



Vision

Faith

Engagement

CHAMPAGNAT

AN INTERNATIONAL MARIST JOURNAL OF CHARISM IN EDUCATION

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Feature Article:

Fostering spiritual vigour and integrity in
Australia's Catholic Schools

Michael Green F.M.S

*Come Jesus, come,
give strength to the light and to the good,
come where dishonesty, ignorance of God, violence and
injustice dominate.
Come, Lord Jesus, give strength to the good in the world
and help us to be bearers of your light,
workers of peace,
witnesses of truth.
Come.*

(Benedict XVI)



*A reflective stillness lies at the centre of Advent.
Quietly, but insistently, it awakens our hope and invites us
to wait upon the Lord
who will fulfil his promise.*

*It assures us that we will not wait in vain.
Advent calls us to renew and deepen our trust,
while the world finds trust difficult,
and hope is dismissed as naïve.
Now, in this season of Advent,
we come to know that this time,
the time in which we live,
whatever the time,
is the time of our redemption.*

(James Hanvey S.J.)



Champagnat

An International Marist Journal of Charism in Education

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Champagnat: An International Marist Journal of Charism in Education aims to present information on research, educational practice and policy-making in the field of Marist Schools Australia Melbourne and other associated areas in a format that is accessible to both researcher and practitioner, within and beyond the international Marist network. Qualitative and quantitative data, case studies, historical analyses and more theoretical, analytical and philosophical material are welcomed. The journal aims to assist in the human formation and exploration of ideas of those who feel inspired by a charism, its nature and purpose. In this context, charism is seen as a gift to an individual, in our case Marcellin Champagnat, who in turn inspires a movement of people, often internationally, across generations. Such an educational charism encourages people to gather, to share faith, to explore meaning, to display generosity of spirit and to propose a way forward for education, particularly of the less advantaged. Consequently, this Journal endeavours to discuss the relationship between charism more generally, and education.

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Beginnings

WELCOME TO OUR final edition of *Champagnat* for 2010. As a way of broadening our editorial team, I have invited Dr Des Connelly to be our Guest Editor for this edition. Des brings with him vast experience as an outstanding educator and leader at all levels of education, as well as intimate knowledge of the inspiration charisma can offer education.

As reported in greater detail later in the journal, we have been fortunate again this year to receive a number of awards. The Australasian Catholic Press Association saw fit to judge our Journal winner in two categories: 'Best Column' and 'Best Devotional Article – Applying Faith to Life'. Both these awards honoured our columnist Lee McKenzie from Lavalla Catholic College,

Traralgon and Newborough for, among other contributions, her inspiring column titled 'I saw Mary in the Supermarket'.

The Australasian Religious Press Association also honoured our Journal in two sections: 'Best Ecumenical Story' with Constant Mews' Article on this theme, and 'Best Feature' with Maureen Kurzman's retelling of her traumatic experience in the Victorian bushfires.

We congratulate and thank these, and all our authors, and pay tribute once again to Juliette and Lucille Hughes for their creative and dedicated editorial and production work for these editions of our Journal.

John McMahon

Preview

THE THEME FOR this fourth issue of the journal for 2010 is highlighted on the front cover. It is the call to all Christians to be fully engaged in the spiritual growth of a world viewed through the eyes of an ever deepening faith. In the

masterly feature article Michael Green demonstrates how the tendency to consider laity as on a lower spiritual plane than clergy is at variance with the attitudes revealed through the Gospels and associated sacred writings. These emphasise that all Christians are called to the classless category of 'followers of Christ'. From the late Middle Ages practical recognition of this central truth tended to be prevented by tacit acceptance of levels of spirituality, the laity almost by definition being relegated to the lower ones.

Nevertheless, throughout the centuries, as Brother Michael cogently points out, it is often lay people who have spearheaded a resurgence of spirituality in the Church. In the vanguard of forces engaged in this kind of mission throughout the 20th century, and often unnoticed by the Church in general, were ecclesial movements of various kinds, predominantly but not exclusively lay. Having established this important context the author turns his attention to the spirituality that is a desirable quality in all personnel in catholic schools today. His words make compelling reading. They invite close attention, reflection and action from all interested and involved in having Catholic

education serve its central purpose. The questions raised are so vital that they will be further explored by Michael Green and others in successive issues of the Journal through 2011.

In a short article Charles Chaput, the noted Franciscan Archbishop of Denver, provides a related perspective. He warns that Catholic institutions of higher education can become like a cup of salt that has lost both flavour and purpose. In a similar vein, Michael Green's feature article speaks of the signs that, while there are many fervently Catholic schools, some nominally Catholic schools in Australia are becoming increasingly secular. Readers of the first of this year's issues may recall Charles Gay's experience of certain U.K. Catholic schools that in practice promoted norms antithetic to Gospel values.

At the root of such developments is what Archbishop Chaput has described in another of his writings as the modern world's spirit-destroying 'state religion' of unbelief. Whether such unbelief be deliberate and ideological, or lazy and pragmatic, he says, its outcome is a compression and destruction of the human spirit, and a society without higher purpose.

The missionary obligations of Christians include renewing their country's ideals through proclaiming and practising Gospel-based permanent virtues. Accordingly, the Archbishop urges, they must oppose modern attitudes that regard values as essentially relative, that is, open to being abandoned when they are judged inconvenient.

Indisputably, upholding Gospel values as proclaimed by the Church should be core business for Catholic educational institutions. Yet in practice some can come to downplay their close relationship with the Church, or effectively treat Catholic teaching as peripheral to their main interests. In such cases, in the archbishop's judgement, they are virtually proclaiming that they have nothing new or confident to say.

Scanning an inflight magazine recently I came across an advertisement for a prestigious metropolitan college. Clearly displayed was a plaque proclaiming the association of the school with a particular religious denomination. The benefits of attending the school as detailed in the text of the advertisement could have been applied almost unchanged to

two or three government high schools in my neighbourhood. How many 'independent' schools, technically affiliated to a religious denomination, are in fact little more than better endowed and more expensive versions of good government schools?

For Archbishop Chaput, as for Brother Michael Green, a bulwark against such a development lies in educational leaders and teaching staff who are zealous in advancing the Gospel, courageous in resisting what is wrong, and forthright in distinguishing good from evil. Their basic inspiration is the charism of Christ. For many this is given added impetus and direction through the motivating and energising force derived from the spirit and vision of outstanding Christians such as Mary of the Cross and Marcellin Champagnat.

This journal aims to play a helping role in fostering in educators the qualities to which both Green and Chaput refer. Through the standard and nature of the contents it seeks to deepen their sense of their personal vocation, encourage them to a constructive experience of communion with others, and propel them into mission.

The renowned White Father, Joseph Donders, has written for this issue an article that encourages profound reflection on the significance of the Eucharist. His views and the article by Joel Hodge on cultural norms complement one another in a number of respects and also provide supplementary dimensions to the Green-Chaput thesis. On the question of the various kinds of migration that are a phenomenon of our times, Daniel Groody arrestingly examines what theology can offer to clarify our thinking on this complex issue. Kate Fogarty gives an inspiring perspective on World Youth Days, while the team of Michael Elligate, Lee McKenzie and Carolyn Young combine to heighten awareness of the spiritual significance of the current liturgical season of Advent. The spirit of the season

is also beautifully captured in the photograph by Cathy Floros of her three daughters absorbed in the lighting of the fourth candle in the family's Advent wreath. Frederick McMahon gives us the second in his series of articles on Jean-Claude Courveille, perhaps the most complex of the personalities involved in the earliest days of the Marists. Berise Heasley briefly reflects on the importance of the media and provides engaging reviews of three selections from the print media. Richard Leonard rounds off our offerings with a detailed and insightful review of a new DVD on Mary MacKillop. Varied fare! but hopefully contributing in significant ways to deepening the commitment of our readers to vocation, to communion and to mission.

Des Connelly

Catholic schools are characterised by the institutional link they keep with the Church hierarchy. This guarantees that instruction and education are grounded in the principles of the Catholic faith and imparted by teachers of right doctrine and probity of life.

Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, 8 September 2009

Contributors

CHARLES J. CHAPUT OFM. CAP. Belonging to the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin since 1965 and member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Tribe he became the first native American archbishop when he was appointed to Denver Co. in 1997. In his writings and public addresses he is forthright in calling on Catholics to deepen their commitment to Scripture and to the teachings and traditions of the Church.

JOSEPH G. DONDERS M.AFR. is a member of the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), Emeritus Professor in Mission and Cross-cultural Studies, Washington Theological Union, he has taught and lectured worldwide, and is a much published author.

MICHAEL ELLIGATE for 23 years has been Parish Priest of St. Carthage's University parish, in the Melbourne suburb of Parkville. He chairs various committees in Human Ethics Research at the University of Melbourne, is deputy chair of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical

Research Ethics Committee, and has maintained a keen interest in scriptural research over many years.

KATE FOGARTY has held senior positions in a number of Marist schools and is currently Co-Principal of St. Joseph's College in Echuca, Vic., a school under the governance of the Brigidine Sisters.

Featured author:

MICHAEL GREEN FMS is National Director of Marist Schools Australia and is based at the Montagne Centre in the Melbourne suburb of Brunswick. His experience of Catholic schools has included secondary school teacher, principal, supervisor of schools and researcher. His studies, including doctoral research, have been mainly in the areas of curriculum, organisational culture and spirituality.

DANIEL G. GROODY Member of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, an order of priests and brothers founded in 1837 in Le Mans, France, Father Groody is

Contributors

a scholar, award-winning author and film producer. He teaches at the University of Notre Dame (Indiana), where he is Assistant Professor of Theology and Director of the Centre for Latino Spirituality and Culture. He spent many years working in Latin America, particularly along the U.S.- Mexican Border.

BERISE HEASLY has had lengthy experience in Catholic and Independent education, also has substantial editorial experience, and has been actively involved in the publication of 'Champagnat' over a number of years.

JOEL HODGE is a Lecturer in Systematic Theology in the School of Theology, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University, Melbourne. His doctoral study at The University of Queensland focused on East Timor, and examined how Christian faith forms responses to violence and oppression.

RICHARD LEONARD a Jesuit Priest, is the Director of the Australian Catholic Film Office. He has

completed a PhD in cinema studies at the University of Melbourne, and is a widely respected author and public speaker.

LEE MCKENZIE Head of St. Paul's Campus of Lavalla Catholic College in Latrobe City, Victoria won awards in 2010 from the Australian Catholic Press Association for the 'Best Column' and for the 'Best Devotional Article Applying Faith to Life', both of which were published in Champagnat.

FREDERICK McMAHON fms is a Marist Brother whose thorough research into many aspects of Marist history has revealed a wealth of interesting detail about the early period of the Marists.

CAROLYN YOUNG is the Director of Mission at Assumption College Kilmore, where she has worked for thirteen years. Carolyn also serves on both the Melbourne Province's Interim Ministry Council and the Champagnat Education Animation Committee.

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Specifically for Advent there are four short and very prayerful chants in 'Sing Spirit, Sing Life: Scripture-Based Chants for Liturgy & Prayer' (Marist Brothers 1996).

The album 'Song of the Pilgrim' (Spectrum Publications, 2000) includes the beautiful Advent hymn 'Give us new hearts, O Lord'.

Inquiries to Brother Michael at mherry@maristmelb.org.au



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SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

THOUGHTFUL observers commonly speak about the distinction between managing a school and leading it. Jamie Madigan's views on 'Spiritual leadership and the concept of kingdom' remind us that happily many of our schools are led by enlightened people who know the difference.

Margaret Hunter
Perth WA

ST. PAUL AND THE EDUCATIONAL LEADER

OBVIOUSLY there is much to learn from current writings about leadership. But thanks to Elizabeth Monahan for showing how inspiring figures from the distant past can throw fresh light on situations we cope with today.

Cath Baker
Sydney NSW

CHRIST COMES TO GREENE COUNTY

THE ARTICLE headed 'Christ comes to Greene County' was very informative and will inspire more people to take up the challenge. When I am involved with groups undertaking this work I stress to them that the activity is not Community Service where you feel good about yourself. It is about walking with the marginalised and doing it from a Gospel perspective. It is allowing Christ to speak to you through these people whose lives you have entered. This is why prayer and reflection daily is important when on mission. There is an important apostolate for a number of us to mentor the many young people that are now looking for a 'Greene County' whether at home or abroad. I was also touched by Brian Schumacher's article about his daughter Cassie in El Salvador. I have been in contact with Cassie regularly by email. Her last account on her blog is from the heart, and demonstrates how the Lord has really touched her. We need to assist her to integrate her experience into her life in Australia.

Doug Walsh FMS
Brunswick VIC



THANKS FOR sending me the article titled 'Christ Comes to Greene County'. I read it a number of times and, aside from the fact that the author gives me too much credit, I find something new in it each time. The bottom line for me can be summed up in the thought that everyone can do something to help build up the kingdom of God. Experts have a role to play, but so too do the non-experts. I hope that the article inspires others to take a chance and, as Mother Teresa said, do 'something beautiful for God.'

**Patrick Cullen PP. VF.
Bessemer, Alabama**

THANK YOU for permission to use the article on the website of Unum Omnes (The International Federation of Catholic Men). Father Cullen and his team have a lot to be proud of. Their commitment and dedication also make Catholics in general proud of them. It is important to publicise these 'good news' stories as a counter to the negative media attitude to the whole Church and its priests. The appalling crimes of a minority

are being used to beat the liberal and anti-clerical drum. The kind of work that Father Pat has been organising is of inestimable value. And the fact that he does it all in such a quiet and humble way makes it even more admirable. I often ponder on aspects of Pope Benedict's *Deus Caritas Est* which raise the question, 'Who is my neighbour?'. That question can sound misleading in that it seems to ask which people are my neighbours and which are not. The Pope explained it well when he said: 'The issue is no longer which other person is a neighbour to me. The question is about me. I have to become the neighbour, and when I do, the other person counts for me as myself'.

**Niall Kennedy KCSG
President: Unum Omnes,
Dublin, Ireland**



Comments of about 150 words are invited to stimulate further thinking on a previously published article. They should be emailed to: descon@netspace.net.au Subject: 'As I See It'.

CHAMPAGNAT WRITERS WIN AWARDS

Congratulations to those of our writers whose excellent work was formally recognised in the 2010 awards of the *Australasian Catholic Press Association* and *The Australasian Religious Press Association*.

Australasian Catholic Press Association: Lee McKenzie for 'Best Column'

In singling out *Time of Grief, Time of Grace* (May 2009) for the award the judge also drew attention to *I Saw Mary in the Supermarket* (August 2009) and *Launching* (December 2009). The first of these three articles was described as 'without doubt the most powerful and evocative account (the judge) had read in relation to the Victorian bushfires', while in relation to the other articles there was commendation of Lee's ability to present a word picture of the spiritual underlay of everyday events.

Lee McKenzie for 'Best Devotional Article Applying Faith to Life'

Again in this category *I Saw Mary in the Supermarket* (August 2009) was considered outstanding. In the words of the judges: 'The author pinpoints something quite beautiful in a very ordinary event. The writing is original, fresh and accessible. There is a lightness of style which reflects the subject matter; however, the structure of the piece displays a depth of reflection and insight.'

Australasian Religious Press Association:

Constant J. Mews for 'Best Ecumenical Story' (Silver Award)

'*Catholicism, Nostra Aetate and Inter-religious Dialogue*' (May 2009) was described as 'a thoughtful and informative curtain-raiser to the Parliament of the World's Religions (Melbourne, December 2009), blending historical, theological and personal perspectives on the evolution of the Catholic Church's understanding of the nature of its catholicity up to the present.'

Maureen Kurzman for 'Best Feature-Single Author' (Highly Commended)

'*Inferno and After*' (August 2009) was singled out as well-written, compelling and human in conveying a graphic first-hand account of the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria, where faith transcended chaos and loss.

MICHAEL ELLIGATE

Handling advent with some insights from the scriptures

DECEMBER IS A mad month for most of us. It seems that everything has to be done before Christmas. Yet the cycle of readings in these four Advent Sundays contain a package of gems for the searching believer.

Advent Season is about the one who is coming, and each set of Sunday readings look, from vastly different perspectives, at whom and what is coming.

The first set of Sunday readings are rather weird and wild! They are what scholars call eschatological. Here we explore the Christian tradition about the last things and images about the end of time.

One of the first major adjustments for early Christians, was to recognise that the end of time and the return of the Lord was not about to happen today or tomorrow. Jesus himself died expecting the end of things was very near. The Christian communities' adjustment to the reality of digging in for the long haul, reaches down to us.

So we have these apocalyptic Gospel passages with preaching about disturbances upon the earth and great cosmic happenings in the sky.

Both the passages from the Book of Daniel, The Book of Revelations, and the references towards the end of the Gospels, are designed to get us to take a stand in life. Though our world may be falling down all around us, the message is stand firm, stand tall in the Lord. Our world can and does fall down around us, in life's crisis moments.

Through the imagery of the texts, comes the steady call to remain firm and faithful in the ways of The Lord.

In a pre-scientific world, the Crucified and Risen Lord returning on a cloud surrounded by mighty angels, was an effective image. We would see this as precisely an image or metaphor trying to describe the

end of time, together with the final coming of the Lord.

Within the dramatic images is a sense that our God is the Lord of all things. All times and seasons ultimately come from Him. Here is the moment of commitment for us – in the beginning and in the end we place our lives before the Lord. The searching believer takes the option that through all distress and turbulence, the spirit of the Lord will nurture and guide us. We too await the final coming and, just as importantly, we look for the presence of our God who comes to us many times in life, not just at the end.

The middle Sundays focus on the person of John the Baptist. In three Gospels, Jesus does not know John, but hears of him and seeks him out. John the Baptist is the catalyst that draws Jesus out into public life, and sets him on his mission.

Jesus is baptised and becomes a follower of John. Along the way, Jesus breaks out on his own, and gathers his own disciples. We tend to gloss over the possible tension between the two prophetic figures: John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth.

Yet we can see in the Gospel texts, the communities resolving the issue decades later. Assertions like ‘I must decrease, He must increase’ or ‘I am not worthy even to untie the strap of his sandal’ are signs of communities deferring to Jesus, while honouring John.

‘Prepare the way of the Lord’ and ‘a voice crying in the wilderness’ have such resonance for us.

The Lord cannot be born again in Bethlehem this year, but he can only be born in us. In adjusting our lives to his ways, we prepare the way of the Lord, to become present in us.

However, in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus and John are related; their mothers, Mary and Elizabeth, are cousins. Luke creates a narrative that commences prior to Jesus’ birth and has a number of purposes. The words of the angels and the songs of the faithful ones in what we often refer to as ‘The Benedictus’, ‘The Magnificat’ and the ‘Nunc Dimittis’ are very Jewish. Yet they all speak of celebrating all peoples beyond this one faith who will come to see the promises of the Lord fulfilled.

Luke has that genius for the inclusive gesture. Outsiders become insiders. The meals in Luke are all about Jesus bringing the stranger to the table. John the Baptist in Luke has an indelible Jewish heritage: let all the people who surround both John’s and Jesus’ births open the

invitation for all peoples to share in the life of the Lord.

No need to mention here the struggle the Church has to be inclusive in our time!

The final Sunday is often so close to Christmas Day, that the Gospel reading sort of slides into the Christmas story along with the wide variety of Christmas celebrations that overtakes us by this time of the year.

The Gospel passages usually focus on Mary as the mother of Jesus. So we read the stories of 'The Annunciation' or the entry of Joseph into the infancy stories. In recent decades, enormous study has been undertaken on these narratives found only in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

They require a separate consideration in a further article. Suffice to say here that the images of Mary and Joseph proclaimed in the final Gospel readings of Advent, are so helpful. In the midst of life's demands, they are faithful people to God. The stories suggest distress and complications so messy yet they remain true to their convictions, and they steadily trust in God.

Hope and trust are the gifts we crave for so often in life. The pulse of our lives can be steadied by these images from the final Advent Gospels. ■





LEE MCKENZIE

Can't see the Christmas for the Trees?

AS WE CLOSE our calendar year, the church year moves to the season of Advent. It was designed to focus the faithful on the coming of the Christ child, a re-telling and re-living of the experience of the world before his salvation. In the early church it was a time of fasting not unlike Lent, a period of three to six weeks.

Fasting still plays a major role in the Advent celebrations in some of the Orthodox churches. It was Pope Gregory I who formalised the time of Advent to a four-week period and later still Advent was allocated the sombre liturgical colour purple. In the usual way of the Church, with the cyclic re-telling of the Jesus story, the season tries to make real the anticipation and longing for the coming of the saviour and the manifestation of God as man. Advent is a time of 'getting ready' for the birth of the saviour.

For most people and particularly those who don't attend church, the subtleties of purple for the weeks of Advent, the omission of the Gloria during mass, or even the rose coloured robes for Gaudete Sunday to mark the midpoint of Advent are lost in the gaudy mayhem of Christmas marketing. In a bleak, dark winter world of Europe in the Middle Ages, the coloured robes, the glowing symbolism of the Advent wreaths with candles lit in successive weeks, would have been vibrant symbols of hope and anticipation. Fasting would have been quite the norm particularly in the face of limited winter supplies. Yet translating this to the Southern Hemisphere and in modern time these practices, signs and symbols are often lost, or at least obscured by the consumer frenzy that has become entrenched in our culture.

Perhaps Advent is a victim of transportation to Australia. In the Southern Hemisphere, it occurs during some of the longest days of the year, where people have a heightened sense of well-being. It also coincides with the school summer break, known as the Christmas holidays. Rather than the northern hemisphere experience of a build up to Christmas as a midwinter celebration, it is generally a sun-soaked time for children and families to prepare for annual vacations and put away the worries of the school year ready to start again in the new year. For many Australians it has a sense of culmination rather than beginning. This runs counter to the Advent message which focuses on the bleakness before the coming of the Christ child. The Eastern Orthodox Church practices of Nativity fast or Phillips Fast for 40 days prior to Christmas, November 14th to December 24th, seem counter cultural in the midst of what for us are summer celebrations.

It's a common complaint, modern secular Advent seems to start around September with not so subtle hints about lay-bys and pre-paid Xmas hampers. On the 26th of December Christmas is officially ended with the Boxing Day sales. By New Year's Day, hot cross buns

Can't see the Christmas for the Trees?

appear and as consumers we are ready to focus on Easter and the associated marketing opportunities; time to pay off the credit card, pack away the plastic tree and finish the summer holidays. Christmas is reduced to a day, not the Church understanding of 25th December until the Epiphany, a twelve day celebration. Advent becomes lost in the Christmas hype, the focus so tightly on the festive day, that any thoughts of restraint, fasting or self denial seem totally out of place. It's true, if the focus of Christmas isn't really Jesus, then Advent makes little sense. If we have a forest of Christmas trees from October which point us towards a Christmas that seems to leave little room for Jesus, then Advent is lost and irrelevant. There is little reason to go through a period of anticipation.

We live, some say, in the post Christian era, but none the less we are in the world where Christ has already been. Trying to relive the sense of anticipation at his birth is a challenge. In our Australian society of the twenty-first century it is generally a time of excesses, too much eating, too much drinking, too much spending. How do we build up anticipation of Jesus' arrival today when many in our society don't notice they have not welcomed him into their lives, do not realise that they are waiting for him?

While this all sounds a little bleak, it has to be said that something opens our hearts during Advent. The majority of people are moved to reach out to others even if only in a social sense. There is a pervading sense that people need to be "caught up with", social gatherings held and families need to come together over meals. Somehow in the midst of what can be a frantic pace of life in our Australian culture an imperative takes hold. Families, who have spent months not eating at tables, not eating together, gather for the most ancient and possibly sacred tradition- a shared meal. So while for many Advent doesn't have an explicit Christ focus it is a time of preparing themselves to encounter others, to give and receive hospitality.

In our Christian/secular society it takes some skill or faith to read the signs of Advent in our world. For me one of the signs is a trailer at my local supermarket. As the weeks leading to Christmas go by the trailer is slowly filled with donations of toys and food. Each time I shop I can see the collection grow bigger; thankfully it is a modern sacred site, no need to lock it off for fear of stealing. On the last Saturday before Christmas a group of mature aged motorcycle

riders collect the trailer, rally in the main street of town and begin “The Toy Run”. Dressed as Santas, or with bikes glittering with tinsel they ride through local towns gathering more goods until they arrive at the pickup point. There, vans from various charities wait. The riders dismount and bring forward the toys and food, dividing them equally between the organisations so they can be distributed to those in need in our community. I do not hear Jesus name used at the Toy Run, but I feel his presence, inspiring these people to think of others and to celebrate the joy of being human.

While there is a diminution of Christian images for Advent, it is still the one time of the year when families may display religious symbols eg. a nativity set. In most kindergartens, little children still dress as shepherds, angels, Jesus and Mary, to sing ‘Away in a Manger’ to the delight of their parents. Christmas carols are played in public, one of the few occasions when our culture tolerates religious music outside a church ceremony. Many homes and shops display nativity scenes.

Perhaps we need to hold a mirror up to our practices and recast them in a Christian context or amplify them. It is the challenge of modern western culture, when life is relatively good, in an era of instant gratification, why would people long for a kingdom that they don’t understand? We should strive to have people become aware of the Kingdom as it is; present in our midst. Hearts are open, people are willing but they need to hear the message in a meaningful, relevant way. This is where our challenge lies, as people of hope we need to help those around us see Christ in Christmas. We also need to build or highlight rituals that help re-invent Advent for our time. Perhaps the emphasis should be on re-connecting with Christ as we do with family at Christmas. The longing to do this is present; it is obvious in the number of people who attend Christmas church services. After they have come to his table on this one day what do church and faith have to offer to draw them back?

Like so many, I don’t know the answer to this. I simply know that there is a hunger for love and belonging that consumerism or even human relationships cannot satisfy. We know that Jesus waits with open arms for us to accept him into our hearts, and we also know that during Advent and Christmas many hearts are unlocked. What a graced time to reach out and draw people into the comfort of his love. ■

CAROLYN YOUNG

End of Year Liturgy

Preparing a liturgy for the conclusion of the school year is always challenging: we must harness the students' enthusiasm for holidays, distract them from the media's presentation of Christmas as a time of receiving presents, and encourage our young people to give thanks for the opportunities of the year that passed. In the flurry of cleaning out lockers and saying goodbyes, the beginning of Advent can sometimes be forgotten by students keen to exchange Kris Kringle presents! Yet as our end of year liturgies usually take place as Advent begins, we must turn our attention to this significant time of preparation for the coming of Jesus.

The liturgy offered below has been celebrated by Houses at Assumption College at the conclusion of a school year. It can be adapted for a range of parish, school and other groups. It can also be added to in a variety of ways: for example, students may like to act out the gospel, or artworks and symbols may be included to illustrate the prayers. Conversely, the liturgy may also be edited to suit your school's needs (perhaps you know your students won't relish singing! Don't be afraid, however, to give them the chance to – with a bit of preparation, you may find they love it!). Hopefully this liturgy inspires you in some way and assists you as you prepare to end the school year and begin Advent with the young people in your care.

THE HOUSE Coordinator will lead this liturgy. Twelve students are needed to read/light a candle/carry a Bible, one staff member to read, one staff member to work the PowerPoint and one staff member to work the CD player and lead the singing.

As students and staff are entering the Sacred Space, 'Open My Eyes' (by Jesse Manibusan) or suitable alternative should be playing. Students should enter reverently in preparation for our liturgy. Keep repeating this track until all are seated. Begin the liturgy by encouraging the students and staff to join in with the responses and the songs.

Emmanuel – God’s gift for the past, present and future

House Coordinator (H.C.):

We gather now quietly at the end of our year together. We’ve spent our final days at school busy in community: finishing assignments, class work and exams, having fun and spending time in each others’ company. Soon we will break from the demands of school life here at Assumption to be with family, friends from other places and possibly to enjoy beautiful holiday places outside the local community! Right now, we pause to gather our thoughts and prayers as we begin our preparation for Christmas. [PAUSE]

Gathering Prayer:

H.C.: We gather in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

All: Amen.

H.C.: Birthing God, we wait with breathless anticipation for the coming of the Christ Child. Quieten our hearts and minds that we may receive you in holy hospitality,

All: Amen.

H.C.: We come together today to give thanks for the year we have shared as [INSERT NAME] House, and to recognise that we are called as Christians to welcome Jesus into our hearts this Advent season.

And now, we light our Advent candle, symbolizing that we are in the First Week of Advent, our first week of waiting for the arrival of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

(Three students come forward: two to read, and one to light the candle.)

Student 1: As we light the First Advent candle today, we pray that peace will come into our world, our families and our hearts, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Student 2: As we light the Advent candle today, we pray that forgiveness will come into our world, our families and our hearts, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

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Student 1: As we light the Advent candle today, we pray that joy will come into our world, our families and our hearts, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Student 2: As we light our Advent candle today, we give thanks for Mary's Son whom she named Emmanuel – a name which means "God-is-with-us".

(Student 3 now lights the candle as 'The Advent Song' (by Mary Lu Walker) is played. H.C. does not begin the next prayer until this track has finished.)

H.C.: Each year we keep the season of Advent to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ. Each year is different- another year has passed and we have been changed by our experiences, good and bad, which touch our lives. The world too has changed - war and peace, disasters and new beginnings. We know, however, that one thing never changes, and that is God's love for us. We begin this season of Advent with hope in the coming of Jesus who will bring the promise of life and joy.

Grace, peace and mercy from God our Father to all who prepare their hearts to welcome Jesus who will come into our world!

All: To God be glory and praise forever.

Advent:

(Two students come forward to lead us in our Advent reflection.)

Student 4: Advent is a season of waiting.

Waiting accompanies all of life - it comes before a desire which is incomplete. Waiting is what unites the past, present and future. All of our lives are made up of successive moments, dreams, hopes and desires.

Student 5: We wait for the seasons to fulfill their promises. We wait for the seed to bring forth its flower. Our waiting is always in hope and in this season of Advent, we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

All: Advent is a season of waiting.

Student 4: Advent is a season of searching.

In this season of Advent we search for you, O God. We search for you in the life that we live every day. We search for God in all the things that we do. We search for a joy that will last forever, that comes from knowing Jesus Christ and following his example.

Student 5: God of love, it is you that we search for, even without knowing it. Open our hearts that we may find you in our need.

All: Advent is a season of searching.

Student 4: Advent is the season of welcome.

When we make someone welcome, we create a bond that is special. As Christians, we believe that when we welcome a stranger, we welcome Jesus into our lives. The friendship that we share is a sign of life.

Student 5: God our Father, we are your guests in this world that you have created. Jesus Christ is your gift to us. Help us to make him welcome in our lives.

All: Advent is a season of welcome.

Student 4: Advent is a season of recognition.

When we recognize someone we are invited to understand them at a deeper level. We recognize someone as a friend sharing with us the gift of themselves. When we recognize someone, there is clarity and understanding.

Student 5: In this season of Advent we recognize God in Jesus Christ who is coming into the world, and we recognize Jesus as a brother and friend.

All: Advent is a season of recognition.

H.C.: Lord God, we are waiting to celebrate the coming of Jesus into the world. Help us as we search for you in our lives and give us a generous heart that we may make you welcome. Give us the grace to recognize you in our brothers and sisters but most especially in Jesus Christ whose coming we

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celebrate at Christmas. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord,

All: **Amen!**

Christmas:

H.C.: And now, as we turn our thoughts to the story of Jesus' birth, let us sing together:

All Sing: **OH COME ALL YE FAITHFUL**

(At the conclusion of this song, Students 6 and 7 come forward to lead us in our Christmas reflection.)

Student 6: The Christmas story is about someone who lived 2000 years ago in a tiny town in a remote area of a small country in the Middle East. His birth was so significant that it changed the course of the world's history, despite taking place in a manger. Let us prepare to hear this Christmas story by singing together:

All Sing: **AWAY IN A MANGER**

Student 7: The birth of this baby was indeed a special gift and not just to his parents, family and friends! Other people living in the past welcomed his arrival – shepherds, with their presence there, and Kings from the East, with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

H.C.: That baby born so long ago continues to be a special gift for us today, here in the present, and we are hopeful that those who will hear the story again and again in the future – your children, their grandchildren, and all the children of the world's tomorrows - will recognize Emmanuel as God with them.

Student 6: The ancient words of Scripture make us remember the importance of God's gift to us of his only son, Jesus, Emmanuel - God is with us.

(‘Silent Night’ is now played as Student 8 carries the Bible forward, held high above his/her head. S/he lays the Bible in front of the wreath before turning to

read the Gospel reading. Fade music out...)

Student 8: A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew (1:18-25)

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Student 8: Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call him Emmanuel,' which means 'God is with us'. When Joseph awoke from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife and when she had borne a son, Joseph named him Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

(Student 8 returns to his / her place and the teacher who is to read joins the two remaining students.)

H.C.: We know that the baby Jesus was visited by three wise men – let's now join together to sing a Christmas song that calls us to celebrate our Savior's birth:

All Sing: WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE

Student 7: Our world today and our culture are so different to the world into which Jesus was born. Some things about it, though, were just the same - it was a world troubled by violence, oppressive governments, greed, poverty, incurable illness and religious fundamentalism. So it's easy to see why the hope

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offered by the arrival of this tiny baby called Jesus still calls to us from the same dark spaces. Today we just tell the story a little differently.

Teacher: The birth of any baby is an amazing experience for parents. Imagine Mary and Joseph's amazement and concerns at Jesus' birth, as they sat in a stable and reflected on the very circumstances surrounding God's gift, not just to them but to the whole human race - past, present and future!

Teacher: Our Christmas future relies on our being connected in our present to our past. If Christmas is only about putting up the fairy lights and buying gifts for those who'll give us some in return, then God's message given to us in Jesus' birth isn't getting through - if that's all Christmas is to us, then we are NOT allowing God to be with us.

(These students and teacher now sit.)

Prayers of the People:

(Four students come forward to lead us in our Prayers of the People.)

H.C.: So we pray, Lord, for your help to be like the shepherds and the three kings - bearers of good news and gifts to a world troubled by violence, greed, poverty, prejudice, illness and despair.

Student 9: A Prayer for Peace:

Lord Jesus, when you were born, the angels sang about peace on earth and goodwill to all people. We pray very seriously today for all those who will open their eyes on Christmas morning to the hardships of a life lived in war and fear. Keep those in Palestine, Israel, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Iraq and all war-torn countries safe and hopeful of your peace. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Student 10: A Prayer for Freedom:

Lord Jesus, you knew what it was like to be a refugee when Mary and Joseph had to flee from Herod so you weren't

killed as a baby. We offer our prayers for all those who will spend the time we celebrate as Christmas in refugee camps, in prisons, in detention centres, behind razor wire. We especially pray for those people here in Australia who will spend their Christmas in detention. Help us not to take for granted the freedom you bless us with. Make us generous, tolerant and ready to work for the freedom of all people. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Student 11: A Prayer for Families:

God didn't send you to us, Jesus, as a grown-up. You became God with us in a family who cared for you, worried about you, loved you, taught you your trade and sometimes struggled with the things you said or did. Help us not to take for granted our own families. Especially at Christmas, life for families can be difficult and complex. We ask your blessings on our families and on the families who will receive the food and gifts that we have donated. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Student 12: A Prayer for our Country:

In our House, Lord Jesus, we have tried to create a place of welcome where you are at the heart of all we do. We have tried to be people who have been compassionate, tolerant and at the service of others. We have worked hard and with commitment to use our talents. Help us now to have the courage to take you into our communities outside this College. You have blessed us with a unique and wonderful country. Help us to shape its future with the generosity, gratitude and respect for all that we have learned in this place. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

(These students now sit.)

H.C.: Jesus tells us in the gospel of Matthew that when you do things for others, you are in fact doing those things for

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him. Think now about the other students in our House and our teachers, and how they have done things for you that have shown you in simple, practical ways that God is with us. Think about the support you have received from your teachers and your friends, the respect they have shown you. Think of one thing that you can say thank you for... [PAUSE] Lord Jesus, we thank you for people who have shown your face to us this year. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

H.C.: Lord Jesus, hear our prayers, that we offer you in confidence -

All: Amen!

Final Blessing:

H.C.: We say this blessing together as our liturgy draws to a close:

All: **Your blessing be upon those who have shared with me the gift of friendship.**

Your blessing be upon those who were once dear but with whom I have lost touch.

Your blessing be upon those whom I find difficult, and on those who find me difficult.

Your blessing on us all, Lord.

H.C.: God, our Father, you loved us so much that you sent your only Son into the world to be our Savior and our friend. Grant us your blessing as we wait and search for the coming of your Son. Open our hearts to make him welcome that we may recognize him when he comes. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

All: Amen!

All Sing: **JOY TO THE WORLD ■**

Pope Benedict XVI

World Youth Day 2011

DEAR FRIENDS, I invite you to attend World Youth Day in Madrid. I await each of you with great joy. Jesus Christ wishes to make you firm in faith through the Church. The decision to believe in Jesus Christ and to follow Him is not an easy one. It is hindered by our personal failures and by the many voices that point us towards easier paths. Do not be discouraged. Rather, look for the support of the Christian community, the support of the Church!

Throughout this coming year, carefully prepare for the meeting in Madrid with the bishops, priests and youth leaders in your dioceses, parish communities, associations and movements. The quality of our meeting will depend above all on our spiritual preparation, our prayer, our common hearing of the word of God and our mutual support.

Dear young people, the Church depends on you! She needs your lively faith, your creative charity and the energy of your hope.

Your presence renews, rejuvenates and gives new energy to the Church. That is why World Youth Days are a grace, not only for you, but for the entire People of God. The Church in Spain is actively preparing to welcome you and to share this joyful experience of faith with you. ■



*Firm in the faith, we walk in Christ,
Our Friend, our God.
All glory to Him, All glory to Him,
Walk in Christ, firm in the faith.*

- Chorus of the WYD 2011 Theme Song

KATE FOGARTY

World Youth Day 2011

IT SEEMS QUITE surreal to be gathering headspace to think about World Youth Day 2011, with 'WYD08' still so indelibly imprinted on our Australian brains! Indeed, I'm not convinced that many of us know what to make of the preparations for the big event in Spain, so let's spend a moment or two reflecting on where we've come from, and how our preparations for 2011 in Spain might develop over the coming months...

WYD08 in Sydney was a tremendous event, and none can doubt that an amazing awareness and experience of the Spirit inundated our country for those brief few days. Young people overwhelmingly spoke (and sang and danced) of a new appreciation for their faith and the Church, and generously shared their joy and sense of hope with anyone and everyone who might listen. Resources were mustered, loaves were broken (and shared) in unprecedented numbers, and our Church was seen at its best: joyful, broad, just and engaging.

Should we be surprised that WYD08 did not translate into packed pews and a revitalized Australian Church? Parishes may have experienced a brief flourish of interest from young people and their families, but it seems to me that the vast majority of Parishes have now settled back into their previous demographic, perhaps even a little bruised from having given so much, and received so little in return. In schools we saw 'big liturgy' on a whole new scale, and many of us tried hard to emulate the 'events' we experienced in Sydney. As we soon discovered however, sustaining that level of energy is not only tiring, but costly! Nonetheless, great ideas were generated and shared, networks were formed and many were buoyed by the possibilities they encountered. And in many cases, this has been sufficient to sustain those with a passion for youth ministry, ensuring that those faithful few continue this important work.

As for Spain, we would do well to remember that, as with WYD08, the vast majority of us will not be attending! In fact, school communities may

be lucky to have even half a dozen ‘pilgrims’ make the journey to Spain. Naturally, our energy should thus be channelled towards the majority who are staying behind.

The 2011 WYD theme ‘Built up in Jesus Christ. Firm in the Faith’ (Col 2:7) is not as user-friendly as more recent themes, and it will take considered discernment from those with a good ear for youth-friendly language to bridge the gap between this rather ‘Churchy’ biblical phrase and the modern teenage lexicon. This is not insurmountable, and it seems likely that a good many youth agencies (Diocesan or otherwise) will again provide a series of resources to assist schools to bridge this divide. Being attentive to the variety of online resources will serve schools well in preparing good alternative WYD programs for the young people in their care.

We now also have a more intimate understanding of the power of the large-scale liturgies that World Youth Day is built around. The Stations of the Cross in Sydney were magnificent in their simplicity and beauty as they linked modern themes with the Passion. Spain will undoubtedly provide the same quality of Liturgy as Sydney. Planning to use these events as the foundation for local celebrations, or simply as an occasion to bring young people together (to watch the telecasts as a community) would be valuable. Similarly, the concerts and many celebrations of the Eucharist at WYD 08 provided us with a multitude of opportunities to pick and choose the best and most inspirational ways of bringing such events to life for adolescents.

Mostly however, we must tap into the energy and joy of the major events that served us so well in the time around WYD08 (including Days in the Diocese). Moments of collective prayer, inspirational music, catechesis and social justice experiences gave young people the opportunity to share their faith with others in a way which was comfortable and spoke to their need for social connection. Our collaboration with each other (schools, Parishes, Dioceses and other networks) will be critical and again raises the potential for our youth to experience our faith community on a broader scale.

Finally, we must trust our instincts. We know our communities and we know the needs of the young people most close to us. Effective youth ministry is based on strong relationships, mentors with integrity and the provision of a variety of experiences that simply give God space to be present in our lives in unexpected ways! ■

MICHAEL GREEN

Lay people and the spiritualities of the Church

*Ways to foster vitality and integrity
in Australia's Catholic Schools*

The following article is the author's edited text (abridged) of a keynote address given at 'Light for the Journey' Townsville Catholic Education Conference, Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre, 13th July 2009.

THIS COULD BE a short article if we took the view, as each of the inspired authors of the books of the New Testament seems to do, that there is no discrete group of people within our Church called 'laity'. It's true: search every verse of the Christian scriptures and you will look in vain to find the Greek word *laikos*. And if there are no lay people, then it would follow, logically, that there could be no such concept as 'lay spirituality'.

This is no cute play on words. Saint Paul would have struggled with the proposition that there are degrees of spirituality, or a kind of ecclesial caste system, that presumes that some of us are the professional, full-time, holy Christians, while others of us are only part-timers, with serviceable enough spiritual lives but having no serious claim to a developed expertise.

Rather, Paul taught the Christians at Colossae, as he teaches us: 'You [that is, all of you] are God's chosen ones, his saints.' Peter likewise. In his first letter we read that we, all of us, are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart.' The four evangelists would have similarly been puzzled by a notion of a 'lay' spirituality. In each of the four Gospels, the so-called 'hard-sayings' of Jesus are not directed at some special elite, nor just to the Twelve, but to everyone.

The New Testament authors did not write with priests, monks and nuns as their target readership. Their core concern was *discipleship*, and that this discipleship was for all who answer the call of Jesus. In all that has happened and has been written in the two millennia since, nothing has altered this basic truth. Each of us, as a Christian, is called to be a disciple of Jesus. There are no grades of discipleship, no first-class and second-class Christians, no full members and associate members of the Church. So, can we legitimately talk about ‘lay spirituality’?

Here is not the place to present a detailed history of the development of lay people in the Church, or to trace the crests and troughs of ecclesiology over the centuries¹. It is sufficient to recognise that ordained ministry was defined clearly enough in the first centuries after Jesus, and that a concept of laity subsequently emerged by a kind of default. The relative importance and the roles of the ordained and non-ordained members of the Christian community have found varying expression over time.

In the course of the Church’s history, and in its various rites and geographical regions, there has been considerable change and difference in how the clergy and the laity – and additionally those in the various forms of eremitical, monastic and apostolic religious life – have understood their place and purpose in the Church, and have related to each other. By the end of the Middle Ages, there had developed a strong clerical ascendancy, augmented by a certain *fuga mundi* emphasis in spirituality which, by implication, was exclusive of most lay people in their normal worldly lives.

The laity was left with a diminished approach to Gospel living, one assessed much more in terms of morality than of spirituality. This perception was challenged from time to time by renewal movements in the Church, often enough led by lay people, or certainly accessible to them, such as that begun by Francis of Assisi, or spiritual schools such as that developed by Francis de Sales and his contemporaries. But the institutional face of the Church (as distinct from its charismatic one), remained largely clerical or monastic.

THE PLACE OF LAY PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH

The second half of the twentieth century saw much written and implemented to re-establish the right and proper role of lay people in the Church. This more authentic ecclesiology was promoted by the theologian Yves Congar especially, as well as by others such as Hans Urs von Balthazar and Karl Rahner. Interestingly, it was formulated at a time when numbers of clergy and religious were at their height. Later the Second Vatican

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Council caught the spirit and formalised it by proclaiming unambiguously that the call to holiness was universal, and that the responsibility to share in the evangelising mission of the Church belonged to all Christians as a fundamental result of their baptism.

It was a paradigm shift. As hoped for by Pope John XXIII, it was an *aggiornamento*. The notion of the Church as the People of God was reclaimed and developed. All of us are pilgrims and disciples. All called to be holy. How we respond to that call, in community and for the mission of the Gospel, we may understand as our *spirituality*.

Nevertheless, in the western Church as a whole, the increased emphasis on the role of lay people in the church has occurred in a period when the number of priests, religious sisters and brothers has decreased markedly, and when the signs are that they will be few and getting fewer, old and getting older. Today the work of the Church is largely undertaken by lay people. In education, in health services, in aged care, in social welfare, in youth ministry, in evangelising and catechising, in planning and animating prayer and worship, in building and leading parish communities, it is mainly Christian people other than priests or religious who are doing it.

Yet it is not good theology or good ecclesiology to speak of a 'lay church'. This is not what John Paul II meant when he envisaged the twenty-first century as the century of the laity. Vatican II is often misrepresented in this regard, and a misconceived ecclesiology can develop as a result. Certainly, in pivotal gatherings such as the Synod on the Laity in 1987², and the landmark document, *Christifideles Laici*, that came from it, there is no sense of a church or a mission that was the province of lay people alone.

Rather, the mission of the modern church is seen as being situated in the context of the theological and ecclesiological idea of *communio*, a concept founded on the complementary and unified states of life in the Church as the Body of Christ: the laity, the ordained priesthood, and the consecrated life.

So, a healthy or viable understanding of 'lay spirituality' will not develop from considering the spirituality of lay people as a phenomenon that is distinct from that of priests and religious (or vice versa). It is a diminished and incomplete understanding of spirituality, because it is a diminished and incomplete understanding of church.

If this were the sense in which we approached it, then indeed it would not be valid to talk of a 'lay spirituality'. In the context of the charismatic³ spiritual traditions of the Church – which is the major focus of this article

– it is similarly flawed to think of the spirituality of lay people as some kind of successor of the spiritualities of the religious orders that are now so limited in their presence and activity.

To develop these ideas, let us examine how the rich charisms of the Church may help us to develop the spirituality we all need to become disciples of Jesus and to undertake the mission of the gospel together as the People of God.

NATURE OF SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality can be one of those nebulous concepts that people sometimes make to mean anything they want, and often nothing more than fluffy thoughts or fuzzily warm feelings. Spirituality is, nonetheless, something that we need to understand and to appreciate at the intuitive level. At the beginning of his *Confessions* Saint Augustine described his famous awakening moment as a sense of restlessness: ‘Our hearts are restless, O God, and remain so until they rest in you.’⁴

Restlessness, hunger, desire, thirst: these are not uncommon themes among spiritual writers. It is a restlessness for meaning, a hunger for relationship, a desire for integrity in our lives, a passion for love. I call it a ‘God-thirst’. For the Christian, it is discipleship with Jesus that quenches this God-thirst. An authentic Christian spirituality will lead to and from Jesus. John Paul quotes from the powerful verses of John Chapter 15: ‘Remain in me ... Whoever remains in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit.’

There are, legitimately, different forms of Christian spirituality and these forms will work well for some people, but not necessarily so well for other people.

Christian spirituality will ultimately be a spirituality of discipleship, which will deepen a people’s sense of their personal vocation, give them an experience of communion with others, and propel them into mission.⁵ These are the three dimensions of any Christian life – whether it be lay, clerical or religious. The US Catholic Bishops agree with this view of the call to every person – to personal holiness, to community, and to mission/ministry – and they add a fourth, perhaps distinctively American, imperative: a call also to adult Christian maturity.⁶ Closer to home, the Archdiocese of Brisbane is shaping its mission around the same tripartite understanding of the Christian life, calling it simply ‘Jesus, Communion, Mission’.

While pointing out that the essence of all Christian spirituality leads to and from Jesus, John Paul II also importantly observed that each one of us will engage this discipleship in a different way,⁷ a way that suits who we are, where we are, how we are living and working, and connects with our personal abilities and preferences. What he is acknowledging is that there are, legitimately, different forms of Christian spirituality and these forms will work well for some people, but not necessarily so well for other people.

A person must feel at home in a spirituality if it is going to lead that person to a genuine experience of Christian discipleship. It has to feel right; it has to fit who that person is, and where, when and how he or she lives. That is not to suggest that it might not be a challenging experience, or have its quite demanding aspects, as the Spirit takes the initiative. It has to be able, however, to bring the person's faith, culture and life into harmony, to give his or her life an integrity and a unity.⁸

Each of the great spiritual traditions of the Church, for example the Benedictine or the Ignatian, was begun by someone who had just such an aim and was able to effect it in a way that was compelling both for them and for their time and place. Benedict and Ignatius, both as laymen, had an experience of God, over time, that led them to develop a distinctive response. Both wrote it down, so we have the Rule of St Benedict and the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. Their purpose was to inspire other people to follow them and be schooled in the same spiritual experience.

In the context of this article, it may be important to emphasise that the Spiritual Exercises – which underpin Ignatian spirituality and all that flows from that spirituality – were developed long before Ignatius was ordained priest or founded the Society of Jesus. They came from a lay person's experience of God in his ordinary living. This is not to define it as a 'lay' spirituality, but as a Christian spirituality, one that has sated the God-thirst of countless men and women, lay and clergy, consecrated and married, for centuries now. So, also, could we point to so many traditions – Franciscan, Dominican, Augustinian, Lasallian, and others – that have done the same.

NATURE OF CHARISM

We are wading now into the domain of what the contemporary Church commonly describes as 'charism'. St. Paul coined a Greek word drawn from *charis* (meaning 'gift' or 'grace') to describe the spiritual gifts evident in some early Christian communities. Subsequently, the term did not find significant mention in Church documents or teaching until the twentieth

century. Vatican II famously gave it life and put something of a new spin on its meaning. Pope Paul, in applying the Vatican II understanding of charism to the religious life itself and as well as to individual founders and foundresses,⁹ helped to take the concept further than we find it described in the Pauline texts. It then became a term recurringly used by Pope John Paul II, and employed in the same sense:

The Holy Spirit, while bestowing diverse ministries in the Church communion, enriches it still further with particular gifts or promptings of grace called charisms. They can take a great variety of forms both as a manifestation of the absolute freedom of the Spirit who abundantly supplies them, and as a response to the varied needs of the Church in history.¹⁰

The word has entered general Church discourse, nowhere more than in the Church's service ministries of education and health care. This has been perhaps because these ministries are often enough undertaken or sponsored by apostolic religious institutes of relatively recent founding whose corporate memory of their founding generation is proximate and alive, and ones who have been active in attending to the spiritual formation of their lay co-workers. The benefits have been many, as lay people have found rich spiritual paths to follow and inspirational fellow-travellers with whom to share the journey.

But there have also been, and continue to be, some less helpful developments. A first has been confusion with other uses of the term within the Church and in common parlance. A second has been a demeaning of the word as the result of another confusion: people's mistaking the temporal expressions of a charism (for example, a distinctive teaching or caring style, or a grouping of people) with the essence of the charism itself, which is always a way of embracing the gospel of Jesus.

This seems particularly the case when the charism has been the means of addressing a practical social need, such as education or health care. A third factor is the conventional view that a charism belongs to a religious order or some other church group, when in fact it belongs to the whole Church, to all the People of God, for its benefit and its enabling for mission.

The charisms are, as one commentator has put it, the 'great gospel ideas'¹¹, the inspired ways of discipleship that have stood the test of time and have proven fruitful, that have inspired generations of Christians to recognise and to love their God, and to undertake the mission of the Church. They have given them a story to join, a community of mission to

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which to belong, a work to do, a way to pray, a face of God to see. They have been built around inspired and inspirational people, indeed saints. They have grown into rich and wise schools of spirituality. These charisms are treasures of the Church; they are the Spirit alive in the Church. It is well that those involved in Catholic education embrace the call of the Council and of the Popes of our time to receive them 'with gratitude'.

The word 'charism', nonetheless, remains a little strange for many, one that doesn't roll easily off the tongue. For this reason, and because of the way it can be misused, I usually prefer to use the terms 'spirituality' or 'spiritual tradition' except where the meaning of charism or charismatic is clear from the context.

SPIRITUALITIES NEW AND OLD

It should not be presumed that Christian spiritualities are all 'old', or even new expressions of old. The last century saw a remarkable explosion of new movements both before and after the Council, for example the St Egidio Community, the Focolare Movement, Communion and Liberation, the Neocatechumenate, Opus Dei, the Emmanuel Community, the Charismatic Renewal, the Cursillo. In many cases, these have grown up in situations where the life of the Church, including the consecrated life, had become jaded and tepid, or anonymous and tired.

Generally called the 'New Ecclesial Movements', they stretch across the liberal-conservative spectrum, if such a thing exists, and continue to attract many new members. In one country, Spain, it has been estimated that over forty per cent of Catholics actively involved in the Church are doing so primarily as part of a 'movement' rather than through parish or traditional structures.¹²

The two most common ways in which lay people are connecting themselves with the spiritualities of the Church are, first, through the New Ecclesial Movements and, second, through movements associated with established religious orders and institutes. The former of these had grown to such an extent that at the beginning of the 21st century many in the Church were beginning to see them as the most efficacious way through which the Church of the present age was being prompted to be renewed and reformed by the Spirit.

It has always been new movements, or fresh irruptions of the Spirit, that have reformed the Church, and often enough they have been met by suspicion by the old guard of the Church. This is not the place to undertake

a deep analysis or evaluation of this modern Church phenomenon,¹³ but only to observe that there are new spiritualities continuing to emerge in the Church, including ones that are being associated with Catholic schools.

In the context of a consideration of charisms, the growth and the vitality of the new ecclesial movements teach something critically important to the whole Church. Almost without exception – whether they appeared before or after the Council – they have a structure that is consistent with Vatican II's emphasis on *communio*. They are largely lay, with lay people unambiguously embracing their baptismal responsibilities to grow in Christian holiness and share together in the mission of evangelisation, but they also have a strong Sacramental life with the ordained pastors of the Church actively exercising their priestly ministry within the movement's life. Moreover, they mostly allow for some members to make a more intense, celibate, long-term or permanent commitment, and to live a common life in ways not dissimilar to older forms of the consecrated life. They exist to provide a means for their members to deepen their own sense of vocation and holiness, to form community, and to take part in the mission of the Church.

In this they provide a paradigm for the traditional spiritualities, if these spiritualities also are going to continue to be relevant and engaging for the contemporary Church. The 'old' spiritualities are called to the same thing: to be largely but not exclusively lay, to be able to integrate their charismatic vitality into the institutional life of the Church, and to inspire their members to a holiness that propels them to mission.

It is the lay thing that will be the biggest challenge for many of the traditional spiritualities, because they have for so long been defined primarily in terms of clergy and religious, with lay people often seen only as associates.

Some traditions, however, such as those associated with Ignatian, Franciscan and Dominican spiritualities, have long enjoyed a quite inclusive membership by recognising that all people can embrace the spirituality in differential ways that suit their respective state of life, and their other personal circumstances. In this they are proposing that the way forward in today's Church is to be around a sense of shared mission, with people acting as a church community and graced by a spirituality built on one of the 'great gospel ideas' as it has evolved over the centuries. So must it be for any group. Here are the essential links between charism and lay spirituality.

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INTEGRITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Over the last three decades, the Congregation for Catholic Education has published several documents well worthy of our reading. Early in its most recent publication there is a critically important observation:

The project of the Catholic school will be convincing only if it is carried out by people who are deeply motivated because they witness to a living encounter with Christ, in whom alone 'the mystery of man becomes clear'.¹⁴

There are, at the present time, no greater challenges to the integrity and the effectiveness of Australian Catholic schools as agents of evangelisation than (a) the depth of spirituality and (b) the degree of ecclesial commitment of those who teach and work in these schools. In world terms, our Australian Catholic schools are built and resourced outstandingly. They allow our dioceses and religious institutes to conduct a world-class network of schools, and to be able offer these to virtually anyone who is seeking a Catholic education.

But to what extent is it still a *Catholic* education that we are offering? Or, to put it more pointedly, to what extent are our schools places that satisfy the God-thirst in people and promote Christian discipleship? Most of us know schools where it is exceptionally so. The degree to which it is the case in a school will be largely a function of the commitment of the staff who lead it to build a community where the reign of God pervades all that is done there and how it is done.

I recently heard, for the first time, of a diocesan director of Catholic education who openly questioned if a particular school in his diocese – a largish, urban, secondary school – could any longer be honestly described as a Catholic school. Yes, the school was still a school owned and operated by the diocese; its signage and documents all proclaimed its church identity; it required its students to take the usual religious education classes; a majority was nominally Catholic; and there were other ostensible vestiges of its Catholic heritage. But was it any longer Catholic in practice?

His doubts seemed to be prompted more by his assessment of the people who led and staffed the school rather than the largely un-churched and student population whose active parish engagement was probably less than five percent. The religious institute which had originally founded the school had long since ceased any connection; the local pastor had written it off and rarely visited.

While not wishing to be unnecessarily alarmist or pessimistic, there

is likely to be an increasing number of such schools, or schools heading in that direction. As the next generation of teachers moves into middle-management and senior leadership – a higher number of whom have grown up in families that have not been active in their practice of the faith in the traditional sense – this is likely to become more the norm.

There will be what some commentators call ‘mission drift’.¹⁵ You notice it first in little ways, such as the replacement of overtly religious figures or activities with various ways of demonstrating a vague espousal of Christian values. The school moves subtly towards becoming just a low-fee private school – albeit one that may be quite professionally run and with a solid value base that is not in conflict with the Gospel – but with little capacity for explicit evangelisation or catechesis, or much understanding of it or vision for it. As far as involvement with the life of the Church goes, the main point of connection may be through the local Catholic Education Office rather than any parish, pastor or religious institute.

Not everyone will be uncomfortable with such a scenario, or even necessarily notice that it has actually happened. The world of young Australian people, including younger teachers, is for the most part a post-Christian and post-modern one, marked by the relativism which the present Pope has long criticised. There are quite notable and inspiring exceptions, and there are certainly differences among ethnic communities across the country, but most people under fifty live quite secular lives.



Photo: Cathy Floros

Which way for Catholic schools?

FRESH WAYS

Should we panic? Should we limp off in defeat? Only if we are not students of history, or have doubts about the Church's facility for renewal, or do not believe in the Holy Spirit. There have been many times over the centuries, in various places, when the Church has become dispirited, discredited, and disenfranchised. What has happened? One of two things, typically: either it has wallowed in its old ways and remained disconnected from the lives of most ordinary people, or it has been open to the fresh ways that the Spirit has offered people to satisfy the God-thirst in them, personally and communally, ways that suited their time and place.

Witness, for example, the emergence of the Franciscans and the Dominicans in the medieval church, the Jesuits in the Counter-Reformation, or the explosion of apostolic movements in France in the decades that followed the revolutionary-Napoleonic period. In our own country, look at the contribution of religious institutes in saving and building our Catholic education and health sectors.

The Spirit will always be seeking to irrupt when and where the needs are greatest. The inspirational people and the inspired movements that emerge in such situations generally have a short life-span. The 'more remarkable' ones¹⁶ become a continuing part of the spiritual fabric of the church. They do this by their facility for adaptation to different times, places and cultures, and their accessibility to many different people.

For a spirituality to be one that will serve the Church of the third millennium, and particularly one that is going to be embraced by a contemporary Catholic school, it will need to be one that allows for an expression of *communio* in the sense that Vatican II has proposed it: it must be inclusive of lay people as its main constituent group. Let us look for such spiritualities. Let us be alert for them, because it may be that in them we might just find the Spirit at work.

Does a school need to tap into one of the charismatic spiritualities of the Church in order to be a vibrant, spiritually rich, and effective evangelising community of mission? Not at all. For many parish schools, the way the gospel finds its vitality and incarnation is in the life of the parish itself: its community, its sacramental programmes, its liturgies, its various ministries. It has to be suspected, however, that many Australian Catholic schools – staffed almost entirely by lay people – are struggling with their sense of mission effectiveness, and are looking for something else. The movements that have grown from the 'great gospel ideas' can provide them with some answers for their search.

The Church has always been revitalised by movements, by inspired and inspiring people. The great 'spiritual families'¹⁷ of the universal Church that continue to this day, and the newer ones to which the last century gave birth, are such movements of grace. At the present time, the Church looks to these spiritual families, through their inclusion of lay people within them, as 'one of the great hopes for the future of the Catholic educational mission'.¹⁸ The ones that allow lay people to draw on the spiritual and apostolic fruitfulness of the original charism of the movements' founders, while at the same time ensuring that they can live out fully their secular vocation, are those to which we as contemporary Catholic educators should be looking.

TWO DIMENSIONS

The Second Vatican Council spent some time considering the complementary roles of the hierarchical and the charismatic dimensions of the Church. It saw that the Church needed both its structures of authority, teaching and organisation, as well as ways that fostered its being open to the movement of the Spirit in fresh and compelling ways, even in ways that were unsettling, as they were for Mary the mother of Jesus. Without the former, the Church would lack direction and surety, without the latter it could lack vitality and relevance. For the Church to proceed with both integrity and inspiration, it needs both.

When the Council Fathers were debating the role of institutional structures and the exercise of authority they are unlikely to have had in mind the Catholic Education Offices that have developed in Australia. But these are essentially an arm of a bishop's curia, his bureaucracy, a contemporary expression of the institutional dimension of the Church. There is nothing wrong with that; indeed it is essential for prudent governance and stewardship. On the other hand, their ascendancy over the more charismatic dimensions of the Church has come to be one of the characteristics of the contemporary Catholic Education scene in this country.

As the religious institutes have become less involved and less influential in the education sector, they have left a vacuum into which lay people have not adequately stepped. Whereas lay people occupy places in the curial bureaucracy both comfortably and competently, they are yet to assume their rightful positions of recognised leadership and practical influence in the spiritual traditions of the Church in ways that impact sufficiently on the life and mission of the Church in education. Despite the best of intentions and the deployment of resources, they are ill-equipped to meet

the critical challenge of the development of staff spiritually.

Spirituality is not something that can be mandated. It is something of the heart. Certainly, the practice of a particular spirituality and an understanding of it can be taught and learnt; the term 'school of spirituality' rightly implies this. But, first it has to attract and to inspire, and it has to suit each person at the intuitive level. Each has to feel at home with the spirituality itself, and with his or her spiritual companions.

A local church needs continually to ask itself – as does the universal Church – about the relative influence that its curial offices have at any one time, because it is less likely that these are going to be the nests from which the fresh and surprising ways of the Holy Spirit will fly. A bishop who is interested in enlivening the life of his local church, would be always alert to inviting new charismatic movements to his diocese and to supporting older ones to renew themselves and to remain apostolically and spiritually fruitful. It is a way for him to keep what might be termed a rich 'ecclesial gene pool'.

The larger charismatic movements have a life in the universal Church, and so can bring to a local diocese and a local parish a broader view of church and a diversity of spirituality that may be unlikely to grow indigenously. They also provide a necessary foil to the natural tendencies of any bureaucracy – ecclesial or otherwise – that can confuse uniformity with unity, diversity with disunity, innovation with disloyalty, and difference with independence. Look at the ways that some of the new ecclesial movements have been treated with suspicion and rejection, because they do not fit the prevailing model of how the Church should operate or how spirituality should be expressed.

Some of the new movements – including those associated with as exciting a phenomenon as World Youth Day – are sometimes dismissed as conservative, revisionist and, therefore, out of sympathy with the *aggiornamento* and 'spirit' of Vatican II. Interestingly, these criticisms often enough come from late middle-aged Catholics – including religious and priests – who themselves have become somewhat tepid or anonymous in their witness to their faith or their overt practice of it. We have all probably also met these Vatican II refugees from the 1960s and 1970s who are cynically dismissive of anything they judge to be pre-conciliar.

But the young people, burdened by none of their elders' baggage, are simply developing a personal relationship with Jesus, allowing their imagination to be captured by the beauty of the Church's liturgy, and being inspired to make a radical commitment of their lives, as young people do.

POWERFUL MEANS

The best spiritual families and the ecclesial movements work first on this inspirational level; people are attracted to join them intuitively. They provide ways of incarnating Christ-life into time, place, mission, and the hearts of people. As a founding charism moves over time to become a spiritual tradition, it develops a wealth of accumulated wisdom and resources into which others can tap to learn from those who have walked and are walking the same spiritual path.

It gives people a story to enter, a group to which to belong, a mission or work to share with others. It provides them with a literature to read, songs to sing, an accessible language and symbols to use, and saints from whom to draw inspiration. These are pegs onto which our faith hats can be hung. While not ends in themselves, they do often provide powerful means to receive and to promote the gospel of Jesus – a do-able discipleship.

In the context of a Catholic school community, the potential benefits of belonging corporately to such a spiritual tradition or movement are immense. First, it will give people a means of deepening their personal and their communal spirituality, a way of quenching their God-thirst, a path to meeting Jesus. Second, it will give a treasure chest of resources, solid formation programmes, literature, symbols and rituals, strategies for ministry, extra-parochial and extra-diocesan links, and collected wisdom, from which the principal and staff can draw. It becomes the glue that binds the community and gives it focus in its mission.

School communities need, however, to beware of a quick-fix mindset. For a school community to choose a spiritual tradition of the Church as the way it wants to define and to animate its life and mission, it is not simply a matter of going along to the charism store and selecting one off the shelf. A few years ago, when I had the position of Chair of the Association of Marist Schools of Australia, I occasionally frustrated some of my fellow committee members with the degree of caution I adopted each time a new school sought membership of the Association. AMSA is a network of like-hearted schools whose principal aim is to be mutually supportive of each other in bringing the Marist spirituality of St Marcellin Champagnat to the service of Australian Catholic schools. It is all about charism.

The line I took whenever a school wanted either to re-connect with its Marist identity, or to develop one, was always to ask if it were real. Was Marist spirituality at the heart of the school's mission and culture? Was it named as such, and generally owned as such? Is that how the school

leadership and staff understood what it meant to be Marist? In other words, were there roots to the flowers that they thought they saw, and were they prepared to cultivate and water these roots in ways that would allow them to sink deeply into the ground of the school?

One of the things not always sufficiently appreciated by some Catholic education bureaucrats is that ‘charism hopping’ is difficult, and not always natural. At one level it is quite possible to become ‘literate’ in a particular charism, by reading its documents, learning its language, knowing its symbols and rituals, and appropriating its ways. But to become part of it as a movement, to belong to it, is something more profound because this calls for a spiritual connection, for an intuitive bonding, for feeling at home within it and with those who belong to it. To some degree, a person’s own identity becomes inextricably meshed into the broader narrative of the movement. This is in the affective domain more than the cognitive.

Charismic traditions should be schools of holiness, where discipleship can be taught and learnt, but this does not mean that they can be reduced to a skill-set or a core knowledge-base. While, in the final analysis, they all lead to discipleship of the one Lord, and communion with the one Church, and while there is a natural ‘simpatico’ among some charisms because of their bloodlines, it is a diminished understanding of the way they work incarnationally to presume that an educator, and most especially a school leader, can become something of a charism chameleon.

GENUINE ACCEPTANCE

Quite understandably, there is an expectation that aspiring leaders of Catholic schools should gain experience in different schools. Unfortunately, this cannot always take place in a way that allows a person to grow within a chosen spiritual family. Nor, it must be said, is the value of that often enough recognised or encouraged. Part of the reason is Catholic education has become organised largely on a diocesan basis in this country, while most of the spiritual traditions operate on a supra-diocesan basis as part of the universal Church. The other part of the reason is that the voice of the spiritual traditions in the Catholic education sector has become muted and tired. They wait for lay people to revocalise them.

There are several factors that seem essential to be in play if a school community is to be genuine in its embrace of one of the charismic spiritualities of the Church, and likely to benefit from it to undertake its evangelising mission. Let’s call them the ‘Seven C’s of Charism’.

1. COHERENCE

A school's practices and its organisational culture have to match its charism rhetoric. A school may claim to be animated by a particular spirituality. But to what extent is it just window-dressing? Is it reflected in the way the school community, especially the staff, publicly prays and worships? What can be found in its documents, policies, symbols, and rituals? Is there an explicit language that most people use, or shared ways of acting and reacting, of judging and intuiting, of prioritising and evaluating, and of relating and organising, that would be readily identifiable as emanating from that spiritual and apostolic tradition? To what extent do staff and students have a self-understanding as being part of the tradition, of belonging to its wider story, and indeed of being its present-day protagonists?

2. CRITICAL MASS

In any school community, the reality is that the staff will act out of a range of religious faiths and practice. So, also, when a school is part of a charismic tradition. At one end of the spectrum will be those who identify strongly with the tradition: it is their preferred personal spirituality; it defines their pedagogical and pastoral style; they feel in communion with others in the same spiritual family; they even take responsibility for articulating it, for nurturing it, and for inducting new people into it; they may even have actual membership of a third order, oblate branch, or some other kind of formalised association. There will be others who have no more than a passive awareness of the values and intuitions of the charism, while there could also be others who, at least covertly, only tolerate the religious emphases of the school because that is where fate has landed them.

For a school to be a genuine community of mission within one of the spiritual traditions of the Church there needs to be a critical mass of people at the strongly-identifying end of the spectrum. Among these people has to be the principal, along with, ideally, the entire leadership team. So, also, it is helpful that the people on staff who carry the most influence among their colleagues identify with similar clarity. These may be longer-serving members of staff who carry the corporate memory of the school, or it may be others who have moral authority on staff, but they need not be in any particular role.

Every school has them. They may be the receptionist or the deputy principal or the sports co-ordinator. Whoever they are, these are the people who need to know the story of the spirituality, to own it, to be

able to share it with others, to feel it in their bones, and to inspire others in their appropriation of it. In the Australian Church context of today, they will be people who see themselves living out this spirituality fully as lay people; they will not understand themselves riding on the coat-tails of religious, or doing their best in the absence of religious. Indeed, although they may have a deep appreciation and even affection for the religious institute which introduced the spirituality to the school, they will themselves now be taking responsibility for it.

If there is not a critical mass of such people on staff, then a spirituality is unlikely to have much significance in the ordinary life of the school. It will be dilute and diffuse. Worse still, there could be a dysfunctionality among centres of influence in the school.

3. CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

Any Christian spirituality or ecclesial movement will, if it is genuine, be a way of nurturing people's discipleship of Jesus, and of bringing them into community with others who are attracted to the same way and to the same mission. It will be a spiritual thing, primarily and essentially.

In proposing what he described as the 'six criteria of ecclesiality' for discerning the value of any new lay group within the Church, Pope John Paul II's first measure was the extent to which the group could be considered to be a 'school of holiness' that promoted a 'unity of faith and life'.²⁰ That is, by belonging to a particular group or movement, lay people would grow spiritually.

The charismatic traditions of Catholic education are not merely sets of characteristic patterns of pedagogy, or care, or shared human values. While we may validly describe a Lasallian way of educating, or an Ignatian pedagogy, these are expressions of a deeper experience. At its best, all Christian spirituality leads to and from an encounter with Jesus.

For a spirituality to be Catholic, this encounter will be significantly found in the Sacramental life of the Church, and within its shared pastoral mission. A school could well ask itself, therefore, the extent to which it is normal for its staff to pray and worship together, to be nurtured spiritually, or to be linked into the life of the Church.

4. CONSTANCY OF ORIENTATION

It takes time to embed a particular spirituality into a school community. When such a spirituality does become a defining feature of that community – where there is indeed a congruence between what the school claims and

what its members actually are and do, where there is an active critical mass of lay people who have a self-identity defined by that spirituality, and where a distinctive form of Christian discipleship is at the heart of it all – then a school is likely to have something powerful at work. But this will not happen overnight. It requires sustained leadership, and a certain ‘constancy of orientation’ to use a way of understanding charism that was proposed by Pope Paul VI.²¹ For a school to develop into a real ‘school of holiness’, in the sense that John Paul II used the term, it will need people who are steeped in the spirituality, and where there is a continuity of leadership.

In the context of the Australian Catholic school, the principal is the single key person in this regard. It is the principal who will be the one to witness convincingly and teach wisely about the way that the particular spiritual tradition can provide an ‘integration of faith, culture and life’.²² If the leader of the community of mission is not able, willing, or naturally disposed to do this, or to do it with sufficient credibility, then it is unlikely that the spirituality will grace the mission of the school in the way it could otherwise do. This has significant implications for criteria of principal selection and support.

5. CONTINUING FORMATION

Religious institutes have long recognised the critical importance of what the Church often calls ‘formation’. This is not a term that has much currency in the English language, but one that has been appropriated from Latin languages and has the general sense of education and training. In the Church, it is usually associated with guided personal and spiritual development. Members of religious institutes benefit from a mindset of life-long formation, and most religious institutes invest significantly in it. While a good deal of formation can happen through critical reflection on normal life experience, there is nothing that can replace the worth of formal programmes, courses, reading, and spiritual direction.²³

If the lay members of a spiritual tradition are to develop in their embrace of that tradition, and allow it to develop in their discipleship, they need formation opportunities. This is not only for their own benefit, but also for that of the tradition itself, because it will only ever be as vital and convincing as are the people within it.

In its discussion of the roles of lay and consecrated people in today’s Catholic school, the Congregation for Catholic Education devotes a major part of its document to this imperative.²⁴ Fortunately, some of the richest programmes and resources for spiritual development and formation are those

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produced by the spiritual families of the Church. It is perhaps their greatest contribution to her spiritual vitality. Among the most attractive benefits for lay people to become part of one of these traditions for their own spirituality and mission, are the opportunities for ongoing formation that they offer.

6. CHURCH CONNECTION

In a recent address to members of the Franciscan family, Pope Benedict XVI reflected on Francis's intuition, even in his spirit of radical reform, to place his mission within the Church, and not outside or alongside it.²⁵ He need not have done so, observed the Pope: Francis could have tried to reform the Church from the outside. The Franciscan way has made such a perennial fruitful contribution to 'rebuilding the Church' because Francis took the option that he did, something Benedict XVI urged present-day Franciscans to continue to do. He pointed out to them that 'charism and institution are always complementary' for the Church; it needs both. One of the unhealthy directions for which any community needs to be alert is that of insularity. When a group becomes too clubby, or defines its identity or its mission differently from the Church, it runs the risk of moving from being an ecclesial community to being a cult.

7. COMMUNITY OF MISSION

In the end, it all comes back to mission. We often say that the Church has a mission, but another way to understand it is that the mission has a Church.²⁶ All charisms are about empowering the Church for that mission, that is for bringing people into discipleship with Jesus and associating them together as community, so that they can become a 'community of mission'.²⁷ This is the final criterion and the ultimate goal for any Christian spirituality. If it effects that, then we can all shout 'Amen!'

CONCLUSION

Several years ago, at the biennial conference of the Association of Marist Schools of Australia, the then Vicar General of the Marist Fathers, Craig Larkin SM, beautifully opened up the the ecclesiology that underpinned the traditional icon of The Ascension.²⁸ The iconography of eastern Christianity – and the theology that it visualises – often reveals a more mystical, a more symbolic, and a more experiential approach to the Divine than is evident in western Christian art.

In the Ascension icon we see Mary and the Apostles depicted in a way that honours the distinctive giftedness and the place of each but without any hierarchy of gifts or of holiness. This is an image of the Church that is

quite different from the pyramidal one that I first saw in primary school: the pope and the bishops at the top, the laity at the bottom, the religious sandwiched hierarchically in between.

The ecclesiology of the Ascension icon, dating from the earliest centuries of Christian thought, is very much in sympathy with that of Vatican II. The Church is depicted in all its charismatic diversity, its members in communion with one another, with God, and with the eternal manifestations of Church. Each of the charismatic movements of the Church will find or lose its relevance for today's Church by the way it does or does not engage all who may be attracted to it into such an experience of Christian discipleship. And this certainly includes those whom we awkwardly call 'lay'. ■

ENDNOTES

- ¹ See Faivre, A. (1990) *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church* for a good analysis of this. Tony Hanna (2006) *New Ecclesial Movements* also considers the question insightfully.
- ² Or, to give it its full title: A Synod on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World.
- ³ My preference is to use 'charismatic' as the adjective relating to 'charism', and 'charismatic' with 'charisma'. I suggest that, in normal English usage, this can effectively distinguish something that is theological from something that is largely sociological.
- ⁴ *Confessions* of Augustine of Hippo, Book 1, Chapter 1.
- ⁵ See Orsuto, D. (1997) *The Challenge of Lay Spirituality*.
- ⁶ USCCB (1995) *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium, Reflections of the US Catholic Bishops on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the 'Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity' and the Fifteenth Anniversary of 'Called and Gifted'*.
- ⁷ Pope John Paul II (1993) *Lay spirituality is rooted in Christ*. General Audience, Vatican, 1st December.
- ⁸ Such an approach to spirituality fits easily within the definitive understanding of it that has been proposed for it by the noted writer and theologian, Sr Sandra Schneiders IHM: spirituality is 'the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives'. Spirituality in the Academy, *Theological Studies* 50 (1989), 684
- ⁹ See Pope Paul VI (1971) *Evangelica Testificatio, On the renewal of the religious life according to the Second Vatican Council*. #2, #11.
- ¹⁰ *Christifideles Laici*. #24
- ¹¹ The phrase is Claude Maréchal's, the then Assumptionist Superior General, who delivered an insightful paper on this topic at the 56th Conference of Superiors General, in Rome, in 1999: *Toward an effective partnership between religious and laity in fulfilment of charism and responsibility for mission*.

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- ¹² Hanna, T, (2006) *New Ecclesial Movements*.
- ¹³ In a recent doctoral study, Tony Hanna (Hanna, *op.cit*) offers a comprehensive, critical and well-balanced analysis of the new ecclesial movements in general, with a specific focus on three of them: Communion and Liberation, The Neo-Catechumenate, and The Charismatic Renewal.
- ¹⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education (2007) *Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A shared mission between consecrated persons and the lay faithful*. Rome: Libreria Edrice Vaticana.
- ¹⁵ See Nicholson, P (2009) PJP: *Issues in Formation* for a discussion of this phenomenon.
- ¹⁶ *Lumen Gentium* #12
- ¹⁷ The term is the one used by the Congregation for Catholic Education in this context. See *Educating Together in the Catholic School*, #28-30.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Cardinal Suenens was, both during and after the Council, among the most powerful and eloquent proponents of the charismatic dimension of the Church, and typical of the line of thinking that entered the Council documents. See, for example, his intervention in the debate on the drafting of *Lumen Gentium*: 'The Charismatic Dimension of the Church' in Y. Congar, H. Kung, D. O'Hanlon (eds.) (1964) *The Speeches of Vatican II*.
- ²⁰ *Christifideles Liaici*, #30.
- ²¹ Paul VI (1971) *Evangelica Testificatio, On the Renewal of the Religious Life according to the Teaching of the Second Vatican Council*. #12.
- ²² *Educating Together in Catholic Schools*, #21.
- ²³ See Nicholson, *op.cit.*, for a discussion of the importance of formation for lay people in this sense.
- ²⁴ See *Educating Together in Catholic Schools*.
- ²⁵ Pope Benedict XVI (2009) *Attract to Christ Men and Women of All Times*. Castel Gandolfo, April 20.
- ²⁶ The phrase belongs to Stephen Bevans SVD who used it as the theme of a lecture series sponsored by Mission Australia, presented in Sydney and Melbourne in April 2009.
- ²⁷ See *Educating Together in Catholic Schools*. This is a major theme of the document of the Congregation for Catholic Education.
- ²⁸ Larkin, C. (2005) *The Icon of the Ascension, A Marian Church*. Keynote address to the Biennial Conference of the Association of the Marist Schools of Australia. Brisbane, July.

The complete text of the address fully annotated and referenced can be accessed at <http://www.johnmcmahon.id.au/storage/02-catholic-church/0201-academic/Green%20Lay%20Spirituality%20%20Charism.pdf>

JOEL HODGE¹

Witnesses of Hope in a Dying Culture

DESPITE THE DRAMA, there was one important issue that the 2010 election campaign (and subsequent negotiations) did not talk about: the cultural crisis occurring in the West. This neglect is typical of us human beings: we tend to talk about the pseudo-crises to avoid facing the real ones. It is what 'hypocrisy' actually entails (and what Jesus complained about to the Pharisees who placed false crises in the face of believing Jews instead of the real issues of faith and life). In Australia (and in the West, in general) we talk of such diverse situations as the 'economic crisis', the 'ecological crisis', 'political crisis', the 'border security crisis' and the 'rural crisis' – which are all real to some degree.

The media even seemed to want to manufacture a crisis with the supposed instability of a hung parliament – though Australian society kept going. We often do the same in our personal lives – moving from one crisis to the next, usually constructed out of the tensions, rivalries and gossip of everyday life. We talk of, and even sometimes manufacture, these crises to avoid the real crisis: in the case of the West, it is our society's increasing inability to hold onto common cultural assumptions and justify its own existence and identity to really deal with our problems.

WHO NEEDS EXTERNAL ENEMIES?

Many comment on our problems – rampant individualism, consumerism, economic exploitation, relativism, breakdown of marriage and family, drug and alcohol abuse, violence, suicide, falling social and religious affiliation, dysfunctional sexuality, abortion, euthanasia, psychological issues, and so on – which are all symptoms of a cultural crisis, i.e. a crisis in which there is a declining sense of truth that gives meaning to our being human, to how we should live together, what this world and our existence in it is about, and how we should relate with God. From 'dignified suicide' to

'wrongful birth' (the concept that some people just should not have been allowed to live), the West is attacking its own foundations; and because it lacks any strong will to critique this attack, it is encouraging its citizens on this path.

Who needs external enemies? The prevailing ideological dogma of the West that there is no truth, which justifies 'the 60s' individualism (supported by mass capitalism), has not set people free from ideological dogmas or cultural norms, but enslaved them to new types of insipid norms: relativist and individualistic ones that do not build up, but leave people with shaky foundations for dealing with life in all its dimensions: beginning with relationships, vocation, sexuality and family life.

While there have been great advancements in living standards and the consciousness of rights, the crisis of meaning and truth in the West is acute, and in particular the younger generations are suffering from it in various ways. These deeper issues are not being commented on or addressed by politicians because many do not acknowledge them; or if they do, they are limited in what they can do about them, especially in a 'democracy' that is driven by mass media and which does not want to make hard choices. Yet, politicians are not afraid of speaking about their beliefs – at least the ones that will get them elected. However, the positive messages and initiatives that we do sometimes receive from our political class often lack a strong sense of where their foundational values emerge from and how these values are fulfilled within a broader picture of what it means to be human.

GOD HAS THE POWER TO 'DELIVER'

There are no easy answers to the current crisis, as if we could go back to the 'good old days' (that never were), or just become Christian again (as if we really ever were). We hear from our political leaders how they are transforming the country and making things new. However, education, money and work are not salvific on their own (as some politicians seem to claim), but are just parts of how we can really be transformed into our true humanity. Christians are realists; and Christian hope is radically realistic: ultimately humans don't want to and can't seem (on their own) to move away from crisis, selfishness and self-sufficient opposition to God (even with the best education!). Yet we humans do yearn for transformation and inspiration – and seek it from our politicians; but do we expect it from the wrong source? We should have expectations of our politicians; but do we expect salvation from the government and economy when they cannot deliver?

As people of hope, Christians trust in the God who ‘makes all things new’(Rev 21:5). So, not despite, but precisely because we are realistic, we hope in God, who has the power – by his radically humble, self-giving love – to move us ‘forward’. It is the God who loves us completely, infinitely and inexhaustibly who can fulfil our deepest yearnings and desires, not politicians, fashions or romantic movies (despite their initially satisfying nature). God wants to break us out of the lesser realities and pseudo-crises of life so we can remember our true selves: by remembering Christ – the victim of our false crisis who comes to us with forgiveness and love – we are put in touch with our real selves in relationship with God and others.

BEING ABLE TO RECEIVE

Rather than leave us to construct false saviours for our problems and crises, God comes to satisfy us and enable us to live our true lives:

‘It is not man who goes to God with a compensatory gift, but God who comes to man, in order to give to him. ... This is truly something new, something unheard of - the starting-point of Christian existence ... It does not stand there as the work of expiation which mankind offers to the wrathful God, but as the expression of that foolish love of God’s which gives itself away to the point of humiliation in order thus to save man; it is his approach to us, not the other way about. With this twist in the idea of expiation, and thus in the whole axis of religion, worship too, man’s whole existence acquires in Christianity a new direction. Worship follows in Christianity first of all in thankful acceptance of the divine deed of salvation. The essential form of Christian worship is therefore rightly called Eucharistia, thanksgiving. In this form of worship human achievements are not placed before God; on the contrary, it consists in man’s letting himself be endowed with gifts ... Letting God act on us - that is Christian sacrifice.’ (Joseph Ratzinger, 1990, Introduction to Christianity, p. 214-5).

In other words, God is allowing us to relax into our true lives in His love. In the first place, Christianity privileges reception: receiving from God – the gift of His very self – so that we can give to others. In this sense, the Eucharistic liturgy is at the heart of the Christian life because it is a service to us – to the Church. It is a service that God performs through Christ who mediates God fully to us as loving priest and victim. This service is the beauty and precious quality of the liturgy itself. The liturgy allows us to enter into the space of God – to have a taste of the Kingdom. Though it can seem alien to some, the liturgy allows us to enter into the

rhythms and movements of God – to move to the slow and determined pace of the chants, readings, and prayers that enable us to contemplatively come to a deeper participation in God's life.

Through receiving him, Christ wants us to enter his life so that we can fulfil our purpose: to give of ourselves in praise of and service to God and the world, particularly in building in communities around the sacraments and ministries of justice and charity such as for the hungry, homeless, refugee, elderly, people with disabilities, unwanted child or unsupported mother. Yet, all these ministries – that go to healing the crisis at the heart of a broken culture – come out of the heart of God who is enabling us to live our true and full life.

Thus, we, Christians, trust that God will bring about change and conversion, as the 'history of salvation' shows us, by putting ourselves at God's disposal in His Church. We must 'read the signs of the times', be aware of our cultural milieu (and its effect on us), even as we sow seeds with God, and help our politicians to do so as best as we can; so to provide a witness of hope in the midst of a confused and dying culture. There are opportunities opening all the time for witnesses to hope: for witnesses who can make sense of a world by living a life of deep meaning and integrity for others in faithfulness to God's promise. ■

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Drasko Dizdar.

GATHERED AROUND THE SAME TABLE

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JOSEPH G. DONDERS

Eucharist as Summit and Final Outcome

SOME HAVE called the gospels one of the *eatingest* books in literature. In a gospel like Luke's we find Jesus constantly at table with all kinds of people. His last supper is not his first and not his last meal. All kinds of things happen during those meals. In a way they fulfilled Wisdom's old promise in the book of Proverbs (9:5): 'Come; eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed!'

Eating is important, the best selling non-fiction books in a country like the United States are cook-books, followed by books on spirituality. Meals together are even more important. Eating together entails all kinds of consequences. That is why Mary Frances Kennedy Fisher, the author of 'The Art of Eating', a classic on the subject, wrote in her introduction: *The Gastronomical Me* -

There is a communion of more than bodies when bread is broken and wine is drunk. And that is my answer when people ask me, 'Why do you write about hunger, and not wars or love'¹

And Marc David wrote in his study *Nourishing Wisdom*:

As an eater, I acknowledge the domain of the sacred. I recognize that the act of eating may be ritualized and inspired. It may be given symbolic meanings that are religious or spiritual in nature. It may even be joyous. I further agree that eating is an activity that joins me with all humanity. I recognize that to be an eater is to be accountable for the care of the earth and its resources. I acknowledge that despite our differences, we are all ultimately nourished by the same source. As such, I agree to share. I recognize at its deepest level eating is an affirmation of life. Each time I eat I agree somewhere inside to continue life on earth. I acknowledge that this choice to eat is a fundamental act of love and nourishment,

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a true celebration of my existence. As a human being on earth, I agree to be an eater. I choose life again and again and again ... To eat, and especially when you do that in a meal together with others is to weave yourself in the substance of life and creation itself.²

Consequently, being deprived of food is the deepest possible poverty, and being excluded from any meal the greatest possible injustice. It is something we all know. Even children often do when they are asked to say grace before a meal. How often does it not happen that they, looking for food on the table in front of them, add a prayer for those who are hungry.

JESUS ENTERED THIS REALITY AT HIS INCARNATION

The gospels tell us about the many meals Jesus had with others. In John's gospel his public life starts with a meal at Cana and his gospel ends with a breakfast at the shore of the Sea of Galilee. In the gospels there are meals with Simon the Leper, Mary and Martha, with Matthew, Zaccheus and the couple at Emmaus, to mention only a few of them. He had enormous picnics together with large crowds. One of the few miracles mentioned in all four gospels is the feeding of the 5000. In one of them the willingness of a boy, with five small pieces of bread and some fish, to share, is taken up by him, and all have more than sufficient to eat. There are plenty of leftovers. They fill some enormous doggy bags, symbolically sufficient to feed the whole of Israel (the twelve baskets) and the whole of the world. (the seven baskets).

In one of the most influential speeches given in the last century, one of his disciples, Martin Luther King Jr., would pick up Jesus' theme, when he said for a crowd of hundreds of thousands, 'I have a dream ... (of a future that we) will be able to sit down together at a table'. It was Jesus' dream, plan and project to restore 'the banquet table of his Father (Mt 22:4)'. In Jewish tradition the words '*tikkun olam*' are often used for this messianic task. It means 'the repair' or 'the restoration' of the world. The first quote in Pope John Paul II's encyclical on Mission, *Redemptoris Missio*, is Paul's sigh: 'Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel' (I Cor 9:16), and the second quote is Jesus' prayer in the Gospel of John:

'... that they all may be one'(Jo 17:21).

John Paul II considers the realization of this 'oneness' as the Mission given to us. The absence of it, so painfully felt in our day and age, might be explained in different ways. It might be that Jesus prayed for this oneness – the one table – because we are spread out and scattered all through history

and the world as pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that broke up, and that has to be brought together again to form the full picture.

Another explanation might be, that Jesus prayed like that, because we are 'one', but do not live up to its reality. Whatever understanding we might prefer, one table is our mission: '*...that they may be one!*'

SUPPERS AND BREAKFASTS

The meals Jesus had with the people he invited, or with those who invited him, were different in character. He shared suppers and breakfasts. Though we - and rightly so - speak about his last supper, we should not forget that the last meal he seemed to have had with his disciples and friends was a breakfast. It was a meal for which he provided the fish, and baked the bread. (Jo 21:9).

Usually suppers and breakfasts are very different in character. A supper is eaten when the day is over. There might be some candles on the table and a good glass of wine. We have some time for each other, we are going to rest. Breakfasts are generally done in haste, the day and its work is waiting, tasks and missions assigned.

It is what happened at Jesus' last breakfast with his friends. He gave them their task: 'If you love me, watch over the others, and feed them!' (cf. Jo 21: 15-18). That breakfast on the shore of the lake was a 'working' one! It was at the last supper that Jesus deepened the meaning of their eating together, when celebrating the Exodus event at the last Seder meal he had with them. It is Paul, though not present that evening, who explains what happened that night:

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.' (1Cor II:23-32).

And he added in the next chapter of the same letter:

'Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it' (1 Cor 2:27).

That night they ate and drank themselves into his body and his blood, forming one body and one blood. In a text quoted in the official *Catechism*

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of the Catholic Church (Oct. 1992) St. Augustine drew as his conclusion:

If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive. To that which you are you respond 'Amen' ('yes, it is true') and by responding to it, you assent to it. For you hear the words, 'the Body of Christ' and respond 'Amen' – Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your Amen may be true. (#I 396)

It is - in a way - a question of identification! It is also the reason that Paul had a difficulty with the Corinthians. He had been informed that the celebrating well-to-do Corinthians celebrated the Eucharist in the context of an additional meal in which some were eating their fill from the food they had brought with them, while overlooking the poor ones present, who left the celebration hungry. That is the reason he wrote them:

'When you meet like you do, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat.' (I Cor 11:19).

PROCLAIMING THE LORD'S DEATH...

In his encyclical '*On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church*' (April 17 2003) Pope John Paul II cautioned not to overlook that Jesus, speaking those words about 'Giving his body and blood', referred to his willingness to sacrifice himself for us:

'The Lord wishes to be remembered by us in meal and sacrifice.'
(#20).

Paul has Jesus insisting on that second aspect when he reports Jesus' words:

'Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes (I Cor 11:26).'

He did not only say that in view of Himself and his cross, but also in view of ourselves and the mission He left us. We have not only to proclaim His death and resurrection. We should proclaim his cross in our lives. What then does that proclamation of the death of the Lord mean? How do we proclaim Jesus' death on the cross? How do we express in our lives what we celebrate together with Him and together with each other, forming the one Body and Blood of Jesus Christ? It is where the Corinthians failed, when they remained eating while others remained hungry.

Forming 'together Christ's Body' (I Cor 12:27), Christ's loving and

self-denying death on the cross for others - made present in the Eucharist - should lead us, participating in the Eucharist, to a matching life-style. Our sacrificial love for others represents Christ's life and death to them. It is a manifestation of His risen life in us. Only by actively loving and caring for others does the participant in the Eucharist 'proclaim' Christ's death as something that happened for us and all the others. That is why Saint Augustine instead of saying, 'The Lord be with you' preferred to say, 'The Lord is with you,' adding 'Be then a member of the Body of Christ so that your *Amen* may be true.'

THIS IDENTIFICATION SHOULD BE PUT IN A 'CONTEXT'

Meals have to be put in a context. This is certainly true of the more official ones. This identification with him should be put in a context too. Going to Mass should not only mean going for Holy Communion. There is more to a meal, even to a sacrificial one, than eating only. The reason should be given for our being together. The celebration has to be interpreted. It is something we all know from our being together. The celebration has to be interpreted. It is something we all know from our more significant meals at a jubilee or an occasion like that. It is here that the importance of the word and its proclamation comes in!

The *first* Sunday readings usually remind us of the old hope and expectations in the First (the Old) Testament, the *second* readings generally remind us of what happened to the first Christian communities in the apostolic letters and the Acts of the Apostles; while we meet in the *Gospel* readings the person of Jesus himself, in his miracles, healings, words and dreams!

THE EUCHARIST AS A BREAKTHROUGH: 'ALREADY' AND 'NOT YET'

Sometimes in special circumstances, the reality of Jesus' Body suddenly does shine through the humdrum of our daily lives. It did this for me during the Second World War, now seventy years ago. The Netherlands was occupied by foreign troops. I was a boy in those days, a Mass-server in our parish. We considered the soldiers who occupied the country as enemies. We would never accept anything from them. We would never eat with them, and when we saw others doing that we considered them traitors, who should be punished when the war would be over.

We lived under curfew. Nobody was allowed to move in the streets from sunset to sunrise. But then, in 1943, the foreign Military commander, who must have been a Christian, lifted the curfew for Christmas night. That

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night we all went to the Midnight Mass. They were already singing their carols, when I went to the sacristy to serve Mass. Part of my task as Mass server was to hold the paten, a small gilded dish, under the hands of the priest while he was distributing Holy communion to people kneeling at the communion rail.

At the beginning of Mass there was quite some commotion. A small group of soldiers entered the church, making quite some noise with their hobnailed boots. At communion time I accompanied the priest at the communion rail, until I thought all parishioners had received communion. I put the paten on the altar and went around the communion rail to kneel down myself to receive Holy Communion, when some soldiers came from the back of the church to receive Holy Communion as well.

One was kneeling on my right side and two at my left. I could even smell the leather of their belts. Our parish priest, who - as I later heard - helped to hide a Jewish family from the occupying forces at the risk of his life, gave first Holy Communion to the soldier next to me, then to me, and then to the two others.

It was at that moment, receiving communion with those hostile soldiers that I realized - young as I was - something about that one Body of Christ we formed together notwithstanding our actual human condition. We celebrated sacramentally a reality that had still to be realized in our everyday life.

The Eucharist is about a reality that is already with us, and that at the same time has still to be concretized amongst us. It is the 'already' and the 'not yet' of the Kingdom of God. There are - maybe - not a lot of times that the Kingdom of God and the world in which we live come so clearly together, but that was definitely one of those times and places.

'... UNTIL HE COMES'

The consequences of being at table with Jesus are enormous. Seen in their concrete setting they are of a global and cosmic proportion with all kinds of social, economic and ecological ramifications. The acclamation after the consecration:

'until You come in glory' leaves us with a mission. We are waiting for and should be working at the 'new heavens and a new earth' (Rev. 21:1).

We have been often so intent on our own personal salvation (and the personal salvation of others) that we forgot how John in the 11th chapter of his Gospel noted that Jesus died 'to gather into one the scattered children of God' (11:52). It is a task, a mission that in our globalizing world is of the utmost actuality!

Being at table with Him assures us of the final outcome, and gives us the strength to do what we can in furthering God's Reign, a Reign of Peace, Justice and the integrity of Creation. It increases our sense of responsibility for our globalizing world today, building a world in harmony with the sacrificial meal we celebrate in the Eucharist together with him.

AN UNFINISHED EUCHARIST

It is more than twenty-five years ago that Bishop Oscar Romero was killed at the end of his homily during the celebration of the Eucharist. He did not finish the celebration of the Eucharist. Neither was the Eucharist of his funeral Mass finished. Gunfire and death were again present, when the people in the plaza in front of the cathedral rushed inside for cover. Bishop Ramirez from Las Cruces in New Mexico explained in those days, that those unfinished Eucharists are like a symbol of what still has to happen in our world. He noted:

While we live in these ends of time we are challenged to contribute to the completion of the unfinished Eucharist of the Last Supper which Jesus Himself left open-ended: 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it (again) until there is fulfilment in the kingdom of God.' (Lk 22: 14-15).

The Eucharists in this world are actually celebrated with 'closed' numbers of people. Jesus' intention is that they should be celebrated in the global context he was asking for when he prayed, "...*that they may be one.*" He left the realization of that celebration to us as our mission, equipping us with the Spirit of God. ■

ENDNOTES

¹ M.F.K Fisher, *The Art of Eating*, Macmillan, 1990

² Marc David, *Nourishing Wisdom*, harmony/Bell Tower, Crown Publishers, Inc. 1994

DANIEL G. GROODY

Dying to Live

Theology, Migration, and the Human Journey¹

A FEW YEARS AGO I was working in Mexico at a border outreach centre that offered material and pastoral support to those on the move. Some were travelling northwards in search of better lives, and others had tried to enter the U.S. but failed and were deported back to Mexico.

One day a group of forty immigrants arrived in the centre, sojourners who had hoped to reach the U.S. It had been a long night for them – and an even longer week. For three days they had crossed through the Arizona desert in temperatures that reach 120 degrees in the shade. Amid the challenges of the desert terrain – their personal vulnerability to everything from heat stroke to poisonous snakes – they had braved a perilous journey and tried to make their way to the U.S., often under the cover of darkness. They walked remote and diffuse trails that have taken the lives of thousands of immigrants – an estimated 300–500 annually since 1994.

Why were they willing to take such risks and leave their home country? When I asked them, some said they had relatives back home who needed medication they could not afford. Others said the \$3–\$5 a day they earned for a twelve-hour work day in Mexico was not enough to put much more than beans and tortillas on the table. Still others said potato chips had become a luxury they could no longer afford, and they could not stand to look their children in the eyes when they complained of hunger.

THE DESERT ORDEAL

‘We are migrating not because we want to but because we have to,’ said Mario. ‘My family at home depends on me. I’m already dead in Mexico, and getting to the U.S. gives us the hope of living, even though I may die.’ But now they were back on the border after a week-long ordeal. While walking through the Arizona desert, they had suddenly heard a rumbling

sound on the horizon. Then a white laser-like light cut their world in two. Within moments a border patrol helicopter surrounded them and threw the group into chaos.

‘So they circled around us and then rounded us up like we were cattle,’ said Maria. ‘I said, no, dear God ... I’ve gone through so much sacrifice to come this far ... please don’t let them send us back where we came from.’

‘It was an awful night,’ added Gustavo. ‘But the worst part was when they started playing the song, ‘La Cucaracha’ (The Cockroach) over the helicopter intercom. I never felt so humiliated in my life, like I was the lowest form of life of earth, like I wasn’t even a human being.’

The story of Mario, Maria and Gustavo gives witness to their particular journey across the U.S.-Mexico border, but its dynamics are universal in scope. Today there are more than 200 million people migrating around the world, or one out of every thirty-five people on the planet, which is equivalent to the population of Brazil. Some 30-40 million of these are undocumented, 24 million are internally displaced and about 10 million are refugees.² For many reasons some scholars refer to these days as the ‘age of migration,’ touching every area of human life. The immigration issue underscores not only conflict at geographical borders but the turbulent crossroads between national security and human insecurity, national sovereign rights and human rights, civil law and natural law, and citizenship and discipleship.³

Amid these contentious debates, much has been written about the social, political, economic, cultural dimensions of immigration. But surprisingly very little has been written from a theological perspective, even less from the vantage point of the immigrants themselves. Yet the theme of migration is as old as the Scriptures. From the call of Abraham to the Exodus from Egypt, from Israel’s wandering in the desert to their experience of exile, from the holy family’s flight into Egypt to the missionary activity of the Church, the very identity of the People of God is inextricably intertwined with stories of movement, risk and hospitality.

BROKEN BORDERS: GOD’S MIGRATION

But what exactly can theology offer to this complex issue of immigration? Here I will highlight three Christian themes that touch directly on the migration debate and help us understand that crossing borders is at the heart of human life, divine revelation and Christian identity. These three areas are the *Imago Dei* (the Image of God), the *Verbum Dei* (the Word of God) and the *Missio Dei* (the Mission of God).⁴

The notion of the *Imago Dei* emerges in the earliest pages of Scripture. We read in the first creation account that human beings are created in God's image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27). No text is more foundational or more significant in its implication for the immigration debate. It reveals that immigration is not just about a political 'problem' but about real people. The *Imago Dei* is the core symbol of human dignity, the infinite worth of every human being, and the divine attributes that are part of every human life, including will, memory, emotions, understanding, and the capacity to love and enter into relationship with others.

Listening to stories of immigrants along the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as the borders between Slovakia-Ukraine, Malta-Libya, and others, I have discovered that a common denominator around the world among all who migrate is their experience of dehumanization.

I recently was speaking with a group of refugees in the Spanish-occupied territory of Ceuta on the Moroccan coast. They took me up to the mountains to meet some people from India, who were hiding out in cardboard shacks in the mountains.

The only place available to them was a small plot of land, where they built a cardboard shack, located above an animal shelter that had hundreds of dogs, which barked all through the night. 'Even many of the animals here live better than we do,' said one refugee, part of a group from India that was seeking work in the European Union. 'It is as if we are worth nothing to the people who live here, and if we die, it won't matter.'

The 'Imago Dei' brings to the forefront the human costs embedded in the immigration equation, and it challenges a society more oriented towards profit than people to accept that the economy should be made for people and not people for the economy.

The insults they endure are not just a direct assault on their pride but on their very existence. Their vulnerability and sense of meaninglessness weigh heavily on them; they often feel that the most difficult part of being an immigrant is to be no one to anyone. The *Imago Dei* brings to the forefront the human costs embedded in the immigration equation, and it challenges a society more oriented towards profit than people to accept that the economy should be made for people and not people for the economy. It is a reminder that the moral health of an economy is measured by how well the most vulnerable are faring. The *Imago Dei* insists that we see immigrants not as problems to be solved but people to be healed and empowered.

CROSSING BORDERS: JESUS THE REFUGEE

The second theological notion that is central to the immigration debate is the *Verbum Dei*. It declares that God in Jesus crosses the divide that exists between divine life and human life. In the incarnation God migrates to the human race and, as Karl Barth notes, makes his way into the ‘far country.’⁵ This far country is one of human discord and disorder, a place of division and dissension, a territory marked by death and the demeaning treatment of human beings.

The Gospel of Matthew says God in Jesus not only takes on human flesh and migrates into our world but actually becomes a refugee himself when he and his family flee political persecution and escape into Egypt (Matt 2:13-15). The divine takes on not just any human narrative but that of the most vulnerable among us. This movement toward the human race takes place not on the strength of any human initiative or human accomplishment but through divine gratuity. Walking the way of the cross, overcoming the forces of death that threaten human life, Jesus gives hope to all who go through the agony of economic injustice, family separation, cultural uprootedness, and even a premature and painful death. Certainly migrants who cross the deserts in search of more dignified lives see in the Jesus story their own story: he opens up a reason to hope despite the most hopeless of circumstances. What impresses me most in speaking to migrants in the midst of their arduous journey is their ability to believe in God even in the most godless of situations. They speak about trusting in God even after all has been taken away, and they affirm God’s goodness even when their lot has been marked by such suffering and pain.

BEYOND BORDERS: CIVILIZATION OF LOVE

A third notion from theology that gives us a different way of understanding immigration is the *Missio Dei*. The mission of the Church is to proclaim a God of life and make our world more human by building up, in Pope Paul VI’s words, the ‘civilization of love’. In imitation of Jesus, it seeks to make real the practice of table fellowship. The significance of Jesus’ table fellowship with sinners and social outcasts is that he crosses over the human borders that divide one human being from another.

If the incarnation is about God crossing over the divine-human divide, the mission of the Church is to cross the human-human divide. It is fundamentally a mission of reconciliation, a realization that the borders that define countries may have some proximate value but are not ultimately those that define the body of Christ.

One of the most remarkable ritual expressions of this unity takes place each year near El Paso, Texas. In the dry, rugged, sun-scorched terrain where many immigrants lose their lives, bishops, priests, and lay people come together annually to celebrate the Eucharist. Like at other liturgies, they pray and worship together. Unlike other liturgies, a sixteen-foot high iron fence divides this community in half, with one side in Mexico and the other in the U.S. Amid a desert of death and a culture of fear, this Eucharist is not just a tool for activism or social reform but a testimony of God's universal, undivided, and unrestricted love for all people. It speaks of the gift and challenge of Christian faith and the call to feed the world's hunger for peace, justice and reconciliation. In uniting people beyond the political constructions that divide us, it gives tangible expression to the moral demands of the Kingdom of God, the ethical possibilities of global solidarity, and the Christian vision of a journey of hope.

Immigration is arguably the most challenging issue of the new century, but this need not blind us to the core issues that lay at the heart of every one of us. How we respond to those most in need says more about who we are individually and collectively than it does about those on the move. Theology supplies a way of thinking about migration that keeps the human issues at the centre of the debate and reminds us that our own existence as a pilgrim people is migratory in nature.

My primary purpose here is not to make a case for or against open borders but to give a new way of conceptualizing a difficult and contentious global issue. It seeks to broaden the intellectual terrain about migration and forge the beginnings of some theological foundations for such a perspective. Viewed as a theological concept, migration offers a rich hermeneutic for some of the most foundational dimensions of human existence and offers a different vantage point for making moral choices; it illuminates the gift and demand of Christian faith in light of the pressing social problems of the modern world, and it opens up a space to bring out what is most human in a debate that often diminishes and dehumanizes those forcibly displaced.

Although some argue that combining theology and migration mixes politics with religion, and others that migration falls more to the domain of social science than theological reflection, migration touches so many aspects of life and society that it cannot be hermetically compartmentalized. Academic reflection requires its own transborder discourse to understand the complex phenomenon of global migration and its multidimensional implications. A theology of migration not only dialogues with other

disciplines but integrates their findings into the overall task of faith seeking understanding in the modern world. Moreover, social science and theology need each other in this difficult debate. Social science without theology does not give us a perspective wide enough to account for the deeper relational and spiritual dimensions of human life that shape, define, and sustain human existence—a fact that becomes more evident especially amidst crisis and trial. Theology without social science leaves us less equipped to read the signs of the times, engage contemporary issues, or speak to the pressing questions that affect large portions of the world.

Christian discipleship reminds us that the more difficult walls to cross are the ones that exist in the hearts of each of us.

Theology offers not just more information but a new imagination, one that reflects at its core what it means to be human before God and to live together in community. In seeking to overcome all that divides us in order to reconcile us in all our relationships, Christian discipleship reminds us that the more difficult walls to cross are the ones that exist in the hearts of each of us. Unable to cross this divide by ourselves, Christian faith rests ultimately in the one who migrated from heaven to earth, and through his death and resurrection, passed over from death to life.

The question, then, is not whether to allow or restrict migration but whether our moral choices are creating divides which move us toward a globalization of polarity rather than toward a globalization of solidarity. In David Hollenbach's words, "The needs of the poor take priority over the wants of the rich. The freedom of the dominated takes priority over the liberty of the powerful. The participation of marginalized groups takes priority over the preservation of an order which excludes them." Ignoring those in pain and building of walls of separation alienates people not only from each other but also from themselves.

A theology of migration seeks to understand what it means to take on the mind and heart of Christ in light of the plight of today's migrants and refugees. To limit compassion to the borders of one's nationality, one's family, or even one's self is a migration toward disintegration. For those on a trajectory toward disintegration, a theology of migration cannot make sense, since it will always be news from a foreign land. 'If I see a person

or persons suffer,' notes Elie Wiesel, 'and the distance between us does not shrink ... then, my place is not good, not enviable.' If the term 'alien' is to be used at all, it would be descriptive not of those who lack political documentation but of those who have so disconnected themselves from God and others that they are incapable of seeing in the vulnerable stranger a mirror of themselves, a reflection of Christ, and an invitation to human solidarity. ■

ENDNOTES

- ¹ This article is drawn in part from two previously published pieces, Daniel G. Groody, *Dying to Live: Migration, Theology and the Human Journey, Reflections*, Yale University, Fall 2008, and Daniel G. Groody, *Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees*, *Theological Studies* (September 2009). 638-667.
- ² For more on these statistics, see the website for the International Organization for Migration, <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pid/254>.
- ³ Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age Of Migration: International Population Movements In The Modern World* (London: The Guilford Press, 2003).
- ⁴ Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008
- ⁵ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV.1, "The Doctrine of Reconciliation," trans. G. W. Bromiley, ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance (London: T&T Clark International, 1956/2004), 157-210.



FREDERICK McMAHON

The Lost Leader (2)

*The second excerpt from the story of
Father Jean-Claude Courveille (1787 – 1866)
Benedictine monk and promoter of the Society of Mary*

FATHER JEAN-CLAUDE Courveille was indeed possessed of a golden tongue. We have confirmation of this in the reflections of his contemporaries: ‘During that period, on one occasion when we went to the country house of the Grand Seminary of Lyon, he spoke to me of the Blessed Virgin in a tone so inspired that perhaps never in my entire life have I received an impression so profound. He had only very ordinary means available to him, but he found in his heart an inspiration that made him at times most eloquent. It is true that he was then a saint; you were transported in listening to him. During his course of Theology he went to Confession to Fr Cholleton, Spiritual Director in the house. Those who presented themselves to the penitential tribunal after him found that the prie-Dieu was covered in tears.’⁸

EARLY IDEAS

Gradually, a group of fifteen seminarians was built up. They met secretly, sometimes in the rooms of Father Jean Cholleton, Professor of Moral Theology, who had been let into the secret and who had been chosen as their adviser, and sometimes at the country house of the seminary. At these re-unions, shrouded in mystery, they encouraged one another, ‘rejoicing in the honour of being the first children of Mary’⁹ and seriously discussing ways of bringing their ideas to fruition. They also debated who should be admitted and the main needs of the people. Courveille presided. He stressed the need of imitating Mary ‘especially her exquisite humility’.¹⁰ He frequently repeated the motto which the Knights of the Faith had taken from the Knights of Malta and which concluded all their prayers, ‘Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your Name give glory.’¹¹ Interchange of

ideas flowed freely: "They also discussed revelations regarding the project, notably, that the Society of Mary would emerge under the auspices of a most Christian king. This king was identified in 1817-1818, not with the reigning sovereign, but with the child of the Temple, Louis XVII, who would be a great Marist, and to whom the holy Virgin would give all the power she held. They also spoke of eschatology, of Mary as the support of the Church at the end of the world. In prophetic vein, the Society of Mary was imagined as a tree with three branches covering the whole world - Fathers, Sisters, and Third Order."¹² Eventually, however, Father Gardette, Superior of the seminary, fearing that these private meetings might upset peace and union in the community, moved to moderate and control them.

In relation to the president of these assemblies, the level-headed Fr Séon recorded the following observations: "Here is what concerns M. Courville. He commenced his studies very late. He had much zeal and had a natural eloquence; sometimes he even seemed to be inspired. When I was a young seminarian I venerated him and once I went to confess myself to him through veneration and, at the same time, through curiosity. I was very happy about this and very edified. He had studied Saint Chrysostom very extensively. Perhaps the Blessed Virgin would have been able to make more use of him, but, however, he was unfaithful to his vocation."¹³

During the remainder of the year Courville used to recall to his companions an attitude of apostolic fervour: "We shall act as did St Jean-Francis Regis."¹⁴ But, when the long vacation came, Courville, on the eve of the departure day, drew Déclas aside: "You know that what I have spoken to you about during the year is serious; there is to be established an Order which will be very similar to that of the Jesuits. Its members will call themselves Marists."¹⁴ They exchanged the usual promises to write to one another. What is more, they kept their promises.

Marcellin Champagnat had been following courses at St Irenaeus for two years when, after All Saints 1815, he was directly invited by Jean-Claude Courville to join the Society of Mary. Champagnat, however, was realistic and always had in mind the thought of founding a congregation of teaching Brothers, a branch not provided for in the 'original revelations'. When he joined the foundation members of the Marists, he said to them: "I have always felt within me a special desire to establish Brothers. I am very willing to join you, and, if you judge it fitting, I shall take charge of this section. My early education was inadequate; I should be happy to provide for others the advantages of which I myself have been deprived."¹⁵

As his proposal did not seem to meet with much response, Champagnat insisted: 'We must have Brothers; we must have Brothers to teach catechism, to help missionaries and to teach the children.'¹⁶ The usefulness of having Brothers was not disputed, but their founding did not appear in the original plan of the new society and only moderate importance was attached to his continual repetition of 'we must have Brothers'.¹⁷ Finally, to free themselves of his importunities, they said, 'Very well, you take care of it since you had the first idea of it.'¹⁸ These words, prompted by boredom and impatience, Marcellin accepted as a mission, and from that day his whole life, all his thoughts and desires, all his plans and labours were directed to the creation of this project.

MARIST PLEDGE

However astonishing it may seem, Courveille had not yet been admitted to the clerical state. Indeed, a register of ordinations shows us that he did not receive the tonsure and Minor Orders until Saturday, 6 April 1816. By this time Father Champagnat was already a deacon. But Courveille quickly caught up - in 107 days. On 7 April he received the sub-diaconate, on Sunday 21 July he became a deacon, and on 22 July he was ordained priest with Father Champagnat and others, the whole ceremony taking place in the seminary chapel at the hands of Monseigneur Du Bourg, bishop of New Orleans. At that time the urgent need for clergy in France and the age of the candidates often forced the hastening of the stages leading to the priesthood.

On Tuesday, 23 July 1816, the day after their ordination, and exactly six weeks after Fr Bochard had given approval to the petition presented by the Director of the major seminary, Fr De La Croix, for the establishment of the Society of the Cross of Jesus, the first members of the Society of Mary, who had signed a formula of commitment some days before, went up together to Notre Dame de Fourvière so as to give a more formal appearance to their decision. They were twelve, like the twelve stars surrounding the Virgin of the Apocalypse¹⁹, twelve apostles of the Church in the last times. The pledge bearing the signatures was placed between the altar stone and the corporal and, in his role as founder, Jean-Claude Courveille said Mass, the others receiving Communion from him. Then they consecrated themselves to Mary, manifesting their wish to institute the Society of Mary, no matter what the work and suffering entailed, in true accord with the Roman Pontiff and the bishop, under the peaceful

The Lost Leader (2)

rule of a most Christian king.

They declared:

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All for the greater glory of God and the honour of Mary, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

We the undersigned, willing to work for the greater glory of God and Mary, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ, affirm and declare that we have the sincere intention and firm will to consecrate ourselves, as soon as it is opportune, to the institution of the most devout Congregation of Marists. And so, by this present act and our signatures, we irrevocably devote ourselves and all that we have, as far as possible, to the Society of the Blessed Virgin. And we undertake this engagement, not lightly and childishly, not for any human motive or in the hope of any temporal gain, but seriously and maturely, having taken counsel and weighed everything before God, for the glory of God alone and the honour of Mary, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We dedicate ourselves in all troubles, labours and sufferings, and, if needs be, in tortures, being able to do all things in Him who strengthens us, Jesus Christ, to whom by this same act we promise fidelity in the bosom of our most holy Mother, the Catholic and Roman Church, attaching ourselves with all our strength to the supreme Head of this same Church, the Roman Pontiff, and likewise to our reverend Bishop, so that we may be good ministers of Jesus Christ, nourished by the words of faith and true doctrine, which, by His favour, we have received, confident that, under the peaceful and religious government of our most Christian King, this excellent institution will come into being. We solemnly promise that we will spend ourselves and all that we have in order to save, in every way possible, the souls of men, under the most august name of the Virgin Mary and under her auspices, accepting in everything, however, the better judgements of our superiors.

Praised be the Holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Amen.²⁰

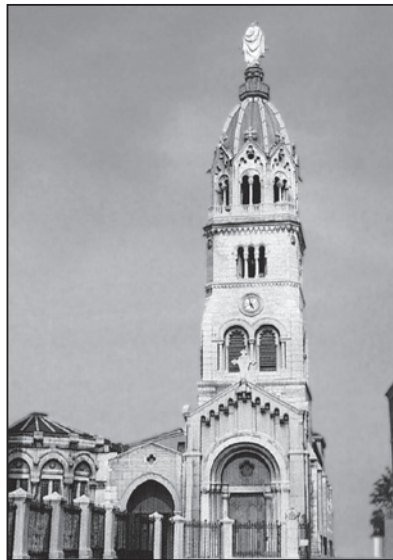
MARIST MISSION

The objective of the Society - the regeneration of France perverted by the revolutionary ideas - was to be worked out in an 'end-of-the-world' atmosphere and in a sincere belief in the Society's eschatological mission.

Being the only contemporary document of the Marist project at the

seminary of Lyon and the first historical evidence in existence concerning the Society of Mary, this formula deserves careful attention. The text contains the official act by which the number of those who signed pledged themselves as solemnly as possible to found a congregation devoted to Mary, but without stating a specific work to be undertaken or any restriction as to place or time.

On the other hand, the object of the project is the salvation of souls by every means, under the name and protection of Mary. And, to stress their insertion into the Church, they proclaim full allegiance to the authority of the Pope before that of the bishop. Thus there is a basic difference between the Marist project and that of Father Bochard. The Society of Mary today readily recognises itself in this first exemplar, and the little document signed by the twelve seminarians still contains one of the best syntheses of what constitutes its mission and its spirit.



*The chapel of the 'Black' Virgin at Fourvière –
site of the Marist pledge.*

The heading is characteristic of Father Courville and perhaps some of the text is his also. This is not to suggest that the final draft was prepared by him. There was only the one document drawn up; it was signed by all beforehand. This pledge speaks of a congregation, not simply an

association (yet to be founded), and it was to be ONE society, not several. The various branches, as far as they were foreseen, counted for little as against the unity of the whole project. The original document, written in Latin (the final draft probably checked by Father Cholleton), was placed under the corporal during the Mass celebrated by Father Courveille in the old chapel of Our Lady of Fourvière on 23 July 1816. The promise of fidelity to the Holy Father is here very explicitly stated and is also found strongly expressed in the Constitutions of the Society of Mary.

All those who signed knew quite well that they had until then really only elaborated a plan and that it was their duty to work for its realisation as soon as possible. They also agreed to write to one another often, to maintain among themselves the union they had formed and to preserve and increase the spirit that animated them.

The group then dispersed. Father Champagnat went as curate to La Valla and Father Colin to join his brother, the parish priest of Cerdon. Courveille was in succession appointed professor at Verrières junior seminary (February 1817 - June 1817), curate at Bourg-Argental (June to August 1817), Rive-de-Gier (September 1817 - October 1819) and then officiating parish priest of Epercieux. In the last-mentioned two places Courveille remained in touch by letter with his former seminary classmates. Besides that, he took very seriously his role as founder and Superior General of the Society of Mary, acknowledged by the clergy of the nearby area and by his adherents (in different degrees – but not by all).

THE FIRST FEMALE BRANCH

At his very first appointment Courveille wasted no time. Although allocated to the community of priests at the Verrières minor seminary and not to normal duties in the parish, Courveille saw fit to address himself to a group of young people gathered into an Association of the Holy Family. These he sought to direct towards becoming members of the Third Order of Mary.

Evidence of this move by Courveille comes from a letter written at Verrières on 14 June 1824 by the priest-in-charge. He wrote to a Vicar-General of Lyon in relation to this Association of the Holy Family which he had set up in the minor seminary at Verrières. He wanted the Vicar General to extend the privileges of the Association to parishes in which it might be established: 'I desire this Association to be given all the scope possible, because I do not know of any other being established in honour of the Holy Family. Father Courveille was anxious that this association

might be the Third Order of the Marists.²²¹ This attempt by Courveille would therefore have been in 1816-1817 when he was a priest at Verrières, Fr Meret being the priest-in-charge of the parish. Three months after writing this letter (September 1824) Meret was appointed a parish priest and had to leave Verrières. No trace of this Association remains in the parish records. Nothing concrete came of Courveille's efforts towards establishing a Third Order.

At Verrières Courveille found himself under the influence of the Society of the Cross of Jesus. Fr Bochart still hoped to combine the Society of Mary with his own Society. It was, he thought, simply a question of patience, since his Society was the only one canonically recognised; any other could be so recognised only with his approval. Moreover, since 1816 at least two seminarians, former disciples of Courveille, had cancelled their signatures to the Marist formula, preferring the 'Pious Thoughts' project. Time was needed to mature the effect of such an example. So the Vicar General continued to favour the rival group and brought Courveille closer to Champagnat by appointing him curate successively at Bourg-Argental (20 June to 20 August 1817) and at Rive-de-Gier (18 September 1817 to 1 October 1819).

In mid-September, then, Jean-Claude Courveille, presumed superior of the Society of Mary in Lyon, received his appointment as curate at Rive-de-Gier (Loire). Good fortune favoured him, for here he found a community of nine 'pious young ladies', assembled some ten years earlier by the parish priest of that area, Father Lancelot; they conducted a school for 130 girls. These 'Sisters of Rive-de-Gier' are documented in official records: '(9 Sisters or novices). They teach 60 poor children gratis; 70 pay. A house belongs to one of them; only one-third built. Income comes from legacies, gifts, manual work, board paid by the pupils or by the sick. They have not adopted a Rule as yet; they intend to do so "when ecclesiastical matters are decided".²²² Three of these ladies had the government teaching certificate (the brevet).

The new curate was delighted to discover in these young ladies the nucleus of the female teaching branch of the Society of Mary. The idea pleased them and it would have been easily implemented but for the opposition of the parish priest: 'I don't agree,' he said, 'that a new Order be established in my parish. If these young ladies wish to be religious, they may do so, provided they choose an existing order.'²²³

The opposition of the parish priest and, still more, of the Vicars General,

allowed no official or canonical organisation. A less hostile diocese had to be sought for Courville's group and so, by agreement with Monseigneur Simon, bishop of Grenoble, Father Courville established a part of his community at Saint-Clair-sur-Rhône (Isère), where the Sisters soon took charge of the parish school. This transfer probably occurred in 1819 when Courville himself was transferred to Epercieux.

Deprived of serious formation to the religious life, having difficulties with the school and removed from their founder, the Marist Sisters of St Clair soon presented the spectacle of a community in confusion. It was then that Courville applied to Father Colin to ask him for some support. At that time there was a certain Marie-Thérèse Jotillon, who had teaching experience and who was known to both the Fathers Colin at Cerdon. Yielding to the request they made to her, she went to St Clair in company of her niece, Marie Gardet, and helped to straighten out the school situation. She remained there until Cerdon became independent of the archdiocese of Lyon after 1823. Under the direction of Father Jean-Claude Colin, Cerdon, now part of the new diocese of Belley, became a Marist centre. Marie-Thérèse returned to this town to make community there with her good friend Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn. Hence the Marist Sisters counted three houses in all : in Rive-de-Gier (Lyon), in St Clair (Grenoble), and in Cerdon (Belley). ■

ENDNOTES

- ⁸ O.M. 3, Doc 798, Para. 3
- ⁹ O.M.2, Doc.750, Para. 5
- ¹⁰ O.M.2, Doc.750, Para. 5
- ¹¹ Psalm 113
- ¹² V & M 138
- ¹³ O.M. II. Doc. 625, Para. 3
- ¹⁴ O.M. 2, Doc. 591, Para. 7
- ¹⁵ O.M. 2, Doc. 752, Para. 53
- ¹⁶ O.M. 2, Doc. 757, Para 2
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Apoc. XII vi.
- ²⁰ O.M. 1, Doc. 50
- ²¹ O.M. 1, Doc 105, Para 1
- ²² O.M. 1, Doc. 55, 56
- ²³ O.M. 4, Doc. 876, Para 5

BERISE T. HEASLY

The Media and the Message

UNTIL RECENTLY, I have not had serious reason to reflect on the breadth of the Catholic Media, nor the role and function that so many people, in all forms of the media, continuously play. The diversity begins with TV, Print and Online, but extends far into the lives of the people of Australia. Of course, it is wider than that in this most globalised 21st century of ours, is it not?

We can think of Print alone and canvass the spread of holy cards, prayer books, lectionaries, sacred literature, dailies, weeklies, quarterlies like *Champagnat*, academic literature, RE resources, spirituality and more. What an array! The Second Vatican Council's *Decree on Social Communications Media (Inter Mirifica)* encouraged the development of authentically Catholic print media. For the Council the principal objective of all Catholic media is to spread and defend the truth, to form, support and advance public opinion in accordance with natural law and Catholic teaching and precepts, and thereby foster Christian influence in human society. More succinctly, for the forty-fifth (2011) World Day of Social Communications, Benedict XVI has identified as hallmarks of all forms of the media: 'Truth, proclamation, and authenticity of life'.

When faced with the world of communication, it seems wise to 'situate' *Champagnat* in its proper place within the landscape of Catholic media today. *Champagnat* began in 1998 as 'the official Journal of the Champagnat Education Commission of the Marist Brothers, Melbourne Province'. It aimed 'to enhance the effectiveness and improvements of education and schooling in the Champagnat tradition for all students and young people, regardless of family background and economic status'.

Today the journal has two additional concepts in its full title: 'international' and 'charism'. Early in 2010, Benedict XVI emphasised that every charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and exists to serve the sanctifying mission of the Church. The ideal of heroic Christians such as Francis of Assisi, Mary Ward, John Bosco and Mary of the Cross, was

to imitate in a practical way the virtues of Christ, and they, according to the Holy Father, are the best interpreters of the Bible. Their ideals, their spirit and their vision make the word of God more captivating for us, so that it really speaks to all followers of Christ. Consequently, in accordance with the thinking of the Church, the role of *Champagnat* has broadened to encompass the goals of promoting a robust spirituality in individuals, and through them to foster spiritual vigour and integrity in Catholic education generally.

The mission of the *Champagnat* journal revolves around 'charism in education'. Using the role of our journal in the general Catholic media scenario means that we explore the elements of charism in education. The term itself means a gift, a perspective that offers a particular framework usually based on faith for the wider community to experience, recognise, even to practise. This charism pertains usually to the vision and spirit of the founder and early members of an Order in the Church, as these are authentically interpreted to meet changing times, cultures and circumstances.

It is important then to reflect on the elements of the Marcellin Champagnat approach, his perspective which is illustrated in articles in various issues of *Champagnat*. We remember the contributions of Brother Fred McMahon and others, who have traced the links and connections from the time of Champagnat himself till today.

From the centre of Marcellin spirituality, in the recent past we have looked further towards the charism and spirituality of the female Orders. In the cases of the Loretos and the Josephites, their history, commandingly researched by Dr Constance Lewis, has recently been recorded in this journal in the form of chapters from her doctoral thesis. It is intended to carry the story of some other congregations in future issues of the magazine.

So the Marist charism in education has a special place within the various charisms we can think of, and that includes the very real charism in education of the various organs of the Catholic media. The Australasian Catholic Press Association (ACPA) publishes as its aim the promotion of the principles and practices set out in the Second Vatican Council's decree on the mass media, and in subsequent related social instructions. Each year the Association makes awards in a large number of categories in order to recognise and encourage excellence as exemplified over the range of Catholic print media. The ecumenical Australasian Religious

Press Association (ARPA) also identifies annually people and products that demonstrate high quality in a range of aspects of the religious press generally.

In a well-deserved tribute to the team of John McMahon, Juliette Hughes-Norwood and Lucille Hughes, the ACPA awarded the 2009 Bishop Phillip Kennedy Memorial Prize – ‘Best Magazine Award’ to the *Champagnat* journal. Individual Champagnat writers won ACPA awards in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2010. Also in 2010 two *Champagnat* authors received awards for their articles from the ecumenical ARPA.

Catholic media is charged with the responsibility of critical and honest support of the Mission of the Church: to take the gospel message to the whole world. *Champagnat*, in its diversity of content, makes a strong effort to provide spiritual, empathetic, critical and realistic writing for the reader four times a year.

The Decree *Inter Mirifica* expressed the wish that ‘the faithful be advised of the necessity both to spread and to read the Catholic press (so as) to formulate Christian judgements for themselves on all events’. The Synod also ‘earnestly invited’ those with the means to do so to support Catholic media ‘freely and generously... inasmuch as they contribute to genuine culture and the apostolate’. The team of enthusiastic people producing the *Champagnat* journal is preparing to face 2011 with a renewed determination to meet as fully as they can the expectations the Church has in relation to Catholic media generally. While our goal is to merit the support of a growing number of subscribers, independent umpires have given the journal awards indicating that it is already doing a number of things well. Needed are more hectares of receptive soil to receive and make more productive the seed the journal is sowing. ■

Without closing your eyes to the defects of your pupils...keep in mind at the same time all the pleasant qualities they have which deserve your attention. Look at the sincerity of their contrition, even though it may not last long; the honesty of their resolutions, even though they break them quickly; the generosity of their efforts, even though it is rarely sustained for long. Give them credit for the good they do, no matter how imperfect, and for all the evil they do not do.

- St. Marcellin Champagnat

CHARLES J. CHAPUT

Catholic Identity in Catholic Higher Education

*Remarks of the Archbishop of Denver, Colorado to leadership
and faculty of the University of St. Thomas in Houston Texas.,
2 March 2010.*

I'VE BEEN ASKED to offer a few thoughts about the Catholic identity of Catholic higher education. As I was gathering my thoughts for this morning, I remembered two articles. Neither is recent. But each is even more important today, than when it appeared.

The first was published on the web in 2002. The author Francis Fukuyama spoke at the Carnegie Council, and then he took questions from an audience. His theme was 'Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution.' The council then posted the transcription to the internet. The second article appeared in 2004. Bill Joy, a scientist and mathematician, wrote it for *Wired* magazine. The title speaks for itself: 'Why the future doesn't need us.'¹

PROBLEMS WE FACE

Each of these men has an outstanding mind. Neither, to my knowledge, is religious. Both are deeply pro-science and pro-technology. But both describe possible futures that should sober us all – futures where the technology we create undermines important things we *think* we know about human nature, human rights and human dignity. And the most unsettling thing about both men is that they have the insight to see and understand the problems we face. They also have the good will to worry about them. But they don't have the moral framework to offer any convincing solutions.

In his Carnegie remarks, Fukuyama made an observation that's worth dwelling on. He said: 'When [Thomas Jefferson] was on his deathbed in

1824, he wrote: “One of the reasons we can be optimistic about the future of the United States and of progress, is that Nature has not conspired to create certain people that were born with saddles on their backs, and others born booted and spurred to ride them”.’

Having quoted Jefferson, Fukuyama then added this comment: The technologies we will have within the next two decades ‘will give us the capability, in effect, to create people that are either born with saddles on their backs, or born booted and spurred’. This is not fantasy or science-fiction. It’s fact, or very soon will be.

If we want to know why a *truly* Catholic education is so urgent, and why a place like the University of St. Thomas is so important, the answer is right there in Fukuyama’s words. As a nation, we’ve created a culture that behaves like the Sorcerer’s Apprentice. Neil Postman once called us the world’s first emerging ‘technopoly’ – a society where the real organizing principle is technological progress in its narrowest sense, and every other social value is subordinated to it.

We have the knowledge to unlock the power of creation, but we lack the wisdom and the humility to use it for real human progress. Our definition of ‘progress’ is limited and confused. It ignores the most vital part of what it means to be really ‘human’: our spirit. We don’t fully understand the power that we unlock, or its implications. In fact, many of us no longer really believe that a unique and permanent ‘human nature’ exists.

CHOOSING TO BE RELEVANT

The genius of a Catholic education is to anchor the yearnings, the brilliance and the glory of the human mind in the greatness of God. Man has no security outside the guarantees of God’s love. If we deny Him, we deny ourselves. If we do not know Him, we cannot know ourselves.

And this is why, when Catholic institutions of higher learning soften or dilute their bonds to the Church, or treat Catholic teaching as somehow separate from serious intellectual life, they’re not becoming more progressive or more relevant. They’re choosing to be *irrelevant* because they have nothing new and confident to say to the world around them. They’re betraying themselves, their students and the culture that Jesus Christ calls them to sanctify. *Jesus Christ is Lord. The Church is his bride and our mother and teacher.* If these two facts don’t burn in the heart of a Catholic university, its leaders and its faculty, and through them, in the lives of its students, then it’s just another cup of salt that has lost its flavour

Catholic Identity in Catholic Higher Education

– and its purpose.

The greatness of the University of St. Thomas is not just your academic excellence, which is vital and admirable and does honour to the great Catholic intellectual tradition. Your real greatness is the Christian humanism – given life by the Catholic faith – that educates and makes new the *whole* person: mind, body and spirit. *That's* what sets you apart. Never lose it. Be Catholic, *really, faithfully, unapologetically* Catholic, and the future will have the kind of articulate and morally mature leaders it needs.

I began with a couple of voices worried about the future. I want to end with a voice from the past who knew the peace of God's presence in a world just as confused and anxious as our own. Augustine, as all of you know, lived his ministry as a bishop in an age when everything solid in the old Roman world was unravelling. His people lived with a constant fear and uncertainty. The encouragement their bishop gave to them was this: "Bad times, hard times – this is what people keep saying; but let us live well, and times shall be good. *We are the times.* Such as we are, such are the times."

You and I, and all of the lives this wonderful university touches: *We are the times.* And we can shape the future with our zeal and faith and Christian love from this moment forward. *So let us live well, and times will be good.* We are the times: Such as we are, such as we *love*, such as we *do* – such are the times. ■

ENDNOTES

¹ Francis Fukuyama is best known for his book *The End of History and the Last Man*. His Carnegie Council appearance was tied to the release of his subsequent book *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.

Bill Joy was the main player in the development of the computer operating system BSD UNIX, the basis for most subsequent forms of UNIX, the dominant OS for most of the world's large-scale computer and information networks. He also co-founded and has served as chief scientist for Sun Microsystems.

Archbishop Chaput's address is reprinted with the permission of Francis X. Maier, Chancellor of the archdiocese of Denver.

BERISE T. HEASLY

A Coffee, A Couch and a Good Book

*A Friendly Guide to
THE NEW TESTAMENT,*
by Francis J Moloney SDB;
John Garratt Publishing, 2010,
64 pages, RRP \$24.95

ANOTHER IN the ongoing series of Friendly Guides, this publication is colourful, concise and a companion to further titles in the series: 'Jesus' and 'The Mass'. Fr. Moloney is the Provincial of the Salesians of Don Bosco, and is eminently positioned to provide students, as well as new and continuing teachers with a small compendium of information vital to the accurate reading of the New Testament. Beautiful artwork, some coming from the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy in North Melbourne, give us a sense of background to gems of information, presented in small digestible boxes that attend to the authentic understanding of myth and truth about the life and times of Jesus and the early church.

We are shown ways of understanding Bible references, as a

preparation to exploring the Judaic and Greco-Roman world of the New Testament. We are invited to imagine the questions that faced the Apostles after Jesus returned to the Father. This is followed by a delightful 'biography of Jesus of Nazareth'.

A most exacting picture of how each of the Gospels came into being follows, accompanied by pictures of early icons, mosaics, a map of the Bible Lands. We are treated to some superb and atmospheric art work of Susan Daily and Lynne Muir. History connecting the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and its teachings with the Gospels, the life and writings of St Paul and those writings attributed to him, are described and explained carefully. The content finishes with a prayer exercise called *Lectio Divina* – a favourite exercise in meditation of the Church. There are headings following the steps in the format of the *Lectio Divina* sufficient to show how the use of the Scripture texts can become central to the lives of

BOOK REVIEW

Christians of 21st century Australia.

I recommend this volume as a central curriculum publication, suitable for primary, secondary and, within reason, for tertiary study because of the clarity and breadth of the information contained so succinctly within. ■

*The Spirituality
of the Diocesan Priest,*
Donald B. Cozzens, ed.;
Liturgical Press, 1997, 208
pages, RRP \$43.95

ORIGINALLY published in the United States more than a decade ago, this book is currently being distributed in Australia through John Garratt Publishing. Controversial when it first appeared, it is now widely accepted as conveying an accurate picture, and has been translated into a number of languages. The editor, Donald Cozzens, formerly President-rector of a Seminary and Graduate School of Theology in Ohio, has assembled a group of twelve specially commissioned articles from eminent bishops and seminary directors. They each give valuable insights regarding the idealised life of a parish priest who is charged with the brief of becoming the pastor, the pivot and the preacher to God's People. All but one writer are American; the remaining one is

from Adelaide, SA.

The overall picture is an enlightening one for the average lay readers, who may have had little understanding of their priests' inner life of prayer, ministry and spiritual journey. Each writer takes elements of the story, giving us understanding and helping us to learn more about the singularity and particularity confronting each seminarian as he faces his own ordination, and who then realises the long journey and the subsequent expectations laid on him.

The two-fold aims of his life will be to become, as best he knows how, a priest who walks with his parishioners in their journeys through the various challenges and messiness of living the message of Christ; and to become also a vital organ of the presbyterium – that central role in supporting and being supported by his brother priests in a given diocese.

While the concept of 'formation' for the priestly life is highlighted, what is missing is the provision for each priest to be taught valuable insights into the other half of God's People. I am reminded of the article in the Tablet, 17th July, 2010, in which Sheila Hollins, a professor of psychiatry, tells of her imaginary conversation with Pope Benedict: 'To whom can priests turn for their daily hug?' The struggle for human intimacy is a vital struggle for priests if they do not have close male

BOOK REVIEW

and female friends to provide the affirmations that are so much part of the emerging emotional maturity of human beings, be they priest, poet or professor!

In the Church of the 21st century, when so much negative and tragic history of abuse has been uncovered, and when trust and acceptance of the pastoral role has diminished considerably, the priest must negotiate these responsibilities. Underlying some beautiful and poetic prose, one senses here the aloneness of the individual pastor. The idealised profile that each priest seems to try to emulate is very difficult for a lay reader to understand at a deep level.

That lack of trust and the abhorrent history of clerical abuse which precedes today's diocesan priest leaves him very isolated, and often leads to a painful realisation that he must 'prove' himself nearly every day. The sense of need for human understanding and acceptance is not as easy to satisfy as it was in earlier times when the role and function of a priest in the diocese was clear, authoritative and universally accepted.

Fr. Cozzens is acknowledging that he is leading, through the auspices of this beautiful writing, towards a 'renewed theology of priesthood' in this century of change and development in the Church. The two-fold responsibility of the

priest of today: for the people, for the presbyterium, needs to be underpinned by a compassionate People of God, who understand the challenges of celibacy, who are prepared to support the initiatives of the Vatican Ecumenical Council and its teachings, and who recognise their role in the support and friendship of today's diocesan priest.

By reading carefully and at depth, we can glean much that will be of value for the Parish Priest, so that support in our own dioceses will be informed by right understanding, empathetic recognition of the various challenges described, and prayer together. Community is a two-way process, and charism in education requires us to recognise the somewhat hidden response-ability that the People of God can provide so that spirituality for the priest is scaffolded by an honest appreciation of what he faces in today's parish. We can begin the journey together by providing support so that the priest is not left alone, and lonely. Jesus needed his friends, even when he prayed in Gethsemane, and so do our remaining Parish Priests.

I recommend this publication to readers as a beautifully written and somewhat sad expression of what our priests take on. Knowledge and Understanding from the Holy Spirit will continue the task that Fr. Cozzens and his co-authors ask of us. ■

BOOK RESPONSE

*Love's Urgent Longings-
wrestling with belief
in today's church,*

**by Bishop Geoffrey Robinson;
John Garratt Publishing, 2010,
104 pages, RRP \$19.95.**

THE FIRST reaction on reading this publication was to recognise that the title was so appropriate – Love in all its forms. The sub-title is equally important – as a heroic response to long term pain endured and eventually accepted. Many of Bishop Robinson's readers will be familiar with the circumstances and challenge for him to remain focused on the life's aim of living out the Jesus direction to love God and neighbour despite severe and sometimes debilitating suffering.

The emphasis throughout the text on his journey to understand what God wanted of him is carefully addressed with highlights that speak of a personal culture of reflection and a personal culture of resilience. Twin themes: pain endured and pain accepted, do not make for easy writing, a fact of which readers become very aware as the author's text increasingly articulates his pain. There is evidence of emotional pain, social pain, intellectual pain, and spiritual pain.

There are connections Bishop Robinson makes too about the consequences of what he endured as a child and the appallingly widespread horror of an Australian, and world phenomenon. He does not dwell on the elements that were the hardest to digest, but the indications are that such overwhelming pain, when tasked with the responsibility of examining the individual cases of abuse, was soul-destroying in its intensity and potential.

It is a tribute to him, his prayer, his resilience and his courage that he made the decisions we now know – to recognise the trauma of the victims themselves but also to understand the trauma that he faced as a consequence of his honesty, uncomfortable as he knew that had to be.

I have the greatest admiration for his strength of faith in the darkest times, when he was ostracised by the decisions which were the consequence of being at the helm of the investigation. I recognise and commend his response-ability which was so compassionate, so realistic and so clearly dismissed. The connections today with the People of God, for whom his honesty gave much-needed support in their urgent questions about justice, mercy,

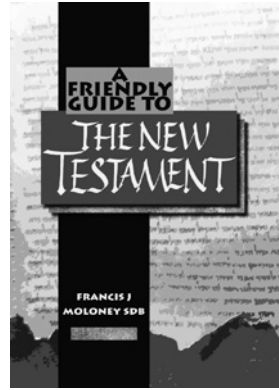
BOOK RESPONSE

understanding, courage and strength – are all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, when we think of it.

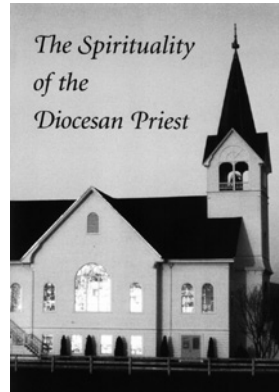
We can only applaud the clarity with which he addresses the consequent dip in his faith response in those early days when hurt and disbelief were uppermost in his mind. His text is a dramatic example of how his journey and his innate Faith in God could help him to finally communicate his progress towards reconciliation beside those who were also so badly betrayed.

Finally, we recognise his gift of writing at such depth that readers can understand, appreciate and begin to walk in his shoes, glimpsing the underlying echoes of unsolved problems, of his response towards resistance to matters of concern. We can only applaud his resistance to the idea of justifying his stance at the expense of others. His compassion is balanced by his warm and finely balanced Love – charity as it is rarely found. His dark night, so eloquently descriptive, teaches us a valuable lesson about the various faces of Love – and that is the triumph of this book.

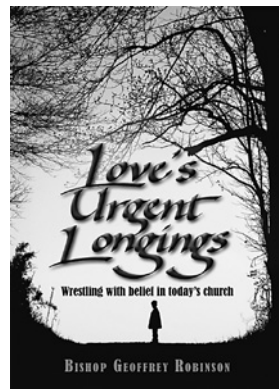
I recommend it therefore as spiritual reading at its best. ■



A Friendly Guide to THE NEW TESTAMENT
Francis J Moloney SDB



The Spirituality of the Diocesan Priest
Donald B. Cozzens, ed.



Love's Urgent Longings - wrestling with belief in today's church
Bishop Geoffrey Robinson

RICHARD LEONARD¹

*Blessed Mary:
A Saint for All Australians.*

Television docudrama
hosted by Alan Jones.

Starring Octavia Barron-Martin,
Gil Balfas and Penelope Rowe.

Written by Michael Cove.

Directed by Serge Ou.

58 minutes. Rated PG.

Available as DVD.

MARY MACKILLOP'S beatification in 1994 produced two excellent documentaries: *The Business of Making Saints* and *MacKillop's Melbourne*; and a feature film: *Mary: No Plaster Saint*. Mary's canonisation in 2010 has seen the cultivation of a 'MacKillop rose', a play, *Her Holiness, Mary MacKillop - The Musical* and more than ten books written. So far there is one more straight documentary, *Soul of the Sunburnt Country - the story of Mary MacKillop and the Josephites* and this docudrama, *Blessed Mary: A Saint for All Australians*.

Docudrama is one of the most difficult genres to get right, easily becoming neither a satisfying drama nor a good documentary. But with the resources of *The History Channel*, *Universal Films* and *Foxtel*, the Canberra-based

Bearcage Productions have got it just right. *Blessed Mary* is both satisfying and good.

The dramatic recreations are its strongest element. The acting is especially well done. Octavia Barron-Martin as Mary, with her light Scottish accent, and Gil Balfas, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Julian Tenison Woods, give passionate and convincing performances. Penelope Rowe as Flora MacKillop leads a large and equally enjoyable supporting cast too.

Writer Michael Cove chose to rely heavily on quotes from actual letters from the historical characters, or their descriptions of the events. On the whole, this adds enormously to the authenticity of the drama. Director Serge Ou employs the risky technique of having the characters regularly turn and deliver to-camera statements to the audience. Here it works brilliantly, adding to the power of the story.

Alan Jones as host and interviewer is the glue that holds the narrative together, with commentary from three Sisters of St Joseph, Ambassador Tim Fisher and the Archbishop of Sydney. Indeed some of Cardinal Pell's

TV / DVD REVIEW

public critics will enjoy, nearly as much as the Cardinal seems to, his comments on the leadership styles of Bishops Shiel and Matthew and James Quinn.

The film magnificently outlines how much St Mary of the Cross cared for the rural poor, how she conceived of an Australian Federation long before most others, the injustices she faced and fought especially as a Scot in an Irish colonial Church, and her humility, in the richest sense of that word. I learnt, again, that she stayed in Europe for over two years waiting for the Vatican to rule on her case. They have never been quick.

There are, however, a couple of problems with *Blessed Mary: A Saint for All Australians* that take away from its many strengths. Alan Jones is one of them. Although he is a household name in Australia, he is also a divisive figure. Not being a Catholic may be an asset in selling Mary MacKillop as a saint 'for all Australians', a phrase that is used so often that it ends up sounding defensive, but I think some of Alan Jones' public stands on a range of social and political issues are irreconcilable with the values St Mary of the Cross espoused, and those which her sisters embody today. This is not being unkind, because the film itself starts by setting up who Alan Jones is, I

imagine for an international sale to an audience who do not know him.

Unlike the subject in this film, he is pictured as a friend of celebrities, 'Some would say that my life has been blest in meeting plenty of saints and sinners, though, no real saints of course...' Jarringly, Jones goes on, 'When I think of my own life, and when most of us look back on our lives, we think of the real battles we've fought, the scraps we got in to, or out of, usually sticking up for ourselves or defending what we thought was right. When I looked into the story of Australia's first saint, there was plenty to relate to, plenty of battles and they started very early.' The linking of Mary's battles to that of the host's is poorly judged. Maybe a less polarising figure would have made a better host.

Furthermore, the film opens with Padre Pio's canonisation at St Peter's in June 2002. As venerable as St Pio of Pietrelcina might be, why focus on him? Mary was not a Franciscan. She did not know him. She was not a stigmatic. Maybe it was because he carried the wounds of the mystery she made her own, the Cross, but this link is never made. I would have thought for most Australians he is a very obscure saint with no discernible link to Mother Mary's story. It may have been that the producers were

FILM REVIEW

able to get the footage cheaply.

As much as I liked Michael Cove including words from the letters and diary entries, at least twice characters speak of 'Propaganda' as an institution, the meaning of which will be lost on many Catholics and almost all those who are not. Sometimes history needs a little help.

Cardinal Pell is incorrectly described as the 'leader of the Catholic Church in Australia'. With all due respect to His Eminence, he's not. Archbishop Wilson is.

Personally I would have thought that in a film reaching out to an audience beyond the Church, it would have included references to Mother Mary's great patrons and friends like the Presbyterian Mrs Joanna Barr-Smith and the Jewish Mr Emmanuel Solomon. Rich pickings there.

And though the film gets miracles almost right, it might have been good to tell 'all Australians' that Mary Mac does not perform them. God does. Mary is our friend and supporter, praying with us and for us that God's life may be manifest in all our lives.

But none of these criticisms take away from the soul of the film, which is the woman herself: who was loyal but refused to be mastered by her religious masters;

who was a proud daughter of Scotland but loved Australia; who saw beyond sectarianism and religious bigotry to just being friends; and who saw that to have faith in Jesus leads to working for justice for all, especially the poor. ■

Blessed Mary: A Saint for All Australians aired on *The History Channel* on Sunday, October 10 at 7.30pm (AEDT), with another screening on Sunday, October 17 at 8.30pm (AEDT). The DVD has been available for sale since mid-October 2010.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The copyright for the above review is held by Richard Leonard S.J., Director of the Australian Catholic Film Office, who has kindly given Champagnat permission to reprint it.

Information and Guidelines for Contributors

Champagnat is a quarterly publication that aims at deepening the spirituality of readers, especially educational leaders and teachers, and thereby helping to foster spiritual vigour and integrity in Catholic education generally. Writers should keep in mind that readers are likely to be committed Christians, predominantly lay, and engaged or actively interested in school and/or post-school education.

Articles explore from a variety of perspectives the application of the example and teaching of Christ to everyday thought and behaviour. Often they illustrate how the spirit and vision of heroic Christians like Mary of the Cross and Marcellin Champagnat can assist in interpreting Christian principles in a modern context and serve to motivate and energise attitudes and action.

Each issue of the journal will contain an appropriate mix of articles varying in length from 'columns' of 1000 words to one or two feature articles of approximately 7000 words.

The main but not exclusive focus of the journal in 2011 will be lay spiritualities, both in general and as manifested in ecclesial movements. The articles will be grouped into the following four general categories:

1. Faith in action, including reflections on the relevant season of the liturgical year;
2. Charism and spirituality;

3. Tradition and vision;
4. Education.

The supplementary 'Comment' and 'Reviews' sections will also continue.

Material submitted for publication should demonstrably come from writers who are informed through experience, reading and reflection, and who give evidence of a level of scholarship and research appropriate to the topic and the targeted subset of our readership.

While of interest to specialist students of the relevant disciplines, the articles should be addressed in particular to the general body of informed professional readers.

Clarity of meaning should be a key characteristic of articles submitted. Writers should use inclusive language, avoid jargon and cliché, preferably use the Harvard system of referencing, and endnotes not footnotes.

Material submitted is reviewed internally as part of the acceptance/rejection process. Where the Editor judges it appropriate formal procedures involving anonymous peer reviewers are implemented.

The Editor reserves the right to make minor changes to the text as these are considered desirable. With regard to more significant changes that the Editor judges necessary, acceptance of a manuscript is subject to mutual agreement.

Inquiries can be emailed to:

**Berise Heasley at beriset@internode.on.net
or to Des Connelly at descon@netspace.net.au**



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