact. He is also well-informed. His style sets a good model. *What Can The Church Say?* is a timely reminder to us all, that we cannot afford to be indifferent observers of key events or naïve readers of their descriptions in the media. Nor should we be covered by the criticisms of public figures who resent our comments. Chapter 2 – “Relating Politics to Religion” – is a substantial philosophical reflection and forms a solid anchor for the book. The thoughtful reader will find this Chapter particularly rewarding. Discussion questions follow each of the four Chapters. Anyone seeking to enter the public conversation would do well to read this book. Bearing in mind that actions do speak louder than words, sometimes words must be spoken. Murray reminds us they should be well considered and informed.

Pope John Paul 11, *Mane Nobiscum Domine (Remain with us Lord)*, *For the Year of the Eucharist October 2004 – October 2005*, St Pauls Publications, 2004, 43 pages, \$3.95.

Here is a personal letter to Christians from the late Pope, using the first person, (“I trust . . . ; I thought it helpful . . .”) urging people of faith to make the Eucharist active in their lives, parishes and religious congregations. He offers a very succinct theology of Eucharist and then moves on to practical matters. It is not a plea for just the local bishop or parish priest to do something; it asks that we all find a way to make a personal response to the real presence of God in our lives. The title reminds us of the Emmaus journey and the disciples’ “Remain with us Lord” after he has broken the bread with them. John Paul asks us what we actually do to have Christ remain with us. The focus is on: how do we observe Sunday, (is it a special day of the week?), what preparation do we make before receiving the Eucharist, what thanks do we give for the reception, and what service do we offer as a witnesses to the presence of God in our lives? He asks what are we doing, for example, about the many forms of poverty in our world (hunger, disease, loneliness and unemployment). The suggestions the Pope makes and the issues he raises are very practical and call us to think through our beliefs and responses to Eucharist. It is a brief text but one that is sharply focussed and, in the right way, disturbing of complacency. This is a text to be read, contemplated and acted upon by all believers in the Eucharist.

Brendan Byrne, *Lifting the Burden. Reading Matthew's Gospel in the Church Today*. St Pauls Publications, 2004, 249 pages, pb, bibliography, index, \$29.95.

The Church’s readings of the day in June, July and August this year are taken from Matthew’s gospel. Thus the publication of Australian Jesuit Brendan Byrne’s study of Matthew is timely and fitting, particularly for all who follow the daily gospel readings. The focus is on Jesus who “lifts humanity’s burdens” and the text sets out to explain the life of Jesus in the context of the writer and one that remains relevant to us today. There are so many interesting insights in this detailed study of the Gospel attributed to Matthew that it is impossible to single one or two out. Brendan Byrne illustrates Jesus the teacher, elucidates the point of the teaching and shows the radical nature of what Jesus requires of us if we are to allow God to influence the way we live our lives. The kingdom is a state of affairs, not a place nor an institution; thus the gospel is the story of identifying this state that God desires of His followers. It is demanding and is about disposition as much as observance of laws. When he turns to the miracles of Jesus, Brendan shows that Jesus was above all responding to those who had faith. His actions were responding to the call of faith in God rather than the more populist view of being a wonder-worker. This is a book for preachers, teachers, commentators and those with time and a real concern to delve into the meaning of what we read, to see the message of God in scripture.

### THE MIX IS A FORUM FOR CONVERSATION

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### PETER'S MINISTRY OF UNITY

In 1965, as Fr Joseph Ratzinger, theologian at the University of Münster, Pope Benedict XVI wrote: “Let us dwell for a moment on the bishops’ conferences, for these seem to offer themselves today as the best means of concrete plurality in unity. They have their prototype in the synodal activity of the regionally different ‘colleges’ of the ancient church,” Again, in 1967: “The church is essentially plural . . . . So ecclesiastical acts at national or provincial or diocesan levels have their importance.” In 1985, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he seems to be following a somewhat different line of thought: “The decisive new emphasis on the role of the bishops is in reality restrained, or actually risks being smothered, by the insertion of bishops into Episcopal conferences that are ever more organized, often with burdensome bureaucratic structures. We must not forget that the episcopal conferences have no theological basis, they do not belong to the structure of the church as willed by Christ.” Vatican II was extraordinarily wise, at a time of intense flux within the world and the Church, to be promoting collegiality and subsidiarity. We must wait and see where Pope Benedict XVI’s thinking runs from here. Let us hope that, as the new Bishop of Rome and bearer of the ministry of Peter to the universal Church, a ministry of unity, Pope Benedict does not continue that later line of thinking which seems at odds with Vatican II and potentially drives a wedge between the individual bishop and his brother bishops in the local church.

Michael Whelan SM