In the course of the extraordinary Synod of Bishops, there was frequent insistence on the need to avoid any antithesis between the “ars celebrandi” – the art of proper sacramental celebration – and the full, active and fruitful participation of all the faithful. The primary way to foster the participation of the People of God in the sacred rite is the proper celebration of the rite itself. The “ars celebrandi” is the best way to ensure their “actuosa participatio”. The “ars celebrandi” is the fruit of faithful adherence to the liturgical norms in all their richness ....

Pope Benedict XVI  
Sacramentum Caritatis, n. 38  
22 February 2007
THE PRIEST
the journal of the Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy

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Chairman’s Remarks

Earlier this year in March, several members of the ACCC Executive met with the Bishops’ Commission for Church Ministry. This Commission is chaired by Bishop Michael Malone and includes Bishops Brian Heenan, William Morris, Luc Mathys, Donald Sproxton, and Brian Finnigan. In the two-hour meeting we had a very cordial and fruitful discussion with the bishops on a range of issues. These included:

1. the need for a properly prepared national implementation of the new Missal translation when it is completed, along with adequate education for both clergy and laity and the production of fittingly dignified liturgical books;
2. the importance of uniformity in liturgical and sacramental practice throughout the country;
3. the difficulties that can sometimes be encountered by priests when dealing with large centralised bureaucracies in diocesan Catholic Schools Offices; and
4. the need to find appropriate pastoral approaches to the ongoing sacraments of initiation for children. (This last issue will actually be the subject of a paper and a panel discussion at this year’s ACCC conference in Melbourne to be held 2-6 July 2007.)

A final matter we discussed with the bishops was the concern that many priests have regarding the Towards Healing protocols. These protocols contain the principles and procedures in responding to complaints of sexual abuse made against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia. We began by affirming that we thoroughly support the Australian bishops in their initiative to put in place structures necessary to deal with accusations of sexual abuse of children by clergy. It is imperative that priests found guilty of offences against children be removed from ministry, and that no further offences occur.

However, priests also have serious concerns and reservations about the protocols. Priests’ main areas of concern seem to be the following: that priests accused of boundary violations that are not crimes against children are being treated in the same way as those of sexual abuse of children; that the accused priest is often not aware of his rights and often concerned that his rights are being overlooked; that undue pressure can seem to be applied to attend psychological assessment and programs run by Encompass for testing and treatment; and whether or not the protocols are compatible with Canon Law. A further concern complicating the matter is the poor level of understanding that many priests seem to have about the protocols.

It was quite clear from our meeting that the bishops remain committed to the Towards Healing protocols, but they did acknowledge and are aware of our concerns. We are most grateful that the bishops did agree to clarify the protocols current standing with Rome, to revisit the matter of education of the clergy regarding the protocols, and to find an effective way to make accused priests aware of their rights.

The March meeting was the first between the ACCC and the newly formed Bishops Commission for Church Ministry, and was considered very worthwhile by those who took part. It is now likely to become an annual meeting. The Bishops Commission for Church Ministry will present a summary of our discussions to the Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference annual meeting in May. We hope and pray that our efforts may bear fruit.

Father Michael Kennedy, PP

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

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**This Pope engages**

What I mean by the heading “This Pope engages” is what may be seen in the Papal images that we now frequently see. Pope John Paul II was a great communicator and his personality was that of a great communicator, as manifest in the crowds he drew and the outstretched arms of people toward him and his instinct for the grand gesture. Pope Benedict XVI does not have that personality type, and his public gestures tend to understatement rather than grandness. Yet the thing that comes over is that this Pope engages those whom he meets and powerfully communicates. Photographs of his meeting with bishops (ad limina visits) convey a sense that these are working encounters with the Pope, not just formal encounters following meetings with curial staff. The photographic record of his journey to Turkey also demonstrated this “encounter” aspect: they portray a Pope in engagement with his guides in Hagia Sophia; a Pope in engagement with the Imam of the Blue Mosque, etc.; engagements that are not simply formal encounters, but engagements that are personal encounters. And these personal engagements distinctively also are ones that engage ideas.

What we see in the texts accompanying the pictorial record of encounters is the fleshing-out of ideas set forth in the Pope’s most seminal words, particularly his first and programmatic encyclical (and so far his only encyclical), Deus Caritus est, and in his path-breaking Regensburg address. What we see is a consistent and gracious exposition in human encounter that God is love and a consistent and gracious exposition in human encounter that God Who is Love is a God Who creates and acts in reason and Who leads us in the ways of reason, and of reasonableness.

Pope Benedict XVI engages those whom he meets in a personal graciousness that is an exercise of reason and of reasonableness; an engagement that calls forth a meeting of minds and a discourse of minds and an exercise of human courtesy that shows forth something of the Divine courtesy.

As Editor, I would love to re-present the Regensburg address, and to address some of the profound issues that therein are raised; but space limits me. What I have chosen instead is to present a very pointed application of what the Holy Father so programmatically set forth at Regensburg: his address in the presence of the Director of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey. This was at the beginning of his Apostolic Visit to that country. It was the same official who represented the Republic of Turkey at the Pope’s departure, and the photographic record of the airport departure lounge meeting firmly conveys an engagement – it was not just a formal affair, but a meeting of persons, and a meeting of persons that set a path for reasonableness and for the exchange of understanding and for movement toward mutual understanding, respect, and peace.

The quiet and low-key manner of Pope Benedict XVI is clearly bearing fruit. He evidently builds upon the work of his predecessor (indeed, predecessors), but he is clearly contributing something new: a new quality of personal engagement for the proclamation of the Gospel, for the representation of the ground of ideas on which the Gospel is predicated: Deus Caritas est … et Verbum caro factum est. (1Jn 4:16, Jn 1:14) (Editor)

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**Notice to Associate Members ACCC and their friends**

Some Associates, taken by the promotion in *Inter Nos* of our 2-6 July 2007 Annual Conference, have asked whether laity can attend. In 2006, our principal speaker was a laywoman! But generally the Annual Conferences are clerical conferences. We however each year include a Public Lecture, and this year it is 7.30pm Wednesday, 4 July 2007 in the Central Hall of the Australian Catholic University, city campus, 20 Brunswick St, Fitzroy. The speaker is the Metropolitan Archbishop of Denver, USA, the Most Rev. Charles Chaput, OFM (Cap.). Attendance is free, but there will be opportunity for donations, which are appreciated.

Associates and friends are welcome to attend the public liturgies of the Conference at St Anthony’s Church, 45 Railway Place, Alphington. The Conference Organiser (Father Tattersall 03 9532 4154) provides the following details:

**Tuesday 3 July 2007** (St Thomas, AM), 7.30am Lauds; 5.00pm Conference Mass with the Metropolitan Archbishop of Melbourne as principal celebrant and homilist.

**Wednesday 4 July 2007**, 7.30am Lauds; 11.30am Pontifical Requiem Mass for deceased members of ACCC; 5.15pm Solemn Vespers.

**Thursday 5 July 2007**, 7.30am Lauds; 11.30am Pontifical Votive Mass of Christ the High Priest (Abp Chaput as principal celebrant and homilist); 5.30pm Solemn Vespers; 7.30pm Holy Hour with Benediction and Compline.

**Friday 6 July 2007** (St Maria Goretti), 7.30am Lauds; 9.30am Holy Mass.

Kindly see the further notice under *Editor’s Corner* page 22.
The Late Reverend
Father Terence J.
Purcell, PE, OAM,
Pastor Emeritus,
St Benedicts,
Broadway,
Archdiocese of Sydney
born: 11-2-1922
ordained: 24-7-1954
deceased: 19-12-2006
(photograph: John XIII Bookshop)

As we commend Father Terence Purcell to God’s love and mercy, it is my privilege to offer a few words of appreciation. I first express my sincere sympathy to members of the extended Purcell family, especially to his sisters, Norma and Pat, on my own behalf and on behalf of all those present. Far more important are our prayers both for them in their bereavement and for the happy and eternal repose of Father Terry’s priestly soul, until that final day when we shall all become one in Christ Jesus.

We need to remember that we are living in times that seem more interested in image than truth; in personality than character; in how things appear, rather than what they actually are – and so to many moderns Father Terry’s priestly dedication may appear a bit old-hat and therefore irrelevant. Though by nature meticulous in his priestly duties, Father Terry was not so straight-laced as to be without humour, and at times revealed the possible makings of the straight man in a comedy team.

There was nothing vacillating or ambiguous in Father Terry’s character. He was unashamedly straightforward as a Catholic priest in his proclamation of the faith of the Church, as he was clearly positive in his opinions as a private citizen. What we saw was what we got. During his long tenure as Parish Priest of St Benedict’s, Broadway, this capability was acknowledged by the news media who not only looked for his comment on religious matters, but were happy to publish his characteristically terse Letters to the Editor on a variety of subjects. No doubt, he was helped by his early media experience in producing Catholic Television programs and as first Chairman under Cardinal Sir James Freeman of the Archdiocesan Council of Priests.

Father Terry served as a Staff Sergeant, RAEME, in the Australian Armed Forces since the 1940s, when he was among those who survived the Japanese bombardment of Darwin, and he was never a man who could be intimidated by the pretensions of overweening power. The esteem he gained during his wartime service was reflected in the fact that the preacher for his First Mass at St Mary’s, Concord, on 25 July 1954, was the Bishop Emeritus of Darwin, the Most Rev F X Gsell, MSC.

In those heady years that followed the Second Vatican Council, Father Terry could be relied upon to distinguish and discern the rival claims of the two magisteria which so often locked horns within the Church herself – the overblown “magisterium” of some academic theologians, and the genuine magisterium of the College of Bishops as headed by and in union with the Holy Father, the Pope. Nonetheless, while he stood unequivocal in his support of the Holy Father and the received teaching of the Church, he also remained active and appreciated in the sphere of ecumenical relations within the city of Sydney.

In 1985, Father Terry was numbered among the foundation members of the Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy, whose charter and keynote is loyal service of the Church under the Holy Father. This priestly Confraternity now proudly numbers among its members a number of bishops, a majority of the younger clergy, and most of the seminarians of Australia.

Father Terry impressed others by his business-like approach to all administrative responsibilities and issues he tackled. His Army and Public Service experience prior to commencing studies for the priesthood had schooled him to do every “i” and to cross every “t”. Nothing he tackled – however controversial – was ever hastily or shoddily done. The priests of this Archdiocese are particularly thankful for his tenacity and competency in helping to bring into being the Clergy Remuneration and Retirement System as introduced in the early 1970s.

In later years, Father Terry confidently maintained a sharp mind in the face of his cross of dimming eyesight. He valued the ready assistance of his long-time acolyte, Mr Mark Blackman, whose care and support enabled him to continue to function in the active ministry with this one aim: to celebrate his Golden Jubilee of priesthood at St Benedict’s – which he did in 2004. Although his body was slowly failing, his mind remained strong. A loyal friend to his bishop, priests, many of whom have by now gone to their eternal reward, he enjoyed their priestly company – always at ease with them, be they young or old. We should pray that they all have ring seats in heaven, urging us on in the contest of life.

Advancing years and increasing infirmity eventually forced Father Terry to retire from the active parish ministry to live privately at his family home in Strathfield. From there he supplied Mass at various times for overworked pastors. More recent times saw a visible decline in his health, and today it is our sad duty to gather to commend him to the Lord. We pray that his totally dedicated and undivided priestly soul may Rest in Peace. Amen.

Father John Walter

As referred to by Professor Rowland: an excerpt from chapter 22 of Gaudium et Spes:

The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him who was to come; namely, Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father, and His Love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown. All this [the foregoing in Gaudium et Spes] holds true not for Christians only but also for all men of good will in whose hearts grace is active invisibly (Lumen Gentium 2.16). For since Christ died for all (Rom 8:32), and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery.
Benedict XVI’s Augustinian Engagement with the World

Tracey Rowland

An opening caricature

In a recent review of John Allen’s biography, Cardinal Ratzinger – The Vatican’s Enforcer, which came out about two years ago, John Thornhill explained that Ratzinger’s reservations about some aspects of Gaudium et Spes are associated with his choice of Augustine as his principal theological guide and further that there is a profound divergence of views between John Paul II, a follower of Aquinas, and Joseph Ratzinger, a follower of Augustine. This explanation is consistent with a common interpretation of the Augustinian tradition as having almost nothing to contribute to the Church’s social teaching aside from just war theory and as regarding this world as merely a “valley of tears”, or at best a strict academy for the practice of virtue, with its political orders being one of the many unfortunate consequences of original sin to be stoically endured. According to the common caricature, Augustinians want to hide in caves and monasteries and, if they get married, they home school their children. Thomists however believe that an engagement with the world is not only virtuous, but some would say a basic human good – something we must do in order to be good Christians.

From caricature to fulfilment in the Revelation of the Church

This caricature is one that’s rather difficult to overcome because for many decades this has been the standard way of reading Augustine and Aquinas. For example, this is how the difference between Augustine and Aquinas is presented by Ernest Fortin:

Aquinas bestowed a degree of autonomy upon the notion of natural law which is never achieved in Augustine’s thought. Independently of Revelation and prior to the infusion of divine grace, man has access to most general principles of moral action and to the extent to which his will has not been corrupted by sin he finds within himself the power to act in accordance with them. There is thus constituted a specifically natural order apart from, though obviously not in opposition to, the higher order to which human nature is elevated by grace. For the single whole in the light of which man’s final end has been discussed by Augustine, two complete and hierarchically structured wholes have been substituted, of which the lower or natural whole possesses its own intrinsic perfection and is capable of operations that do not of themselves require the aid of divine or properly supernatural grace. The issue is not without far-reaching, practical implications. Speaking figuratively, Augustine had warned that one cannot safely appropriate the spoils of the Egyptians, that is to say pagan learning and philosophy, without first observing the Passover. Without much exaggeration, one could say that Thomas shows a greater willingness to postpone the celebration of the Passover until the Egyptians have been properly despoiled and until such time as the whole land of Canaan has been annexed.

Nonetheless, while Fortin has provided an excellent caricature of the difference between the Augustinian and Thomist spirit as it is commonly perceived, the account of nature and grace which he presents as classically Thomist was completely re-evaluated by Henri de Lubac. The notion that there is such as thing as pure nature was rejected by de Lubac and those who followed him. Whatever one makes of this dispute (the correct interpretation of the nature and grace relationship in the thought of St Thomas) it is important to understand that Ratzinger belongs to the camp of those who rejected the account presented in Fortin’s caricature.

Contrary to those who would present Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict, as someone who wants to run away from the world and the goods it has on offer, one could say that the classically educated Augustine – in whose tradition Pope Benedict follows – was not at all shy about appropriating “the spoils of the Egyptians”. However, both Augustine and Aquinas saw the whole of human history from the perspective of salvation history in which the achievements of the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Egyptians and all the pagan peoples, only find their fulfilment and completion in the arrival of Christian Revelation. And this is not without significance for Ratzinger’s interpretation of Gaudium et Spes and for his understanding of the Church’s engagement with the world. This, I think, is the really significant point and it can be seen to be embodied in paragraph 22 of Gaudium et Spes. Benedict believes that the achievements of the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Egyptians and all the pagan peoples only find their fulfilment, their completion, in the arrival of Christian Revelation.

Understanding “Alpha” in “Omega” light

Concretely this means that Benedict is opposed to engaging the world in such a way that Christian revelation is presented as a mere “top up” for secular humanism. One of the best places to glean an understanding of his concerns here is in his commentary on the treatment of human dignity in Gaudium et Spes. Like other commentators since, including Cardinal Walter Kasper with whom he is not always in agreement, Cardinal Ratzinger – as he then was – noted that there is a significant difference between an understanding of the human person as “merely theistically coloured” – that is, in some sense made in the image of God after the account of creation in Genesis – and an understanding of the human person which takes into account the Trinitarian anthropology of the New Testament. In the earlier sections of the document the Old

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Ratzinger suggests that this ambiguity arose because the document did not offer a “radical enough rejection of a doctrine of man divided into philosophy and theology” — “... the text was still based on a schematic representation of nature and the supernatural viewed far too much as merely juxtaposed.” In other words, it was based too much on the account of the nature-grace relationship of which de Lubac was critical. It took at its starting point “... the fiction that it is possible to construct a rational philosophical picture of man intelligible to all and on which all men of goodwill can agree, the actual Christian doctrines being added to this as a sort of crowning conclusion.” The Christian part of the puzzle of the human person was presented as a special “take” on anthropology which “others ought not to make a bone of contention but which at bottom can be ignored”. This, in a nutshell, is the de Lubac charge against where the tradition of Cajetan ends. Ratzinger complained that *Gaudium et Spes* prompted the question: “Why exactly the reasonable and perfectly free human being described in the first articles [of the document] should suddenly be burdened with the story of Christ?” Instead of it being emphasised that the Incarnation is a radical irruption in human history, an event which changes everything, one can get the impression from *Gaudium et Spes* that belief in the Incarnation is a kind of Christian gloss on an otherwise secular humanist canvas. There is thus here in the thought of Benedict a notion of Christian revelation being transformative of all other traditions. Sometimes Benedict speaks of it “purifying” other traditions.

*Christocentric engagement with the world*

To quote John Paul II, in the very first sentence of *Redemptor Hominis*, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of Man, is the centre and purpose of human history. This is a proposition with which no Augustinian would quibble. It means in effect that any engagement with the world which is anything other than Christocentric will to some degree be inadequate. This was in part de Lubac’s argument in his work *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism*. Benedict is sensitive to the point and as far as possible he does not want to retreat to a level of engagement that takes the form of eliminating God from public discussions. In some ways this represents a major transition in the apologetic trajectory of the Church’s intellectuals over the last 40 years, because it creates a fault line with the dominant liberal culture. That liberal culture is derived from various philosophical principles of the eighteenth century enlightenments. What the German, Scottish, French and English “enlightenments” all had in common was this notion of severing faith from reason. That was the core of the Enlightenment project. One way that Catholic scholars responded to that was to try and defend the Catholic tradition with reference to reason alone. There were many heroic attempts at this and they met with varying degrees of success, but what is now happening is that there is a movement away from that particular way of defending the faith to an approach which is sensitive to the criticisms of the Enlightenment project coming from the direction of the post-moderns. A new front has opened up. The Church’s nineteenth-century sparring partner is under attack from her nineteenth-century detractors.

*The three archetypes: pre-modern, modern and post-modern*

In secular universities people often talk about pre-mods, mods and pomsos, as abbreviations for pre-moderns, moderns, and post-moderns. In a nutshell these terms refer to different approaches to the relationship between faith and reason.

The characteristic of the *pre-mod* is the belief that there is an intrinsic link between faith and reason, that the two do not exist in two completely separate realms.

With the *moderns* however, which is also shorthand for the philosophers of the various eighteenth-century enlightenments, there is an attempt to distill reason from faith and to characterise faith as something so subjective that it is not a respectable subject in academic discourse, unless one is analyzing some faith belief by reference to the standard of pure reason. The leading example of a modern is Immanuel Kant. The leading examples of pre-moderns would be Augustine, Aquinas and some of the Greek Fathers like St Basil the Great.

When we get to the *post-moderns*, they do acknowledge that there is an intrinsic link between faith (or usually they say with myth or with theology) and reason. Against Kant and with the pre-mods they argue that there is no such thing as “pure reason”. They believe that if one digs deeply behind conceptions of pure rationality one always finds a bedrock of theological presuppositions. But where the post-moderns differ from the pre-moderns is that while they recognise that there is an intrinsic link: they do not believe that one can use the faculty of the intellect to discern that one myth is better than another myth.

So this is where we find the relativism of the post-moderns. The popular post-modern mentality is “every person has his or her own myth or theology or tradition, and they are all equally valid”. The more sophisticated post-moderns however do evaluate different traditions, but not from the perspective of rationality. Rather they evaluate them from the perspective of how much freedom they bring to the human person in the exercise of his or her drives and ambitions. Hence Nietzsche (the “father” of the post-moderns) was passionately opposed to Christianity because of its promotion of self-sacrificial love and virtues like humility. In his transvaluation of Jewish and Christian values, humility becomes a vice, self-sacrificial love the morality of the herd (the lower classes) and selfishness becomes a virtue.

*The battle between God and the post-modern demi-gods*

The French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard, one of the leading scholars of the post-modern movement, has argued that 1968 was not merely the year that the sexual revolution arrived in full force but it was also the year in which the various Enlightenment projects, including that of the quest for pure reason, finally came to be regarded as the most significant intellectual force behind tyranny in the 20th century. Within the great secular universities such as the Sorbonne in Paris, Kantian “pure reason” was not only passé but it...
started to be linked to the problem of social violence. So it became quite unfashionable to believe in Kantian “pure reason”, and instead it became fashionable to look at “traditions”. It became quite acceptable to look at theology – quite fashionable in fact – so long as one does not try to say that Catholicism is true, one can write dissertations looking at the Catholic elements in literature or Catholic elements in political theory. One simply cannot assert any truth claims about it. So the battle is no longer so much “superstition” against “rationality”, but the battle becomes “your god” against “my God”, your “myth” against my “myth”.

In this context you will notice that in Deus Caritas est, the very first person that Pope Benedict mentioned was Nietzsche. He has been criticised for not mentioning Aquinas – but I think it is important to understand that Benedict appreciates that the primary problem of the moment is not eighteenth-century attacks on the rationality of the Christian tradition, but the nineteenth-century onwards claim that Christianity is really the morality of the herd and those who follow it are destined to have a diminished humanity – their freedom is curtailed to such a degree that their lives are boring. In particular Benedict understands that Christians need to answer the Nietzschean charge that Christianity killed eros. This is what he tries to do in Deus Caritas est, and Aquinas is not much help here because the indictment is not that Christianity is not rational, but rather that it is not erotic. One can profitably digging in Aquinas for some ideas about truth, but when it comes to eros, Augustine would seem to be the better quarry. As Benedict once remarked in an interview: “[In the works of] St Augustine, the passionate, suffering, questioning man is always right there, and one can identify with him.”

The “Second Enlightenment” of 1968

So part of what one sees in the essays and speeches of Benedict is his confrontation with the cultural dynamics of the unholy cocktail of Nietzsche and Freud which came together as the fuel behind the student movement of the late 1960s. Benedict often makes reference to the “Second Enlightenment” of 1968, which is an indication that he understands Lyotard’s point that in 1968 the turmoil which was almost universal in the humanities departments of the universities across the western world, at least in part represented the death agonies of the first or eighteenth-century Enlightenment and a phenomen-like re-birth of a project which jettisons the quest for pure reason, and while acknowledging the link between mythos and logos, yet – instead of defining itself with reference to the Christocentric humanism presented in documents like Gaudium et Spes – rather goes in search of the old pagan gods. In his response to this, Benedict is trying wherever possible to move Christ back into the foreground. He understands the post-modern position so well that he knows just how to manoeuvre Christology into a position where it can be used to emphasise the difference between a Christian humanism and the alternative demi-god projects.

Developing Christological anthropology

When it comes to understanding the human person, Ratzinger and others have recognised that classical Thomism provided no account of the role of culture or history in the formation of the individual person. What Aquinas was interested in was universal human nature or what it is that we all have in common as human beings. This is often referred to as the realm of substantiality. Ratzinger does not reject this dimension of Thomism but believes that it needs to be supplemented by an account of relationality. “Relationality” is about how our identity as individuals is determined by our relationships with other people. So part of what Benedict is trying to do in the area of anthropology is to link “substantiality” with “relationality”. In theological anthropology this is linked back to the Trinity. The argument is that just as the persons within the Trinity acquire their identity through their relationship with the other Divine Persons (for example, the Son is defined by reference to his relation to the Father and the Holy Spirit) – so too we as individuals acquire our individuality through this dimension of our relationality.

When we come to the specific faculties of the soul (the dimension of substantiality), Thomists usually talk about the “intellect and will”, but those who are more in the tradition of Bonaventure and Augustine tend to speak in terms of “intellect, memory and will”. This is just a difference of nuance (since of course Aquinas also acknowledges that we have a memory); it is just that in the Thomist tradition the faculty of the “memory” is not emphasised to the same degree as it is in Augustine, and it may be that this is because of the strong influence of Plato on Augustine. In any event, the use of (1) “intellect, memory and will” makes it possible to link the faculties of the soul to the theological virtues (“faith, hope and love”) and the transcendental properties of being (“truth, beauty and goodness”) in such a way that we can think about the links between the transcendental of truth and the theological virtue of faith and the faculty of the intellect; (2) the transcendental of goodness, the theological virtue of love and the faculty of the will; (3) and the transcendental of beauty, the theological virtue of hope and the faculty of memory.

“Faith, Hope, and Love”

When these Trinitarian relationships are set out in rows one can see that John Paul II spent an awful lot of time on the intellect-truth-faith line. Against the trend of so much of twentieth-century psychology, he argued that the human person does have a rational intellect, that it is capable of discerning truth from falsehood, and that it is perfected by the virtue of faith. I think what is happening now is that Benedict is moving on to the next two lines which are a little more Augustinian in the sense that Augustine spent much more time on the “love, will and goodness” line and the “memory, hope and beauty” line.

St Augustine wrote a great deal about the role of memory in the whole process of his evangelisation. He was also particularly interested in the transcendental of beauty. The Transfiguration provides a case in point: the Apostles have the experience of beauty as the glory of the Incarnation. It becomes lodged in their memory and that makes them very receptive to the theological virtue of hope. So one of the things that Benedict does in his homilies is to go back to historic events and give a commentary on the meaning of that historic event, and then relates this meaning to some contemporary problem. He does not like dealing with issues in historical vacuums.
“Purification of the heart”

Part of the critique of what is wrong with western Europe and countries of the First World is that there are a couple of generations who have no memory of functional family life, of a functional church, of functional civic institutions, of beautiful things for which they might want to hope and for which they might commit their lives. In no sense does Benedict down play the significance of the intellect-truth-faith line, but if one thinks of the Catholic tradition with reference to architectural metaphors, it is as if both John Paul II and Benedict are working on a war-damaged château, and John Paul II has fixed up one wing, and Benedict is moving onto the next wing. In terms of the second line or wing, the important Augustinian point is that there is a strong link between “what we love” and “what we think” is reasonable. In other words, there is not only a link between faith and reason, but between love and reason and this also comes out strongly in Deus Caritas est. In one interview Ratzinger described St Augustine’s epistemology as “much deeper than that of Aquinas, for he is well aware that the organ by which God can be seen cannot be a non-historical ratio naturalis [natural reason], which just does not exist, but only the ratio pura – that is, purificata [purified reason] or, as Augustine expresses it echoing the Gospel, the cor purum [the pure heart].” Ratzinger further commends Augustine for his recognition that the “necessary purification of sight takes place through faith (Acts 15:9) and through love, at all events not as a result of reflection alone and not at all by man’s own power.”

Augustinian “City of God” and “City of Man”

Another Augustinian theme in Ratzinger’s work is the notion of the “two cities”. Here it is important to understand that he does not have a notion of the world as being divided into a secular zone and a sacred zone. The term secular used to mean the period of history before the second coming of Christ. It has only been in recent centuries that the notion of an ontologically separate “secular” space has been promoted by the liberal tradition. Catholics should not in fact speak of the secular world (although we all do) because it fosters the liberal attitude that there are some legitimate “God-free” zones. While of course endorsing the idea of a separation of Church and state, Ratzinger nonetheless rejects the liberal political theory of the moral neutrality of the state. He regards it as a logical nonsense. The state will take its values from somewhere, from some tradition, and while Ratzinger is not in favour of the Church running the state, he is in favour of the state being run in such a way that it respects and fosters the Ten Commandments. For Augustine there is the “city of God” and there is the “city of man”, and we’re all on either one team or the other. There is no theologically neutral third city.

Differing modes of engagement with the world

So, where is the alleged difference between the Thomist John Paul II and the Augustinian Ratzinger when it comes to engaging the world. Arguably, the answer is not to be found – as is popularly claimed – in any fundamental difference between Augustine and Aquinas in relation to the world. For both Augustine and Aquinas, the world is essentially good. It is an epiphany of God’s love in which there appear vestiges of God’s Trinitarian form. It is the theatre in which the drama of human salvation is played and within this drama the nobility of the human person is manifest in man’s spiritual and cultural achievements in accord with the movement of grace. Thus the Thomist John Paul II wrote that the world was created within the dimension of time within which the history of salvation unfolds, and finds its culmination in the fullness of time of the Incarnation and its goal in the glorious return of the Son of God at the end of time. Similarly, the Augustinian Benedict has written that the necessary condition for life in community lies in steadfast adherence to the law of God which orders human affairs rightly by organising them as realities that come from God and are intended to return to God.

For neither Benedict nor for John Paul II is the world or society a theologically neutral space, nor is it merely a valley of tears. It can be a valley of tears, but it’s not merely a “valley of tears”. Rather the difference between the two popes would seem to lie, not so much in their understanding of the world, as in their readiness to use the language and idioms of the Egyptians, so to speak, to present the teaching of the Church to the part of the world remaining unconverted to Christ.

While John Paul II sought to baptise such concepts as modernity, feminism, liberty, equality and fraternity, in every case he employed a strategy of adopting the concept but then restuffing it with material taken from the Thomist tradition. In other words he would take the language and gut it of its offensive liberal material, and then restuff it with a Thomist content. On the other hand, Cardinal Ratzinger – as he was then – has a tendency to rely on language and symbols which are exclusively Christian and exclusively theological. As John Milbank concluded in an essay on Deus Caritas est, “there is no sign of a backing away from John Paul II’s commitment to thinking through the moral and political issues of the day. One glimpses instead something like an accentuation of an insistence upon the relevance of the specific perspectives of faith to these issues, rather than just a reliance upon sound reason and natural law.”

One could perhaps conclude that the fundamental difference, and it’s only a difference in nuance, between the two, lies in their strategic approach to diplomacy with the uncatechised, and in particular in the assumptions which underpin their approach to the philosophy of language rather than to any fundamental difference over the nature of the world in the economy of salvation.

A concrete example of this difference which was recently the subject of an article in the London Daily Telegraph is their different position on inviting the aging 60s rock star Bob Dylan to perform a concert in the presence of John Paul II and Catholic youth. Ratzinger was of the view that Dylan’s music is just bad music – not something worthy of a hearing, let alone a papal “baptism”; whereas John Paul II listened to Dylan and gave a homily using lyrics taken from Dylan’s classic hits and then literally re-stuffed them with Christian meaning.

My sympathies here are entirely with Benedict. I’m praying that the next encyclical will be a critique of pop culture from the perspective of Augustine’s De Musica.

Presentation of this paper would not be possible but for the assiduity of Rev. Fr John J Walter in taping Conference proceedings, and the astonishing typescripting of the tape by Mrs Marie Swanson of Toowong Office Services – which provided the basis for the author’s fine re-workings. (Ed.)
Four Key Influences on Benedict XVI: Nazi ideology, Vatican II, European loss of faith, collaboration with John Paul II

Father Anthony Robbie

The saying, “He who has not understood history is bound to repeat history” is one that Benedict XVI doubtlessly implicitly appreciates as he reads his pontifical era with the eyes of one schooled in History. Father Robbie gives a historian’s eye to what he identifies as the key influences for understanding the pontifical approach of Benedict XVI.

From Faith to loss of faith

The history of the Catholic Church has always been largely coterminous with the history of Western civilisation. Such a proposition was very easy to support during the Ages of Faith, when matters of religion were important enough to be major considerations in the policy of nations and the interests of peoples. We now stand at an unprecedented point in history where man is trying to make his way in the world largely without the involvement of God. The relegation of God to the private sphere of interests has its roots in the Protestant revolt of the sixteenth century when, for the first time, people were taught that they might have God on their own terms. The philosophical child of this attitude is the French Revolution which took the principle one step further, asserting that we might have God or not, simply on the basis of a private choice. Never before had formal atheism been so widespread and acceptable a proposition to so many. As John Courtney Murray pointed out in the Problem of God, the sacred Scriptures talk about atheists (“the fool says in his heart there is no God”), but the sacred writers certainly did not understand by this what we see in an atheist. No one was stupid enough actually to believe that God did not exist. The biblical atheist is the shortsighted immoralist who behaves as if God did not exist.

This age of the formal banishment of religion is the age in which we still live. The expectations and the principles of society have not changed substantially from the time of the French Revolution and from the Age of so-called “Enlightenment” of which it was the climax. The age of post-religious modernity has reached a shocking climax in the twentieth century where the world has witnessed the replacement of public religion – first by godless political ideologies, and then, by a gross sensualism which is the replacement of public religion with its roots in the Protestant revolt of the sixteenth century when, for the first time, people were taught that they might have God on their own terms. The philosophical child of this attitude is the French Revolution which took the principle one step further, asserting that we might have God or not, simply on the basis of a private choice. Never before had formal atheism been so widespread and acceptable a proposition to so many. As John Courtney Murray pointed out in the Problem of God, the sacred Scriptures talk about atheists (“the fool says in his heart there is no God”), but the sacred writers certainly did not understand by this what we see in an atheist. No one was stupid enough actually to believe that God did not exist. The biblical atheist is the shortsighted immoralist who behaves as if God did not exist.

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Backdrop to Benedict XVI

This century-long confrontation is the backdrop of the life of Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI, and gives meaning to the various phases of his formative experiences, as well as to his choice of pontifical name, much commented upon last year. I mean to argue that there are four broad areas of influence which have made Ratzinger as Pope the man he is. These are: firstly, growing up in the shadow of the Nazi phenomenon; secondly, his experiences with the Nazi phenomenon; secondly, his experiences with the Second Vatican Council; thirdly, the sudden loss of religion throughout the Christian heartlands of Europe; and fourthly, his collaboration with the pontificate of John Paul II.

Nazi ideology

Benedict was born Joseph Ratzinger in the small Bavarian town of Marktl am Inn on 16 April 1927. His formative years saw the rise of Nazism in his homeland, but they were not the strongest influence of those early days. Ratzinger refers with a touching delight to the warm and joyful experience of Baroque Bavarian Catholicism, which was the cradle that formed him. It was a culture at once both humane and highly civilised – the result of a long and consistent development of culture which affirmed man’s spiritual nature while accepting the best of the modern world and its developments. Such a background was the perfect inoculation to the barbarism of the Nazi savages, with their racial superstition and appeals to all the most brutish instincts of man. Joseph’s father, Alois Ratzinger understood immediately this early clash of cultures and that Nazism was entirely incompatible with the Catholic faith. In this conflict the Ratzingers made their choice firmly for the faith, and they paid for their choice. Alois found himself in constant difficulties because of his anti-Nazi opposition and the family were required to move home many times. More horribly, the Ratzingers were to know the savagery of the Nazi regime’s dehumanising principles when one of their cousins who had Down’s syndrome, was put to death in 1941. During the war years Joseph and his brother Georg were conscripted against their will into the Hitler Youth and various units of the German military auxiliaries. Their interest in the Nazi element was entirely absent and when the war ended they were both free to enter the seminary and pursue their vocations to the priesthood. Pope Benedict has recently said that it was the experience of growing up against the background of this Nazi horror which made him want to be a priest. Joseph Ratzinger well understood both at the time and certainly later, what it was that Christian civilisation was confronting. He later wrote in Milestones, concerning the Marxist corruption of university thought, of the new secular political religions “keeping the religious ardor, but eliminating God and replacing Him with the political activity of man.” Ratzinger goes on to say.

Hope remains, but the Party takes the place of God, and, along with the party, a totalitarianism that practices an atheistic sort of adoration ready to sacrifice all humanness...
to its false god. I myself have seen the frightful face of this atheistic piety unveiled, its psychological terror, the abandon with which every sort of moral consideration could be thrown overboard as a bourgeois residue when the ideological goal was at stake (p. 137).

To grow up in the face of the Nazi evil and to understand the capacity for destruction within the heart of man led Joseph Ratzinger to cling to the alternate explanation of man’s nature and destiny which was offered by the Church. There lay a vision, more secure and more tested for the salvation of man. It is a well recognised phenomenon that after the Second World War a very large number of servicemen of every type entered the priesthood, determined to show the world what really mattered and a way out of the darkness that seemed to have overwhelmed the world.

**Vatican II**

The second great influence of the life of Pope Benedict is the indelible experience of the Second Vatican Council. For most Catholics who lived through the Council, it is the defining moment of their religious lives. Many to this day are unable to think of the Faith except in terms of “was/is”. For Benedict the Council was not a backdrop to his life, but a very stage, upon which he played a significant part. The Pope is above all a man of ideas. In describing these years, he talks less of events than of the flow of arguments, of where the talk was and of who was giving forth. Father Ratzinger was one of the periti, or theologian experts whom the bishops brought to the Council to advise them on the discussion and voting. In Ratzinger’s case, it was Cardinal Frings, Archbishop of Cologne, and rather a very prominent liberal at the Council, who took Ratzinger as one of his theological consultants. In his memoirs Pope Benedict describes the cautious steps he took in this position, but also the euphoria and hope which gripped all those from the German theological world. The new spirit of hope and renewal which he detected in German theology he dates from the end of the First World War, and which he says survived National Socialism. The first great controversy at the Council was the rejection by the Council Fathers of the schemata, or propositional texts for the documents. There is no doubt that the German and French delegations, with support from the Dutch and Belgians, led the the call for the rejection of these documents. The documents were redrafted in ways that were acceptable to the vigorous enthusiasts of renewal. Ratzinger says that he found no real flaw in the schemata as they were and only felt that they seemed more the work of scholars than of shepherds. Father Ratzinger’s early enthusiasm for renewal and his support for the positions of Father Karl Rahner, his old teacher, had begun to seriously wane by the end of the Council as he saw the discussion both in the Council and outside it, taking a turn which astonished and dismayed him.

**Interpretative response to the Council**

For Joseph Ratzinger, the Council and its redaction have become the key to an appreciation of the content of Catholicism in the twentieth century. All of the wars over morality, liturgy, dogmatic theology, missiology etc which we have all found ourselves caught up in, depend to a large extent upon the reception and application of a new post-conciliar theology, which proclaims, almost as a virtue, its distinction from the theology which former ages understood simply as that of the Church. In his position as Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, no-one was more aware of the turbulent clouds of theological controversy which have obscured the nature and work of the Church for the past forty years. As I have said, Ratzinger is an ideas man. He notes less the political opposition and the tactics used by those who claim to question but who actually repudiate Christian teachings, than to observe the flow of the arguments that were unfolding. I feel that this is a key to understanding his approach to dealing with these problems.

“Exorcising” the “Spirit of Vatican II”

In December 2005, Pope Benedict gave a pre-Christmas address to the Roman Curia in which he articulated the division in a characterisation at once precise and profound. He speaks of the conflicting interpretations in a way that leaves no doubt about which he knows to be true:

On one hand, there is an interpretation that I would like to call “hermeneutics of discontinuity and rupture”. It was frequently able to find favour among mass media, and also a certain sector of modern theology. On the other hand, there is the “hermeneutics of reform”, of the renewal of the continuity of the single Church-subject, which the Lord has given us. It is a subject that grows in time and develops, remaining however always the same, the one subject of the People of God on their way.

[“Hermeneutics” is a term for “principles of interpretation” as applied to a text such as a portion of Sacred Scripture, or a Conciliar document (or any other text for that matter). (Ed.)]

For Benedict, the Council has now become a text argued over and even quoted by different schools of thought after the manner of textual biblical studies. He does not, however, claim that they are equivalent or both partially valid. On the contrary, he says, “One of these [the “hermeneutics of discontinuity”] has caused confusion; the other, in a silent but increasingly visible way, has brought results, and continues to bring them”. In repudiating the “hermeneutics of discontinuity”, Benedict does not distance himself at all from the Council. He says that it was necessary and he specifies three areas which needed to be addressed – the relationship of faith to science; the relationship of the Church to the modern age; and the question of religious tolerance. The answers to these questions could only be found in a reading of the Council which takes the Church and her faith seriously, and which sees the Church before the Council as the same as the Church after the Council.

Hermeneutics of discontinuity risks leading to a fracture between the pre-Council and post-Council Church. It asserts that the Council texts as such would still not be the true expression of the spirit of the Council. They would be the result of compromises within which, to reach unanimity, many old and ultimately useless things had to be dragged along and reconfirmed. It is, however, not in these compromises that the true spirit of the Council would be revealed, but instead in the drive toward newness that underpin the texts: only this would represent the true spirit of the Council, and starting from it and in conformity with it, it would be necessary to go forward. Precisely because the texts would reflect only imperfectly the true spirit of the Council and its novelty, it would be necessary to go courageously beyond the texts, making room for the new, in which the more profound, even though still indistinct, intention of the Council would express itself. In short: it would be necessary to follow not the Council texts, but its spirit. In this way, of course, a huge margin remains
for the question of how then to define this spirit and, as a result, room is made for any whimsicality. With this, however, there is a basic misunderstanding of the nature of a Council as such.

[See, http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/dettaglio.jsp?id=44072&eng=y, and also the English edition of L’Osservatore Romano, 4 January 2006, p.5.]

Pope Benedict, like all the rest of us has been occasionally haunted by that obnoxious and elusive poltergeist, the “Spirit of Vatican II”. One hopes that this landmark address will go some way to exorcising it.

Meanwhile, Pope Benedict has lived for forty years now with the painful spectacle of the Church divided and obstructed by a variety of forces using the Council as a smokescreen. In some cases a lack of clarity in the conciliar texts may have contributed. Cardinal Ratzinger’s description of some of the language of Gaudium et Spes as “frankly Pelagian” is surprising to say the least. [Pelagianism is a heresy that attributes sanctifying power to simple human effort. (Ed.] In other cases it is increasingly clear that the implementation of the Council sometimes exceeded its brief. He describes the Fathers as being basically disinterested in the liturgical question and participating in the work of Sacrosanctum Concilium only to find out how a Council should work. Finally, there is the great confusion—much of it deliberately spread—to alter the Faith in ways the Council Fathers never could, nor did authorise. The restoration of clarity and the dispelling of these clouds have occupied the second half of Pope Benedict’s life. Now that he is Pope, his determination to reclaim the Council has gained a much greater momentum.

European loss of faith

The third great influence on the life of Pope Benedict is the massive and sudden secularisation of Christian Europe in the period after the Council. The reasons for the mass secularisation are still being researched and not enough serious work has yet been done on this extraordinary phenomenon. Certainly, it is possible to see the roots of this in the 1930s onwards, speeding up in the late 1950s. Were it not for the Council, I think there would still have been a great secularisation, but the coincidence of Vatican II with the arrival of the contraceptive pill, the sexual revolution and the counterculture revolt of the 1960s made for a toxic combination. At just the moment when the reassuring voice of religion was needed to calm a turbulent world, the Church flung herself into a turbulence not seen for four hundred years. What makes this more of an issue for Pope Benedict is that the ecclesiastical revolution was produced first a revolution and then a new Catholicism, shorn of its medieval splendour, but freer to pursue goals of the social apostolate. Today’s age of accentuated individualism presents new challenges of how to preserve Christianity in a context of materialist hostility. Moreover, Pope Benedict is blunt about the fact of many of our catholic institutions having lost their character and remaining Catholic in name only. Should we not perhaps divest ourselves of them, he asks. He points to the great gesture of St Pius X surrendering the property of the Church in France, rather than surrender her freedom to the state.

Benedict understands the secularisation that has sundered people from each other and sees partial recovery in new associations. “No one can be a Christian alone”, he says. But he does not adopt an attitude of blase indifference to the defections from the Church in Europe. He does not say that this will necessarily turn out well. It is a grave crisis, and in very many ways graver than the particular crises facing the Church in other regions of the world. Nevertheless, Benedict sees the recovery of Europe and the addressing of its concerns as a matter especially affecting him. He chose his papal name to remind Europe of the role of the Church in nurturing civilisation, as St Benedict of Nursia the father of Europe. For a man as deeply cultured as Pope Benedict, who looks back on his Bavarian childhood with its panoply of Catholic religious and social life as the happy cradle of his existence, it must be a particularly bitter thought that all of this has perhaps passed away and forever. He is Eropean, but does this really matter anymore? The confidence of the Europeans is rather shaken by the comprehensive repudiation of their great experiment. Does anyone really care what they say and write? Is the future of Catholicism simply going to be in the developing world or can it be recovered in Europe? He does not seem particularly hopeful on this point. His generation is passing from the scene and leaving others who have no memory of a Christian past.

Collaboration with John Paul II

The last influence which places Pope Benedict at the heart of the twentieth century is his extraordinary collaboration with John Paul II in the work of leading the Catholic Church for a turbulent quarter of a century. John Paul II, whom Benedict repeatedly calls “the great” found a way of addressing the problems of the Church in the modern age which was dazzling and arresting. Cardinal Ratzinger collaborated with these. What were the characteristics of this collaboration?

1. An academic approach to the solving of the problem of confusion in the church. Encyclicals (some very significant), frequent addresses, the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Both are academics and have spent the bulk of their lives constantly reading, writing. This brings a possible drawback – Benedict is
not primarily an administrator.

2. Sponsoring of new movements: This was not directly his work. But predated him. Mutual sponsorship existed between the movements and the Pope, like friends in the dark encouraging each other by the sounds of their voices.

3. Never ending attempts at reaching out to communicate – addresses, papal visits, writing books, the public gestures.

4. Unambiguous reaffirmation of controverted points, especially in the field of Christian morality. Ratzinger was his great helper here. Although maligned as a “hardliner” and an “enforcer” – in fact, embarrassingly few were disciplined. Some major issues were confronted, such as liberation theology; relativism; the uniqueness of salvation, Dominus Iesus; and, of course, sexual abuse of minors.

5. He has learned how to be a pope from John Paul II. While not agreeing with him in everything (for example, the apologies), he supported him in everything, as a servant and a friend. They met at least twice a week including a private meeting every Friday night. Ratzinger greatly admired the fidelity of his predecessor to his office, and Ratzinger shows a similar fidelity. He has declared he tried to resign three times – in 1991, 1996 and 2001 – but each time John Paul II asked him to continue; and the sight of the Pope continuing in those circumstances made it impossible for him to refuse. So closely were they aligned that the overwhelming swift vote of the cardinals was a clear endorsement of continuity, which he has honoured.

6. He has seen that, despite gloomy predictions, the mission of John Paul II was actually able to touch very many people. Perhaps the papal “touch” can still work. Predictions of the demise of the Church may be a bit premature.

7. This Pope has a unique window on the universal Church. He reads, talks, visits, has interviewed visiting bishops over many years, and no one knows the Church better than Ratzinger.

**Summing-up**

Finally, I would like to offer this comment on the mission of the new pope, provided by the man he has chosen as his new secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone:

I believe that Benedict XVI will guide us in the work of refounding our culture, the life of our society, our nations on the Judaic-Christian roots and therefore we will also be able to see a flowering of testimonies, namely of those who demonstrate how it is possible to live according to our Christian roots. There are so many who want this. So many who follow the Pope.

**Times have now changed …**

The years roll by so quickly … It is only a few years back that an article under the title “Times are a-changing” by Father Paul Stuart, then Director of Vocations for Melbourne, was published in this journal. Back then however there was no Eucharistic Procession in Sydney, led by diocesan Seminarians (see back cover photo). And there was certainly no public presentation of Seminarians as seen in *The Catholic Weekly* photographs of street carol-singing and habited Seminarians as published before Christmas 2006! During his time as Director of Vocations, Father Stuart saw a goodly number of young men enter Corpus Christi Seminary, most of whom have now reached or are approaching ordination by the Archbishop of Melbourne.

The pattern that is emerging at growth points across Australia is that younger priests who are in tune with the “times are a-changing” are being used by God to call forth a new and growing generation of seminarians whose zeal is evangelical – the “salvation of souls” – and who are eager to be identified as seminarians and eager to live out public lives that proclaim afresh the salvation that God has entrusted to his Church. This renewed focus on the Word entails no diminution in the work of the Church in the world; but involves a renewed recognition of the ministry of the laity in the world and the distinctive focus of apostolic ministry in Word and Sacraments.

This shift in focus is manifest in the manner of presentation: what is now seen in photographs is an eagerness by public witness of a manner of living to proclaim the Gospel and to live out the public nature of vocation – whether as Sacred Minister or as Religious. What we now see are young men inserting themselves into and being inserted into a manner of living that anticipates and prepares for a life of public service of the Gospel. The experiments of “dumbing down” and secularisation of seminarians and priests are past; it is now not simply “Times are a-changing”; rather, *times have now changed*. Some are still running a rearguard action and endeavouring to reproduce experiments that clearly have failed. But those who try to reproduce this past are doomed to failure: they have proven and will prove to be sterile, and will have no successors. Those who are fertile are those who plant for a “perennial culture”, not an “ephemeral culture”. What the photographs in this issue show is the clear re-emergence of commitment by young seminarians to the eternal gospel that is to be proclaimed … (Revelation 14:6).  

**St John Vianney College seminarians and staff:**
The 2006 photograph below show the “pride and joy” (Phil 4:1) of the Bishop of Wagga Wagga.
“Pasch and Eschaton in Ecclesia”:
Joseph Ratzinger’s Theology of the Liturgy

Father Glen Tattersall FSSP

Early Ratzinger responses

What does Joseph Ratzinger – now Pope Benedict XVI – think about the liturgy? It is interesting that the young Father Ratzinger reported a certain dissatisfaction with the opening Mass of the Second Vatican Council at which, as a peritus, he was present. He was irritated by the postponement of the Creed until after Mass, by the litanies (which, in his view, should have been replaced by what we now call the Prayers of the Faithful), but above all by the apparent lack of active participation by the assembly. By way of contrast, Ratzinger was pleased that, by the end of the first session of the Council, the Mass responses were being sung by all present. Indeed he remarked in a 1963 study that the success of the Council’s first session could be gauged by how different its concluding Mass was from its opening one (Nichols, 2005:76). We might note that this comment was made prior to the first revision of the text and rubrics of the rites, which did not occur until 1964. In other words, Ratzinger was registering his pleasure not at a change in the liturgy in se, but in the changed spirit with which it was celebrated.

Ratzinger learnings in response to changes

By the 1970s however, Ratzinger was earning a name as one of the more trenchant critics of many aspects of the liturgical “reform”, as it had been implemented after the Council. The essays collected in Feast of Faith, published in Germany in 1981 (English edition, Ratzinger, 1986), attest to the depth and breadth of Ratzinger’s concerns about the direction of liturgical change in the fifteen years following the Council’s conclusion. By the time the famous (or for some, infamous) Ratzinger Report appeared in 1985, the then Cardinal’s unease with the post-Conciliar liturgical situation was clear to all (Ratzinger Report, 1985:119-134). Later, Cardinal Ratzinger described the sad irony he had experienced through this period:

The liturgical movement had been attempting to teach us to understand the liturgy as a living network of tradition which had taken concrete form, which cannot be torn apart into little pieces, but has to be seen and experienced as a living whole. Anyone like myself, who was moved by this perception in the time of the liturgical movement on the eve of the Second Vatican Council, can only stand, deeply sorrowing, before the ruins of the very things they were concerned for. (Ratzinger, 2005:11)

Continuity in Ratzinger’s responses

So, has Joseph Ratzinger changed his spots? Has the bright young theologian of the 1960s turned his back on the promise of the Council and its apparent fulfillment in the reformed liturgical life of the Church? On the contrary, I want to argue that there is far greater continuity than discontinuity in Joseph Ratzinger’s theology of the liturgy. I believe that there is a depth of insight in Ratzinger which obliged him to be critical both of elements of the liturgical status quo on the eve of the Council, as well of aspects of the post-Conciliar changes.

Liturgical as the touchstone of Ecclesiology

In any case, there can be no doubt that for a long time, Ratzinger has considered the issue of the liturgy to be of vital importance. While he acknowledges a multitude of pressing contemporary political and social crises, and the moral challenge these present to Christians, these, far from overshadowing concern for the proper forms of worship, underline the urgency and centrality of this question – for without a satisfactory answer to the question of worship, we cannot expect to have at our disposal the moral and spiritual resources necessary to resolve these other problems (Ratzinger, 1986:7). Moreover, the liturgy is inevitably a touchstone of Ecclesiology, and one would have to regard Ratzinger’s liturgical reflections as being tightly bound to his ecclesiological insights and preoccupations. In The Ratzinger Report, the Cardinal noted that “behind the various ways of understanding liturgy there are different ways of understanding the Church and consequently God and man’s relation to Him. The question of liturgy is not peripheral: the Council itself reminded us that we are dealing here with the very core of Christian faith.” (Ratzinger Report, 1985:119f)

However, if the liturgy is central to our concern about man, and the relationship between God and man in the Church, this provides no justification for constructing an anthropocentric liturgy:

For the liturgy is not about us, but about God. Forgetting about God is the most imminent danger of our age. As against this, the Liturgy should be setting up a sign of God’s presence. Yet what is happening, if the habit of forgetting about God makes itself at home in the Liturgy itself, and if in the Liturgy we are only thinking of ourselves? In any and every liturgical reform, and in every liturgical celebration, the primacy of God should be kept in view first and foremost.” (Ratzinger, 2005:13)

Ratzinger’s fundamental principles and influences

What then are the fundamental principles and influences in Joseph Ratzinger’s understanding of the liturgy?

Vatican II. There is no question of his commitment to the doctrinal content of Sacrosanctum Concilium. Drawing upon Bouyer (1964), we might summarise the great themes of the Council’s teaching on the liturgy as follows:

• The liturgy is the embodiment of the Paschal Mystery – Christ’s dying and rising again for our salvation.
• This Paschal Mystery is a mystery of worship.
• Consequently, the liturgy is intimately related to the Mystery of the Church Herself, not only because Her
apostolic function requires Her to proclaim the Paschal event and to perpetuate its reality sacramentally, but above all because it is the mystery of Her own life, of the union of the Mystical Body with its Head.

- Necessarily then, the liturgy has a unique and central role in the whole activity of the Church: it is described as the summit to which all Her activities tend, and the source from which all Her powers flow (Sacro sanctum Concilium #10 [hereafter, Sac Con]).

- The earthly liturgy also shares by anticipation in the heavenly one: so that at the same time as it renews the Paschal Mystery, it looks forward to the consummation of the work of Redemption in Christ’s second and definitive coming, and with this the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. Thus, the Council sought to emphasise the cosmic and eschatological dimensions of the liturgy (ibid., #8).

- Finally, the Council teaches that the liturgy, besides re-presenting the Paschal Mystery to us objectively, in a sacramental mode, is also intended to enhance our most effective reception of it: our subjective response to God’s gift of grace. This point provides a central point of reference for liturgical reform. Under this heading we can include key issues such as the encouragement of a greater active participation (participatio actuosa) (Sac Con, #14) by the Faithful – the precise meaning of which has been the subject of intense debate.

Other influences. Aside from the event of the Council, what are the other significant influences helping to form Joseph Ratzinger’s understanding of the liturgy? Building on his own immediate contact with the liturgical life of the Church in Bavaria, the young Ratzinger developed an appreciation of the liturgical movement centred on the Benedictine monasteries, in particular Beuron and its daughter-house, Maria-Laach.

1. Guardini. Probably the single greatest influence of all was that exercised by Romano Guardini, who himself “discovered” the vitality of the liturgy in the Benedictine context. In fact, for Ratzinger, the best ideals of the liturgical movement are those maintained by Guardini. For it was Guardini who, while he deeply appreciated all that the liturgical movement had to offer, also rejected its excesses and recognised certain dangers: a type of purism or rigorism lending itself to archeologising tendencies, and a rejection of the gains of the Middle Ages. So, for instance, this purist strand of the movement was critical of the development of Eucharistic adoration outside of Mass, a view for which Joseph Ratzinger has never shown the least sympathy. More positively, Guardini’s book The Spirit of the Liturgy, (Guardini, English edition, 1937), first published in 1918, opened up the treasures of the liturgy to Ratzinger when he read it soon after starting his studies for the priesthood in 1946. Ratzinger’s own work of the same title (Ratzinger, 2000) is meant as a tribute to Guardini. They are very different books, written to address the needs of different times, but there are also common emphases and preoccupations: among these, are an appreciation of liturgy as a fellowship or communion, the importance of liturgical symbolism and ritual form, and the primacy of the logos over the ethos (and thus of contemplation over action; of beauty over didacticism).

2. St Augustine, St Boniface, and successors. Other influences I will have to be content to mention in passing: St Augustine, particularly in his understanding of the nature of sacrifice; St Bonaventure’s doctrine of exemplarism, which in turn draws on Pseudo-Dionysius to support a rich teaching on symbolism as a bridge to the world of the transcendent; Dietrich von Hildebrand, especially in his study of the formative power of the liturgy on the Christian personality; and von Balthasar’s theological aesthetics centred on the beauty of Christ, as well as his study of Maximus the Confessor’s writings on the cosmic dimension of the liturgy (Cosmic Liturgy, English edition, Ignatius Press, 2003).

Ratzinger’s mature reflections

The mature reflections of Joseph Ratzinger on the liturgy are to be found in The Spirit of the Liturgy, first published in 1999. The approach is strongly Biblical, and starts with a study of aspects of the Exodus. The whole point of the Exodus – both historically and in type – is the worship and service of the True God by His people. Even the good of the Promised Land is subsumed under this rubric, because the Promised Land is only a true good insofar as it is intended to be a place where God Himself reigns (Ratzinger 2000:15-17).

Interweaving of God and cult. On Sinai, a Covenant is sealed in which the aspects of worship, law and ethics are inseparably interwoven. This Covenant demonstrates that nothing in human existence is autonomous from God. As law is essential for freedom and community, so worship – the right kind of cult, or relationship with God – is vital for law. But more profoundly, worship is necessary for the right kind of existence in this world, precisely because it reaches beyond this world. Worship “gives us a share in heaven’s mode of existence” and so “has the character of anticipation. It lays hold in advance of a more perfect life, and in so doing, gives our present life its proper measure” (ibid., 21). This character of anticipation, as we shall see, is supremely present in the New Covenant as the Church ceaselessly looks forward to Christ’s return.

God’s self-revelation in worship. According to Ratzinger, the event of Sinai has something else to teach us. True worship is not “man made”, in which case it would be “just a cry in the dark or mere self-affirmation” (ibid., 22). True liturgy requires that God Himself reveal how we are to worship Him. This need to receive and accept revelation is illustrated dramatically in the cult of the golden calf. Ratzinger insists that this incident is not simply a turning to the false gods of the heathen. It is worse – a much more subtle apostasy. The people believe that they may properly represent and worship the True God in the image of the golden calf. Ratzinger insists that this incident is not simply a turning to the false gods of the heathen. It is worse – a much more subtle apostasy. The people believe that they may properly represent and worship the True God in the image of the golden calf. In this event, worship is no longer an ascent to God, but an attempt to bring God down and refashion Him according to man’s desires, and to use Him for man’s purposes:

- The narrative of the golden calf is a warning about any kind of self-initiated and self-seeking worship. Ultimately, it is no longer concerned with God but with giving oneself a nice little alternative world, manufactured from one’s own resources. [Thus the liturgy becomes pointless or – worse – ... an apostasy in sacral disguise. All that is left in the end is frustration, a feeling of emptiness. There is no experience of that liberation which always takes place when man encounters the living God (ibid., 23).

Cosmic dimension of worship. The “cosmic” dimension of worship is also central to Ratzinger’s liturgical theology. He notes the parallels between the creation account of Genesis
and the giving of the ceremonial law in Exodus. Both creation and the building of the Tabernacle are works that end on the seventh day with the manifestation of God’s glory: “The completion of the tent anticipates the completion of creation. God makes His dwelling in the world. Heaven and earth are united (ibid., 27).” Thus, creation looks forward to the Covenant, and the Covenant completes creation.

**Authentic sacrifice.** His reflections on the cosmic dimension of the liturgy bring Ratzinger to an important excursus on the meaning of sacrifice. Traditionally, sacrificium (from sacrum, sacred, and facere, to make) is used to describe both an object made sacred by being set aside for the service of God, and also the process by which this separation and dedication takes place. Ratzinger is deeply critical of the “destruction” theory of sacrifice, which has enjoyed some currency in recent centuries. This theory claims that the destruction of the sacrificial offering is absolutely necessary to affirm God’s sovereignty, by definitively removing the subject from any possibility of man’s reach. Rejecting the possibility that such an act could serve God’s glory, Ratzinger insists:

> True surrender to God looks very different. It consists in the union of man and creation with God. Belonging to God has nothing to do with destruction or non-being. It is rather a way of being. It means emerging from the state of separation, of apparent autonomy, of existing only for oneself and in oneself. It means losing oneself as the only possible way of finding oneself. That is why St. Augustine could say the true “sacrifice” is the civitas Dei, that is, love-transformed mankind, the divinisation of creation and the surrender of all things to God (ibid., 28).

It may be that the previous widespread acceptance of the destruction theory ultimately undermined the notion of sacrifice itself. Certainly, Ratzinger noted in his address to the 2001 Liturgical Conference at Fontgombault Abbey that the loss of the real meaning of sacrifice is bound to precipitate a liturgical crisis. For this reason, the liturgical crisis of the 1960s shared much in common with that of the Reformation. Since the Eucharist is in fact the sacramentum of the true and definitive sacrificium, it is vital that its form be configured to the reality it contains. Again, relying deeply on St Augustine, Ratzinger places love at the heart of sacrifice: this movement of love, firstly from God to man, and then of man returning to God, is what gives meaning to the Paschal mystery of Christ and the spiritual sacrifices of Christians, and unites them (cf., Ratzinger, 2003a:24-28).

**Exitus and reditus.** The meaning of sacrifice is deepened by a consideration of the classic schema of exitus and reditus; of a going out from God and a return to Him. Gnosticism regards finitude itself as a flaw, and non-Divine being as essentially fallen. Christianity, on the other hand, understands the exitus that creation is entirely good and positive. Likewise, in the Christian vision of reditus, the creature, existing in its own right, comes home to itself, and this act is an answer in freedom to God’s love. The being of the other is not absorbed or abolished, but rather, in giving itself, it becomes fully itself. This reditus is a “return”, but it does not abolish creation; rather, it bestows its full and final perfection (Ratzinger 2000:32f).

What has happened in the Fall is an abuse of freedom by which man has refused the path of reditus as originally proposed to him, rejecting Divine love as imposing an unworthy dependence. In a fallen world then, the reditus of man has need of Redemption, and thus of a Redeemer. If the essence of sacrifice as a return to Love remains unchanged, this worship does have a new aspect: in dependence on Another, Who alone can rescue us, it assumes suffering in order to heal our wounded freedom from within. After the Fall, reditus only becomes possible when the Logos Himself, the Eternal Word, assumes human nature in the Incarnation. The reditus of Christ as the first-born of all creation occurs through His Pasch; our reditus follows, in dependence on His. Ratzinger concludes:

> God becomes “the Way”. A sound theology of liturgy has the humility to accept that we cannot of ourselves construct the way to God. In the Redemptive Incarnation, God has not only shown us the way to Himself, but has Himself become “the way”! And so in the liturgy, the Incarnate Logos not only speaks to us, but comes to us in order to unite us to Himself (Ratzinger, 2003a:30). The essential form of Christian liturgy is necessarily cosmic because, through it, the Word Incarnate draws “all flesh” into the glorification of God: “He takes up into Himself our sufferings and hopes, all the yearning of creation, and bears it to God (Ratzinger 2000:47).

**Stages in Ratzinger’s understanding of the liturgical act**

If we examine more closely how this goal is to be accomplished, we can discern three stages. Firstly, the foundation of the liturgy is the unique historical event of Christ’s Pasch. The second stage is the entry of the eternal into our present moment in the liturgical actions of the Church on earth. The third aspect – its eschatalogical and cosmic dimension – is concerned with the fulfillment of the work of Redemption in all of creation and its consummation in Christ’s Second Coming. The intermediate stage – the earthly liturgy – makes sense and has meaning only because it contains the other two dimensions. Our participation both in the historic event of the Pasch, and in the heavenly liturgy, is mediated to us through earthly signs, whose efficacy relies upon the power and will of Christ. Thus, the theology of liturgy also concerns itself with symbols, insofar as these connect us to what is present but hidden (ibid., 59-61).

**Practical and pastoral issues**

I wish now to turn to some of the practical and pastoral issues which Joseph Ratzinger’s liturgical theology identifies as significant under this second aspect [of Ratzinger’s understanding of the liturgical act]: the liturgical rites of the Church on earth. It should be obvious now that the fundamental criterion for judging the adequacy of any temporal liturgical ritual will be the degree to which it is configured, in its symbolic form, to the Pasch and Eschaton.
**Right worship.** Ratzinger reminds us, in this connection, of the true meaning of orthodoxy: right worship, or true splendour – that is, the splendour of God. Where this is understood, there will be no danger of reducing the liturgy to problems of “matter” and “form” alone, in which everything else is freely disposable, and the meaning of the surrounding rite is reduced to something merely extrinsic and juridical. Unfortunately, the danger of this reductionism sometimes has not been obvious, but instead has been aided and abetted by an inadequate scholastic sacramental theology, which sees the Eucharistic liturgy as no more than a collection of ceremonies lending external solemnity to the Consecration. It is this narrowness which helped to make possible both the liturgical destruction of the Reformation, and much in the post-Conciliar period that has passed for “renewal” (Ratzinger, 2003b:146).

**Particularity of the rite, and limitations of “re-inculturation”.** Ratzinger holds to a rich understanding of the meaning of liturgical rite as:

the expression, which has become form, of ecclesiality and of the Church’s identity as a historically transcendent communion of prayer and action. Rite makes concrete the liturgy’s bond with that living subject which is the Church, who for Her part is characterised by adherence to the form of faith that has developed in the apostolic tradition (Ratzinger 2000:166).

Because of the intimate bond between liturgical rite, Scripture, and Tradition, the liturgy is concretely anchored in the particularities of time and place. This is a positive good, willed by God, by which He forges a communion. It also means that liturgical rites cannot be freely and uncritically “re-inculturated”, because however much the historical liturgies might have incorporated elements from different cultures, they are above all forms of the apostolic Tradition as it has unfolded – providentially – in the great places of the Tradition. As a consequence, while there may be a legitimate development of rites, this ought always to be an organic unfolding in conformity with the genius of the particular rite. Such development rightly resists haste, aggressive intervention, and all spontaneity (cf, Ratzinger 2000:163-165).

**Limitations in Papal juridical liturgical prescription.** This warning applies even – and perhaps especially – to the use of Papal authority in the modification of liturgical rites:

The Pope is not an absolute monarch whose will is law, but is the guardian of the authentic tradition, and thereby the premier guarantor of obedience. His rule is not that of arbitrary power, but that of obedience in faith. That is why, with respect to the liturgy, he has the task of a gardener, not that of a technician who builds new machines and throws the old ones on the junk-heap (Ratzinger, 2005:10f).

**Our “participatio actuosa”.** If a given liturgical rite is the historically developed and formalised response of a particular Church, or grouping of Churches, to the true worship of the Logos, how are we to make this response our own? Through our participatio actuosa, our active participation. Common external expressions are important to facilitate this participation, but not sufficient. Ratzinger insists that there must be a common movement of internalisation, a shared path that is not only inward but transcendent (Ratzinger 1986:69). The process of interiorisation is of primary importance simply because liturgical participation is ultimately about a participation in God’s life. But it is not only a misconstruing of actuosa as the more superficial actus, that has caused mischief. Ratzinger also notes that the word “part-icipation” refers to some principal action in which everyone has a “part” (Ratzinger 2000:171). Hence, it is essential first of all firstly to determine what is this central actus in which everyone is meant to participate.

It is of course the Eucharistic prayer – the canon, or Oratio. This Oratio is something far more than a speech – in it, the human element is the instrument for a Divine actus. While the role of the ministerial priesthood (acting in persona Christi capitatis) is unique and irreplaceable in making this action present, there is nevertheless no essential difference between priests and laity in the interior participation which is required of each: the prayer, and disposition, that the sacrifice of the Logos already accepted by the Father may become our sacrifice, so that we ourselves may be conformed to the Word, and be knit to the Mystical Body of Christ which is the Church (ibid., 173f).

**Spiritual “looking to the Lord!”** We must be careful however about falsely spiritualising the liturgy. If it is true that we are dealing with the sacrifice of the Word, this Logos has taken flesh. The liturgical actions of the Church therefore must reflect, and ought to foster, the reclaiming of our bodily existence by and for the Incarnate and glorified Word. Our external gestures are then of tremendous significance in the liturgy. Speaking of this in relation to the correct response to the actus of God in the Eucharistic prayer, Ratzinger insists that “it is not now a matter of looking at or toward the priest, but of looking together toward the Lord and going out to meet Him” (ibid., 174).

**Liturgical orientation as a proper aid.** On this basis, Ratzinger regards the physical orientation of the Eucharistic celebration as an important aid to proper participation. This view places him at odds with what has become almost a universal practice in the reformed liturgy – though not, it should be noted, with liturgical law. Ratzinger believes that the insistence on the celebration of Mass versus populum obstructs true participation in the liturgy: “The turning of the priest toward the people has turned the community into a self-enclosed circle. In its outward form, it no longer opens out on what lies ahead and above, but is closed in on itself” (ibid., 80).

**Liturgical orientation of “Looking to the Lord”**. While in the liturgy of the Word the dynamic of proclamation and response favours a face-to-face exchange, this is not at all the case for the central action of the Mass, the sacramental re-presentation of Christ’s Sacrifice. Here, Ratzinger believes,

a common turning to the East … remains essential. Looking at the priest has no importance. What matters is looking together at the Lord. It is not now a question of dialogue but of common worship, of setting off toward the One Who is to come. What corresponds with the reality of what is happening is not the closed circle but the common movement forward, expressed in a common direction for prayer (ibid., 81).

Continued on page 21
The Place of Latin in the Church

David Birch

The Genius of the Roman Liturgy

On the evening of Wednesday 13th September 2006, Sollemn Vespers began in the historic 13th century chapel of Merton College Oxford, in much the same way as it would have done at the very first sung Vespers in this beautiful space, designed for the classical Roman liturgy already very well-established in its language and forms when this chapel was first built 400 years before the English Reformation. For the next four days, the Roman liturgy, through Lauds, Solemn High Mass, Vespers and Compline, were celebrated in a place that – apart from one Novus Ordo Mass in English – had not seen the glories of this Liturgy celebrated in Latin since the mid 1500s. For those of us present at the 11th International Colloquium of the International Centre for Liturgical Studies (CIEL) dedicated to “The Genius of the Roman Liturgy: Historical Diversity and Spiritual Reach”, this was not just an incredibly moving experience, though it was certainly this, but an affirmation of the timeless and spiritual heritage of the Latin liturgy.

Interestingly, as Dom Charbel’s article in the last issue of The Priest made it clear, this affirmation of the genius of the Roman Liturgy lies at the heart of what is now called a “New Liturgical Movement”. But when you are present at a Sollemn Pontifical Mass celebrated according to the 1962 Missale Romanum in a 13th century chapel designed specifically for this liturgy, the idea of the “new” part of this movement raises many questions, not least of which is the need for us continually to reflect on the place of Latin in the Church today. This short article is a reflection on this topic, not simply as a call for a nostalgic, romanticised, return to a liturgy with which many in the Church are now completely unfamiliar with in its fullest forms (including many Priests and Religious), but as a way of seeking to put back onto the agenda the fact that still at the heart of many Church documents, pre-Vatican II and post-Vatican II, the importance of the place of Latin is still central.

The Church’s policy on Latin, through its Magisterium, is clear, and I outline that in what follows. What seems to have fallen by the wayside for the vast bulk of the Church worldwide is adherence to that policy. For some months now we have been expecting some sort of formal statement from Pope Benedict XVI on the place of the classical Roman Liturgy (over and above #62 of the recent Sacramentum Caritatis discussed below). What form that will take is mere speculation for those us outside the inner circles of the Curia, but no matter how and when something appears, I believe it is valuable at this time to consider the overall place of Latin in the Church, not simply to justify an event like the CIEL Colloquium in Oxford last year, but to show that such a “central place” is actually real in today’s Church – and thus, not as a denial of Vatican II, but as a continuing celebration of it and what it had to say about the continuing importance and relevance of Latin in the active life of the Church and the training of its Priests.

When Pope John Paul II addressed the participants of Certamen Vaticanum on the 27 November 1978 he told them that at a time:

When in many places the Latin language and human studies are less known, you must joyfully accept the patrimony of this language which the Church holds in high esteem and must, with energy, make it fruitful. The well-known words of Cicero, “It is not so much excellent to know Latin, as it is a shame not to know it”, in a certain sense are directed to you. We exhort you all to lift up the high torch of Latin which is even today a bond of unity among the peoples of all languages.

Certamen Vaticanum was established in 1953 as a competition for the promulgation of Latin prose and poetry. Two decades later, in 1976, Pope Paul VI established the Latinitas Foundation “to promote the study of the Latin language, classical literature and Medieval Latin”, as well as to promote the increased use of Latin, especially in the development of new words and phrases to keep Latin alive to the changes in languages the world over. Latin is still the official language of the Church, and in May 2003, Pope John Paul II established a new Vatican Commission to restore the use of Latin in the Church.

In doing so he echoed the words of Pope Paul VI who speaking several years earlier in 1968 also to Certamen Vaticanum said that “Latin must be continued to be fostered … above all to appreciate the treasures of the Sacred Liturgy.”

Pope Paul VI while vigorously defending the development of the use of the vernacular following Vatican II had earlier issued a motu proprio, Studia Latinitatis (1964) and an encyclical, Summi Dei Verbum (1963), both of which were directed at the proper study of Latin in seminars. The use of the vernacular, for Pope Paul VI was driven not by a desire to see the end of Latin in the Church, but by his understanding of the pressing pastoral concerns of the late 1960s. As he said in his address to Certamen Vaticanum in 1968, “The bread of the Word of God, as it is given in the Liturgy must be broken by pastors of souls in large and generous handfuls, so as to make it intelligible and accessible to all, enabling the faithful to taste its beauty and participate more easily and actively in its sacred rites.” This did not mean, however, for Pope Paul VI, or indeed his successors, that Latin and its rich heritage within the Church, should be a thing of the past.

Later, in his April 2004 letter to Vox Clara, the Committee on English Liturgical Texts, Pope John Paul II in guiding the members of this committee to their difficult task of translating the 2000 editio tertia of the Missale Romanum,
called for a more “permanent commitment to draw ever more abundantly from the riches of the Liturgy that vital force which spreads from Christ to the members of his body, which is the Church.”

The Formative Value of Latin

Both the decree Optatam Totius and the Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium promulgated at Vatican II argued strongly for the necessity and study of Latin, and as such, Pope Paul VI continued in his address to Certamen Vaticanum in 1968 by saying, “It is precisely for its educative and formative value that we desire that Latin should continue to hold a place of honour in our midst.” Referring to Latin in the life of the Church as a “spiritual and cultural heritage from which modern civilisation still draws life and which it still needs”, he concluded his talk by saying that “The Church has used and uses Latin as a precious vehicle and instrument for the fusion of souls and for communication between peoples.”

Pope Pius XI also wrote at length on the topic of Latin in his 1 August 1922 Apostolic Epistle, Officiorum Omnium, and in his 20 October 1924 motu proprio, Litterarum Latinarum; and some years later Blessed Pope John XXIII made it clear that, “It is evident that Latin must be kept in honour in the Church”, and similarly, writing in 1962 in Veterum Sapientiae on the value and importance of Latin in the Church, echoing the previous thoughts of Pope Pius XI in 1922, he made it clear that there are three main qualities of the Latin language “which harmonise to a remarkable degree with the Church’s nature. ‘For the Church, precisely because it embraces all nations and is destined to endure until the end of time ... of its very nature requires a language which is universal, immutable, and non-vernacular’.”

Latin and Priestly Formation

Before the 1983 revisions of Canon Law, Canon 1364 mandated the thorough study of Latin by seminarians, and Canon 249 in the 1983 revisions, and still in force today, requires all in Priestly formation to have a “careful schooling in the Latin language”, to ensure their ability to fully engage in the understanding of Church doctrine and law. Canon 249 states:

The Charter of Priestly Formation is to provide that the students are not only taught their native language accurately, but are also well versed in Latin, and have a suitable knowledge of other languages which would appear to be necessary or useful for their formation or for the exercise of their pastoral ministry.

In Pope John Paul II’s 15 April 1979 Apostolic Constitution, Sapientia Christiana on ecclesiastical universities and faculties, it is also made clear in the Norms of Application (29 April 1979) Section IV n.3 that, “A suitable knowledge of the Latin language is required for the Faculties of the sacred sciences, so that the students can understand and use the sources and documents of the Church.”

Pope John Paul II’s Pastores Dabo Vobis, on the formation of Priests in the circumstances of the present day, strongly reaffirmed the teaching of Vatican II’s documents and that formation should proceed as established in the 28 October 1965 decree Optatam Totius and in the 1967 Synod (#61). Pope Paul VI’s Optatam Totius states very clearly in article 13 that seminarians “are to acquire a knowledge of Latin which will enable them to understand and make use of the sources of so many sciences and of the documents of the Church. The study of the liturgical language proper to each rite should be considered necessary; a suitable knowledge of the languages of the Bible and of Tradition should be greatly encouraged.”

Note also that article #101.1 of Sacrosanctum Concilium also makes it clear that ‘In accordance with the centuries-old tradition of the Latin rite, the Latin language is to be retained by clerics in the divine office’, with the proviso that a vernacular version is acceptable for those ‘for whom the use of Latin constitutes a grave obstacle to their praying the office properly.’ There is some evidence that the rigorous study of Latin is returning, particularly in Schools of Canon Law, but it is still generally optional in most seminaries around the world, hence positioning clerics to have little choice but to recite the Divine Office in their vernacular.

Latin Rites

When Pope Benedict XVI launched the new Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, on 28 June 2005, he urged Catholics around the world to memorise the most common Catholic prayers in Latin. By doing so, he threw into sharp relief the position established in the Second Vatican Council document, Sacrosanctum Concilium (1963) that “steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them.” (#54) and that “the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites” (#36.1).

Article 268 in the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments’ Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy (2001) also makes it clear that:

On occasions when pilgrims come together from different countries, it is important that the Creed and the Our Father be sung in Latin using simpler melodies. Such celebrations offer a truer image of the Church and of the Eucharist, and afford the faithful an opportunity for mutual encounter and reciprocal enrichment.

Both Canon Law and the existing Constitutions of the Church on this issue are rarely, if ever, applied, however, and few Catholics (including Priests and Religious) around the world today would be familiar with most (or indeed any) of the basic prayers in Latin, and even fewer with the very much larger corpus of Latin prayers, hymns, collects, Psalms, readings and poetry which constitute both the spiritual and literary legacy of the history of Catholic prayer life.

When Pope Benedict XVI called for Catholics to learn some basic prayers in Latin, as well as in one’s own language to “help Christian faithful of different languages pray together, especially when they gather for special circumstances”, he also said that he hoped the 200 page Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, (a synthesis of the much larger 1992 Catechism of the Catholic Church), “would give Catholics and non-Catholics easy access to the basic and essential tenets of the Catholic faith.” Those tenets are not just in the words of the Catechism – they continue to live and breathe through the history of Latin prayer.

As Pope Benedict said to those gathered for the launch of the Compendium, picking up on his comments when he submitted
the Latin edition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to Pope John Paul in 1997, "Latin, has for centuries been the vehicle and instrument of Christian culture, and guarantees not only continuity with our roots, but remains as relevant as ever for strengthening the bonds of the unity of the faith in the communion of the Church."

**Unity and universality through Latin**

If we think that we will “understand” the liturgy simply because it is in the language we use on a daily basis, we will never grasp the real truth of the liturgy – and this is simply that, irrespective of the language, we can never fully understand it: the liturgy, rather, “understands” us. This truth is a quite different, and far more searching, realisation, because the liturgy is the mystery of Christ, and no matter how fluent we may be in the languages of the world, no amount of linguistic skill – Latin or otherwise – will ever enable us to understand, let alone, *explain*, the liturgy. The argument for the place of Latin in the Church is not to return to an earlier time – like the beauties of the 18th Century Merton College Chapel – for nostalgic reasons, or indeed, for theological ones, the use of Latin is better to put into practice the teaching of the Magisterium.

Part of that teaching is *Sacramentum Caritatis* published by Pope Benedict XVI on 13 March 2007, where he re-affirms the policy of the Church as follows when talking about the celebration of large scale liturgies in section 62:

None of the above observations should cast doubt upon the importance of such large-scale liturgies. I am thinking here particularly of celebrations at international gatherings, which nowadays are held with greater frequency. The most should be made of these occasions. In order to express more clearly the unity and universality of the Church, I wish to endorse the proposal made by the Synod of Bishops (in harmony with the directives of the Second Vatican Council) that – with the exception of the readings, the homily and the prayer of the faithful – such liturgies could be celebrated in Latin. Similarly, the better-known prayers of the Church’s tradition should be recited in Latin and, if possible, selections of Gregorian chant should be sung. Speaking more generally, I ask that future priests, from their time in the seminary, receive the preparation needed to understand and to celebrate Mass in Latin, and also to use Latin texts and execute Gregorian chant; nor should we forget that the faithful can be taught to recite the more common prayers in Latin, and also to sing parts of the liturgy to Gregorian chant.

This is an important statement, and it will be interesting to see just to what extent the Holy Father’s wishes as part of the Church’s continuing teaching on the place of Latin in the liturgy, priests formation and the active prayer life of the faithful, will be implemented, given that so much of it has been ignored in the past.

[Editor: Certainly, the recent papal liturgy in the Holy Spirit Cathedral, Istanbul, did not develop it! For that liturgy was a hotch-potch of different languages, and with a large “concert” element and use of the shortest consecratory prayer, Eucharistic Prayer II.]

**Notes:**

My thanks to Father Glen Tattersall FSSP for detailed feedback on an earlier version of this work.

For more details of the actual conference see http://www.ciel2006.org, and on CIEL see http://www.CIEL-UK.org. See also Shawn Tribe’s article outlining the contents of the conference at http://thenewliturgicalmovement.blogspot.com/. 

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**Doctor John J. Billings, AM, KCSG, MD, FRCP, FRACP**

*a tribute*

**Born, Melbourne 5 March 1918**

**Died, Melbourne 1 April 2007**

A kindly helper in his later years to this Editor.

Natural family pioneer and co-inventor of the method that bears his name, Dr John Billings, died in Melbourne at the age of 89 years following a short illness. Dr Billings with his wife Dr Evelyn (Lyn) Billings pioneered the Billings Ovulation Method in the 1950s as a system that helps women to identify their fertile and non-fertile states based on their menstrual cycle.

Dr Billings served with the Australian Imperial Force as a doctor in New Guinea during World War II. In 1947 he was awarded a Nuffield Fellowship for post-graduate studies in London, specialising in neurology, returning to practice in Melbourne. He later became the Head of the Neurology Department of St Vincent’s Hospital, the Dean of its clinical school at the University of Melbourne and, from the late 1960s until recent years, the hospital’s consulting neurologist.

The work for which he was most famous began in 1953, when he was approached by Father Maurice Catarinich of the Catholic Church’s Catholic Marriage Guidance Bureau to devise a method for couples to regulate their fertility. Dr Billings and his wife have since spent more than 50 years researching fertility, and establishing WOOMB (The World Organisation Ovulation Method Billings International) in Melbourne as the centre for research and teaching the method around the world.

The Billings Method was taught in more than 100 countries including China, where it was the only natural fertility method accepted by the Government. Dr Billings’s work was incredibly important; it has had a global effect. Through Dr John Billings and Dr Evelyn Billings, Australia has given people around the world a much greater understanding of fertility and it has given couples the opportunity to use that knowledge in a natural way to achieve/regulate pregnancy.

Dr John Billings and Dr Evelyn Billings travelled the world to establish teaching centres and train teachers to educate women and couples about the method. For over 30 years, Dr John Billings edited the Bulletin of the Ovulation Method Research and Reference Centre of Australia (OMR&RCA) (see below), in which articles and news were published, as well as articles and excerpts on Catholic faith, moral and philosophical theology, and magisterial teaching (see, www.woomb.org).

In 1991, Dr John Billings was made a member of the Order of Australia (AM). In 1969 he was made a Knight Commander of the Order of St Gregory the Great, and in 2003, His Holiness Pope John Paul II elevated him to that rank “with star” (the only Australian so honoured). In 2002 the Doctors Billings jointly were honoured with the International Catholic Physician of the Year award.

He is survived by his wife Evelyn, eight of his nine children and a growing family of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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**Editor**
Father John Fowles, CCS

Looking back nine years ago to the pioneering days of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Thurgoona, I remember very well the long hours of planning and work to establish this new Parish. As a newly ordained priest, I recall standing on the virgin soil where only gum trees and native scrub flourished. This block of land was purchased for the purpose of establishing a new parish in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga. “There you are; now build your Church,” said Bishop Brennan.

It was rather a daunting task, perhaps I was feeling like a little like David facing Goliath. The task of building a new Church, Presbytery and Parish Centre along with car parking and the landscaping of gardens was enormous, to say nothing of establishing the community of faith that would bear the burden of it all. But sitting there looking at it was not getting the job done. This was to be a church dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The successful completion of such a complex project depended not only upon the hard work of a team of volunteers, but even more upon the faith of the community – a faith which grew and became steeped in devotional practice through the intercession of Our Lady.

The outcome could only leave us in awe of God’s hand at work in bringing to completion what for many was sheer folly.

With a small band of dedicated volunteer workers we set out designing our “orthodox” church. We were very excited with what we had come up with. Monsignor Elliott wrote to us congratulating us on the beautiful design, and much to our surprise Professor Duncan Stroik from Notre Dame University USA, also gave us encouragement. However, this was quickly hit on the head by those in charge. We were forced to abandon the idea of the design of a church the people were so excited about. We were being directed to go with a style that no one really liked: a modern style building that was acceptable to certain authorities, and yet, was unacceptable to the sense of the faithful.

As a result, instead of a church, it was decided to seek approval for a hall to be built: this is the beautiful church we have today.

Together, the community of the Confraternity of Christ the Priest and the Parishioners undertook a risk bigger than Texas, known as the “Highway to Heaven Truck Raffle”. There was no room for the faint hearted, chook raffles were a thing of the past. The Parish was on a mission, a mission to honour the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so that where ever we went in our fundraising work we took devotion the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The “Highway to Heaven” covered all parts of Australia, the priests and people took to the highways and, at the same time, the pastoral work of the new parish was being developed. The Immaculate Heart of Mary Church has a close connection to those men of the highways, as it is through their generosity that the foundations of the church were laid.

From the very first committee meeting we placed all our fundraising activities under the patronage of the Infant of Prague along with having petition forms asking for Rosaries for the intentions of the new foundation were circulated and prayed by Catholics far and wide. The result was evident. We purchased a Kenworth prime mover valued at $369,000 with a parish bank balance of $10,000. On the morning of the draw we sold $10,000 worth of tickets. Our faith proved us right and we were able to commence the construction of the church. Needless to say, the Novena to the Infant of Prague has continued to this day.

With few resources at our disposal, we begged, borrowed and almost stole to get materials for the project. No matter what we needed it always seemed to arrive at our feet. A statue of Our Lady was placed in an alcove high in a tree that overlooked the workers. It was from there that Our Lady watched over our project.

The many fundraising efforts were fruitful. The Annual Parish Ball now in its 10th year has seen over 350 people dance the night away. With people from far away as Melbourne and Sydney traveling to join with us for the Ball, which has proved to be an important social event among Catholics in our region.
The inclusion of this article is timely in this issue that has a tribute to the late Father John Whiting, the founder of Confraternity Christi Sacerdotalis, the Confraternity of Christ the Priest. This Parish well represents his vision of evangelisation of the unchurched. Against opposition faced by the CCS Fathers at the time, the church also well represents his liturgical commitment, and “looks and feels like a church”. The church mightily displays what can be done in confining circumstances, for the church is in fact a “hall” that one day may become such after a “church” is built, with everything done to give it a churchly aspect. It was during a liturgy of the 2006 ACCC Annual Conference there that the Editor noticed the ceiling beams and their hall-like quality! The same beams were later noticed in an illustration in L’Osservatore Romano, n. 36 of 6 September 2006, when the beams were the first cue to identifying this rural NSW church as being the illustration for an article under the title “Celebrating Jesus Christ the Hope of the World!” (Editor)

The First Mass was celebrated on the back of a semi-trailer. With a canvas canopy to shade the altar, the Mass was attended by 400 people whose enthusiasm was reflected only by the scorching heat.

Work continued from dawn to dusk, the Bob Cat ran hot. Blisters, splinters, aching backs and tired limbs were all part of the project as we pushed through barriers that were in our way. Every week women and children would arrive with sausage sizzles, scones and refreshments; yes we were all on target, and Our Lady poured out many blessings on each family.

Another major fundraiser was required to continue the development. For the second “Highway to Heaven” we decided to raffle a Western Star Truck. Once again we took to the highways with our message of good faith. Fuel Stations, Field Days, markets, and any venue that would have us, soon discovered that there were many ways and means of spreading the gospel. Finally we achieved our aim, and it was back to the construction site where the labourers were few and weary, but the spirit was strong.

Finally on 8th September 2003 with the Parish Complex complete, it was time to hand over to Our Lady the keys to her new Church. Bishop Gerard Hanna officiated at the consecration of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. A day that saw the church packed with people full of joy at the completion of this extraordinary work of faith. The Marian Centre, Presbytery and Church were all complete with car parking facilities and landscaping ready for use.

One of the most amazing aspects of the Parish is the generosity of the benefactors. Donations of Statues, Crucifix, Altar, Pews etc. – all have a story to tell of how they got there! The hours of volunteer labour and the generosity of contractors could only be counted as numerous blessings from Our Lady.

Today we see our Parish growing with young families. The Marian Centre holds programs for the youth and adult faith education. The Legion of Mary has Praesidiums for all ages. The Novena to the Immaculate Heart of Mary has continued for nine years, while the newly formed Cenacle continues to grow.

The Motto of our Parish is “Show me your faith, and I by my works will show you mine.” (James 2:18)

Every Saturday men and women continue to gather for the “Working Bee”, with that pioneering spirit which continues to motivate the faithful in giving witness in a visible way to the love of God in their hearts. This little band of loyal parishioners has continued to gather to maintain the complex and gardens. Among the ongoing developments has been the outdoor Stations of the Cross situated in the gardens and the foundations of a piety shop and shrine to honour the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
Orientation situates the particular Eucharistic celebration in its true cosmic context. The rising sun is such a powerful symbol of the Resurrection and of the Parousia that it provides a vital focus for the expression of the liturgy’s intrinsic and permanent orientation (Ratzinger 1986:139-145).

**Ratzinger on liturgical gesture**

I do not have the opportunity, on the occasion, to make a comprehensive survey of Ratzinger’s teaching on liturgical gestures, but such a treatment would stress the continued importance of the sign of the Cross, and the practice of kneeling. His teaching on the role of sacred images in worship, which again we cannot touch on here, is also significant.

**Ratzinger on Sacred Music**

I think it is essential however for us to consider some of Ratzinger’s reflections on the nature of Sacred Music (ibid., 97-126 and Ratzinger 2000:136-156). It is clear that Ratzinger regards Sacred Music as an integral component of the Sacred Liturgy, not an optional adornment. The Church may for various reasons tolerate liturgical celebrations that are not sung – a practice that only commenced with the development of the so-called Low Mass in monasteries – but this is no more than toleration. The normative liturgy is sung. The universal practice of the Church throughout the first millennium of Her existence witnesses to this, as does the constant and continued practice of most of the Eastern Churches.

A sung liturgy should be regarded as normative because of the relation of Sacred Music to the Logos. The Divine Word is entitled to the highest form of proclamation. The response to that proclamation, a response that seeks to acknowledge and reciprocate God’s gift of self in sacrificial love, also calls forth song: music of joy, grief, hope and supplication. The Holy Spirit Himself assists with this. He guarantees, in the treasury of Sacred Music, that quality of “sober inebriation” which enlarges the worshipper’s spirit by wedding it to the senses, at the same time as it elevates and purifies the senses by uniting them with the spirit. Thus, liturgical music properly expresses man’s special place in the hierarchy of being, and aids the redemptive healing of the fracture between senses and spirit resulting from the Fall. Aside from indicating the achievement and the continued relevance, of the patrimony of Sacred Music – Ratzinger’s insights provide guidance (and some warnings) for new compositions: Sacred Music exists firstly to serve the primacy of the Divine Word. Not every musical form can properly serve this purpose, or facilitate the “spiritualisation” of the senses. Neither the cult of the banal, which is expressed in Pop music, or worse, the Dionysian cult of Rock, can be of any service to the liturgy. They are foreign to its essence and must be excluded.

**Sacred music and the cosmic dimension of the liturgy.**

Sacred Music especially ought to serve the cosmic dimension of the liturgy. According to the ancients, the music made by man must participate in the inner music and order of the universe, the so-called “song of the spheres”. The more that human music adapts itself to the rhythmic and harmonic laws of the universe, the more beautiful it will be. Revelation confirms and deepens this insight – the Logos contains the archetypes of the world’s order, and fashions all the beauty of the universe Himself: to harmonise with the universe then, means to follow the path of the Logos. This “cosmic character of liturgical music stands in opposition to two tendencies of the modern age: music as pure subjectivity, music as the expression of mere will” (Ratzinger, 2000:155).

If the glorification of God demands of liturgy that it be truly cosmic, Sacred Music will seek to orchestrate the mystery of Christ with all the voices of creation. In the treasury of Sacred Music, the Church elicits and enriches the glory of the cosmos. For this reason, She cannot be indifferent to beauty, which as Ratzinger notes is:

> so closely allied to love. For together, beauty and love form the true consolations of the world, bringing it as near as possible to the world of the Resurrection. The Church must maintain high standards; she must be a place where beauty can be at home; she must lead the struggle for that spiritualisation without which the world becomes the “first circle of hell”. Thus to ask what is “suitable” must always be the same as asking what is “worthy”; it must constantly challenge us to seek what is worthy of the Church’s worship (Ratzinger 1986:124f).

Utility cannot be played off against nobility.

**Liturgical silence.** If music is an integral part of the liturgy, silence is its necessary counterpart. Sometimes, as in the case of polyphony, our own silence will enable us, by listening – instead of singing – to deepen our participation. At other times, the liturgy will demand a complete silence, in order to deepen our awareness of the Divine: this silence “creates a space in which we can encounter what is truly great and inexhaustible, something that does not need ‘variety’ because it suffices in itself” (ibid., 72).

**Liturgical reform in the pontificate of Benedict XVI**

Finally, I want to turn my attention to the possible course of liturgical reform in the Pontificate of Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI. Given the published views of Joseph Ratzinger over more than a quarter of a century on matters liturgical, I think it is reasonable to expect this Pontificate to be marked by reform in this area of the Church’s life. In what might such reforms consist? What follows are merely my own speculations.

**The classical Roman rite.** Firstly, it is clear that Ratzinger sees the historical, or classical liturgy of the West as a precious patrimony of the Church. This is not only because he regards the old Missal as a treasure in itself, and as an essential point of reference for the reform of the Pauline Missal. Ratzinger the ecclesiologist has also stressed that it is “indispensable to continue to offer the opportunity to celebrate according to the old Missal, as a sign of the enduring identity of the Church. This is for me the basic reason: what was up until 1969 the Liturgy of the (Western) Church, for all of us the most holy thing that there was, cannot become after 1969 – with incredibly positivistic decision – the most unacceptable thing” (Ratzinger, 2003b:149). I believe that Pope Benedict will seek ways to build on the *Ecclesia Dei* decree of his predecessor by reaffirming the honoured place that the classical liturgy ought to hold in the life of the Church, without however seeking in any way
“Thank you” to the priest who allowed my father to choose: a homiletic story

Father John Speakman

My father went to see the priest about the Baptism of his first child. He had not been looking forward to the interview. He wasn’t practising the Faith. The priest asked him to go home and pray and to ask God to help him decide whether he believed or not. He told my father to consider:

- If you don’t believe, stop pretending!
- If you do believe - practise your faith!
- Don’t drag your faith around like a dead cat on a piece of string.

This question of choosing is just as much a crucial question for you and me as it was for my father, or for Joshua and the Hebrews at Shechem. Joshua called the People together and said:

- ... choose today whom you wish to serve ...

As Bob Dylan sings in his song Gotta Serve Somebody:

- It may be the devil,
- or it may be the Lord,
- but you gotta serve somebody.

All we have to do is choose but this is not as easy as it sounds even when the People say with one voice:

- We ... will serve the Lord, for he is our God.

Their decision to serve (“we will serve”) goes hand in hand with their statement of belief (“for he is our God”). It makes it very clear that the modern distinction between believing and serving (practising) is totally unscriptural:

- “Oh, of course, Father, I believe, and so does my husband. It’s just that, well, we don’t go to Mass because we don’t believe it’s necessary. We pray at home. We have our faith.”

Note what the couple is really saying: “We believe ... it’s just that ... well ... we don’t really believe.” Okay, so what’s going on here? Let me ask this couple some questions: “Do you believe you have a grave obligation to attend the Eucharist with the faith community each Sunday?” No! “Do you believe it’s a mortal sin to miss Mass on Sunday?” No! “Do you believe you need to confess missing Mass deliberately before you can go to Holy Communion?” No!

So now at least we know one thing clearly – this couple in fact do not believe what the Church teaches. This is why they do not practise. They may be baptised, they may have been brought up in a Catholic home, they may have attended a Catholic school, they may have their faith, but they do not believe what the Church believes.

Please understand me, this is not an accusation! I’m not judging this couple. I have no idea of their spiritual journey and what has brought them to this point. I am merely making a very important diagnosis. This couple does not hold the faith of the Church. They are living according to their faith, but not according to the Faith.

Well, what now? What are some of our options?

- Go ahead and baptise the child and hope the parents will find faith at some later time and raise the child as a practising Catholic?

Rev. John Speakman is a priest of the Diocese of Sale, Victoria, and an ACCC member, at present serving the Church in Sydney.

- Give the parents an hour’s worth of instruction on the meaning of being a Catholic and then hope for the best and baptise the child?
- Tell the parents how important it is to attend Mass on Sundays and then baptise the child?
- Delay the Baptism till the parents come to some faith of their own?
- Refuse the baptism because they have no intention of raising the child in the practice of the Faith?

My own answer to these very difficult questions is that we should offer this couple an opportunity to choose. This is what my father was offered; this is what Joshua offered the people; this is what Jesus offers his followers in the Gospels.

On a practical level this will involve a prolonged, prayerful, gentle catechesis similar to the Catechumenate - during which couples can be renewed (re-evangelised) in their understanding of the Catholic Faith. Somewhere within this process the couple will choose. If they choose not to enter the process they have still chosen. All concerned will find this a difficult decision to accept but it must be respected.

Jesus, too, experienced the disappointment of watching people walk away.

Faith is a grace-filled, individual choice. We cannot make it for others, nor can we insulate people from the need to make it. This has been one of our most unhelpful tactics in the determination we have to keep people somehow attached to the Church at all costs.

My father chose for the Church he knew so well but which he had left. The faithfulness with which he lived his decision over the years was an example and an encouragement for each one of his children, all eight of whom still practise the faith.

I thank that priest for allowing my father to choose.

Editor’s Corner

The ACCC waives annual dues for seminarians, funded by kind donations from Associate Members. We have also undertaken to make the 2007 Annual Conference free to any seminarian attending and involved in the seminarian program. This subsidy could cost even as much as $7,000, and so we would be specially grateful of any donations from Associate Members (or clergy members). You may wish to attach a note to your donation indicating the tied purpose, and we will ask the seminarian(s) who benefit to pray for your intentions. Cheques to the ACCC Secretariat address, please.

2006 National Executive showing National Chairman, centre, and Editor on far right.
The main emphasis of reform will

Although the gains of the so-called “Reform of the reform” movement, a position for which Joseph Ratzinger has long expressed sympathy: “In my term, I suspect we shall see promulgated yet another edition of the Roman Missal. Further typically of the Roman Missal.

But I suspect that other reforms are likely. We should expect Benedict to encourage, wherever possible, a common orientation for the celebration of Mass. He has indicated, as Cardinal Ratzinger, that where facing East or at least in a common direction is difficult or impossible at present, a prominent Crucifix centred on or above the Altar (not off to the side) should provide a common focus for priest and people, and where the celebration remains versus populm, this would assume the character of a sort of open iconostasis (Ratzinger 2000:83f).

Promotion of liturgical Latin. Although the gains of the use of the vernacular will not be repudiated, especially in connection with the Liturgy of the Word, we can expect – in total conformity with the express wishes of the last Council (Sac Con #14) – that elements of Latin will be restored and made more widespread for parts of the Ordinary of the Mass, as a visible sign of Ecclesial communion across time and space.

Reform of sacred music, architecture, and fine arts. There is also an urgent need in many places to reform what passes for Sacred Music. This will be one of the most difficult aspects of any attempted reform, as otherwise conservatively minded clergy and laity often have little knowledge of, or even interest in, the treasury of Sacred Music. And it is easy to sing Gregorian chant badly! Here, above all, I believe the Pope will be looking to institute major long-term plans to encourage education and formation in what we might call the cultural matrix of the liturgy. Aside from Sacred Music, there needs to be a strong impetus given to Latin studies, sacred architecture, and the fine arts. This intense cultural formation and program of recovery will be essential not only to prepare priests to celebrate the liturgy more adequately, but also for the lay faithful, especially those involved in the provision of music in parishes. Although certain juridical dispositions are necessary for any effective reform, they are not in themselves sufficient to provide lasting gains. Pope Benedict will be quite aware that the success of any reforms ultimately will depend on sufficient bishops, priests and laity to be persuaded of the essential correctness of such reforms, and their practical capacity to carry them out.

Further editio typical of the Roman Missal. Over the longer term, I suspect we shall see promulgated yet another edition of the Roman missal – one which will reintroduce certain prayers and ritual gestures from the 1962 missal, while retaining various gains from the 1970 reform. This is the vision of the so-called “Reform of the reform” movement, a position for which Joseph Ratzinger has long expressed sympathy: “In my view, a new edition will need to make it quite clear that the so-called Missal of Paul VI is nothing other than a renewed form of the same Missal to which Pius X, Urban VIII, Pius V and their predecessors have contributed, right from the Church’s earliest history” (Ratzinger 1986:87). Once again, Ratzinger reminds us that the authenticity of the liturgy is essential for a sound Ecclesiology: “It is the very essence of the Church that She should be aware of Her unbroken continuity throughout the history of faith, expressed in an ever-present unity of prayer (ibid.). For this, let us pray!

Postscript: “Sacramentum Caritatis”

I styled this talk “Joseph Ratzinger’s Theology of Liturgy”, because it is important to retain a distinction between Joseph Ratzinger as a theologian, and even as Cardinal, and Joseph Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI. His Holiness’ pontificate is now just two years old, and so it is still not possible to attempt a comprehensive analysis at this point of the theology of liturgy of Benedict XVI. Nevertheless, some eight months after this paper was delivered, we now have the first significant statement on the liturgy by Pope Benedict, in Sacramentum Caritatis (hereafter, Sac Car). An analysis of the exhortation would require another paper!

One does note with satisfaction a number of points that are stressed and in some cases developed in the document, in particular: the importance of respect for the organic and historical development of rites, “without the introduction of artificial continuities” (Sac Car #3); beauty as an intrinsic requirement of the liturgy (#35); a reaffirmation of the sacral quality of Church music, and of the unique place of Gregorian chant as the proper music of the Roman Rite (#42); a call for the more frequent and extensive use of Latin in the celebration of Mass, together with an insistence on the training of seminarians to enable them to offer Mass in Latin (#62); a clarification of the meaning of actuosa participatio (#52, 55); the true Incarnational foundation for spiritual worship (#70), which instead of inviting a crass and indiscriminate inculturation, challenges cultures in order to purify and elevate them (#78). There is no mention of the orientation of the Eucharistic celebration, but because this was not a topic of discussion at the Synod itself, its absence in a post-Synodal exhortation is not surprising. One has the impression, overall, that a firm theological foundation is being laid for further practical directives in the future.

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Growing Vocations

This extract drawn from zenit.org of 6 February 2007 is an extract of a report “Vocations Surge” by Tim Drake published in National Catholic Register. (Ed.)

Dioceses reporting successful rates of vocational recruitment have something in common, says the National Catholic Register, citing from a list of “seven habits of highly effective dioceses”.

**Habit 1.** The first habit was putting the Eucharist at the center of vocational work. In an editorial the newspaper explained: “Eucharistic adoration is especially effective because it draws sharp attention to the great gift that makes the priesthood so extraordinary and so needed – we have the priesthood to thank for God’s real presence in the Blessed Sacrament. And the dynamic of silent Eucharistic adoration inevitably leads to the question, ‘What do you want me to do, Lord?’”

**Habit 2.** The second habit cited by the newspaper was the invitation. According to a U.S. bishops’ survey, 78% of those being ordained are interaction with priests and attendance at a World Youth Day. Youth need to meet and interact with priests or “it may never occur to many young men that the priesthood is a life that would appeal to them,” the article explained.

**Habit 3.** Third, seminaries must be faithful to the Magisterium in order to attract candidates.

**Habit 4.** Seminaries are not the only element that needs to be faithful. Candidates to the priesthood also come from faithful families. The editorial cited a key role played by fathers, explaining: “There are beautiful exceptions, but the rule is that priests come from committed Catholic families in which the father is an active player in the family’s faith.”

**Habits 5 & 6.** The fifth and sixth habits reported by the Register are interaction with priests and attendance at a World Youth Day. Youth need to meet and interact with priests or “it may never occur to many young men that the priesthood is a life that would appeal to them,” the article explained.

**Habit 7.** Key among the venues for this interaction is altar serving: “For many priests, serving at the altar was the first place they first came to know men who had been called and understood what the call entailed.” (Editor)
It is time for committed Catholic parents, as well as priests and teachers, to start nurturing a new respect for celibacy among the young. Guided only by the secular press over the last 30 years, many young men could have come to believe that priests in general are unhappy in their vocation and resentful of their celibacy. We priests need to show by word and example our positive embrace of celibacy and its inspiration in our lives.

While the number of ordinations to the diocesan priesthood has been on the increase in many parts of the world since 1978, the year John Paul II became Pope, at the same time, vocations have decreased in the West. Why has this occurred?

Two sociological factors should be recognised. First, the sharp decline in priestly vocations has coincided with a decline in the numbers of marriages and a rise in the levels of divorce, cohabitation and single motherhood. Second, these trends, which emerged in the 1960s, are characteristic of contemporary Western culture.

I was ordained in 1958 and for nearly ten years after that there were no public complaints about celibacy from priests. Then it began – coinciding with the sexual revolution – much to the delight of the secular media. Priests who left to get married received front-page coverage in some daily newspapers. In fact, the so-called crisis of priestly celibacy is really a crisis of all forms of lifelong intimate commitment in marriage, priesthood and religious life. The cultural forces attacking celibacy are the same ones undermining and devaluing marriage.

The Christian community should not give way to this cultural onslaught. We need celibate priests, for they are ordained to offer sacrifice: not their own sacrifice, but that of Christ. A priest is a minister to the eternal sacrifice of Christ, a ministry which extends outwards from that core to the ministry of the word and sacraments. He is, in a general way, representative of God to people and of people to God. In that context, celibacy has many values.

Several years ago Fr Seamus Murphy SJ made the following points about the value of celibacy.

- Celibacy expresses the Church’s belief in the truth of the New Testament, since it accepts the example and teaching of the Lord Jesus and St Paul that celibacy is positive and life-giving.
- Celibacy expresses the priest’s own faith in the gospel and his personal trust in Jesus. In committing himself to celibacy, he is putting himself on the line, staking a most important part of his life on the call of Christ.
- Celibacy is a significant form of acceptance of Jesus’ call to total renunciation for the sake of the gospel. The Christian community is always in need of people who will respond to that call.
- Celibacy is an imitation of the celibate Jesus, motivated by love of Him. It represents an acceptance of the idea that the priest must, as far as possible, be like the Master.
- Celibacy is sacrificial. It is a sharing in the sacrifice Jesus made through his life and death, as described in the Letter to the Hebrews 2:9-18 and 5:1-10. It is a way of living out Romans 12:1-2, where Paul appeals to the Roman Christians to involve their bodies in their sacrifice to God, going against the norms of the dominant culture.
- Celibacy is an expiation for sin, particularly sexual sin. In our time, when the sexual sins of clergy and religious are highlighted, it would be a serious mistake to drop celibacy, since it would amount to abandoning hope that abstinence is possible.
- Celibacy is a badly needed counter-witness to the sexual exploitation and irresponsibility, and contempt for sexual self-discipline, promoted by a consumer culture.
- Celibacy expresses solidarity with those who are fated – despite their desires – never to marry or have children.
- Celibacy is a counter-witness to the collapse of belief in permanent commitment, whether marriage or celibacy. It expresses belief in: (a) the possibility and (b) the value of lifelong celibacy. If the Church appears to give up on the possibility of lifelong celibacy, it will weaken the cultural support for lifelong marriage.

These values are very important, and the Church ought not risk giving the impression of watering them down. Given the contemporary culture, a decision to drop the celibacy requirement, going against 1,600 years of tradition, would inevitably be seen as undermining those values.

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**Continued from page 26, opposite**

authentic respect for the responsible choices that each person makes, especially those pertaining to fundamental values and to personal religious convictions.

As an illustration of the fraternal respect with which Christians and Muslims can work together, I would like to quote some words addressed by Pope Gregory VII in 1076 to a Muslim prince in North Africa who had acted with great benevolence towards the Christians under his jurisdiction. Pope Gregory spoke of the particular charity that Christians and Muslims owe to one another “because we believe in one God, albeit in a different manner, and because we praise him and worship him every day as the Creator and Ruler of the world.”

Freedom of religion, institutionally guaranteed and effectively respected in practice, both for individuals and communities, constitutes for all believers the necessary condition for their loyal contribution to the building up of society, in an attitude of authentic service, especially towards the most vulnerable and the very poor.

Mr President, I should like to finish by praising the Almighty and merciful God for this happy occasion that brings us together in his name. I pray that it may be a sign of our joint commitment to dialogue between Christians and Muslims, and an encouragement to persevere along that path, in respect and friendship. May we come to know one another better, strengthening the bonds of affection between us in our common wish to live together in harmony, peace and mutual trust. As believers, we draw from our prayer the strength that is needed to overcome all traces of prejudice and to bear joint witness to our firm faith in God. May his blessing be ever upon us! Thank you.
Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am grateful for the opportunity to visit this land, so rich in history and culture, to admire its natural beauty, to witness for myself the creativity of the Turkish people, and to appreciate your ancient culture and long history, both civil and religious.

As soon as I arrived in Turkey, I was graciously received by the President of the Republic. And it was also a great pleasure for me to meet and greet the Prime Minister, Mr Erdogan, at the airport. In greeting them, I was pleased to express my profound esteem for all the people of this great country and to pay my respects at the tomb of the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

I now have the joy of meeting you, the President of the Religious Affairs Directorate. I offer you my sentiments of respect, in recognition of your great responsibilities, and I extend my greetings to all the religious leaders of Turkey, especially the Grand Muftis of Ankara and Istanbul. In your person, Mr President, I greet all the Muslims in Turkey with particular esteem and affectionate regard.

Your country is very dear to Christians: many of the earliest Church communities were founded here and grew to maturity, inspired by the preaching of the Apostles, particularly Saint Paul and Saint John. The tradition has come down to us that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, lived at Ephesus, in the home of the Apostle Saint John.

This noble land has also seen a remarkable flowering of Islamic civilisation in the most diverse fields, including its literature and art, as well as its institutions.

There are so many Christian and Muslim monuments that bear witness to Turkey’s glorious past. You rightly take pride in these, preserving them for the admiration of the ever increasing number of visitors who flock here.

I have set out upon my visit to Turkey with the same sentiments as those expressed by my predecessor Blessed John XXIII, when he came here as Archbishop Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, to fulfil the office of Papal Representative in Istanbul, and I quote him: “I am fond of the Turks”, he said, “to whom the Lord has inspired the creativity of the Turkish people, and to appreciate the natural qualities of these people who have their own place reserved in the march of civilisation”’ *(Journal of a Soul*, pp. 226, 233-4).

For my own part, I also wish to highlight the qualities of the Turkish population. I make my own words the memory of my immediate predecessor, Pope John Paul II of blessed memory, who said on the occasion of his visit in 1979: “I wonder if it is not urgent, precisely today when Christians and Muslims have entered a new period of history, to recognise and develop the spiritual bonds that unite us, in order to preserve and promote together, for the benefit of all men, ‘peace, liberty, social justice and moral values’” *(Address to the Catholic Community in Ankara, 28 November 1979)*.

These questions have continued to present themselves throughout the intervening years; indeed, as I indicated at the very beginning of my Pontificate, they impel us to carry forward our dialogue as a sincere exchange between friends. When I had the joy of meeting members of Muslim communities last year in Cologne, on the occasion of World Youth Day, I reiterated the need to approach our interreligious and intercultural dialogue with optimism and hope. It cannot be reduced to an optional extra: on the contrary, it is “a vital necessity, on which in large measure our future depends” *(Address to representatives of some Muslim Communities, Cologne, 20 August 2005)*.

Christians and Muslims, following their respective religions, point to the truth of the sacred character and dignity of the person. This is the basis of our mutual respect and esteem, this is the basis for cooperation in the service of peace between nations and peoples, the dearest wish of all believers and all people of good will.

For more than forty years, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council has inspired and guided the approach taken by the Holy See and by local Churches throughout the world to relations with the followers of other religions. Following the Biblical tradition, the Council teaches that the entire human race shares a common origin and a common destiny: God, our Creator and the goal of our earthly pilgrimage. Christians and Muslims belong to the family of those who believe in the one God and who, according to their respective traditions, trace their ancestry to Abraham (cf. Second Vatican Council, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate* 1, 3). This human and spiritual unity in our origins and our destiny impels us to seek a common path as we play our part in the quest for fundamental values so characteristic of the people of our time. As men and women of religion, we are challenged by the widespread longing for justice, development, solidarity, freedom, security, peace, defence of life, protection of the environment and of the resources of the earth. This is because we too, while respecting the legitimate autonomy of temporal affairs, have a specific contribution to offer in the search for proper solutions to these pressing questions.

Above all, we can offer a credible response to the question which emerges clearly from today’s society, even if it is often brushed aside, the question about the meaning and purpose of life, for each individual and for humanity as a whole. We are called to work together, so as to help society to open itself to the transcendent, giving Almighty God his rightful place. The best way forward is via authentic dialogue between Christians and Muslims, based on truth and inspired by a sincere wish to know one another better, respecting differences and recognising what we have in common. This will lead to an

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Bishops talk tabernacles

The following is a transcript prepared by Michael S. Rose of the interventions of bishops during a 1999 general meeting of the USA National Conference of Catholic Bishops, addressing a document Domus Dei (published as Built of Living Stones) on church architecture, and specifically speaking to the fad of removing the tabernacle from the sanctuary of churches.

Bernard F. Cardinal Law
Archbishop of Boston, Mass.

“In terms of a more pastorally acceptable location of the tabernacle, it just seems to me that the notion of a separate chapel is unrealistic given the realities of churches in our country. I would register a pastoral concern about the underscored focus of the chapel....

Most Rev. Theodore E. McCarrick
Archbishop of Newark, N.J.

“I have always had this concern about the place of the tabernacle... It seems to me that 90% of our people come into church only on Sunday mornings. If the Blessed Sacrament is nowhere to be seen in the body of the church, they will be missing something very, very important in our spirituality, and in our theology. I would hope that when the arch made revisions to this document... we would find once again an opportunity to underline what the 1983 Code of Canon Law asks us, that the place be ‘prominent and conspicuous’. In the Archdiocese of Newark no new church is allowed to be completed without the Blessed Sacrament being visible to the vast majority of the congregation. I believe that is important for the spirituality of our people and I would hope that the committee would consider that.”

Most Rev. James P. Keleher
Archbishop of Kansas City, Kan.

“In the archdiocese where I am fortunate to be the Archbishop, we never build a church where the tabernacle is not placed visibly in the front. We do have chapels for perpetual adoration. Many of our churches have perpetual adoration. We have separate chapels for that. And I certainly think there are many cases where churches are pilgrimage sites and tourist sites where a separate chapel is most appropriate. However, I think for our ordinary parishes where our folk come on Sundays... I really hope that in the end the document at least allows us the kind of latitude that we can continue to insist that the Blessed Sacrament be visibly placed before the people. And I hope the bishops feel the same way: If you recall when we built the beautiful chapel at the [NCCB] Conference center in the beginning the tabernacle was, may I say, hidden by a very decorative wall. The rising resentment in the episcopal body forced it to be taken down, and I think that was a wonderful move.”

Most Rev. Justin F. Rigali
Archbishop of Saint Louis, Mo.

“This General Instruction of the Roman Missal #276, which is now under revision... goes back to 1967. It was a recommendation at that time, not a law, but a recommendation that already contained two conditions; namely, the structure of the church, and local custom. In addition, what was a recommendation, has been so often inefificiously applied in the past thirty years. The Blessed Sacrament, so often without regard for the structure of the church or for local custom, has been relegated to places that are neither ‘prominent’ nor ‘worthy’ nor ‘beautifully decorated’. What is so significant is that in the 1980 instruction Inaestimabile Donum and then in the 1983 Code, we no longer find the recommendation for a separate chapel, nor do we find any recommendation against it. What we do find so well expressed in Canon 938 is not a recommendation but a law that gives great freedom to diocesan bishops. It says simply, ‘The tabernacle in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved should be placed in a part of the church that is prominent, conspicuous, beautifully decorated and suitable for prayer.’ So I suggest that we emphasise this freedom given to the diocesan bishop by the present Code.”

Most Rev. Michael J. Sheehan
Archbishop of Santa Fe, N.M.

“I think we’ve all experienced in our church in the last thirty years a lessening of devotion to the Eucharist. In many places a loss of the sense of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the sense of the sacred has suffered. I can’t help but believe that placing the Eucharist in a separate chapel that often is practically hidden and sometimes is very small, has not been a part of why we have a crisis with regard to belief in the Real Presence of Christ. I think that when we take the Eucharist away from the place where the people come for Sunday Mass, we tend to lessen their belief. I think ‘out-of-sight, out-of-mind’ is truly what has happened often.”

“Not long ago I was in one of our parishes to rededicate a church that had been renovated. Previously the Eucharist had been in a side chapel. But in the new renovation the pastor brought the tabernacle into an area where it was clearly seen by the people in the church. As I had the rededication of the renovated church I asked the people in the homily, ‘What do you think about the Eucharist being more present to you?’, and they burst out in applause. After the Mass several people came up to me and said, ‘When you have the meeting with the other bishops next week, please let them know that most of us Catholics want to have the Eucharist more visible to us when we come into our church’.”

James A. Cardinal Hickey
Archbishop of Washington, D.C.

“I would like to second the position of those who favour the centrality of the tabernacle in the sanctuary. I think this is for several very important reasons. First of all, it makes it possible for us to reinforce our belief in the Holy Eucharist and the Real Presence by the way in which the Blessed Sacrament is presented as the people come in and make a genuflection, as they keep a prayerful silence before the Mass begins. I say this as if that is the norm. Unfortunately, it is no longer the norm. Our Catholic culture of several generations ago was somehow or other invaded, I believe. I think we should return to a position of the tabernacle that will make it possible for the genuflection to be reinstated, for the people to pray before the Blessed Sacrament before the Mass, and also for them to keep that sense of prayer when they realise they are in the Eucharistic presence of the Lord. I think it is also important to foster Eucharistic devotions, especially Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. I think we should not overlook the private visits to the Blessed Sacrament that have been so much a part of our life. These are the ways in which we sustain our faith in the Eucharist. We lament the lowering grade of belief in the Real Presence. I believe that we need to make these pedagogical means of reinforcing our belief in the holy Eucharist.”

Anthony J. Cardinal Bevilaqua

“I know much has been said about the site of the tabernacle. I add my comments very briefly merely to say that, even though we are saying the same thing – that the tabernacle be conspicuous. The fact that so many bishops are saying it should give a signal. If I took a survey of the people in Philadelphia it would be overwhelming: when they walk into a church they want to see the tabernacle immediately. It’s just to give you an idea of how the people feel about it because so much of the liturgy is reflective of the attitude and customs of people.”

The Priest
Antarctic journey: coincidence and providence

Father Lew Wray

Is there such a thing as a random coincidence? If so, how does one explain a whole series of them?

I fulfilled a long-time ambition last October when I went on a ship down to the Antarctic continent. When I booked I mentioned that I was a priest and would be happy to say Mass on Sundays, but they politely declined. And so I took with me just a small Mass kit, planning to say daily Mass privately in my cabin.

I joined the ship in Buenos Aires, and at lunch time the passengers began the getting-to-know-you routine. By coincidence, I sat at a particular table, and among the first people I spoke to was an English lady, who mentioned that she worked in prisons.

By coincidence, the next day I met Louisa in the coffee shop, and I asked her what sort of work she did, and she told me she was a Catholic prison Chaplain. She went on to say that her one regret about our trip was that there was no opportunity to go to Mass.

By coincidence, we were due to spend the following Sunday in Stanley in the Falkland Islands. I had made e-mail contact with the Parish Priest and had arranged to concelebrate with him. So I was able to tell her that she could go to Mass in Stanley at 10am on Sunday. “How do you know that?” she asked, “Are you a priest?”

Stanley church service times were included on the “things to do in Stanley” schedule, and so it was that about 10 passengers attended Mass, and we shared a special bond from then on.

A couple of days later Louisa approached me on behalf of some of the Catholics she had been speaking to, asking if I would be willing to offer to say Mass the following Sunday. I spoke to Ian, the ship’s expedition leader who was not all that interested, but he directed me to the ship’s doctor. By coincidence, Dr Illeana was an evangelical Christian from Panama. She told me that she and several other crew members met for prayer after work, in front of the ship’s cross which a previous crew member had carved lovingly and inlaid with brass. The doctor was very keen on the idea of Mass, especially for the ship’s crew, and said she would arrange it.

The next day she told me that it was all arranged. Actually, it would have to be on the Saturday morning, while we were still at sea, because Sunday would be busy with Antarctic landings. Anyway, somewhere in the world it would already be Sunday! And would I also say Mass at 10.30pm, when the crew had finished their work for the day? She then offered to find all the things I would need to supplement my small Mass kit.

By coincidence, back in Stanley I had asked Fr Peter for some communion altar breads, just in case. Everything else was found on the ship. We borrowed the candle lanterns from the Captain’s dinner table. The crew set about collecting an assortment of table cloths, bowls, jugs, etc. The ship’s beautiful cross was entrusted to my care. The barman supplied some suitable wine; while Louisa arranged readers, prayers of the faithful, etc. And the Mass was listed on the daily schedule for passengers.

By coincidence, next morning I happened to be passing the information desk when I heard the staff talking about trying to find “the priest”. I identified myself, and was told the doctor wanted to contact me. I headed off to the little hospital in the bowels of the ship, expecting that she wanted to know what size table cloth I needed, or some such detail for the Mass.

But no; that morning a passenger had been found dead in his cabin, presumably of a heart attack. His travelling companion mentioned to the doctor that he was a Catholic, and so I was asked to say prayers for the dead before his body was placed in the ship’s morgue (they don’t do burials at sea any more). I had not come prepared for this, but I was able to adapt some prayers from the Office for the Dead from my Breviary. I was also able to offer support to the man’s travelling companion, especially as he prepared to telephone his late friend’s wife in the USA with the sad news.

The death had a profound effect on the whole ship. Such things had happened before, but not to this crew. The doctor was on her 14th trip, and this was her first such experience. The nurse had worked in critical care for 20 years, and she was shaken. Even the diffident Expedition Leader was upset, and asked if the Mass next day could include a memorial for the deceased.

About 100 passengers gathered next morning, together with the captain and senior officers. It was a “one-handed”. Because of heavy seas the ship was moving around considerably, so I had to prop myself against the bench we used as an altar, holding the microphone in one hand and doing everything else with the other. Another difficulty was that by Norwegian law under which the ship operated, we couldn’t reveal the deceased man’s name, so we had some euphemistic prayer petitions.

That evening nearly all the crew came to their Mass, and were very grateful as they were to be on the ship for 9 months, with only 4 days off in that time, and no opportunity for Mass. The death had an effect on all of them too.
“Coming into focus” – it’s not just about “us”!
on orientation during holy Mass

Father Timothy Deeter

When I was a young priest, I was determined to do my best to “engage” the people in worship. I had seen a number of priests who seemed to have their eyes glued to the Missal; we even used to speak of the priest “reading the Mass”. I was going to be different. I learned many of the prayers by heart, so that I could look the people in the eyes and “proclaim” the Mass to them. I became very good at that; I rarely took my eyes off the people.

Then, one day, as I read the Gospel of the raising of Lazarus, I was struck by these words: “Then Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said: Father, I thank You for hearing My prayer . . .” (Jn 11:41). Sometime later, I was reading about the Last Supper where Jesus speaks to His apostles in the “Farewell Discourse”. The Gospel goes on: “After saying this, Jesus raised His eyes to heaven and said: Father, the hour has come ...” (Jn 17:1).

I began to search the Gospels. When Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes, “He took them, raised His eyes to heaven and said the blessing” (Mt 14:19; Mk 6:41; Lk 9:16). When He healed the deaf-mute, “looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to the man: Be opened” (Mk 7:34).

In other words, when Jesus prayed – when He spoke to His Father – He directed His attention to Him: He lifted up His eyes to heaven. The Gospels also note that when Jesus finished speaking to His Father, He changed His focus to speak to others: “Then, turning to His disciples, He spoke to them ...” (Lk 10:23).

There is occasional talk about the pros and cons of the priest facing the people during Mass versus the priest “facing East”; that is, “with his back to the people”. But I think that misses the point of what was (and is) happening. In the Tridentine rite what happens is this: when the priest addressed the people, he turned toward them; when he addressed God, he turned “towards God”, or “towards the East”. It was a matter of changing focus.

Although Pope Benedict (as Cardinal Ratzinger) has argued for a return to the “facing East” position during the Eucharistic Prayer, that is unlikely to happen anytime soon. We have become accustomed to the present posture of the priest facing the people throughout the Mass.

But, because he faces the people, does that mean that all his words are addressed to the people? I’m a bit chagrined now when I see priests begin the Eucharistic Prayer, carefully turning this way and that to include the entire assembly, looking them straight in the eyes and saying, “Father, You are holy indeed, and all creation rightly gives You praise ...”. Likewise, priests will smilingly look around as they say, “ Lord Jesus Christ, You said to Your apostles: I leave you peace ....”

The problem is regaining focus. The Mass is not a dialogue between the priest and people; it is a dialogue between us – including the priest – and God. That is what was meant in the Tridentine rite: the priest did not turn his back on the people; he simply assumed the same direction as the rest of us: he faced God.

We have some problems today with balancing the Mass as a community gathering and as a sacrificial act of worship. What can be done? I think it is fairly simple: when addressing the people, the priest looks at them. When addressing the Father, he lifts his eyes to heaven, as Jesus did. And when addressing Jesus Himself at Communion time, he looks at the Eucharist on the altar.

In this way, the Mass is more easily realised as a prayer to the Father, and we regain a focus, a sense of worship that can at times be obscured.

text credit: “Catholic Weekly”.

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The Priest
Canonical Reflections on the Experience of Priests with “Towards Healing” and “Encompass”

Rev Dr John Doherty and Rev Dr Julian Wellspring

Across 2005, 2006, and now 2007, articles have been published pleading canonical governance in the Church – in November 2005, Dr McDaid on Administrative Process in Canon Law; in May 2006, Dr Byron on Stability and the Parish Priest; and now Dr Doherty and Dr Wellspring on the present topic. This article was submitted by the authors with the intention of simultaneous ACCC and NCP publication. Article layout has been adjusted to the style policy of this journal. (Editor)

Introduction

This article had its genesis in a meeting in 2006 between the authors and executive members of the Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy and the National Council of Priests. At that meeting we discussed the problems faced by some priests who had been accused of sexual abuse or other boundary violation, particularly their experience of the Towards Healing protocols, the Professional Standards Office, and [the psychology consultancy group] Encompass. We then explored various ways of supporting any priest accused of sexual abuse and, inter alia, decided to seek publication by the National Council of Priests, and by the Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy, so that our concerns could be shared with a wider group of priests.

In this article, we want to draw attention to the way some priests have experienced the Towards Healing protocols. We have worked with these priests as their canonical advisors. This is the experience of an admittedly small sampling of priests in one ecclesiastical province and over a limited period of time. We have been alarmed at what has happened in these cases and, while we cannot draw general conclusions about the application of the protocols throughout Australia, we have reason to believe that the problems that we will articulate here are widespread. In what follows we will be describing deficiencies in the way some cases have been handled and, in light of this, we will highlight serious problems in the protocols themselves.

Affirmation of the bishops’ initiatives in dealing with sexual abuse

From the outset, we want to strongly to affirm the initiative of the bishops and the religious superiors in devising and publishing the Towards Healing protocols and in putting in place the structures necessary to deal with accusations of sexual abuse of children by clergy: the Professional Standards Offices in each province, the Victim Help line, and Encompass. Since the bishops took this initiative, victims of sexual abuse now have a clearly defined way of making a complaint and a structured way of following through that complaint. The Professional Standards Office help bishops investigate complaints and bring to that investigation properly funded and professional resources. When a bishop needs to enquire into the psychological state of an accused priest he can refer him to Encompass, which is also properly funded. These resources help bishops manage difficult cases and, sometimes, very troubled and difficult priests.

The Church and the community at large can now be confident that priests found guilty of offences against children and juveniles can be removed from the ministry. As Pope John Paul II said to a group of Cardinals of the USA on 23 April 2002, “People need to know that there is no place in the priesthood and religious life for those who would harm the young.”

As canonists, we would urge an accused priest to cooperate with his bishop or superior who must thoroughly investigate all complaints. This is a most onerous burden, but the needs of the victim, and the good of the Church, demand that we all cooperate to reach the truth and a just outcome in every case. In highlighting what we see as problems in the application of the protocols in particular cases, which have involved injustices to the accused priests, we hope to facilitate a further refining of the protocols to minimise the possibility of any kind of injustice.

The cases, with some commentary

1.1 It is our experience that priests accused of boundary violations that are not crimes against children are being treated in the same way as those accused of sexual abuse of children. This includes referral to the particular Encompass program that is more suited to sexual offenders than to that program more suited to problems with depression and other illnesses. This is probably due to the lack of a precise definition of “abuse” in the protocols. For whatever reason, protocols that were originally developed to deal with sexual abuse of children are also used to deal with other professional standards violations. It is our view that bishops should find other ways of managing priests who have, for example, engaged in consensual sex with an adult. In one case a priest was removed from ministry for just that. We do not condone this reality, nor do we wish to trivialise it. It is a sin and a serious transgression of God’s law and the priest’s commitment, but the Church’s law does not see it as a crime. Bishops must deal with such transgressions, particularly if there is any scandal, but they must find other more pastoral ways of doing so and should not push priests into a process designed to deal with paedophile activity. The outcomes for these priests have been inappropriate and out of proportion to the transgression.

1.2 It is our experience that those Towards Healing protocols that speak of the needs or the rights of the accused priest can...
be overlooked or ignored. This is particularly true when it comes to advice to and support of the accused priest; priests are not being given appropriate assistance at the beginning of the process. Sometimes the priest will have a support person, as required by the protocols, but the support person may not have been present at the start of the process. We know of one case where the support person was deliberately ignored and marginalised while the bishop dealt directly with the accused priest, to that priest’s detriment. Furthermore, the support person will usually be chosen to give personal support but will have no canonical experience and so cannot offer the necessary practical help. Priests are at a disadvantage if they are not properly supported and advised as soon as they are notified of the complaint and before they respond to that complaint, whether by making admissions, or by agreeing to resign, or by agreeing to step aside, or by agreeing to attend Encompass for an assessment, and so forth. Priests must be advised at every stage of the process about the canonical implications of any decision that he might make.

1.3 Another serious concern is the fact that various forms of pressure are applied to get priests to comply with the bishop’s wishes, whether to make admissions, or to step aside as parish priest, or to attend Encompass. Such actions should be taken by a priest freely and only after he has taken proper and independent advice. The pressure applied to the priest can be subtle or blunt. The priest may go along with the bishop’s suggestions out of respect for his bishop or out of a conviction that he has no choice. It is our experience that priests have been subjected to inappropriate pressure when they are depressed or even medicated. From a canonical perspective, any admission by the priest or any decision taken by him under duress is compromised and probably invalid.

1.4 In particular, a decision to attend Encompass for testing or treatment must be taken freely, as should the decision to make Encompass reports available to the bishop. We have spoken to a considerable number of priests and others who have reported pressure and even coercion to attend Encompass, and then further pressure within Encompass itself. And we must ask questions here about the role of Encompass. Is it to help the priest who may be ill, psychologically or otherwise, or to help the priest’s bishop find a way of dealing with him? It is our experience that testing conducted by Encompass blurs the distinction between internal and external forum matters and that Encompass personnel have encouraged and even cajoled depressed and medicated priests to disclose internal forum matters to the bishop. As a general rule, medical reports cannot be used by the bishop to make external forum decisions about the priest, but this principle has been overlooked. And our experience of working with priests leads us to ask another question: does the Encompass testing and its various programs conform to the Church’s approved doctrine in these areas, and to a Catholic anthropology?

1.5 It is our experience that a priest can be declared irregular for the exercise of priestly orders without proper representation and without any identifiable canonical process. The irregularity is an unusual canonical reality, and the universal law does not prescribe a process for its application. The praxis of the Holy See when dealing with this canonical provision is to ensure that the priest is afforded the opportunity to defend himself. It is against the spirit of the law to remove a priest from his parish and his ministry indefinitely without a process that allows him to defend himself. This is against natural justice, and is a great injustice.

1.6 Bishops are also withholding some aspects of the accusation, or other accusations, from accused priests. The priest is not getting the complaint in writing and he can be “kept in the dark” in a number of ways. Very little is in writing, and the priests’ letters seeking information and clarity have not been answered. Transparency is essential for justice and to reach the truth.

While our sampling is small, our experience is that priests have been removed, or pushed out of ministry, using some or all of the Towards Healing protocols, the Professional Standards Office and Encompass, but often without a correct canonical process. Every priest should be concerned. We should be concerned for our brother priests and, perhaps, for ourselves. We do not doubt that bishops have a genuine desire to offer pastoral care to their priests, but the bishops seem not to have been aware of the wider canonical dimensions of their actions and, perhaps, their pastoral judgement has been assumed by others involved in the process.

Some general canonical observations on “Towards Healing”

Thus far, we have touched on a number of canonical realities. What we will now do is list several canonical concerns in point form with a brief commentary.

2.1 Towards Healing has reinvented the Church’s penal law and its procedures for dealing with serious crimes against children. In doing so, it has lost some of the values and protections contained in the universal law and is a flawed instrument.

2.2 Towards Healing is not particular law for Australia. In other words, it has no formal legal force here and its definitions and procedures have not replaced the universal law of the Church in the matter of dealing with crimes against children. However, given the evident usefulness and even necessity for such protocols and the fact that the bishops have publicly endorsed them and utilise them, we must accept their reality while pointing out some problems and deficiencies in the protocols and their application in individual cases. An accused priest, however, can always ask to be dealt with according to the universal law of the Church.

2.3 Since the promulgation of John Paul II’s Gravissima Delicta in 2001, the Towards Healing protocols may not now have the same critical role as when they were first published. Gravissima Delicta offers bishops a clear and definitive way of handling cases of abuse of children and minors by clerics, and this may or may not require the assistance of the Professional Standards Office and Encompass. These cases must now be referred to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and the Australian bishops have been briefed on this by officials of that Congregation. We do not know how bishops have responded to this new situation, but it certainly has implications for the way they are to handle such accusations from now on.

2.4 It is our view that, in some areas, the Towards Healing protocols are incompatible with the universal law. In these
matters, the Towards Healing protocols must always give way to the Code of Canon Law. We will now list some possible tensions:

2.4.a Every one of Christ’s faithful, including, of course, every priest, has the right to be dealt with according to canon law. An accused priest needs to be properly advised about both his rights and obligations under both Towards Healing and the universal law.

2.4.b Bishops do not have the power to dispense from canon law when dealing with penal matters. A priest cannot be suspended from ministry or removed from his office as parish priest without a canonical process. He cannot be placed on “administrative leave” for the duration of the investigation without some canonical formalities being put in place. The Towards Healing protocols refer to this, but it is our experience that these canonical requirements are being overlooked. Any permanent or indefinite removal from ministry, or even administrative leave, will require a formal penal process and not simply a Professional Standards Office recommendation.

2.4.c The penal law of the Code has very few crimes for which the penalty is removal from the clerical state. Since Graviora Delicta in 2001, sexual offences involving anyone aged eighteen years and under are crimes in Church law and the perpetrator of the crime must be prosecuted. The bishop must refer these cases to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The Congregation will then help the bishop resolve the matter.

2.4.d The principle of proportionality should be respected when determining penalties for all other breaches of professional standards that may take many different forms. The penalty must be proportionate to the nature and gravity of the crime. Only the most serious of crimes, as indicated in the law of the Church, should result in the removal of a priest from ministry or the clerical state. Other more appropriate and proportionate penalties should be applied for matters that are not crimes in law but violate professional standards. Any removal from ministry, be it temporary, indefinite or permanent, requires formal canonical processes, and these processes require appropriate advice to and defence of the accused priest.

2.4.e In canon law, an accused priest has many rights, including the right not to self-incriminate, the right to proper representation, the right to be dealt with using external forum data only, the right to privacy and to a good reputation, the right to transparency, and the right not to be coerced. He also has the right to recourse and appeal, including to the Holy See.

2.4.f Furthermore, the civil rights of an accused priest must be respected.

2.4.g The matter of psychological assessments and treatment is a delicate one touching on, not just the priest’s well-being, but also his dignity and his rights. There must always be a proper respect for the inviolability of the internal forum. While the bishop must sometimes use professional help to clarify the priest’s psychological suitability for ministry, he also has a duty to ensure that the internal forum is respected, as does Encompass or any other professional person or expert engaged in this task. In the procedural law of the Church, medical records may be inadmissible as evidence in any case if the accused priest has consented to their use under any form of coercion. They will always be inadmissible if they contain material pertaining to the internal forum. Medical reports cannot be used to punish him, to remove him from ministry, or for any other external forum action.

2.5 Canon law, reflecting many documents of the papal magisterium, is concerned for a bishop’s relationship with his priests. It is a relationship that is both fatherly and brotherly. The priest collaborates with his bishop in the sacred ministry, but under his authority. The bishop sometimes may need to correct and even punish him. In light of our experience with accused priests, we are wondering if bishops have not de facto delegated this role of paternal correction, admonishment and punishment to other agencies, such as the Professional Standards Office. Have bishops ceded their pastoral authority and judgement to the Professional Standards Office and Encompass?

Some practical proposals for assisting accused priests

3.1 A contact line offering canonical advice should be considered. We have spoken above about the need for canonical advice for an accused priest from the moment the accusation is communicated to him. Priests need to be able to contact a canonist at short notice. Victims, quite rightly, have a contact line and so, too, should priests. The establishment of this service is something that should be undertaken by our bishops. Perhaps they could establish an office for accused priests or support the Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy and the National Council of Priests in running such an office.

And, perhaps the bishop, too, who is faced with the dilemma of dealing with an accusation, may also be able to get quick and relevant advice from this canonical contact line before he does anything else. Not every bishop has access to such advice, and it would help all parties if the process could be managed correctly from the start. We should all be working for the good of the Church, and that can only be achieved if all parties pay careful attention to the rights and needs of everyone else involved in the process.

Canonists need to offer their services so that every accused priest, and the bishop too, has access to competent advice and assistance. This work should be coordinated so that canonists can share their experiences to better serve accused priests and the Church. An unresolved question at this time is: who funds this enterprise?

3.2 There is the question of responding to an accusation. At a practical level, every priest in Australia should be advised about how to respond to an accusation. We will list here some of the more important things:
3.2.a The accused priest should always treat his bishop or superior with respect and cooperate with him, and his agents, in dealing with a serious accusation. However, the accused priest should be aware that the law of the Church and the *Towards Healing* protocols give him rights in the process, and the bishop must respect these rights.

3.2.b First of all, we recommend that the accused priest request details of the accusation *in writing*. The accused priest may elect to respond in writing and not verbally throughout the process.

3.2.c It is most important for the accused priest to get canonical advice before responding. He should not make any admission without understanding all of the civil and canonical implications of the admission. The accused priest should not resign as parish priest, or from any other office, or even agree to step aside, without canonical advice.

3.2.d If the matter is a civil law crime, the accused priest should get civil advice and be willing to cooperate with the police or other civil agency.

3.3 There is a need for all of us to reach out to any accused priest, particularly anyone whose canonical status is unclear and who may be in a kind of limbo, excluded from ministry, perhaps without canonical process or even advice. This could be done by the National Council of Priests and the Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy. Where are our brother priests living? How are they supported? What has their experience been? How do they understand their situation? Have they been offered any assurance of a return to ministry? Are they clear about their canonical status? Each one of these priests should be encouraged to have his case reviewed by an experienced canonist to clarify his canonical status.

3.4 The bishops and religious superiors need to revisit *Towards Healing*, perhaps with a view to eventually submitting it to the Holy See for the formal recognition that would give the protocols a more solid legal basis. As part of that review, we would ask that the bishops and religious superiors do the following:

3.4.a They need to revisit *Encompass* to ensure that its methods are compatible with Catholic doctrine and anthropology.

3.4.b They need to clarify the meaning of abuse, or boundary violation, or professional standards transgression, or whatever it is to be called, so that only crimes are dealt with with full rigour. The Irish bishops recently did just that with their own protocols.

3.4.c When the *Towards Healing* protocols were reviewed in 2003, the Saint Thomas More Society submitted a detailed analysis of the protocols, particularly focusing on their deficiencies in regard to the rights of accused priests. We would urge that these recommendations be incorporated into *Towards Healing*.

3.4.d We would also ask for experienced canonists to be part of any review.

3.4.e Canonists should also be members of the diocesan Professional Standards committees to ensure that procedures are followed, and perhaps to explain why procedures must be followed, so that even natural justice is respected.

3.5 We think that the priests of Australia should press for an independent review of the operation of both the *Towards Healing* protocols, the Professional Standards Offices and *Encompass*. The findings of this independent review should be made available to concerned parties. It would, *inter alia*, elicit answers to the following questions and concerns:

3.5.a To whom are these agencies currently answerable? Has there ever been an independent review? Any review must take note of the concerns of priests who have experienced the process.

3.5.b Has there been an independent review of individual cases? At present the protocols allow for a review by the Director of the Professional Standards Office, but this seems to involve a conflict of interest.

3.5.c Priests, and the Church, need to have factual information about the management of the Professional Standards Offices and *Encompass*. How many priests have been dealt with? How many are out of ministry indefinitely, or permanently, or have been returned to ministry? How many cases have been referred to Holy See? How many priests have been laicised? How many investigations have there been of non-priests (deacons, bishops, seminarians, religious, or laypersons)? Has *Graviora Delicta* made a difference to the way bishops manage cases?

**Conclusion**

In this article we have presented the experiences of some priests who have undergone the *Towards Healing* protocols, or *Encompass*, or both. It is our view that every Australian priest should take a keen interest in what happens to their brother priests and how they are treated during the process and what happens to them after the process has been completed. Indeed, the Catholic Church in Australia should be concerned about this.

We have pointed to what we think are some deficiencies in the protocols themselves and the way they are being applied. Laws and protocols are, by their very nature, imperfect instruments of truth and justice and, like the Church itself, are “always in need of reformation”. However, properly formulated laws and procedures are an essential and indispensable means of arriving at truth and justice. This point was touched on by Pope Benedict XVI in his address to the members of the Tribunal of the Roman Rota on 27 January 2007 when he said: “The love of truth emerges as a point of convergence between processual research and the pastoral service of the person.”

We would like to think that all bishops, religious superiors, canonists, and others involved in the difficult task of the protection of children, may continue to work together for the good of the Church. It is in this spirit that we have published this article. We trust that it will stimulate discussion between priests, and between priests and others, and that this discussion may lead to a review of the protocols and the way bishops apply them so that every future application of the protocols may have a just and true outcome for every party.

“... ‘Towards Healing’ protocols must always give way to the Code of Canon Law ....

Every priest has the right to be dealt with according to canon law.”
My Vocation Story

Sister Mary Clare Francis, OP

An ordinary person’s story
Quite a lot of people today are writing and talking about their vocation stories. Compared with some of these stories, mine is quite ordinary. Still, I guess there are so few young people entering religious life today, that anyone who gives it a serious “go” is made out to be a kind of hero or heroine. When I go to Mass in my home parish the word gets around and everyone turns up to meet me. (They never paid that much attention to me before I became a nun!) It is a pity that young religious draw so much attention. Firstly because we religious are only finding our way to God like all other good Christians and are not necessarily all that special or holy; also because it shouldn’t be so strange for young Catholics to give themselves to God in the Religious Life. God is still calling as many, if not more people to this vocation, but only a fraction of them are answering. As a young religious, this makes me sad. I don’t want to be a celebrity! I just want other young people to share this vocation with me; to be part of the renewal of the Church which the Holy Father expects to come chiefly from the revival of Religious Life.

Catholic family life
Anyway, on with my ordinary/extraordinary story. I was born into an average Catholic family – just another kid on the block. And yet, maybe it wasn’t that average! I mean – my parents are happily married, we have five kids of which my twin Annette and I are the eldest, we had a secure, stable upbringing (Mum never worked and was a dedicated full-time homemaker) and we experienced a good balance of love and discipline in the home. We have all, Mum, Dad and kids always practised the Catholic faith - Sunday Mass, Rosary every night and Children of Mary every Friday. We went to Catholic schools - I went to Cerdon College run by the Marist Sisters – although I have to say that these schools taught us very little about Catholicism.

Growing in knowledge of the Faith
My knowledge of the doctrines of the faith and the spiritual life came from a few important sources. I had a very saintly parish priest who took special interest in me and my family, and taught us a lot by his holy example and ministry. He shared with us his own love for the Church and I have always loved and admired him as a spiritual father. He is very proud of me and supportive of my vocation.

Legion of Mary
There were plenty of spiritual activities in the parish and after I left school I joined the Legion of Mary. This was a great experience, particularly as it brought me into contact with a really wonderful married couple, both members of the Legion, who became in a special way “my spiritual directors”. They had a great sense of the faith and were very serious and well balanced in the way they lived the faith. They taught me to take my spiritual life seriously. They helped me to be honest in my self-knowledge, to want to do the Will of God and to pray and live the Christian life in a fuller way than I had done to that point.

Friars of St Francis
This couple introduced me to Father Christopher Sharah who started the new community called Friars of St Francis (FSF). I began to attend Mass at their chapel regularly and sang Morning Prayer with the brothers. I eventually became a Tertiary of that community – one of their “Friends of St. Francis”. A young group of “Friends” met on a fortnightly basis at the FSF Friary. We’d have talks by Father and discussion followed by tea, or we’d go on an outing – a picnic, bushwalk, tenpin bowling and so on. It was a great time. Some of the boys tried their vocation with the brothers, leaving a group of us girls quite jealous because we loved Father and the brothers and the Franciscan Order. We wanted to join them too!

World Youth Day 2000
I was blessed enough to be at World Youth Day in Rome, 2000. It was a penitential pilgrimage, but I was with a great group of kids and loved every minute of it. I don’t know whether it helped my faith to grow, but it was exciting to be at the centre of the Catholic Church in the place of so much Church history and culture, and with the Holy Father himself.

Some young people seem to hear their call from God at World Youth Day. I don’t think this happened to me. I had never really thought too much about a religious vocation. I’d begun to study nursing and was working part-time in the R.S.I. Club. My overall desire was to be a wife and mother. Father Bray had taken me a few times to Profession ceremonies in Tyburn Priory, but I never felt any attraction to their life. I think Father Christopher must have had some idea that I might have a religious vocation, because one morning after Mass he told me that he had given my name to some Dominican Sisters who were running an information week-end for girls on Religious Life. He warned me that I’d receive a letter from Sister informing me, but that it was up to me to go or not.
I received Sister’s letter that very day. My first reaction was to be intimidated. I thought - “Well, this Sister doesn’t want to pussy-foot around. She means business and doesn’t want her time or my time wasted.” I was nervous, but I decided to go down for that week-end, not having any idea what to expect. Several other girls were there and we had plenty of time to learn and discuss. We got on well, and I talked on into the night with the girl who was sharing a room with me.

I began to see the Religious Life in a positive light and decided to come back to do the six week’s aspirancy. I really did want to know what was God’s will was for my life, and felt I had to be at least open to this possibility. I also became aware, for the first time that the whole thing wasn’t just up to me; I was not the only judge of my suitability for this vocation. I realised that the Community discerns and judges me as well, and this is a more objective way of finding whether I have a call or not. I felt I couldn’t lose by spending a few weeks of my life discovering what this life is all about and “trying my wings” without any real pressure to commit myself to anything. All my dreams of being some kind of Franciscan were never going to come to anything. There are no Franciscan groups of nuns in Australia in which I would be even slightly interested.

**Insertion into learning experience**

Some girls today look around and think that if they can’t find their “dream Order” they should just start it themselves. I never really thought that this was a possibility, but if I had I’d have changed my mind pretty fast when I discovered what religious life is really about. It’s not like starting a business or a club or something. It’s a whole way of living that takes a lifetime to master and the more you live it the more you realise how small and limited you are and how much you have to learn. Unless you have lived the religious vows, you can’t teach others to live them. Unless you have been through a formation period yourself, you wouldn’t have a hope of forming others. Formation in a religious community takes more than five years - eight in our Community – and that’s only the start of your journey of consecration to God. I realised that if I had a vocation to Religious Life it would have to be in Australia, and it would have to be the Dominicans. After all, Dominicans and Franciscans are kind of related. And the Franciscans friars and the Dominican Sisters I knew were certainly the best of friends.

**Dealing with misgivings**

Still, when it came to catching the train to Ganmain, I was nervous. I had to fight to stop myself getting off at the next station and heading for home! I was saved by God’s grace. I had a seat next to a 90-year-old Christian brother. He was a fine, holy old man whose face lit up when I told him I was going to test out my vocation with the Dominicans. He told me about his life as a Christian brother - how he went to the Juniorate at the age of about 13 or 14. He told me all about his postulancy and right through his formation. His love for his religious life was so evident it really calmed me down. He assured me that my nervousness was perfectly normal.

**And persevering**

Just recently I met up again with Brother Athanasius at the Festival of Faith in Sydney, and he was over the moon to see that I had persevered in Religious Life. He used to wonder how things had worked out for me - and now he could see for himself. He wrote me a lovely letter the other day, saying again how happy he was for me. I think seeing me brought back to him his own days as a young Religious. I have quite a few friendships with elderly people, especially priests and religious, and it helps me so much to meet up with these special souls who have remained faithful to God through all kinds of ups and downs; I only pray that I can do the same and have the degree of love and courage and joy that I see in them.

**And hiddenness**

I think that today with all the talk about youth being the hope of the Church, we can over-play the importance of young people. It could give young Catholics the idea that new projects and ideas and lots of enthusiasm are enough to renew the Church. People seem to talk as if World Youth Day is the thing that will get everyone back to the faith in Australia. I have begun to understand that the real action in the Church is spiritual, and often unseen. You see it in older people who have prayed and suffered and carried the Cross for years and years and have become really wise. The Church teaches us in her documents about Religious Life that the heart of the Church is not found in the young, nor in those out on the street-corners evangelising, but in faithful Religious, especially the most hidden ones in contemplative convents and monasteries.

I have discovered an important truth since entering the convent - that “being” is more important than “doing”. It really doesn’t matter what kind of humble lifestyle or occupation a person has: the big question is “are they living in close union with God, fulfilling His plan for their life and responding to his grace?” I had quite a full-on involvement in apostolate with the Legion of Mary, and was able to have quite a lot of influence in helping the faith of others, but I now know that I could save my soul and the souls of others just as well by peeling potatoes – if that is God’s Will for me – if I do it in the right spirit.

**Growing new family bonds**

I was twenty-one when I fronted up for the aspirancy. My sister and I had been given a great twenty-first birthday party by my family and all my extended family and friends were there. I think my family were a bit unenthusiastic about my entering a convent. Mum didn’t like to see her first child leave home, and I think my sisters and brother had some funny ideas about what convent life would do to me. They were afraid I’d be somehow lost to the family – out of touch; not able to come home for visits etc. It was a bit hard for them to realise that my only contact with them from postulancy onward was through a monthly letter and a monthly phone call. Actually, if the convent had been closer to Sydney, the family could have visited me on one Sunday a month. But it was hard for them to understand why I couldn’t go home to stay for a few days at a time every so often. I will not be able to do this until I am finally professed – eight years after my entry. I have found, and I think they have found that as time goes on, this is not such a
big problem. I have been able to visit my home for a meal – usually with the other Sisters when we have to make a visit to Sydney for some reason, and I think that now they have come to know and love the community, and can see that I am not losing weight (pity!) and not looking miserable; they are quite happy with what I have done. My parents are actually quite proud of me I think, and we now feel some of that special bond that the Sisters tell me often grows up between parents and their son or daughter in religion. I still have a great relationship with my sisters and brother – perhaps even better than ever – and I feel more spiritual responsibility for them: to pray for them and even feel able to give them spiritual advice (which they may not always have taken from me before!) and share with them some of the wonderful stuff I have learned about the Faith and how to live it.

Movements of feeling

Aspirancy flowed into about eight months of postulancy, and I went home for a last visit home before making a pre-novitiate retreat and receiving the habit. Everything had looked okay during postulancy, although I had moments of homesickness and doubt. I had learned heaps in my study of dogmatic theology about the wonderful teachings of the Church, and quite a lot about the spiritual life. I also came to understand more about the Religious Vocation and about the Dominican Order.

But when I came back from that week at home, I was having negative feelings about my vocation and really didn’t want to receive the habit. The Sisters asked me if I wanted to leave and then there, which made me really think hard! I knew I didn’t want to give up at that stage. I realised also, that a novice can leave at any time she wishes – or the community can send her away – and I began to feel it would be stupid not to go on to the next stage and give religious life a full trial. I really didn’t want to let God down – and how did I know that this wasn’t just a passing temptation put up by myself or the devil, or even a test from God?

Making objective discernment

There is a real temptation to judge your vocation on feelings alone. I have come to see this is a big mistake. Sure, we should not follow a vocation if everything about it feels wrong for us. But because our feelings go up and down and all over the place – we are never going to make life-decisions if we decide to follow them as our only guide. I am sure that no-one in any vocation – marriage and parenthood, priesthood or consecrated life – has a completely smooth run, with no difficulties or “down moments”. After all Christ has promised us daily crosses which, if we are true disciples, we have no option but to carry. The more I live Religious Life, the more I can see the potential in it for being a saint, and I trust that God will show me clear signs along the way that He does or does not want me to be a Religious. So far, all the signs are positive, but until I am accepted for final vows, I will not feel that I have signed my life completely over to God.

During my novitiate – two years of learning about Religious Life and its place in the Church; about how to live the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, about the spiritual life and how to grow in prayer and virtue – I felt I grew up a lot spiritually. I came to love the Church more and more, and my desire to give myself to Christ through the Church became very strong. I love the Church’s beautiful teaching on the meaning of Religious consecration, and find it exciting to think of belonging to a vocation that is right at the heart of the Church’s life - a vocation so necessary for the holiness of the whole Church.

Growing in enduring commitment

I feel sad that so many young people my age think they are building up the Church by getting involved in all kinds of external ministries, or helping to organise World Youth Day, when all the time the Church is crying for out the witness of people who will dedicate their whole lives to God. The Holy Father says the Church will only be renewed by the renewal and revival of authentic Religious Life. I know I didn’t always take this on board myself, but at twenty-four I’m glad God pushed me into religious life; now I just want to see other people my age listening to the Holy Father on this – especially in Australia.

Approaching a vocational decision

Through my studies in religious life, I not only have a greater appreciation of the Religious vocation, but have come better to understand and appreciate the vocations of marriage and the priesthood. The whole concept of vocation is so much clearer to me now than it was before I entered. The main idea out in the world is that you should shop around and not commit yourself until you have tried everything – not settle down into marriage or any other vocation until you have finished your study, gone ahead with your career, seen the world, and all that. People don’t seem to realise that God’s call is not on the same level as a study-course or a career. It is the real thing – towards which we should be heading.

I hadn’t finished my nursing degree when I decided to try my vocation in Religious Life. Sometimes I wondered if I should have finished it first. But then I’d have been starting out later on my vocation, which might not have been the best thing for me, and anyway – here I am, in an Order that is into education – so nursing wouldn’t be of much use. I never thought I’d be a teacher, but I have found that I really love working with children – and I’ve now had experience, thanks to the guidance of the Sisters – in teaching catechetics and various other things to children whose ages range from 4-13 years.

First vows

After two years of novitiate, I was ready to make my first profession, which I made last October 2005. Father Christopher came down from Sydney to say the Mass and officiate. My family all came down for it and, although it is not a public ceremony and not open to everyone, our Chapel was full. I felt supported by everyone – those who were there and the many friends who sent cards and flowers. There was a little party afterwards with the priests, brothers, Sister Mary Martin’s mum, who had come from England for Sister’s Final Profession the next day, and, of course my family.

Constancy and life-long change

The next days were very happy ones. Then, when everyone went home, the bubble burst. Reality hit! It was a good lesson for me. It helped me to realise all over again that
Religious Life is a bit bigger than parties and the excitement of being at the centre stage. Actually, there is always something interesting and exciting happening in a religious community, but anyone who enters for that reason is off the track. Maybe this is why so many people tune-out on God’s call. They are so used to living in the fast lane and having loads of variety in their lives, that they just can’t see themselves living by a Rule that involves silence and prayer and a regular life-style.

So another thing I was a bit scared of before I entered was how Religious Life might change me. I remember asking Sister Mary Augustine whether I’d be expected to be a different kind of person. She just said something like, “Of course! You’d be changing things in you that need changing anyway. Every person who lives the Christian life seriously has to change; that is what conversion is all about! We have to become perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect; that means making a lot of changes – and it’s life-long!”

Seeing the progress
I think maybe a lot of young people fear this! They think that they will lose their freedom to be themselves – the person they want to be. They are probably afraid that they will not be able to develop the interests and skills that they already have. A lot of people seem to think that a girl who enters a contemplative community is burying herself and her talents; and they probably think this is true too, for any religious community. I think I had this idea, too.

Now, a few years down the track I can see quite big changes in myself and I am actually happy with these changes. Before I came to Religious Life my life was good. I had a secure home life, good friends, a job that I could manage without much hassle. I was quite a confident person and secure in my faith. I didn’t have too many complaints about life.

Looking back, I can see that my life has now opened up in so many ways. From being a complete “tomboy”, I can now understand better and appreciate the gifts of womanhood. Like a lot of other girls, I practically lived in jeans and only wore skirts and dresses on very special occasions when my Mother pressured me into it. By the end of postulancy I had begun to feel at home in skirts and could appreciate what they stood for.

Ceremonies of Novicing
A Novice can leave at any time or be sent away at any time, and it is now common in Australia for the “clothing” of a Novice to be a rather private affair. As this picture of a Poor Clares of Adoration shows (above, Mother Angelica PCA, scissors in hand), witnessing these ceremonies can help the family of a young woman to identify with her transition to Religious Life. Moreover, the ceremony of Solemn Profession, occurring years later, does not have the same potential impact on the peers of a young woman entering religious life – for their links with the candidate are stronger in early days, and their own openness to what the ceremonies of novitiation signify is greater. For stable candidates, it is probably better that only Postulancy be so low key ... (Ed.).

The same, of course, is true for young men, and the photo below shows the first step in a society of apostolic life – the clerical tonsure that immediately follows the bestowal of the habit (a clerical cassock/soutane) upon a seminarian of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter. Diocesan seminarians will typically have family and close friends present at their Commencement Mass.

And seeing the continuity as I grow
I still like to garden, clean cars and do maintenance jobs...
(which sometimes come out right) and I keep bees, which is fun and challenging. I still like to play a game of soccer or cricket with the kids, and if I had the chance (which mostly I don’t) I'd still love to watch sport either on TV or live (we still get to see Vianney College beat the other seminaries at soccer!). But I also find it rewarding to learn to play the piano (I am now up to Fourth Grade pieces) and proper keyboard skills, Latin pronunciation and vocabulary, Gregorian Chant and Polyphony.

My mind has expanded, too. I was never very keen on study – I was interested in maths and science, but hated reading anything that didn’t immediately interest me. I found it hard to get into, but now I can read and appreciate classical novels and even poetry. I am able to get a lot more out of reading – especially spiritual books – than I ever could have before, and I’ve just finished a two-year diploma in Faith Education by correspondence from the CAEC in Sydney, in which I was really able to expand in my knowledge of things from Philosophy and Church History to Bioethical issues and so on. My essay-writing skills have improved immensely.

And the silent interior growth

But the most important way in which I have grown is in the spiritual life. Religious life surrounds you with things that teach you about the Faith, about what the spiritual life involves, about how to love and serve God more fully. I have learned from lessons, lectures, spiritual reading, personal study and assignments, from the liturgy and by trial and error in my daily efforts to reach perfection. I now realise that although I was previously living the Faith much more fully than most of my peers, I was only beginning the journey. The further you travel on this journey, the more you realise you didn’t know. You don’t just learn theories about the spiritual life – you learn the hard way, by experience. I have come to realise that St Catherine of Siena is right, and that honest self-knowledge is the basis for truly knowing, loving and serving God.

Religious formation gives you a new set of standards by which to judge yourself and a greater understanding of who God is and what it means to give yourself to Him. I discover things about myself every day, and I am learning that I can’t do this on my own – that I have to depend completely on His grace. I have learned to be more humble about myself and since humility is the foundation of the spiritual life, I have learned to pray better. Every day I have added to my knowledge new things about God and about my relationship with Him. I get better at mental prayer, which I never used to do before. I can really appreciate the Liturgy – of which I had no real understanding before. I can read Scripture with a lot more understanding.

Growing in virtue

I have learned more about the virtues – especially Poverty, Chastity and Obedience – as I learn about how to live the Vows. These virtues are for everyone, even if all don’t take the vows. So it is good for me to learn a good kind of detachment from people and things, and to learn how to find God and do His Will in everything. It is good to know that I can be a spouse of Christ without needing any earthly husband, and a spiritual mother to everyone on earth.

All of this is an important growing experience, and if, at some stage later in my formation, I discover that God is not calling me to Religious Life – although it would be strange if He had brought me this far without wanting me here – I would have learned a whole range of important life-skills that I could never have learned in the secular world. I’d be a better person: a better wife, a better mother, if that is what God calls me to be.

Making the decision early

Some people hold off trying their vocation until they are too old to fit into religious life. It is not easy to adapt to because it is such a different life from life in the world, and the more you are involved in the world, the harder it is. I was still young enough to adapt, and I had the advantage of being brought up in a family that had fairly strict standards of behaviour. I did not have the degree of freedom that some teenagers have – which is I think, a plus. I respected and was (mostly) obedient to my parents – even after I left school.

I also had good experiences in my practice of the faith, and knew that pride and egotism and self-will didn’t get you far. I had really learned that God’s Will was the big thing in life, which is why I would have felt I’d let Him down by not trying my vocation when I did, and not three or four years later. There’s still some of my life left if, at some stage, the Sisters and I decide that I am not called to Religious Life. I can then go out and find the husband God has in mind for me.

Give it a go!

My advice to you is not to waste time with too much thinking and planning and discerning. You really can’t discern from the outside; you need to give Religious Life a try – even as an Aspirant. I’d also like to discourage you from waiting until you find the “perfect” place for you. There is no perfect religious community, just as there is no perfect husband or job or anything else on this earth. Still, it is not a good idea to try religious communities who don’t have the basics of an authentic religious life-style – who don’t wear habits or pray together, or pray the right way in the liturgy, or who have funny ideas about the teachings of the Church or the spiritual life, or who just don’t follow the Church full-on.

I thought I would be a Franciscan, but because this was not available to me, I didn’t feel I should give up or go to some Franciscan monastery overseas. Instead, I opened my mind and heart to the Dominican charism and have now come to love the Order and its saints and its devotion to Truth. I have faith in my community and have a great loyalty to it. All I would like to see, is a few more young women coming on board to share it with me.

Young women who may be interested in testing a vocation with the Conventual Dominican Sisters may visit the following site (http://users.dragnet.com.au/~veritas/) to contact the Prioress at the Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary, 47 Langham St, Ganmain NSW 2702, in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, NSW, Australia. (phone: 61 2 6927 6439)
The annual Procession of the Blessed Sacrament, led by Archbishop Carruthers, Bildt, Archbishop of Sydney, passed through the city for a time of Adoration at St Mary’s Cathedral, led by Cardinal George, Metropolitan Archbishop of Sydney, who received the High Mass of the processional liturgy. The procession then proceeded to St Patrick’s Cathedral, led by the Most Rev. Julian Porteous, Rector of Good Shepherd Seminary. The procession reflected the growing numbers of priests, the liturgical reforms, and the increasing numbers of young people choosing to become priests. The pattern observed across the world has been for growth in vocations to be linked with adoration and prayer for the growth in vocations to be linked with adoration and prayer for the growth of Good Shepherd Seminary reflects this fact, with youthful seminarians displaying a love for the Blessed Sacrament, and joining with the thousands of the faithful who give testimony to Christ in this annual event.

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