



THE MIX



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Our Say – Vocation, the times, *The Mix*

Each of us *is* a vocation. Each of us is called into the world to be a particular place where God becomes uniquely present. Your *very being* is your vocation. And because relationship belongs to the very essence of each human being, vocation is always a social reality. For those of us who are Christians, vocation always implies commitment within and to the Church.

The times demand that we each question ourselves in terms of our vocation. Not only must we be constantly discerning that fundamental issue of vocation – fidelity to who and what I am – but we must also be constantly discerning that fundamental issue of social responsibility – manifesting that fidelity in action.

Such thinking and questioning will open us to the liberating ways of God, ways that we cannot yet envisage or predict, indeed, ways that we might otherwise ignore or shun. If we respond to our times with intelligence and faith, we will surely experience first hand the truth:

We are well aware that God works with those who love him, those who have been called in accordance with his purpose, and turns everything to their good. (Romans 8:28)

One of the outstanding features of the times in which we find ourselves, is change. That carries with it both dangers and opportunities. It is not simply good or simply bad.

In such a time of change we may, for example, cling to things that ought to be relinquished or we may relinquish things that ought to be clung to. It can take both wisdom and courage to make the appropriate decisions. And if the truth be told, we must expect some of our decisions, as judged in hindsight, to be more or less bad decisions and some to be more or less good decisions. That is life. In humility we do our best to make good decisions all the time.

Catalyst for Renewal, on advice from your Editor of *The Mix*, finds itself making a decision at this time which it trusts is a

good decision, even if it is one that carries a measure of sadness. **The July issue of *The Mix* will be the last.** The first issue was published in April 1996. We have endeavoured to promote conversation for renewal through the regular publication of *The Mix*. It seems to us that the venture has been very worthwhile.

The Editor is deeply grateful for all the support and encouragement he has received over the past eleven years. A special debt of gratitude is due to those generous people who gathered each month and packed *The Mix* to be sent out.

Paid up subscribers will be given the opportunity to receive a refund. However, we do seek your generous support in the remaining months of publication. It will be a difficult time.

Catalyst for Renewal will continue to establish forums to promote conversation within the Catholic Church and beyond. In the days ahead, you will receive more definite news of how this will happen. ■

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

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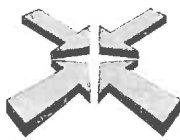
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The Four Arrows and the Cross symbolise diversity giving rise to communion in and through the Paschal Mystery. Those who are diverse by nature and culture, in and through Christ find life-giving unity.

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.

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

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

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THE HUMAN FACE

My name is Peter Golding. I begin my story in Balikpapan in Borneo. I am not sure of the date. It was probably July 10 1945 but it might have been July 11. I remember it was raining. And hot. We had climbed over the side of the *Westralia* and scrambled down the nets into the landing barges at 0902 on July 1.

I recall that date clearly. It was my birthday. In the next days we had pushed the Japanese back a few miles but we had been caught in cross fire on a bend in the road that day and there were casualties, including some dead. I remember the noise of mortar fire and machineguns and fear tearing at my innards. And the small sturdily-built figure of an Army padre in jungle greens with crosses on his collar and a stole around his neck moving around quietly, apparently oblivious to the racket, pausing to kneel in the oozing yellow mud to give comfort to wounded soldiers who had survived or to pray over the bodies of those who had not.

Sixty something years later it is all as clear as though it were yesterday. I never knew who or what the chaplain was except that he was Catholic. Nor am I certain to which unit he was attached but I assume it was the 2/33 Battalion because that was the one that was ambushed. I was an artillery signaller whose job was to move with the battalion's forward patrol and transmit orders for supporting fire back to our guns. One of my friends was among the dead. He was an Anglican but that day he was buried by a Catholic priest.

I have often regretted not trying to find that chaplain. Some years later when my faith, also nurtured in the Church of England, was shaken and I needed something to cling on to it was the memory of his dedication that steered me to the Catholic Church.

That, in itself, was not an easy decision. My father had been an ordained Church of England priest. In the 1914-18 war when he was unable to secure a chaplaincy he had served as an AIF infantryman but couldn't bring himself to return to the Church afterwards.

The war and the terrible Depression that had almost bankrupted him had taken toll of his religious beliefs but my roots were deeply planted in Anglicanism and I had always laboured under the conviction that Catholics were "different". Indeed, this had been reinforced during the war when every Sunday we would assemble on the parade ground to be inspected and then there would be the sergeant-major's command: "Parade! Attention! Fall out the Jews! Fall out the Catholics! Right turn! Quick march!" and off we would go, mostly with

substantial reluctance, to "church". I can remember that the Catholics were very definitely different. They actually seemed to enjoy going to Mass.

I wasn't sure how my parents would take my eventual decision in 1947 to become one of the different people. I need not have worried about my father. His concern was not that I was switching religious sides so to speak but that if I did I should be a good Catholic. He wasn't one for lukewarm people. His philosophy was either be in something or out of it and not in between.

My mother evinced some nervousness. She worried about my father's two getting elderly maiden sisters in England who were, she warned, devout Anglicans and could be hurt by my decision. Please keep it from them, she pleaded. Sorry, I said, I must tell them. It would be like living a lie not to do so. So I sat down and wrote them a letter. A week later I had a cable from them. "Congratulations," it said. "Wish we had done it ourselves years ago but it's too late for us now."

In 1960 I drove from London to North Devon where they lived. By then they were old so I hadn't told them I was coming in case something happened to prevent me. There was no answer to my knock so I walked through the garden around the cottage and peered through windows. When I got to the sitting room I saw them watching television. It was a Sunday morning about 11 o'clock. They were watching a televised Mass.

It will be 62 years this coming July that the example of a chaplain in muddy boots in Borneo beckoned me down the road to the Catholic church. He never knew about it. It took me another three years before I knew myself.



Peter Golding

Your Say – Issues concerning children worldwide

Patrick Byrne

The following is the text that formed the basis for a Catalyst Forum for the Future presentation on March 9 2007 in The Crypt at St Patrick's Church, Sydney. Fr Patrick Byrne SVD is Secretary General of the Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood

Since it was identified in 1981, AIDS has killed on average a million people a year, and is still killing 8,000 a day.

The children of Africa are still not getting AIDS prevention or treatment drugs. Of 15 – 40,000 children estimated to have HIV in Cameroon as of last year, only about 400 got the drugs that would allow them to grow to adulthood, according to government reports. Only a small fraction of pregnant women, perhaps 10%, are getting the medicines that would prevent the transmission of the AIDS virus to their babies.

Although the high cost of AIDS medicines was once regarded as the insurmountable barrier to treatment in Africa, the advent of cheap generics and huge investments by groups like the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the US-run President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and Doctors Without Borders, have brought lifesaving medicines to the continent in the past five years.

But you need to put the medicines into a system that functions. And the fact that children are not being treated is a sign of the frailty of health systems – particularly of maternal child health systems, and particularly in Africa.

Worldwide, there are an estimated 2.3 million children aged 15 and under who have HIV and most of them are in Africa. In Africa, half of all children with HIV die by age 2.

Fatalism about childhood illness makes families unlikely to bring children to the hospital for testing or to comply with complicated treatments. Simpler generic formulations of AIDS medicines for children are still under development.

The vast majority of infected children get the virus from their mothers during pregnancy or breastfeeding, and 700,000 more will get the virus this year at present rates. 80% of infected children die before their fifth birthdays.

Even as governments and aid organizations have worked to broaden access to AIDS drugs among adults in the developing world, children in the same places have been left behind because the particular drugs they need are of scant interest to deep-pocketed pharmaceutical makers.

Children everywhere need their own special AIDS drugs, with many different gradations of dosage for different ages and weights and with complex packaging to make the drugs both palatable to small bodies and capable of massive distribution-pills that dissolve in water, for example.

Children in the developing world have other requirements. Liquid formulations, used for pediatric AIDS drugs in the west, are difficult to administer and thus cannot be used for large-scale programs in places like Africa, China and India.

But there is little interest among global drug makers in catering to the market of children in the developing world. Western pharmaceutical giants generate most of their profits on AIDS drugs in the West, and in the West there is barely any market for children's drugs because mother-to-child transmission of the virus has been effectively eliminated by medicines still not widely accessible in poorer countries. In southern Africa, 76% of infected persons between age 15 and 24 are female.

President Victor Yushchenko of Ukraine conceded that his country was losing ground in the race to curb one of Europe's fastest growing epidemics, saying 100,000 Ukrainians have been registered as HIV-positive. UNICEF officials have warned of a public health catastrophe in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where 270,000 people are infected.

According to last year's UNAIDS report, 24.5 million people out of a total population of 774 million in sub-Saharan Africa, are living with HIV and AIDS. Nearly all the countries of the sub-continent have a rate of infection well above one percent, the epidemic threshold, and the average rate among adults aged 15-49 is 6.1%.

New data published by the United Nations show that Africa continues to bear the brunt of HIV/AIDS. There were worldwide 4.3 million new infections in 2006, with 2.8 million (65%) of these occurring in sub-Saharan Africa.

The number of people living with HIV globally has reached its highest level with an estimated 40.3 million people. More than three million people died of AIDS-related illness in 2005; of these, more than 500,000 were children.

The steepest increases in HIV infections have occurred in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (25% increase to 1.6 million) and East Asia. But sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the most affected globally – with 64% of new infections occurring there (over 3 million people).

LETTERS

I'm writing to congratulate you on your article, Our Say, in the March edition of *The Mix*. I read it with enthusiasm and support.

My husband and I have just returned from a trip to India with Meath Conlan, during which we stayed at Bede Griffith's Ashram for almost a week. Since then my understanding of the Christian message has broadened even more – to the point that even though I still consider myself Catholic (in the truest sense of the word) my church attendance is becoming less and less.

I know we should stay involved and work for change but it's too great an effort to keep banging ones head against a brick wall – eventually it hurts!

I agree wholeheartedly with your article (hope you don't get your knuckles rapped too much) and admire the tenacity with which you keep on working for change.

Sue Druhan, Canberra ACT

Thank you so much for your article regarding the Welby case. It put into words what I had been feeling since reading about the refusal to allow a Catholic Funeral Mass for Piergiorgio Welby.

I kept asking myself why his family should be treated so harshly, especially when on more than one occasion I have seen on television, the elaborate Catholic funeral Masses accorded mobsters and other criminals, both in our own country and overseas.

I believe that Cardinal Ruin's action did present an insensitive Church to the world.

Why should this man's family suffer at such a time in their lives? The loss of a loved one, whatever his life story/history, is a difficult time and we must never forget that the deceased has been part of a family and community who has loved them in spite of their failings or human weakness.

As a parent I can't imagine the pain and resentment Mr. Welby's family must feel having been treated in such a way. Who would blame them for turning their back on "the Church"?

Thank you again for your article, your comments as always helps us to focus on the real message of Jesus.

■ *Janet Godsell*

Essay – A doctor's visit to Cambodia

Maureen Rogers

This is a copy of a report Dr Maureen Rogers wrote for her family and friends after a visit to Cambodia earlier this year. Maureen is a recently retired dermatologist who worked at Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children for 30 years. She is enjoying having more time in her retirement for family, photography, walking, traveling and attending courses at the Aquinas Academy.

I have recently had a short but memorable visit to Cambodia. It was an amazing experience on so many levels. I spent a week at the Angkor Hospital for Children in Siem Reap. The hospital was founded and is maintained by an NGO, Friends Without a Border. This organization was started by a Japanese photographer who had experienced help from occupying Americans when he was starving as a child in immediate post-war Japan and felt that this experience led him to feel positive about a natural enemy.

He felt that if children were exposed early to positive experiences involving people from other countries it may influence their opinions and actions as adults. So he decided to start a children's hospital. He is a very successful photographer, working in New York for many years, and through many contacts and continued donors and volunteers got the project going and growing – initially 4 beds some 8 years ago and now about 50.

He happened to be making his annual visit to the hospital when we were there and it was great to meet him – a very quiet, humble, thoughtful man.

The hospital is staffed by 7 senior paediatricians and about 10 junior staff. The paediatricians have had no formal training in paediatrics but have just learnt on the job with help from visiting specialists. Their medical training was also very limited in that the medical school in Phnom Penh had just started again after the horror years when they attended it – staffed by the remnants of the Cambodian medical profession (only 34 doctors in the whole country survived the Pol Pot regime) and a few Vietnamese and Russian doctors.

However they do a wonderful job under very difficult circumstances. The facilities are very limited. There is just one operating theatre, 2 ventilators and two humidicribs, no piped gases (only large rusty cylinders) and no air conditioning in the wards. They have plenty oral and intravenous antibiotics but no facilities to culture organisms so treatment is all hit and miss. They have

virtually no dermatological preparations oral or topical. They have only had antiretroviral drugs for AIDS in the last year or so and only one doctor has real experience with their use.

There is a huge burden of AIDS, brought in by UN workers when they were sorting out the withdrawal of the Vietnamese who had "liberated" Cambodia from Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge.

These people have such a tragic history and even now the incredibly corrupt government is led by and contains old Khmer Rouge operatives.

There is lots of TB, tetanus, measles encephalitis (no vaccination), and dreadful malnutrition – I saw 3 cases of really severe rickets with irreversible bone changes so the children could hardly walk.

The patients with anything other than the most straightforward congenital heart disease are unable to be operated on – a Korean team comes and does the simple ones at the hospital and a select few go to Korea for operation. All the others just die after a few admissions for pneumonia – in Australia they would all have operations and go on to have a normal life.

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I worked in the outpatients with the junior doctors – saw lots of (fairly ordinary) skin diseases but except for the bacterial infections with nothing appropriate to treat them. I am going to explore possibilities of having some preparations sent over. However their use will be a little difficult because dermatology knowledge is poor (only one previous dermatologist has volunteered, and that several years ago).

The doctors, junior and senior, were desperate for knowledge. They have lectures every day at noon, while having lunch, and at 4PM as well as half an hour of English a day. Khmer is obviously their first language; they did medicine in French and

now are trying to speak English in the hospital as this is the language of most volunteers.

They asked me to give extra lectures at 6.30AM as well as at the other scheduled times. I had simplified the English as much as I could on my Powerpoint slides but the wonderful English teacher had another go with them to simplify it further.

Almost the entire staff came to all my talks and there was also a lot of one-to-one teaching in the outpatients. I have rarely had so avid an audience. I am going to send more material over the next few months and also initiate email contacts so they can send pictures of cases to me. I really want to go back.

A couple of the senior doctors, when we had quiet moments together, talked to me at length about life as a child under Pol Pot, and later with continued fighting between the Vietnamese installed government and remnants of Khmer Rouge – most had lost relatives, one his father and 6 older siblings. It was a great privilege, albeit confronting, that they shared this with me.

The children were absolutely gorgeous, really gentle, well-behaved and funny. The only disruptive ones I saw were wearing nappies and/or bangles indicating that they were from rich families – very few of them at the hospital; they just came when they had been to many private medical clinics (read charlatans) and nothing had worked!

No other babies are in nappies – there is just a cloth or towel the mother carries draped over her shoulder, with the child on her lap and the potentially offending weapon, in the case of little boys, pointing away from herself and straight towards the doctor! It is hard to sit comfortably 12 inches away in the tiny cubicle from a nappiless child whose mother is interpreted as saying has had diarrhoea many times an hour!

There were many emotional moments – the dying emaciated children with AIDS and their sick sad mothers, the orphaned 8 year old who was the sole carer in hospital for her year old sibling, the blue babies with "untreatable" congenital heart disease and most of all the home visits. The hospital has a service of visiting the homes of the really poor rural patients with AIDS and other chronic illnesses.

The houses were one room on stilts, made of bamboo and reeds with a straw roof – holes everywhere. Underneath ducks, chickens and many dogs wander around. No sanitation to be seen – but one had a generator and a tiny black and white

television! The nurses reiterate the very complicated drug regime for the AIDS patients and get the mothers to put the pills themselves in the right slots for each day – marked with rising, full and setting suns as they are all illiterate – they patiently teach and wait, teach and wait till they get it right.

In one house there were 5 children with a 6 or 7 year old girl in charge as her mother was away for several days collecting reeds, and no father. She was caring for and cooking for her 9 year old seriously disabled non-verbal, non-walking brother with cerebral palsy and her 3 younger siblings, one a toddler. There was an uncovered ground level, 20 foot deep well just metres from the house. One of the kids kept pulling at me to show me something and it was a little pig in a very home-made pen. I guess they think they are wealthy!

We walked for an hour before and up to sunrise each morning around the town of Siem Reap and saw a lot of the back streets, rickety riverside dwellings and market preparations – all a great contrast to the much tidier tourist streets and 5-star hotels in some limited areas.

There are myriads of pushbikes and motorcycles – often 3 on a bike and up to 5 on the motorcycle – as young as babies. And in the whole time there I only saw 3 helmets! Lots of head injuries, no CT or MRI machine in the hospital and no neurosurgeons!

The hospital is just a few kilometers from Angkor Wat and the other Angkor temples so we went there at the weekend, travelling everywhere by tuk-tuk, a wagon on wheels behind a motor cycle. I saw sunrise and sunset at Angkor Wat on the same day and in between the wonderful Angkor Thom temple of Bayon with faces of the God looking at you from every position and the strangler fig entwined Ta Promh. On the second day we went to the exquisitely carved Banteah Srei.

All in all a memorable experience - the temples were spectacular but the longer lasting memories will be the faces of the children.

For anyone interested in reading more about the hospital and Friends Without a Border see websites www.angkorhospital.org and www.fwab.org ■

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Enormous amounts of time and energy have been spent on claims that change mandated by the Council has not been implemented – or at least not fully implemented. Those who complain can assemble a formidable and convincing list of disappointments. Let me mention only three.

First, in a revolutionary retrieval of the Church's government during the first millennium of Christianity, Vatican II voted for the collegiality of the bishops – that is to say, for the joint responsibility of all bishops, united in communion with the Bishop of Rome, in guiding the universal Church.

But since the Council the centralised control exercised by offices in the Roman Curia has hampered bishops in the exercise of their collegial authority. Various institutions and powerful individuals have sidelined the bishops, and acted as “gatekeepers”, concerned to screen the heritage of Vatican II and let only some things through.

We still have a long way to go, at least in the world of Western Catholicism, before the genuine collegial working of bishops finally does away with the widespread sense of their being primarily employees of the Pope or officials working for a papal chief executive.

Second, in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Vatican II proclaimed that sharing in the Mass is the supreme “activity” of the whole Church, the “fountain from which all her power flows” (no.10). The celebration of the Eucharist is the heart of the life of the Catholic Church. The Church is where the Eucharist is, and the Eucharist forms the Church.

Given the chronic lack of priests in many countries and the declining number of priests in other countries, far too many Catholics are unable, Sunday by Sunday, to share in the Eucharist, find in it the centre of their existence and draw from it the strength they need for their lives.

A very serious priest shortage threatens the Eucharistic life of the Church. Right now in some countries a long-standing lack of priests is producing a loss of even vestigial Catholic identity, a flight to other Christian communities, or else simply religious indifference.

To meet the challenge we need the far-sighted policy of ordaining to the priesthood married men, who in many cases are already exercising pastoral leadership as catechists, pastoral administrators, or permanent deacons.

Third, by dedicating to lay persons an entire document (the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People) and sections of other documents (the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), Vatican II recognised the fundamental equality of all the baptised, their universal vocation to holiness, and their sharing in responsibility of the Church.

In his 1999 apostolic exhortation *Ecclusia in America* (The Church in America), John Paul II wrote of baptism conferring on

all who receive it “a dignity which includes the imitation and following of Christ, communion with one another, and the missionary mandate to bring “their brothers and sisters to encounter the living Jesus Christ”. Any renewal in Catholic life, he added, will be impossible without “the active presence of the laity ... they are largely responsible for the future of the Church”.

Beyond question, much has happened for the laity since the Council. But in many countries a clericalised culture dies hard and continues to inhibit the active presence of the lay men and women in the Church's mission to the world.

One could go on endlessly about these and other reforms and changes that fidelity to Vatican II requires. An experience in Germany during the third session of the Council convinced me, however, that its vision of Jesus is the heart of the matter. Michael Ramsey, three years into his stint as Archbishop of Canterbury, spoke to nearly a thousand boys and girls from two boarding schools for the children of army personnel.

He might have chosen to talk about the teaching of Vatican II and what that would bring in promoting closer relations between divided Christians. Instead, he delivered a Christ-centred address and finished by asking the boys and girls to repeat after him a prayer by St Richard of Chichester:

Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits thou has given me – for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me. O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother, may I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, and follow thee more nearly.

Even though he did not explain his choice, Ramsey presumably selected this lovely prayer because it came from a saintly bishop in the undivided Christian Church of medieval England. The archbishop also sensed, I believe, that the richest legacy of the Council would be Jesus himself. The Council issued no specific document about Jesus Christ, but his presence pervades all 16 texts.

One might talk endlessly about reforms and changes that fidelity to the Second Vatican Council requires. But any efforts to renew the Church will remain spiritually empty, emotionally hollow and even doctrinally unsound unless they draw inspiration and life from the founder of Christianity himself. ■

This is an excerpt from an essay by Gerald O'Collins SJ – “The Heart of the Council” - published in The Tablet, in December 2005. Fr O'Collins is professor of Systematic Theology at the Gregorian University, Rome.

Words for a Pilgrim People

"God so loved the world he gave his only Son" (John 3:16)

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"Who am I? ... I am one loved by Christ." (Thomas Merton. "Conference on Prayer," **Sisters Today**, XLI (1970), 5.)

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"God's love for us is not the reason for which we should love him. God's love for us is the reason for us to love ourselves. How could we love ourselves without this motive?" (Simone Weil, **The Simone Weil Reader**, Ed. George A. Panichas, David McKay, 1977, 351.)

□□□

"Let me read with open eyes the book my days are writing -- and learn." Dag Hammarskjold, *Markings*, Trans. Leif Sjöberg and W. H. Auden, Alfred A. Knopf, 1976, 131.)

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"After that it got pretty late. And we both hadda go, but it was great seeing Annie again, right? I realized what a terrific person she was and - and how much fun it was just knowing her and I - I thought of that old joke, you know, this-this-this guy goes to a psychiatrist and says, 'Doc, uh, my brother's crazy. He thinks he's a chicken.' And, uh, the doctor says, 'Well, why don't you turn him in?' And pretty much how I feel about relationships. You know, they're totally irrational and crazy and absurd and ... but, uh, I guess we keep goin' through it because, uh, most of us need the eggs." (Woody Allen, "Annie Hall" in **Four Films of Woody Allen**, Random House, 1982, 105.)

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The Bible – The beginning of joy

On the Feast of the Ascension (Year C), we meditate on Luke's account of Jesus' parting (24:46-53). It is a stylised little text, full of references beyond itself. For example, Luke uses the word – *exagein* – when he speaks of Jesus "leading them out" to the place of the Ascension. The Septuagint had used this same Greek word to describe God's action in the Exodus. This suggests the core story of God's liberating relationship with the people has come to a critical point of victory and triumph. The story will continue in the light of this victory and triumph down through the ages. The victory and triumph are emphasized by the words that "he was carried up to heaven" (v51). Jesus' journey – "he set his face towards Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51) – ends in communion with the One who sent him, the One he has called Father (see Luke 11:2). Mission accomplished!

To be in the presence of true joy is to be close to God. To be joyful is to be caught up in the presence of God breaking free in the world.

And Luke's reference to joy is very deliberate and full of possibility: "They went back to Jerusalem full of joy" (24:52). In the beginning of his Gospel, Luke has the Angel Gabriel greet Mary with the word "*Chaire!*" (1:28). It literally means "Rejoice!" and it is not a Jewish greeting. And on the night of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, Luke has an angel say to the shepherds: "Do not be afraid. Look I bring you news of great joy. A joy to be shared by the whole people" (2:10).

There are several obvious features about this proclamation of joy. Firstly, it comes out of the blue. It is a total surprise. Which suggests the second feature of this joy: It is not the result of human effort or human strategy. This is definitely not organised joy. What has happened? We are reminded of a third feature: Genuine joy, like all the best qualities of life, is given, it is pure grace. Real joy has a spontaneity and graciousness about it because it is free of ego. There is not an ounce of compulsion in real joy. The fourth feature is that joy is a manifestation of the Divine. God is at work here, unhindered. To be in the presence of true joy is to be close to God. To be joyful is to be caught up in the presence of God breaking free in the world. ■

The Tradition – Love begets joy

If the Christian tradition has an Achilles heel, it may in be in regard to joy. The outside observer of our tradition might easily find a lot of evidence to suggest that we are a joyless lot. Worse, they might even be led to think that we think being po-faced is a sign of God's blessings. The recent Swedish film, *As it is in Heaven*, struggles with this very thing. The Lutheran Pastor and his brand of "Christianity" are portrayed in stark contrast with the joy of living that the maestro is able to elicit in his work with the church choir. *Babette's Feast* is a film along similar lines. Umberto Eco's novel, *The Name of the Rose*, has a monk as a villain at the centre of the story and his one aim in life is to prevent the discovery of Aristotle's treatise on laughter. In Australia, we are only too aware of the "wowsers" tradition which we roundly condemn.

Any fair reading of the Gospels lands us in the middle of the Easter Story. This is the ultimate Story of joy, surely. So where does it all break down?

One place where we may go wrong is in our emphasis on behaving ourselves, "doing the right thing." The best of the tradition does not place the primary emphasis on what we do or do not do. The primary emphasis is placed on God, what God has done, what God is doing and what God has promised to do. The moment we make ourselves and our behaviour the primary emphasis we head on down the path of the Genesis tragedy: "The day you eat (the fruit) your eyes will be open and you will be like gods, knowing good from evil" (3:5). That misplaced emphasis inevitably leads us into egotisms of one kind or another. This is a somber path. On the other hand, if the primary emphasis is on God's love, if we make God's love the beginning and end of our lived reality as well as our articulation of the faith, if we walked in the world burning with the memory of God's love for each of us, what a difference it would make! This is a joyful path. ■

... if we walked in the world burning with the memory of God's love for each of us, what a difference it would make!

Bulletin Board

Catalyst Calendar (Info: Pauline on 02 9816 4262) SIP Meetings

www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm

NSW and ACT – 7.30-9.00pm unless specified:

- **Albury** New Albury Hotel, Kiewa St (Info: Joan 6021 6880).
- **Batemans Bay** Soldiers Club, Beach Rd.
- **Blackheath – What the World Needs Now...** The Gardners Inn July 11 “A Voice for Justice” Pat Drummond & Rev Ruth Thomas (Info: Elizabeth 4787 6198).
- **Bowral** The Grand Bar and Brasserie (Info: Julian 4861 4649).
- **Braidwood** Servicemen’s Club (Info: Pauline 4842 2829).
- **Engadine – How can we leave the World a better place for our Children?** Sutherland United Services Club, 7 East Pde, May 16 “A Place without Religious Prejudice” Makiz Ansari & tba (Info: Elizabeth 9520 0617 or Annette 9548 2475).
- **Goulburn – Let your Words be for the Improvement of Others (Eph 1:29)** - Soldiers Club (Info: Tony 4822 2636).
- **Inner West** The Pine Inn Burwood/Concord (Info: James 0418 242 932).
- **Jamberoo – Prophets in Our Time** The Jamberoo Hotel May 14 “Prophets in our Time – Robbing our Children of a Healthy Future” Col Brown & Phil Woods (Info: Gabrielle 4232 2735).
- **Kincumber – And the Greatest of These is Love** - The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive June 5 Garry Kirkby & Janet Seath & Frank Scaysbrook (Info: Carmen 4367 2743 or Sue 4334 3174).
- **North Sydney – Maintaining Human Dignity ... Mission Impossible?** – Union Hotel, Pacific Hwy & West St, North Sydney, May 21 “Human Dignity and Social Justice – Love one another with mutual affection, outdo one another in showing honour” Jack de Groot & Alex Nelson (Info: Michelle 9958 5963).
- **Paddington – The Heart of the Matter** – Bellevue Hotel June 6 “The Heart of the Matter: Conversation” Roslyn Bradley & Tim O’Hearn (Info: Marea 9387 3152).
- **Penrith** Golf Club June 27 “Living our Spirituality in caring for others” Kerry Dolaghan & tba (Info: Sue 9760 2324).
- **St George** Kings Head Tavern South Hurstville (Info: Greg 9546 2028).
- **Waitara – Ours is a Destitute Time. What is the way forward for Religion?** -

The Blue Gum Hotel May 16 Teresa Pirola & Peter Maher (Info: Carole 9869 1036(a/h)).

Victoria

- **Ballarat North Midlands Golf Club**, Heinz Lane, Second Wednesday each month 12.00-2pm (Info: Kevin 5332 7451).
 - **Bendigo - Hope** Foundry Arms Hotel 8pm-9.30pm (Info: Helen 0409 212 009).
 - **Bulleen** Veneto Club, 191 Bulleen Rd, 8pm-9.30pm May 16 “Leadership in the Church” Peter Price (Info: Charles 0417 319 556).
 - **Clayton** The Notting Hotel, 8pm-9.30pm (Info: Jo 9807 1912).
 - **Colac** Central Hotel-Motel May 17 “A missionary experience in Tanzania” Melissa Patterson (Info: Clare 5236 2091).
 - **Fitzroy** Pumphouse Hotel, 128 Nicholson St, 8pm-9.30pm June 6 Fr Richard Leonard (Info: Denise 9816 3001)
 - **Goulburn Valley** Terminus Hotel (Shepparton) May 21 (Info: Kerry 0408 579 904).
 - **Mornington** The Royal Hotel, Victoriana Room, 770 The Esplanade, 8pm-9.30pm, May 23 “A life lived in Fear is a life half-lived” Greg Lowe & Margaret Clerke (Info: Colleen 9775 2163 or Carole 5976 1024).
 - **Southern** The Dev Hotel, Cnr Bay & New Streets, Brighton, 7.30pm-9pm (Info: Kevin 9776 2705)
 - **Wangaratta** Café Martini (Info: Kate 5721 6322).
 - **Western** Victoria on Hyde, Yarraville May 15 “Spirituality and our Biological Limitations” Rev Dr Norman Ford sdb & Molly Carlile (Info: Anne 9312 3595).
 - **Woodend** Holgate Brewhouse-Keatings Hotel (Info: Marg 5429 5907).
- ### Other States
- **Devonport (TAS)** Molly Malone’s Irish Pub, (Info: Graham 6424 8286).
 - **Hobart** North Moonah Café Bar & Bistro (Info: Tony 6273 8590).
 - **Perth (WA)** The Elephant and Wheelbarrow, cnr Francis & Lake Sts, Northbridge 7.30-9.10pm (Info: Deborah 0419 939 864).
 - **Verdun (SA)** Stanley Bridge Tavern, Onkaparinga Rd June 5 “The Homeless Spirit” Ian Cox & tba (Info: Gerald 8388 5957).
- ### Other Matters and Events
- **St Mary’s Towers Retreat Centre**, Douglas Park, May 2-10 “Spirituality of Journey” retreat/dir retreat; 11-19 Life’s Healing Journey/dir retreat; 21-29 dir retreat; June 8-11 Life’s Healing Journey; 15-17 & 15-21 The soul’s journey; 22-24

Men’s retreat (Info: 02 4630 9232 ext 101).
◦ **Mount Saint Benedict Centre** Pennant Hills has facilities for group bookings, for day or residential seminars and conferences. Daily sessions and weekend packages available. A number of programmes available for 2007 (Info: 02 9484 6208).

Catalyst for Renewal Victoria

Reflection Morning

May 12th, 9.30am – 12.30pm

Currajeen, 811 Bridge Inn Road,
Doreen

“The Spirituality of our Lives”

Maria George

Entry by donation

Information 0425 878 236 or

Email macrsc@netspace.net.au

Catalyst for Renewal Sydney

Reflection Morning

May 19th, 9.30am – 12.30pm

Marist Centre, 1 Mary Street,
Hunters Hill

“Are gestures stars in sacred
dishevelment?” The Revelation of
the Extraordinary in the Ordinary
in Australian Literature

Dr Michael Griffith

Information (02) 9816 4262

Entry by donation

USEFUL LINKS

www.chiesa

[This site offers a regular free
email service with Pope
Benedict’s homilies and talks.
The Easter homilies are well
worth meditating on.]

www.aquinas-academy.com

[Go to “Reflections” for a
regular column by Michael
Whelan SM.]

Recommended

Eamon Duffy, *Faith of Our Fathers: Reflections on Catholic Tradition*, Continuum, ISBN: 0-8264-7479-9, 2004, pb, 187 pages.

It is possible to get trapped by nostalgia. This is how things were; they were so much better than the present; if only . . . Regrets, hearkening back, dissatisfaction with what is current: all these are capable of playing tricks on us, all, perhaps, on the assumption that our memory is perfect and totally unbiased. Even tradition can play tricks on us: how far back does something have to be to be honoured by the word "tradition"? We hear of family traditions when in fact they are just customary ways of doing things. Eamon Duffy's book looks at his traditions growing up in Ireland in an all-inclusive Catholic tradition. Many Australian readers would recognise the same customs: the same hymns, the prayers to the saints, Mary, priests, papal authority, sex scandals, hell, praying for the dead – the topics of our tradition are all here. What Eamon Duffy has done, however, is to discern what the continuity between the past and the present is for him. His chapter on Mary, for example, singles out the Vatican and later John Paul II focus on Mary's relevance to all Christians today. The chapter on saints has both the fun of belief in non-existent people and the seriousness of seeing the significance of those who allow the divine to break through into our lives. He takes tradition seriously, insisting on its plurality and our need to use it critically rather than holus-bolus. This is a very easy book to read and one that cares about the past and strives to see the relevance to today's circumstances

Solomon Schimmel, *The Seven Deadly Sins. Jewish, Christian, and Classical Reflections on Human Psychology*, Oxford University Press, 1977, ISBN: 0-19-511945-2, 298 pages, notes, bibliography, names and topic index, pb, \$38.13.

That awful word: sin, and seven of them! This Jewish writer takes us into the darkest side of human nature, examining the dysfunction of a life centred on any of the seven – pride, envy, anger, lust, gluttony, greed, and sloth. It's not a pretty picture to read of the underbelly of human behaviour, but it does exist and we do need to be constantly alert to our weaknesses. Schimmel is a psychotherapist and contrasts the differences between a secular perspective on actions and a faith perspective. In each of the main chapters he searches for the perspective of the Jewish and Christian faiths in particular and measures these against the claims of modern psychology. In many cases the latter is found wanting, neglecting the "other" who is, for the Christian, the neighbour. He uses literature, Milton, Shakespeare, the Hebrew scriptures, Aquinas, Seneca and others to consider the sins from so many perspectives, always coming back to the sense that Christianity makes of sin and the redemptive alternative to the "seven deadly" sins. The reader might find it useful to remind herself/himself of the more common expressions of the sins that occur in daily life and just how prone we are to these. This is a book that hasn't dated from its first publication and is a timely reminder of the wisdom of so many, namely, that giving in to these traits are deadly to the good life.

Frank Brennan, *Acting on Conscience. How can we responsibly mix law, religion and politics?* University of Queensland Press, 2006, ISBN: 0 7022 3582 2, 267 pages, Endnotes, index, pb, \$32.

One of the more extraordinary reviews of this book lamented that there were no signs that the author was a Catholic priest. It is clear that Frank Brennan writes as a Catholic priest. His legal training is as clear as his catholic social conscience and his adherence to Catholic teaching. When the book was launched, the secular press was more concerned with politicians than the contents of the book itself. For all who knew neither of these facts, be assured that this is a good and vital read. There is a lot for each adult to consider about their civic duty, the teaching of the Church, the relationship between politics, religion and the law. We have to be grateful that Frank is both erudite and also able to write of complex matters with simplicity so that all adults are able to work through the details of following conscience, making sensible political decisions in conformity to conscience illuminated by the teaching of the Church. Frank addresses significant issues: abortion, stem-cell research, same sex unions, IVF, conscience: a heady list of topics significant to any thinking Australian going to the polls in 2007. Readers might disagree with Frank Brennan's conclusions; they will be unable to say that he hasn't thought long and hard, that his commitment to the Church is lacking. This is an important book for all Australians to use to think through election issues, to consider the teaching of the Church and to make an informed choice at election time.

WE REGRET THAT WE MUST INFORM ALL OUR FRIENDS THAT THE JULY 2007 ISSUE OF THE MIX WILL BE THE LAST.

THIS DECISION HAS BEEN MADE DUE PRIMARILY TO MICHAEL WHELAN'S UNAVAILABILITY TO CONTINUE AS EDITOR.

CURRENT SUBSCRIBERS WILL RECEIVE A LETTER IN JUNE EXPLAINING HOW CATALYST WILL CONTINUE AND GIVING INFORMATION CONCERNING REFUNDS

WE KNOW WE CAN DEPEND ON YOUR GENEROSITY AND PATIENCE.

PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

**CFR, PO Box 139, Gladesville 1675
T 02 9816 4262**

DEUS CARITAS EST

“God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1John 4:16). These words from *The First Letter of John*, express with remarkable clarity the heart of the Christian faith: the Christian image of God and the resulting image of mankind and its destiny. In the same verse, Saint John also offers a kind of summary of the Christian life: ‘We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us.’

We have come to believe in God's love: in these words the Christian can express the fundamental decision of his or her life. Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. Saint John's Gospel describes that event in these words: ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should ... have eternal life’ (3:16). In acknowledging the centrality of love, Christian faith has retained the core of Israel's faith, while at the same time giving it new depth and breadth.”

(Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 1.)