



# THE MIX



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## Our Say – Taking freedom seriously

A key dynamic at the Second Vatican Council emerged from the unfinished agenda of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There was, most obviously, an urgent need to re-visit the issue of authority in the Church, partially and one-sidedly addressed at the First Vatican Council. Less obvious was the need to take up the complex issues of freedom and human rights raised by thinkers like Lamennais and Lacordaire at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Those two Frenchmen, along with a number of other Catholic intellectuals, particularly in France and Germany, urged the Catholic Church to take seriously, though critically, the ideas emerging from the Enlightenment. Among those ideas were parliamentary democracy, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and freedom of the press. In fact, all over Europe there were Catholics who had come to reject the old monarchical way of government and the alliance between the Catholic hierarchy and the aristocracy. Lamennais argued that “liberty which has

been called for in the name of atheism must now be demanded in the name of God.”

Tragically, the pope of the time, Gregory XVI (1831-46), rejected these ideas in the strongest terms. In his encyclical, *Mirari Vos* (1832), Gregory XVI condemned freedom of conscience as madness and the agitation against the monarchical rulers as “detestable and insolent malice.” In particular, he rejected any suggestion the Church herself might need renewal:

(The Church) has been instructed by Jesus Christ and his Apostles and taught by the Holy Spirit. ... It would therefore be completely absurd and supremely insulting to suggest that the Church stands in need of restoration and regeneration ... as though she could be exposed to exhaustion, degradation or other defects of this kind.

Cambridge historian, Eamon Duffy, writes:

Gregory’s encyclical set the register and to some extent the agenda for the key utterances of his successor, Pius IX. The papacy from now on was locked into an attitude of suspicious

repudiation of modern political developments, and the current of ideas which underlay them.

John XXIII (eg *Pacem in Terris*) and Vatican II began to redress this situation. The key to the redress is dialogue. Pope Paul VI’s encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) is a powerful presentation of the nature of dialogue and its place in the life of the Church. Much of the optimism emerging from the Council, was based on the expectation that the Church would promote dialogue in all its dealings.

In fact, the breakthrough to becoming a community based on dialogue, is yet to be achieved. Just as there were some at the Council who vigorously opposed such a breakthrough – eg Archbishop Lefebvre – there are some who continue to oppose it. We must work to establish dialogue as an accepted *modus operandi* so that crucial issues like freedom can be dealt with constructively in the light of our faith. ■

This journal is one of the works of  
Catalyst for Renewal Incorporated.

## THE HUMAN FACE

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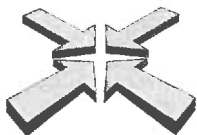
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**The Four Arrows and the Cross** symbolise diversity giving rise to communion in and through the Paschal Mystery. Those who are diverse by nature and culture, in and through Christ find life-giving unity.

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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My name is Anne Spence – an ordinary 46 year old lay person from Melbourne. I grew up on the north-west coast of Tasmania at Wynyard and Boat Harbour – a beautiful part of Australia. My family had a small farm at Boat Harbour, bordered by the Bass Highway on one side and Bass Strait on the other. Our home was on a hill with a spectacular 360° view we took for granted. We made good use of binoculars!

My parents were fully engaged in the life of the community. They were proud and practising Anglicans. My father was on the vestry and was superintendent of the Sunday school. My mother taught Sunday school, belonged to the Ladies' Guild and was choir mistress. My great aunt was parish organist and was completely involved in all aspects of parish life. She was a remarkable woman of faith and an inspiration to all who knew her. My mother was the fifth of eight children and my father was the youngest of four, so we were part of a large family. I have an older brother and two younger sisters.

Schooling options were few – we all led a much simpler lifestyle and that had advantages. My parents were brave enough to decide to send us to Marist Regional College in Burnie for our later years of schooling. I say "brave" because at that time protestants and Catholics did not attend school together. I loved the school. Again, the view was spectacular! But, more than that, I loved the sense of community – we were welcomed and expected to be part of all that was happening in school life, including the religious aspects.

This co-educational school was run by the Marist Fathers and the Sisters of Mercy. The principal knew everyone in the school. He had been a barrister in Sydney before accepting a calling to the priesthood. He encouraged intellectually rigorous debate about all things, including religious dogma. It contrasted starkly to what I had imagined as the stereotypical catholic environment. I had never been to Mass with a whole school community where everyone knew all the words with no Service Sheet. I had never heard modern hymns accompanied by guitar. Music has always been an important part of my life.

I studied in Canberra and enjoyed student life. Of my friends, those who lived their faith were Catholic.

I began work in Melbourne and met and married my husband, Ian, in 1980. Ian is from Goulburn. I am fortunate to be so happily married, to have strong extended family networks and to be the mother of two happy and healthy young adults.

I belong to the Parish of St Dominic's at

East Camberwell. I believe there is only one God and that our denomination is of no importance to God. However, out of solidarity with my fellow parishioners, I decided to formalize my relationship with the Catholic Church in 1990 through the RCIA program.

I believe in fullness of life and I live a full life. I manage the Human Research Ethics Committee at Cabrini Hospital. It is a privilege to work with others whose concern is humankind and the quality of life.

I run, swim, lift weights, play golf, and practise yoga each week. Ian and I have lots of fun dancing on Thursday evenings. I belong to two book groups and the Embroiderers' Guild. I love music, especially that of Bach and Rachmaninoff. I enjoy the outdoors and spend time gardening and bushwalking. I love food (especially fresh food), food preparation and sharing food and wine with friends and family. I serve on the Committee of the Parent Enrichment Program at St Kevin's College in Toorak.

I am concerned about the role of women in the Australian Church and in society.

I try to live according to the guiding principles of the Marist Laity -- simplicity, flexibility and inclusiveness. I try to live a joyful optimistic faith. I subscribe to the Catalyst philosophy of keeping the conversation going – with everyone regardless of their faith or their views. Even if I don't agree with others, I would like to try to understand their position.

I worry about judgements some Catholics pass and labels used on other members of society. We are responsible for our own lives and we each have a contract with God to fulfill our potential and to live our truth. Our contract may not be the same as the next person's! The Gospels tell us the stories of all the different sorts of people Jesus befriended ... they didn't all wear halos. I hope we cherish our faith and understand that it is gift.



Anne Spence

# Your Say – Faith and freedom

François Kunc

**François, a Catalyst member and Secretary of the St Thomas More Society, made these remarks in response to a speech by Bruce Baird MP at the Law-ers Christian Fellowship Dinner in May.**

This evening represents a happy coincidence of events. It is, of course, the start of Law Week. However, for us as Christians, yesterday was Pentecost, the birthday of the Christian Church, and also marked the commencement of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The St Thomas More Society is proud to be associated with this annual event, which is both legal and ecumenical.

As a legal occasion, I remind all that in his message for the 75<sup>th</sup> Red Mass this year, the late Pope John Paul II encouraged all of the Australian legal profession “to recall that ‘faith in fact has the force to shape culture itself by penetrating to its very core.’”

As an ecumenical occasion, I would draw your attention to the fundamental place of ecumenism in the agenda of Pope Benedict XVI. In his first homily as Pope, he proposed as the Successor of Peter, “As a primary commitment, to work without sparing energies for the reconstitution of the full and visible unity of all the followers of Christ. This is his ambition, this is his imitative duty. He is aware that for this, manifestations of good sentiments are not enough. There must be concrete gestures that penetrate spirits and move consciences, leaving each one to that interior conversion that is the presupposition of all progress on the path of ecumenism.”

Bruce’s speech tonight reminds us that the observations which I have just quoted from both Popes depend for their realisation on the right to the free exercise of religion. If anyone doubts the significance of the idea of religious freedom in the world today, I recommend a visit to the website of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, whose May 2005 Annual Report identifies religious freedom as a national security, as well as human rights, imperative.

Bruce focused on the complexities which arise when religious freedom intersects with the anti-vilification laws that we have in parts of Australia. Those laws have the potential to bring before the relevant tribunal issues of faith which hitherto the common law has held not to be justiciable, it is, not proper matter for the courts to pass upon. This is hardly a new principle. Among Christians it might be said to go back to the example of Gallio, Pro-Consul

of Achaia, who refused to adjudicate on a dispute when certain Jews brought the Apostle Paul before him. He is recorded as saying that if the dispute was “about your own Law, then you must deal with it yourselves.”

Here in Australia, I suggest most people are in favour of something called “religious freedom.” I believe that religious freedom remains a privilege that must never be taken for granted. It is an essential prerequisite to a compassionate, authentically human and culturally rich society. Threats to religious freedom are rightly brought to public attention.

In the last few days, the right of seventeen year old Muslim student Yasamin Altahir to wear her mantoo to school has received extensive coverage. We are fortunate that this has not escalated to the national proportions of the l’affaire foularde which afflicted France last year.

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**“...religious freedom is now viewed as the freedom of the believer from interference not just by the secular state but by anyone else as well...”**

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On the other hand, there is no generally accepted line between what our society might regard as an appropriate or inappropriate exercise of religious freedom. Thus the coverage that was generally supportive could just as easily suggested her conduct was a somehow “un-Australian” and aggressive statement of faith. Bruce has raised the question of whether anti-vilification laws are an effective way of trying to draw that line.

Despite these difficulties, religious freedom brings real civic benefits to Australia. One example is the willingness of Sheik Taj Aldin Alhilali to assist personally in attempts to free Douglas Wood in Iraq. The Sheik’s involvement is both a product and example of the social benefit which religious freedom can bring in the interests of civil society, as well as being an act of individual commitment for which all Australians should be grateful.

There are two observations I would like to offer. 2005 is the fortieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*. The Pope in Council is the highest

teaching authority of the Catholic Church and in its declaration it said this:

“This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits. The council further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed and thus it is to become a civil right.”

The importance of this declaration was that it identified the right to religious freedom firmly in the discourse of human rights, drawing on the Catholic Church’s understanding of the natural law.

My second observation is to invite consideration about the impact of religious freedom upon the relationship moving from believers to others. The concept of religious freedom may have been born from opposition to compulsory adherence to state sponsored religion. However, the dominant secularism of the West means that religious freedom is now generally viewed as the freedom of the believer from interference not just by the secular state but by anyone else as well – including other believers.

For Christians, this raises at least two profound theological questions: first, how does my faith take into account other religions (the problem of religious pluralism) and second, what does it mean for the mission to evangelize?

For Catholics, an authoritative and comprehensive theological answer to the question of religious pluralism remains a work in progress, and not free from controversy. While many theologians seem to agree that the answer depends to a large extent on the development of the theology of the Holy Spirit, that exposition has proved far from easy.

The question of religious freedom and evangelization was clearly demonstrated by Bruce’s reference to Christ’s forthright but nonetheless compassionate dialogue with the Samaritan woman at the well. If a religion asserts its claims are true, at what point does the assertion of those claims become impermissible, for example, as possibly inciting racial or religious hatred? As Cardinal Lehmann of Germany has said, “We must promote both tolerance and faith.” ■

# Essay – Science with humanity

Helen McCabe

The following is part of the text of a talk given at the Sydney Catalyst Dinner, April 1st 2005. The full text may be obtained from the Editor.

*Gaudium et Spes* articulates an understanding of the very preciousness of human life according to which every human person has intrinsic, equal and inalienable dignity or worth and, therefore, deserves uncompromising reverence and respect regardless of race, gender, social status, personal wealth or other arbitrary factors.

Accordingly, it is the individual person who is central to the social and political order, the creation and maintenance of which is ultimately for the purpose of promoting human good or human fulfilment. In other words, the existence of a political order, or a common good, reflects our social and interdependent nature; when we work towards promoting the common good of our communities, we also act to uphold the dignity of each member of that community. For instance, on thinking about the need for health care in the contemporary world, much of what comprises this good is beyond our personal capacities to provide.

Therefore, we must collaborate and cooperate with others in order to fulfil our needs for health, life and the relief of suffering associated with illness and injury.

Recent history has shown that the development of vaccines, pharmaceuticals, and other scientific knowledge and technology is better achieved through scientists collaborating on an international scale. At the same time, in order to render the benefits of medical advances accessible to all in health care need, it is also necessary to cooperate with others in raising and distributing the necessary financial and other administrative means for doing so; the advent of universal health insurance schemes, both in Australia and in many other nations, including some poorer nations, has enabled the realisation of such aspirations.

In this sense, individual flourishing is realised through the sharing of life and of activity and of material goods in community with others. At least, it is these conceptions of the human person and of the common good which are central to the promulgations of *Gaudium et Spes*.

However, in ways unforeseen at the time of this encyclical, the rise of an atomistic form of individualism now acts to undermine the very notion of the common

good in which to respond to human need. In its place, we find an encroaching so-called 'free' market where, according to the proponents of a more radical expression of liberalism, the autonomous individual may make his or her way in the world unencumbered by obligations to others.

This autonomous being is respected not as one created in the image of God, not as one in need of community, and not as one who bears actual needs, but as one whose individual interests are to be sought through the expression of choice. That is, on a more radical liberal worldview (one that originates in the work of John Stuart Mill), the basis of morality is founded on individual preference, or individual choice itself. It is individual choice, then, which is the supreme good or ultimate value and it is valued, moreover, regardless of the moral worth, or otherwise, of what is actually chosen; for what an individual has chosen becomes 'good' simply because she has chosen it.

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**“...what the principles in *Gaudium et Spes* are designed to protect against: the demeaning of the human person.”**

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The political correlate of this worldview is the State as a device *not* for meeting human need but, instead, a device for maximising choices; in this respect, the contemporary State gives way to, or grants a less bridled expression of, the norms, values and purposes of the 'free' market where individual choice is granted free reign. For this reason, we increasingly look to the market as the social realm in which to provide health care services where negotiations can occur around price, as distinct from human need.

In consequence of this development, we find a growing disparity between the 'health care haves' and 'have-nots' on a background of diminishing support for publicly funded health care services. In the United States where the most sophisticated medical technology is developed and applied, we find more than 44 million people without access to even a basic level of primary health care while even greater numbers of American citizens lack adequate insurance coverage should they suffer any more serious (or more expensive to treat) medical problems. Underlying this predicament is a denial of any obligation

on the part of the community to provide for the health care needs of those members who lack the pecuniary means for meeting the cost of private health care insurance premiums. As is often quoted of an American proponent of the market in health care: 'it may be unfortunate that some are denied health care, but it is not unfair'.

In Britain, as is the case in the United States, we discover a newfound avoidance of those patients with more expensive conditions to treat, such as HIV, cancer, schizophrenia and other chronic conditions. In Sweden, the public health care services originally designed to grant priority of concern to the frail elderly and those more vulnerable members of the community have now been reconfigured to cater to the demands, or choices, of the wealthier middle classes, as are expressed through their greater purchasing power.

At the same time, health care professionals are abandoning the public health care system to pursue more lucrative careers available in the commercial private sector. In other words, access to health care services is now increasingly determined by an individual's place in the market, as distinct from his or her place in a community where systems of health care have formerly enjoyed, on behalf of that community, political protection. In this respect, the dignity of the human person, if such a notion can be contemplated at all, consists in an individual's choice-bearing capacity, a capacity which, as already suggested, readily finds its expression in the market.

What all this means for the health care well-being of large sections of the human family is precisely what the principles enunciated in *Gaudium et Spes* are designed to protect against: the demeaning of the human person. For those who are poor, it seems somewhat nonsensical to even talk of respecting their dignity when, in being excluded from the benefits of health care, they suffer not only harm to their health but, also, as Michael Walzer points out, loss of social standing. That is, they suffer humiliation. In the contemporary world, where the principles of *Gaudium et Spes* are increasingly viewed as anachronistic, respect for the individual person is contingent at best. Indeed, in the absence of a richer conception of the value of the human person, the term 'respect' collapses altogether. Or, at best, respect for persons is changed to respect for autonomy or for individual choice. In this

sense, those with insufficient means for choosing - children, the unemployed, the unborn, the poor and destitute, the brain impaired or demented, the chronically ill and many others - are in danger of being excluded from both the benefits of scientific medical and economic advances, as well as from that form of friendship found in community.

Instead, our energies and allegiances are increasingly directed towards the market. Market ideology has come to dominate in the contemporary world in ways inconceivable until recently. In addition to its propensity to allow a greater expression of personal Choice, another justificatory argument for promoting the market is what some claim to be its ability to achieve greater levels of efficiency. Contemporary market proponents argue that, through the mechanism of competition, the market is able better to distribute goods and services, including the resources of health care, more efficiently than can such bodies as state bureaucracies.

For this reason, health care services ought to be provided in a competitive market. We now find a growing number of market-based health care services globally to lend expression to this belief. However, proponents of competitive markets fail to distinguish between needed goods, such as health care, and commodities. For the competitive market has its own logic and purposes which are contrary to meeting human need; rather, the market's purpose is to pursue profit, not health, or any other needed good. If actual health is achieved in a market, it is merely accidental to the market's purposes.

Such talk may sound alarmist. After all, we here in Australian can point to our system of Medicare and assume that everyone has access to a high standard of health care services. And this may, up to a point, still be true. However, the market is sought more often as the favoured realm in which to distribute the resources of health care. This development should concern us greatly.

To talk of a mutual respect for the full spiritual dignity of the human person, as it is articulated in *Gaudium et Spes*, finds us searching, with increasing difficulty, for the means of doing just that in the contemporary world. While the provision of health care has traditionally represented a concrete expression of this principle, it is becoming increasingly difficult to uphold in ways that are respecting of the dignity of all (or even any) human persons. In relation to the health care services provided by the Catholic Church, the U.S. ethicist, Richard McCormick notes

that the growing dominance of competitive market ideology in contemporary culture raises the most direct threat to 'the soul of Catholic health care'. For in order to obtain the means to make available the benefits of modern medical technology, Catholic health care services have little choice but to become full participants in a culture in which the primary purpose of providing such services is to serve the market prior to the patient in health care need.

While modern technology can be (and in the spirit of *Gaudium et Spes* ought to be) employed for the benefit of human persons, it is subsumed, instead, by the prior purpose of the market. Hence, the distribution of health care services is determined by its propensity for procuring profit. Furthermore, health care resources are thought of, less often, as components of the common good and more so as individual possessions. This we see in the greater personal (or out-of-pocket) costs for health care, the diminishing support for public health care services, the trend to claim patent protection on scientific and technological developments for longer periods of time, as well as the increasing tendency to privatise health care services.

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**“This is not the time for the Church to abandon the sick and injured.”**

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Moreover, if we consider the introduction of a range of private health insurance policies, we will be able to see that the resources of health care are, under the guise of greater efficiency claims, being redirected to benefit the wealthier members of the Australian community at the expense of the poorer. Notably, it is the wealthy who are able better to support the interests of business. This is the case both within and between nations.

In poorer nations, governments are being forced to give up responsibility for attending to the needs of people in order to service foreign debt. If we consider Latin America for instance, we find that, under the direction of the World Bank and the IMF, governments have been forced to privatise their health services and open up the market to competition from American managed care organisations. Prior to this imposition, the public health care systems of Latin America ensured broad access to basic health care services so that significant improvements in life expectancy rates were realised, together with reductions in maternal and infant mortality rates. In-

deed, the disease profile in Latin America came to emulate that of developed nations, with the rate of childhood immunisation in Costa Rica and Argentina exceeding that of the United States. However, investor-owned, foreign managed care companies have now entered a largely unregulated market where they are at liberty to pursue profit-making unimpeded by obligations to support the poorer members of society who are left with no obvious recourse. And this is the case even though the poor contribute disproportionate amounts of funding to the pool of health care financing to which these managed care companies have access. As a consequence, the progress made in improving the health status of Latin Americans is being undermined.

Overall, what these few examples point to is a loss of any respect for the full spiritual dignity of the person. They also reveal an alienation of individuals from each other with marked disparities between those who benefit from scientific progress and those who are excluded from its benefits. In upholding this rather slippery notion of individual choice, human dignity is offended in other respects as well: high rates of abortion and embryonic stem cell experimentation and destruction are but two instances to consider. And if individual choice is the supreme good, as is claimed, then it will be increasingly difficult to avoid the legalisation of euthanasia. And if access to health care is to be determined by the purchasing power of individuals who 'desire' or 'prefer' particular health care services, then Catholic health care services, in the absence of any alternative funding sources than what currently exist, must refuse care to those who can ill afford it. Rather, Catholic health care services will be granting a preferential option for the well-off.

This is not the time, however, for the Church to abandon the sick and the injured. Indeed, it has been a long time since there has been such a need of the health care services of the Church, particularly for those who are, or will be, finding themselves estranged from the benefits of health care. What is needed, then, is a creative approach on the part of the Church to stand outside the ideology of the post-modern culture in which it finds itself so as to honour the full spiritual dignity of the person in times of health care need. This may call for a re-think on how best to fund Catholic health care services. Most importantly, the more serious challenge facing the Church is to find a language in which to speak to the world of what it really means to respect human dignity. ■

## The Bible – Teaching in parables

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### Words for a Pilgrim People

*“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.” (Matthew 13:44-45)*

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*“..... since God speaks in Sacred Scripture through human beings in human fashion, the interpreter of Sacred Scripture, in order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us, should carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writers really intended, and what God wanted to manifest by means of their words.” Vatican II, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” 12.*

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*“We search that we might find truth; we find truth that we might search again.” (St Augustine quoted by the Lutheran scholar, Dr Kristen Skydsgaard, addressing the Second Vatican Council, October, 1963. Pope Paul VI, when later addressing the Council, quoted Dr Skydsgaard and added: “The Christian must be a stranger to immobility.”)*

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*“The parables of Jesus seek to draw one into the Kingdom, and they challenge us to act and to live from the gift which is experienced therein. But we do not want parables. We want precepts and we want programs. We want good precepts and we want sensible programs. We are frightened by the lonely silences within the parables.” (John Dominic Crossan, **In Parables - The Challenge of the Historical Jesus**, Harper and Row, 1973, 82.)*

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*“And so our good Lord answered to all the questions and doubts which I could raise, saying most comfortingly: I may make all things well, and I can make all things well, and I shall make all things well, and I will make all things well; and you will see yourself that every kind of thing will be well.” (Julian of Norwich, **Showings**, Chapter 31. See also Chapters 27 & 32.)*

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On the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A) we begin a series of meditations based on Matthew’s parables of the kingdom. This section of the Gospel begins: “Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach and he taught them many things in parables.” (13:1 – see similar references in Mark 4:1 and :Luke 8:4.) Parables are open-ended, they point rather than define. They must, therefore, be interpreted and are therefore open to *misinterpretation*. Surely this is a dangerous way for Jesus to teach about something as critical as the Kingdom? Why wasn’t he more definite and more clear about what we are supposed to believe and how we are supposed to behave?

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**Maybe we should learn again the art of storytelling? Or are we afraid of losing control?**

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The Gospel has Jesus himself give a reason why he teaches in parables: “(Because) they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding.” (13:13) We can understand this better if we hold it up to the light of the great promise, “I am with you!” God has, in effect promised the people, “I shall always be with you, but *as I AM* shall I be with you!” Names and definitions inevitably lead us towards the illusion of control. That illusion of control, in turn, leads us to focus on ourselves rather than on God.

The parables are full of silence. We must sit with them and wait. Each time we come back to them we must renew that waiting. We will never exhaust their meaning. This very process is one of yielding and submitting. It is also a process of encounter with the Author of the parable and the Mystery he embodies. This whole process is not so much about knowing what we are to believe or how we are to behave, it is rather about being drawn into an ever-deepening intimacy with Love. Teaching through parables reminds us that the essence of the Christian life is found in the invitation to be in Love. This is God’s gift, unmerited and given unconditionally.

The parables of Jesus, and the very fact that he taught in parables, also reminds us of something very practical. Parables appeal first and foremost to the imagination rather than the intellect. We are perhaps prone to rely too heavily on the intellect in our search for meaning and truth. In particular, our theology and catechesis moves by way of definitions and propositions. Maybe we should learn again the art of storytelling? Or are we afraid of losing control? ■

## The Tradition – Catholic imagination

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Catholicism thrives on imagination. Its expressions vary from the stunning art and architecture of the great gothic cathedrals of Europe, the intense purity of Gregorian Chant and the quiet beauty of the baptism of an infant, through the simplicity of someone thumbing their rosary beads, a community kneeling before the Eucharist, a crucifix lying on a bedside table, to the kitsch art that often surrounds statues and depictions of Mary, the realistic portrayals of the Passion of Jesus and the multitude of pious and devotional expressions throughout the world. A lively imagination seems to go hand in hand with a lively faith.

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**Imagination will be part of our lives creatively or destructively.**

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Andrew Greeley has written a good little book entitled *The Catholic Imagination* (University of California Press, 2001). It is, in a way, a popular presentation of the kinds of insights the theologian, David Tracy, was exploring in his more academic work, *The Analogical Imagination* (Crossroad, 1981). When Paul Collins speaks of “The Catholic Imagination” in his book *Between the Rock and a Hard Place* (ABC Books, 2004), he quotes the Australian Protestant writer, Graeme Garret: “Catholics seem to survive ‘because they don’t seem to be held so much by ideas as by something more poetic and symbolic, something sacramental.’”

The imagination plays a critical role in our practising, understanding, preaching and teaching the faith. Sadly, the creative tension between reason and imagination has been seriously diminished over the centuries since the advent of the Schools and Scholasticism in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Our tradition would tell us that it is a very dangerous thing to overlook imagination. Imagination will be part of our lives creatively or destructively. ■

# 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-renewal.com.au/news.htm**

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

◦ **Albury** New Albury Hotel, Kiewa St **Survival Today** August 9 “Moral Judgement in Business” Rob Maclin & tba (Info: Joan 6021 6880).

◦ **Alstonville** Pioneer Tavern (Info Cathy 6628 5168)

◦ **Batemans Bay** Mariners Hotel Sunday August 28 “Where is God in Suicide?” Neil Harrigan (Info: Viviane 4471 1857).

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

◦ **Campbelltown** Campbelltown Catholic Club July 13 “Has the Church passed its ‘use-by’ date?” Sr Sonia Wagner & Grahame Mundine (Info: Rosemary 9603 2975).

◦ **Engadine** – Engadine RSL July 20 “Who are our prophets today?” Fr Geoff Plant & Julie McCrossin (Info: Elizabeth 9520 0617 or Annette 9548 2475).

◦ **Five Dock** The Illinois Hotel, Cnr Parlatatta Rd & Arlington St **A Just Society** July 27 “Justice for Whom?” Justice Michael Kelly (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-McMahon (Info Gabrielle 4232 2735).

◦ **Kincumber** The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive **From Small Beginnings...** August 2 “Whisper who Dares” Geraldine Doogue & Stephen Aitken (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, July 18 “Reconciling with the Community - responding to my neighbour” Terry O’Connell & Sue Chant (Info: Michelle 8 5963).

◦ **Paddington** Bellevue Hotel **Our Place at the Table** August 3 “Enough is enough –

women and men of spirit” Fr John Crothers, Julia Baird & Jennifer Ann (Info: Marea 9387 3152).

◦ **Penrith** Golf Club August 24 “Vatican II: 40 years since Gaudium et Spes” Sr Susan Connelly & Fr Andrew Murray (Info: Sue 9760 2324).

◦ **Rouse Hill** The Mean Fiddler on Windsor Rd September 13 “Empowerment - Enduring Stories of Courage” tba (Info: Maria 9680 2220 (H))

◦ **St George** Kings Head Tavern South Hurstville July 27 “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..?**” July 20 Julie Morgan & John Robinson (Info: Carmel 0418 451 549).

### Victoria

◦ **Alphington** Tower Hotel, **Marketing Jesus** 8pm-9.30pm August 10 “Marketing Jesus: Drama & Art – How is Jesus presented” Peter Steele sj & Rosemary Crumlin rsm (Info: Charles 0417 319 556).

◦ **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 September 7 (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 (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 & Lynne Haultain (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 August 24 “Who is welcome at the Table?” Peter Collins & Fiona Dodds (Info: Kevin 9776 2705).

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

◦ **Woodend** Holgate Brewhouse-Keatings

Hotel August 2 “Spirituality & Offenders” Br Peter Walsh & Lorraine Caldwell (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** July 26 (Info: Deborah 0419 939 864).

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

◦ **Mylor (SA)** Warrawong Earth Sanctuary, Stock Rd August 2 “The John Roffey Lecture” Rev Dr Andrew Deutney (Info: Gerald 8388 5957).

### Other Matters and Events

◦ **Interchurch Families conference** “Sharing our Dream Downunder” August 18-22, Noah’s on the Beach, Newcastle (Info: Bev 4945 0200 or [kevinbev@bigpond.net](mailto:kevinbev@bigpond.net)).

◦ **4<sup>th</sup> International Inter-Religious Abraham Conference** “Beyond Dialogue: Interfaith Cooperation in Action” Rev Dr Francis Tiso, June 5 10am-4.30pm, Sydney University Main Quadrangle McLauren Hall (Info: 9702 0789).

◦ **St Mary’s Towers Retreat Centre**, Douglas Park, July 8-16 directed retreat; 22-24 prayer weekend; July 31-Sept 2 Ignatian Exercises; Aug 1-9, 10-18 & 19-27 directed retreats (Info: 02 4630 9159).

◦ **Mount St Benedict Centre** Pennant Hills, July 30 “Creative Sacred Art” (Info: 9484 6208). Oct 8-9 overnight retreat for women “Return to Paradise” – contact Judith 4945 5343 or [kellsull@ozemail.com.au](mailto:kellsull@ozemail.com.au)

### 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

Robert Barry Leal, *The Environment and Christian Faith. An Introduction to Ecotheology*, St Pauls, 2004, 104 pages, endnotes, pb, \$19.95.

This book is the third in a series of "St Pauls Windows Into..." which is a series offering openings into contemporary issues, in this case, ecology. The series encourages the readers to think about, discuss, and complete further reading about the topic. The book is introductory for those who have never thought much about a Christian response to the environment. It asks that readers rethink the Hebrew stories that point towards a theology of the environment. "God saw that it (creation) was good" we are told in Genesis; Noah saw that a pair of each living creature was spared from the flood. The Christian scriptures (the donkey in the ditch on the Sabbath, for example) and lives of saints such as Francis of Assisi demonstrate a need to care for God's creation and creatures, all in contrast to the destruction of forests and consequent poverty, especially in the third world. Barry Leal points to our indigenous people and the care for and the respect of the environment. The book asks readers to acknowledge any thoughts of humans as conquerors of the environment, to read the Bible with different eyes and to respect God's creation. There are questions and readings for further consideration by groups as ways of developing concern for the environment.

Gerard Moore, *Why the Mass Matters. A Guide to Praying the Mass*, St Pauls, 2004, 92 pages, Glossary, pb, \$15.95.

Remember when we were taught the parts of the mass and were expected to know both what was happening and why? Gerard Moore's book takes us back to those times and gives a clear and interesting insight to the current order of the mass, or, as many now use the term, eucharist. The book is brief, well written and a good introduction for all mass-goers, the regulars and the not-so-regulars. Gerard moves easily between history, Vatican expectations, practical ideas and clear explanations. The text adds life to attendance at mass, to its various parts and to very pertinent comments about how the mass is relevant to today's world, especially to issues of social justice. There are comments about the use of music, gesture, and interesting insights from history. It would be folly to suggest that this is for lay people only; celebrants too could use it for revising their practices. The book fulfils its aims: to demonstrate why the mass matters and it helps all to pray the mass. This is a book that could (should?) be used at higher secondary school levels, at discussion groups, by acolytes and all who are charged with the preparation of liturgies, and even as brief components of homilies. There is a value in priests explaining what they are doing and why, and congregations would get a more fulfilling experience from praying the mass.

Joseph A Komonchak, "The Church in Crisis: Pope Benedict's Theological Vision," *Commonweal*, June 3, 2005. (See [www.commonwealmagazine.org/](http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/))

This is an insightful little essay. Fr Komonchak, who teaches at Catholic University in Washington DC, is one of the Catholic Church's leading theologians. In this essay, he analyses the theological and philosophical roots of the new pope's thought. Pope Benedict, he writes, focused his studies on the teachings of St Augustine. As a young theologian, and particularly as an adviser to Cardinal Frings at the Council, he was a pioneer of a new way of thinking. He also shares Augustine's negative view of the world. This makes dialogue with the world problematic. We must wait and see whether this leads to a conflict between the Pope and Vatican II. Komonchak writes: "The council, in one of its chief documents, did not think that dialogue and gospel proclamation were incompatible; in fact it could even be said that it regarded dialogue and discerning the signs of the times as essential aspects in proclaiming the Word of God. This requires, of course, a sphere of freedom, a place for discussion for trying out new ideas, for exploring commonalities, for efforts to reconcile perhaps only apparently contrasting positions." If you are interested in a copy of this essay contact the Editor of *The Mix* on (02) 98. 4262 or on email at [michael@aquinas-academy.com](mailto:michael@aquinas-academy.com).

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### **UNDERSTANDING POPE BENEDICT XVI**

(From Joseph Komonchak, "The Church in Crisis" – see note above.)

"Impatience with neoscholasticism also led Ratzinger to resist the nearly exclusive emphasis placed on the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. The latter's 'crystal-clear logic' he found 'too closed in on itself, too impersonal and ready-made.' He far preferred Augustine's personalism in all its passion and depth. His doctoral dissertation was on the ecclesiology of St. Augustine, and the great saint would remain by far the most powerful influence on his thought .... Only thirty-five years old when the council began, Ratzinger served as a theological adviser to Cardinal Joseph Frings, archbishop of Cologne. Ratzinger described the prepared texts as reflective of the 'anti-Modernist neurosis' that had marked the church's response to the intellectual and cultural challenges of the previous century; he wrote the speech in which Cardinal Frings began with a clear and firm non placet ('it does not please') rejecting a text on revelation. .... Ratzinger joined theologians of the caliber of Yves Congar, Daniélou, de Lubac, Rahner, and Schillebeeckx in exploring ways to have the preparatory doctrinal texts removed from the agenda, and along with Rahner he prepared a text the group hoped could replace them. He enthusiastically praised the decisions taken during the council's first session as a reversal 'epochal' in character, making possible a 'new beginning.' .... Ratzinger worked closely on the texts on the church, divine revelation, the missions, and the church in the modern world, topics on which he also published learned essays in theological journals."