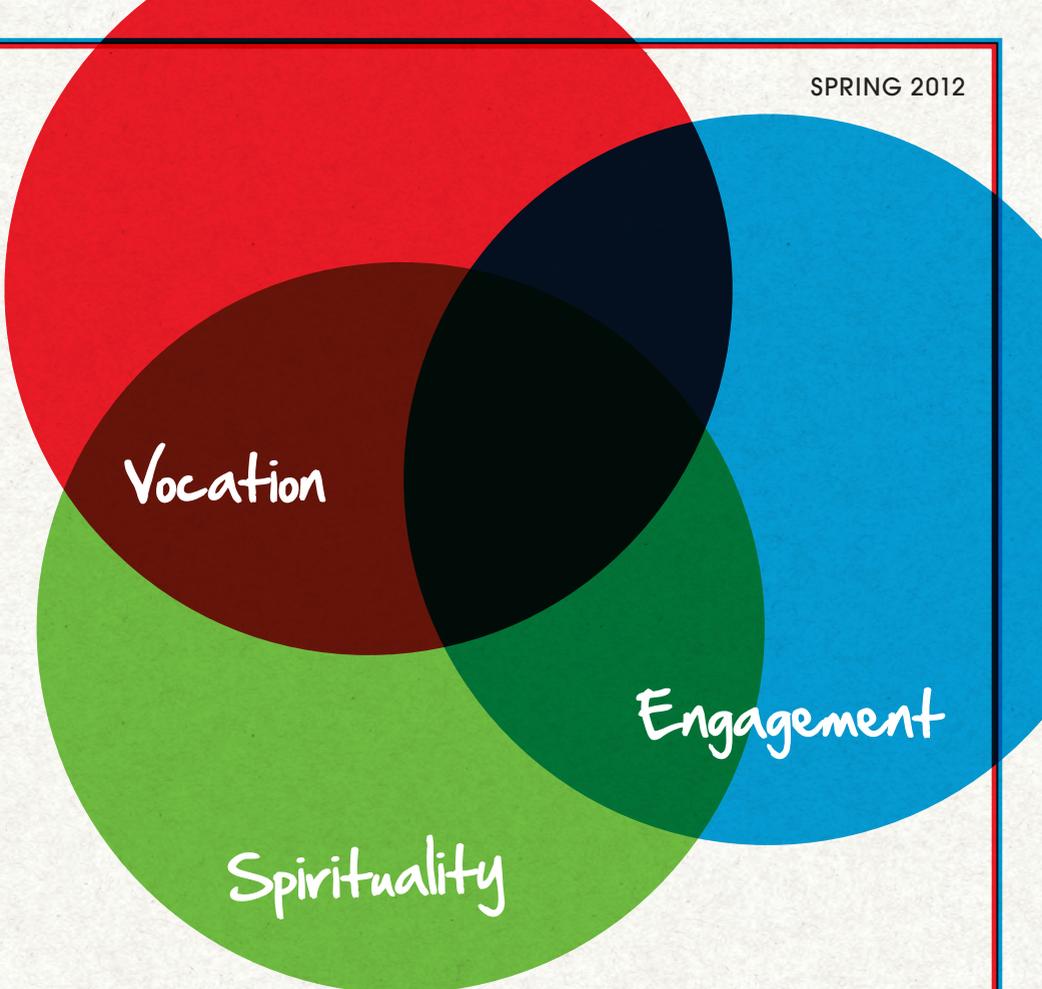


SPRING 2012



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CHAMPAGNAT

AN INTERNATIONAL MARIST JOURNAL OF CHARISM IN EDUCATION

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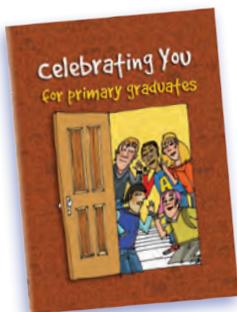
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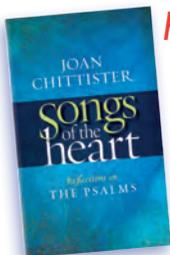
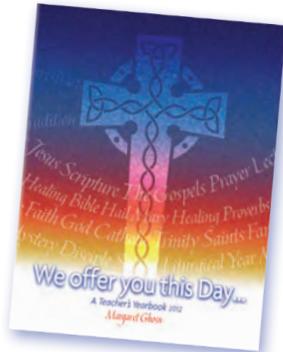
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Champagnat

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Volume 14 Number 3

Spring 2012

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Champagnat: An International Marist Journal of Charism in Education aims to assist its readers to integrate charism into education in a way that gives great life and hope. Marists provide one example of this mission.

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Management Committee:

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Ph: + 61 3 9846 1633
Fax: + 61 3 9846 5354
Email: jmn@champagnat.org.au

Views expressed in the articles are those of the respective authors and not necessarily those of the editors, editorial board members or the publisher.

Editorial Group:

Editor: Tony Paterson FMS

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*in my
view...*

From the Editor

FOR ANY serious student of the apostle, St Paul, it is not hard to find that at times he has had some very bad press. In a television series titled “Christianity: A History”, the presenter seemed determined to prove that Paul had somehow single-handedly transformed Jesus’ radical Jewish faith into a new religion peppered with all sorts of exotic Pauline ingredients.¹ This idea is misleading for we need to remember that Paul was not the first Christian, and he inherited a tradition of faith which recognized Jesus as the Son of God and worshipped him as the Risen Lord. By the time of Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus, the post-Resurrection followers of Jesus, already understood Jesus’ death and resurrection as the inauguration of a new age. They had already instituted the Eucharist into their regular worship and remembered at that time Jesus’ words at the Last Supper (see Paul’s recollection in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Paul developed and expanded upon these inherited traditions and

reflected theologically upon them, but he certainly did not ‘invent’ a new religion.

One of the gifts that Paul left us is his letters. In the Letter to the Romans, Paul is writing to a community that he has not founded. Some of the members of that community may even be hostile towards him because they have heard about him, and his way of preaching and living the Gospel. The letter comes from a mature stage of Paul’s apostolic career, and he writes it from the Greek city of Corinth. For the purposes of this short comment, two lines in the first chapter are of importance to us:

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel. It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: for the Jew first, and then Greek. For in it is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The one who is righteous by faith will live’ (Romans 1:16-17).

Here Paul boldly expresses his absolute confidence in the Gospel which must be a starting point for us in our Christian ministry. The Gospel is the power of God leading to salvation for everyone

who believes – Jew and Greek (“Greek” here stands in for the entire Gentile world; for stylistic reasons Paul uses the ethnic term to balance “Jew”).² The starting point for such confidence is faith; and for Paul faith is the only appropriate response to the Gospel which proclaims that God in Christ is reaching out to the world, graciously offering reconciliation and salvation. Paul explains such saving power in terms of God’s ‘righteousness’. This is a word that we tend not to use today because it is often tied to what is described as the ‘self-righteous’ person. This is not how Paul understands the word. For Paul’s use of the word is focused on fidelity within a relationship. For Israel, as demonstrated in the Hebrew Scriptures, the most significant relationship was the covenant relationship with Yahweh. Within this relationship, Yahweh creates and nourishes the life of the people, he gives growth and fertility, and he provides shelter and rescues Israel in times of war and distress. This was viewed as a particular exercise of righteousness by Yahweh. On the human side of the relationship, Yahweh required righteousness from the people in two key areas: loyalty in worship (no foreign gods) and social justice (non-exploitation of the vulnerable: the

widow, the orphan, the hungry, and the stranger).

Israel failed again and again on these matters. The same call is made to us today with regard to being ‘righteous’ to our God and neighbour. St Paul continues to put this challenge to us each day, and it is often good for us to reflect on how we do this as individuals and as a community. We sometimes fail, but one would hope that our intention is to make positive progress on this matter. There are numerous examples of people that have been able to understand and respond to their God and neighbour as a consequence. For example:

Recently Father Tony Redden of the Diocese of Port Pirie here in Australia passed away after a long battle with cancer. In my early student years at school I remember ‘looking up to him’ at Sacred Heart College in Adelaide when he was a College Prefect; and over the nearly forty years that followed as a priest, Tony Redden always had a great sense of joy and happiness about him. Undoubtedly, as St Paul suggests, ‘joy and happiness’ are important qualities in ministry. Tony Redden was the ‘righteous’ person who lived a life in covenant with his God and his neighbour as he ministered in some very remote centres in his diocese. Like St

Paul, he knew what the heat, dust and flies were like in his ministry. In addition, Tony Redden was one of the early pioneers that helped to build and consolidate the National Council of Priests in Australia, and the respect and admiration that not only the national clergy had for him, but people from all walks of life, was reflected with so many travelling long distances to St Mark's Cathedral in Port Pirie for his funeral.

Likewise, the Australian Jesuit, the late Father Peter Steele, a poet, university lecturer, priest and brother to all, was a "robust wordsmith hammering away at unwieldy words to forge them into poetic and homiletic shape"³. His work, touched thousands, and undoubtedly he fully understood what St Paul was talking about when he used the word 'righteous' in the opening chapter of his letter to the Romans.

Our own St Marcellin Champagnat, the French priest who founded the Marist Brothers of the Schools understood, that like Abraham, he was righteous before God simply because he responded to God's call in faith. That response in faith, that going into the 'unknown' as a disciple of Jesus Christ, resulted in many blessings as reflected today as we continue to live according to the

Marist Charism that is focused on not being ashamed of the Gospel. Rather, like St Paul, we proclaim the Risen Christ.

We do not have to simply 'go back' to the saints or to the recently deceased, to appreciate the importance of understanding that our lives, our ministries whatever they are, call us to God's righteousness, to be people of faith. 'Righteousness' is a word that may not be part of our daily vocabulary, and maybe it should, but we would be very ineffective and wasting our time, if we did not seek to live-out the implications of its meaning when we seek to be people of the new covenant with Jesus Christ and our neighbour. This thought was highlighted for me when I recently reflected on Van Eyck's painting of the 'Annunciation'. The original was painted in 1433, and it shows the angel's visit to Mary as taking place in a church. This was impossible at the time; but the concept is tied to Mary's title of the 'First Christian'. While both Mary and the angel, Gabriel, are adorned in rich clothing, and even multi-coloured wings for the latter, the point is that Mary's face is peaceful and one has the impression that once assured by the angel, she knew what was being asked of her. For she is being asked not only to be the Mother of God, but also the

Mother of the Human Race. This obviously suggests that this young woman knew what was required when it came to being 'righteous' before her God and the world. Her 'Yes' was in fact a revolutionary moment, the moment of acceding to God's plan of salvation. We are called to a revolution, a spiritual revolution in the footsteps of St Marcellin Champagnat. Our place and participation in such an event can only be 'fired' by knowing and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ. St Paul found this out on the road to Damascus, and his life and ours, have changed forever. Thank God for the word 'righteous'. ■

Tony Paterson
Editor

ENDNOTES

- 1 "Christianity: A History", Channel 4 TV, January 2009, Presenter Howard Jacobson.
- 2 B.Byrne, Galations and Romans, Strathfield, NSW: Pauline Books, 2012, 65.
- 3 W.R. Uren in the 'Introduction' of P.Steele, *A Local Habitation: Poems and Homilies*, Melbourne, Newman College, 2010, 1.

NOTES

1. This is the third edition of the Champagnat Journal for 2012. The fourth edition will appear early in 2013 and we are working on a new format.
2. Welcome to Associate Professor Elizabeth Quinn who joins the Editorial Board. Beth is the Associate Professor of Psychology at Marist College, Poughkeepsie in New York State.

Contributors

DARREN MCGREGOR is the Principal of Catholic College Bendigo, a Marist-Mercy Catholic high school of 2,000 students. Darren recently attended the Australian Marist Mission Assembly at Mittagong in New South Wales and reflects on the event and its implications for the future of Marist Ministries in Australia. The Mission Assembly Statement, prepared by the Brothers and Lay Marists who participated at this meeting, is also included as part of his reflection.

CARDINAL PETER TURKSON is the President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and resides in Rome. He is originally from Ghana and recently attended the International Eucharistic Congress in Ireland. His paper focuses on *Reconciliation and Communion* and it provides a very rich resource for us in our Marist ministries.

BROTHER ALOIS is the Prior of Taize Community in France. His paper focuses on *Unity in the Body of Christ*, something that is an important ministry for his

ecumenical community, and it has implications for us in our own life and work.

FATHER TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE resides at Blackfriars Priory in Oxford. He is a former Provincial of the Dominican Province in the United Kingdom and a former Master General of the Order of Preachers. Father Timothy was in Australia recently to lead a retreat in Warnambool for the National Council of Priests. His paper focuses on the spirituality of suffering and healing, something that is important for all of us as members of the Church.

FATHER MICHAEL ELLIGATE is one of a regular contributors. He is the Parish Priest of St Carthage's Church in Parkville in Melbourne. Michael reflects on the New Evangelisation and the relationship it has to Scripture. This reflection is a wonderful reference point for busy people who like the challenge of being 'prompted' by the opinion of another. Such a process can open many doors for those willing to investigate further.

Contributors

ARCHBISHOP BRUNO FORTE is the Archbishop of Chieti-Vasto in Italy. Archbishop Forte was in Australia recently, and his paper focuses on the New Evangelisation. In particular, he speaks in terms of the challenges that such a process presents, and the ‘promise’ that goes with such a call to the new evangelisation in our time.

RICHARD RYMARZ lectures at the University of Alberta in Canada. He has previously written for this journal; and was in Australia recently. His paper titled: ‘The New Evangelisation and Religious Education’ was delivered at a recent professional development day for teachers in the Parramatta Diocese in Australia. The program was facilitated by the Catholic Education Office in that diocese.

PATRICK WEBSTER is a senior teacher at Marist College, Ashgrove in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. He is currently working on his Master’s degree and his paper here is part of that project. The paper considers some aspects of both

Marist Life and Ministry for the first group of Marist Brothers that came to Australia in 1872 and in the immediate years that followed.

ROMEO J. BONSAINT is a member of the New England Province of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, a religious community established in France, around the same time as the Marist Brothers of the Schools. Romeo is co-director of Resources in Spiritual Formation in Danvers, Massachusetts; and he holds post graduate degrees including a doctorate from Duquesne University. Romeo’s paper in this issue focuses on the dispositions for ageing spiritually – a ministry of importance to each of us as individuals and in our care of our neighbour. The paper is printed with permission and we thank Romeo for his interest in the Champagnat Journal.

Once again, the Journal has a number of book reviews.

BERISE HEASLY, a member of the Champagnat Journal Management Committee reviews two books for us: one by **BR ROMUALD GIBSON**, a

Contributors

New Zealand Marist, and one by **FR PAUL MURRAY**, and Irish Dominican. Both books focus on spirituality and both books have the potential to make a serious impact on our own spiritual lives. The third book is on the New Evangelisation. It is written by **RICHARD RYMARZ**. **JOHN KELLY**, a senior teacher at Sacred Heart College in Adelaide has kindly reviewed this book for us. As John indicates in his review, the content of this new book can also be of significant assistance to all who seek to be disciples in Jesus Christ.

Our sincere thanks to all who have contributed to this edition of the Champagnat Journal.

THANK YOU

Our sincere thanks to all of the contributors for this edition of the Champagnat Journal. Contributors fall into two categories: those who write specifically for this Journal, and those who give permission for their papers to be produced here. The latter include those contributors who presented papers at the 2012 Eucharistic Congress in Dublin.

We also thank our peer-reviewers and proof-readers: Br John McMahon, Kath Richter, Berise Heasly, and Br Michael McManus. All are Melbourne-based except for Br Michael who teaches at the Divine Word University in Madang in Papua New Guinea.

Statement from the Members of the First Marist Mission Assembly...

DEAR FELLOW MARISTS,
From many reaches of Australia, seventy of us have gathered at *The Hermitage*, Mittagong, over these last three days to participate in the first Mission Assembly of what is soon to be the new Marist Province of Australia. It has been a profoundly uplifting experience for all of us, one which we are eager to share with you. As we take leave of each other today, our hearts are on fire for our Marist way of life and mission. We leave deeply encouraged by whom we have met and what we have heard, and with vision and confidence for how we can continue to bring young people to love and know Jesus and the liberating power of his gospel.

From the outset of our time together, we felt the privilege that we had been given in being the ones to be invited to this significant gathering. Why us? So many others could have been here in our place. We have also appreciated that our absence from our families

and our places of ministry has meant that others have carried an extra load. We thank you for that. We have felt the responsibility that we have spoken on behalf of a large and widely spread Marist community, living and working in so many ways right across the country. We hope we have been true to all for which you yearn and work as Marists.

Our experience has been one that you would have certainly recognised as a typically warm and welcoming Marist family spirit. Our rapport with each other was immediate, but our communion went quickly beyond the superficial. We were Marists. Our sense of what that meant to all of us – and through us what it represented about Marists across Australia – was deeply apparent and guided us through each session. The groundedness of our discussions, the daring of our imagining, the simplicity and humour of our relating, the depth and richness of our prayer and worship, and the sense of purpose that permeated each day, would have been all familiar to you.

Some time was spent considering the outcomes of the seventeen regional meetings that took place earlier this year, and in reading the written summaries that had been supplied by all the

areas of ministry in the Province: the four major ones of schools, youth welfare, youth ministry, and solidarity, as well as some particular ministries such as East Timor and Cambodia, and the range of projects with Indigenous youth. We also took in the experiences and hopes of the Mission Council, the Mission and Life Formation team, the leaders of Lay Marist life, and from the Brothers. An especially horizon-widening afternoon was devoted to hearing from the leaders of each area of Province mission and life as they answered two questions: *where* are we heading? and *why* are we heading there? It was inspiring to feel part of the vitality and the growth that was taking place. Marist Australia is alive! Our breadth, our diversity, our boldness, our dreams for the future, our alertness and care for the most vulnerable and at-risk young people, and our restlessness to seek new and ever more effective ways to educate, to care, and to evangelise, are all there in great measure.

But it all depends on our continuing to have Marists. That was what became most obvious to us. We need Marists. We need Marists who are well formed, who are sustained in their Marist journeys, and who have effective means for taking responsibility

for our common future. We need committed Lay Marists, we need Young Marists, and we need Marist Brothers. We asked ourselves, and we ask you our colleagues, friends and confreres: are we doing enough to invite people to become Marist?

We believe that we are well along the way to coming to a deeper understanding of the different ways of being Marist. We are actively exploring contemporary structures and means in which this broad movement of people can feel at home, and can share responsibility for developing Marist spirituality, life and mission. God's dream for us Marists calls us to keep imagining, to keep on heading out with Mary to the 'new lands' to which the last General Chapter of the Brothers called us all. We have prepared recommendations for the new Provincial and Mission Council to lead us audaciously in this imagining.

God has graced us over these days with a window into our Marist future. With Mary, as Australian Marists together, let's be alert and open to all to which the Spirit is inviting us:

To you, young Marists,
we rejoice in your
idealism and daring.
We need you to
challenge us out of our
complacency and old

ways, to keep us always new and relevant. We urge you to listen to the voice of God that you hear in the needs of our society, especially in the young, and to be generous in your response. Don't be afraid to commit to something beyond the ordinary. We are counting on you.

To you, our fellow Marists, in our schools and youth welfare programmes, in our youth ministry initiatives, in our solidarity and advocacy projects, and engaged in our missions overseas, we admire and affirm the wonderful things you do, day in and day out. You are giving your best efforts and your best years for young people and for the work of the Gospel. We need your competence and your expertise. We urge you to stay faithful to your first fervour.

To you our principals and ministry leaders, and you who serve us in Province offices, what a critical role you play! We need your vision. We want you to continue to challenge us to authentic ways of being Marist, and to ensure that we have the support we need to keep our mission vital and viable.

To you, Brothers, we thank you for the gift of your lives. We need you to stay at the heart of our Province's life and mission, with young people, and to be our spiritual guides in the way of Marcellin. All of us need to continue to invite young men to join you in your radical living of the Gospel call.

To you, our older Marists, we follow in the mighty steps that you have trod. We hold you dearly. We need your interest and your encouragement,

your wisdom and your prayer. Walk with us, spend time with us, trust us.

When, 140 years ago, Brother Ludovic stepped out onto the deck of the *Star of Peace* and caught his first glimpse of Australian land, he wrote in his journal that he felt like Christopher Columbus, so full of anticipation was he at what could lie ahead for the Marists in this new and unknown world. Today, we are also filled with hope and confidence, and though we have people and resources that would be beyond his

dreams, like him we place all our trust in the God who has called us to share in the mission of the Gospel, in new lands. The future will be different from the past; we are yet to forge the path. But this Assembly has shown us that we will be doing so with faith, with commitment, with imagination, and with one another. ■

**The Members of the first
Mission Assembly of the
Marists of Australia**

*15th August 2012
Solemnity of the Assumption,
our Marist Patronal Day*

PRAYER

Embracing darkness is possibly the most important spiritual practice in the life of prayer. As we work through the inevitable losses of our life, whatever their cause, and also assist others in doing so, we praise God's mercy to us and learn to say with St Paul: "...I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil 3:8)

*Keith J. Egan, Carmelite Prayer: A Tradition for the 21st Century,
New York: Paulist Press, 2003, 137.*

Viewpoint

RESPONSE TO THE FIRST MARIST MISSION ASSEMBLY

JUST recently I woke to the news that Neil Armstrong had passed away. I am sure I am not the only person whose mind immediately went to his most famous phrase “this is one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind”. I have often pondered on what a fitting statement this was as the world witnessed our first step onto the moon. I wonder whether it came to him on the spur of the moment, whether he thought of it on the way to the moon or if indeed he was the original author of the statement. Regardless of its origin, it is a famous statement that has been borrowed and utilised for more than 40 years. I now wish to be so bold as to borrow Neil Armstrong’s line as I reflect upon the recent Mission Assembly. “One small step for a Marist; one giant leap for co-responsibility”.

As the Mission Council, over the last eighteen months, prepared for the Mission Assembly, there were countless discussions around what we hoped to achieve and how this would be done; yet strangely we always knew that something special would occur at the Assembly. As the theme

‘New Province: New Horizons’ developed, I had no idea my reflections, post assembly, would draw me to the lunar horizon.

In the lead up to the Assembly, Regional Gatherings were held across Australia. These were gatherings of Marists; gatherings of lay Marists and Marist Brothers; gatherings of Marists of the Northern Province and Marists in the Southern Province. They were gatherings to celebrate who we are as Marists today. Whilst the gatherings so clearly provided a time of celebration, reflection and reunion, they also provided an enormous amount of insight into possible future directions for us as Marists, as we approach a new Province and new horizons.

Whilst Armstrong reached the moon in July, we Marists took until August to land at Mittagong and from the moment we arrived there was a sense that something special was about to occur. The family was gathering. I did not realise until the final day of the assembly but from the beginning each of the delegates arrived as a Marist. Each required no further label of lay, brother or province.

Early on the second day David Hall (Mission Council Chair) and I presented to the delegates our hopes and aspirations for the Assembly. One image I presented

to the delegates was that of the Visitation: The beautiful greeting between Elizabeth and Mary. I explained that as we take on the challenges of the 23rd General Chapter to go with Mary in haste to this new land, I hope that in doing so we will provide those moments of the visitation to the young, and particularly, the marginalised.

As the Assembly unfolded, we listened to some inspiring and challenging presentations from each of the Ministries. Each explored the questions '*where are we heading? and why are we heading there?*'. By the close of Day Two it was clear that being Marist in Australia was an exciting thing to be. Our deep roots in the charism of Marcellin Champagnat and his will to make Jesus known and loved was alive and well in every presentation. Like Neil Armstrong approaching the lunar surface, I had no idea what was coming but I knew I wanted to be part of it. That night I felt an excitement that ten years of planning was coming to fruition.

Day Three contained those crucial, final moments before landing. Co-responsibility was open for discussion. A term we have read about, defined and redefined and tried to live was now being invited to become a lived reality. I still don't think we could

define it but we knew, regardless of any definition, it will become a lived reality in the new landscape.

The afternoon of Day Three saw the designated authors compile the draft document generally referred to as the statement of priorities. This document was a crucial element of the Assembly. The intended audience is the inaugural Chapter of the New Australian Province. Delegates at this Chapter will then endorse these priorities and pass them on to the new Mission Council as their priorities and mandate for the next three years. A document written by Brothers and lay giving the priorities for Brothers and lay for the next three years to be implemented and overseen by Brothers and lay. A document that prepared the landscape: The new horizon of real co-responsibility. An horizon in which I am confident the term Brothers and lay will simply be replaced with Marist.

When the draft document was received by the Assembly, it would be fair to say it was a failed landing. Not because the document wasn't well written but because the delegates had experienced a taste of the new land and wanted more. The delegates wanted bolder challenges and stronger language as we ready ourselves to approach

Comment

new horizons. That night two documents were created. The first was the Statement of Priorities which the next morning was given strong approval from the Assembly and will now head to the Chapter in December. The second document was an open letter to all fellow Australian Marists. This latter document is an expression of the feelings of those gathered at the Assembly. It talks with great enthusiasm about who we are today as Marists and the current strength from which we head forward into the new land in our endeavours to make Jesus known and loved. Like the lunar walk there is beauty in the new land which is enticing and

exciting but the view back to the Earth we currently inhabit was just as powerful.

I hope over coming months it is a document you will have the pleasure of reading. A document which I believe encapsulates the feeling that this Assembly was one small step for a Marist and one giant leap for co-responsibility.

To go beyond Neil Armstrong and borrow the words of Sting: *Giant steps are what we take walking on the moon.* ■

**Darren McGregor,
Principal,
Catholic College Bendigo,
Victoria, Australia**



CARDINAL PETER TURKSON

Reconciliation in our Communion

Eucharistic Congress, Dublin, 14 June 2012

DEAR Pilgrims: Brothers and Sisters with whom I share a common call to discipleship, to holiness in Christ and to communion with the Lord, as we gradually bring this phase of our celebration of the liturgy before confession to a close, I wish to sustain the penitential mood into which we have entered with a story of pardon and reconciliation and with a five-word exhortation with which St. Paul concluded his second letter to the Christians in Corinth.

First, the story: Listen to this story, something that happened in our times, and as you listen, ask yourself: could this be my story too?

My name is Sister Geneviève and I belong to the community of St. Mary of Namur in Rwanda. I am a survivor of the Tutsi genocide in 1994.

Many of my family were killed while in our parish church. The sight of this building used to turn my stomach and fill me with horror, just like encountering any of the perpetrators filled me with disgust and rage.

It is in this mental state that something happened in 1997 that would change my whole life and my relationships.

A Catholic group called “The Ladies of Divine Mercy” brought me to two prisons in the region of Kibuye, my birthplace. They were preparing the prisoners for the Great Jubilee of 2000. Their message to prisoners and survivors was:

If you have killed, commit yourself to ask for

forgiveness from the survivor; in this way, you can help the victim to free himself from the burden of vengeance, hatred and rancour.

If you are a victim, commit yourself to offer forgiveness to those who harmed your family; in this way, you can free the perpetrator from the weight of his crime and the evil that is in him.

This message had an immediate effect upon one of the prisoners ... and then upon me.

A prisoner stood up in tears, came to me, fell to his knees before me and loudly begged: "Mercy! Mercy!" I was horrified, petrified, to recognize a family friend who had grown up with us and shared everything with us.

He admitted to having killed my father. He told me details of the deaths of my family members.

A feeling of pity and compassion invaded me. I lifted him to his feet, embraced him in tears and said to him: "You are my brother and always will be."

Then I felt a huge weight lift off of me and, in its place, *flowing inner peace*. I thanked the man I was embracing. To my great surprise, he cried out: "Justice can do its work and condemn me to death, for now I am free!"¹

My dear friends, as you listened, could this be your story, too? Could you identify with parts or all of it? I know one Christian who would have readily identified with the story in detail: St. Paul. For St. Paul, having once persecuted the Church, knew how to ask for pardon; and having suffered so much detraction, opposition and hatred in his own ministry, he also knew how to pardon those who made his mission difficult.

And so St Paul, writing his second letter to the Christians in Corinth, in anticipation of his final visit to that community, calls them to repentance. He tells them, "Brothers and Sisters: Rejoice, Be perfect or mend your ways, Encourage one another, Think alike – have the same attitude of mind, Live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you always."² I would like now to explore with you what these five words exhortations mean for us today.

1. With the same pastoral tenderness and solicitude of the great apostle of the nations, the first thing I wish to convey is an invitation to you, pilgrims at the Eucharistic Congress, that we all awaken within ourselves a feeling of joy and rejoicing. So, ***gaudete! rejoice!*** Now this exhortation and call for rejoicing is not meant to detract from the sobriety and seriousness of this celebration. Not at all! Rather, in accordance with the spirituality and attitude of the apostle Paul, who knew how to rejoice even in the most difficult situations because of his firm belief in the presence of the Lord, this exhortation and call is meant to remind us of the presence of the Lord. We stand in the presence of the Lord. Thus the first exhortation, *gaudete* or *rejoice*, is really a call to all of us to *rejoice in the presence of the Lord* or *to rejoice in the nearness of the Lord whose coming with pardon and forgiveness we have gathered to prayerfully seek*. Our first exhortation then recalls the exhortation of Paul to the Philippians: “*Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say, Rejoice. ... The Lord is at hand*” (Phil 4:4). It is thus *the presence of the Lord* which is the reason for our rejoicing.

It is the ***closeness to each of us*** of the Lord *who comes to save his people from their sins* (Mt 1:21) which inspires our joy and rejoicing. It is the ***presence*** of the Lord, who like the *sun of righteousness, rises over us with healing in its wings* (Malachi 4:2), which causes us joy and rejoicing. And it is our ***imminent encounter in the sacrament of reconciliation*** with the same Lord who once said to the sinful woman: “*Neither do I condemn you,*” and who willingly goes to the tax collector, Zacchaeus, as guest, which fills our hearts with joy. It is the Lord who fills our hearts with joy, the way he filled the heart of Sister Geneviève with joy, and the way he filled the murderer of her closest relatives with joy – joy which is both the promise and the fruit of liberation and inner peace.

This God of our rejoicing and joy still beckons to us: “*When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me ...*” (Jer 29:13). Indeed, he is close: “*He stands at the door and knocks*” (Rev 3:20). “*Called into the quiet,*” as we sang at the beginning of this liturgy, let us hear God knock, and let us rejoice in his presence!

2. The second exhortation of the apostle Paul, which we make our own, is rendered in the Latin version of the New Testament as *perfecti estote*, “***Be perfect,***” an expression which echoes the summing up of

Jesus' teaching on the mountain: "*Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect*" (Mt 5:48). In this sense, we would be exhorting you to recall our fundamental vocation to reflect the perfection and holiness of God, *having been created in his image and likeness* (Gen 1:26-27), *and redeemed by Jesus, the son of God and the perfect image of the Father, in whom we have received our adoption as children* (Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5).

The exhortation ***Be perfect!*** invites you to be true to your vocation as *a created image and likeness of God* so that, with your sins forgiven, you will be able once again to reflect his perfection.

But the Greek verb which the Latin translation rendered as *perfecti estote*, "be perfect," suggests that such *perfection* is the *rendering of an instrument or an object to full functionality as a result of repairing or mending it*. The Greek verb of our second exhortation (*catartizesthe*) expresses what one would do to a broken net to make it whole and useful for fishing again. It describes the repairing of a musical instrument to make it sound right once more: fix a fiddle so that it can play rousing tunes again. And so our second exhortation (*catartizesthe*) invites you to mend your ways and be whole again.

But you cannot repair or restore without first looking for what is broken or damaged. ***Be perfect!*** is a call to examine my own life and review our life as Church: what is so broken or damaged that it makes me – or us – play out of tune or keep losing the fish? What are my defects, mistakes, sins or weaknesses? What are the attitudes, habits or tendencies which wound our Church, compromise our credibility, reduce our effectiveness and leave us so low? We need to bring all these to Christ for forgiveness and healing. Then we can be restored *as redeemed and therefore trustworthy servants of God's household*, as we read in Hebrews, *and even more as adopted children because brothers and sisters of Christ, God's Son*.³

So this second exhortation, ***be perfect and mend your ways!*** is a call for intense introspection and examination of conscience, so that we can put all our broken ways into the healing and repairing hands of God in the sacrament of Penance – a Penance that can reconcile us with each other and bring us back into the embrace of communion with each other and with God!

3. Next and with Paul, we wish to exhort you to ***Admonish and encourage one another.*** These are two actions that can be derived

from the Greek expression *parakaleisthe*, which the Latin version of the New Testament renders as *exhortamini invicem*.

In the sense of “*admonishing one another*,” this third exhortation echoes the task of fraternal correction which Jesus enjoined on his disciples as an act of charity, and which Paul also required of his Christian communities. “*When your brother sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone*” (Mt 18:15).

“The eye,” as Shakespeare wrote, “does not see itself, except by reflection.”⁴ To help our brothers and sisters to see their faults is thus an act of fraternal charity and even compassion. The perfection which we have just talked about does require that we help each other to see our weaknesses and hidden faults (1 Cor 4:5). This is not done out of a desire to be judgmental (cfr. Rom 14:10), but in order to help us to renounce the shameful things that are hidden (2 Cor 4:2) and to build each other up (Rom 14:19). Therefore, the exhortation to “*admonish each other*” is an exhortation to help one another grow in perfection and holiness. It is thus an act of ecclesial solidarity and fraternal charity, motivated in its exercise only by love and compassion.

Everyone needs someone to hold up the mirror. Someone steadfast who won't leave their side. Someone to help them through their trial— like the murderer's difficult struggle to ask for forgiveness, and like Sister Geneviève's difficult struggle to forgive. But helping one another see our faults and defects often does require that we also console and strengthen one another in the face of the discoveries we make of ourselves. In this sense, our third exhortation invites us to also play the *Holy Spirit, the Paraclete* and *Consoler* to one another.

We may not only help people see the dark and hidden areas of their lives; we need also to stand by them, help them in their difficulty, in their struggle to overcome defects, and their pain. This is the second action, the “*encourage*” that goes with the “*admonish*” that St. Paul urges us to offer one another. With our fraternal corrections, we want to build up our brethren in holiness; we do not seek to push them over the cliff of despair. We need also to be a compassionate and consoling Church!

4. So far St. Paul has asked us to examine, and correct, and repair. “Okay,” you say, “everyone has their own way of doing that.” But no: St. Paul comes back with his fourth exhortation, to adopt the same attitude

or mind-set as our Lord Himself. “*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,*” Paul wrote to the Christians at Philippi.⁵

The same mind and attitude should clearly identify you and me as belonging to God’s household. But not because I wear a T-shirt which says “Christian” or “Catholic” across my chest. No; everyone should be able to recognize a disciple of Jesus because he or she appreciates things the way Jesus does. Having his “mind-set” means seeing things as He sees them, feeling experiences as He feels them and, maybe hardest of all, forgiving as He forgives.

At the beginning, before and after telling you about Sister Geneviève, I invited you to ask yourself: could this be my story too? But now I am inviting you to go deeper. Can the life and death and resurrection of Jesus be my story? Can the forgiveness of Jesus be my forgiveness?

It was very hard for Sister Geneviève to forgive her family’s murderer; but he admitted the truth and begged for mercy. The Jewish and Roman authorities who crucified Jesus did not think of their actions as evil. They never said “Sorry.” Yet on the Cross, suffering the worst, Jesus prayed: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”⁶

5. ***Have Peace!*** is the final exhortation: ***Live in peace!*** Let me repeat all five: first “Rejoice!” Then, “Be perfect!” Third, “Admonish or encourage one another!” We just talked about the fourth, “Have the same mind and attitude!” And now finally: ***Live in peace!***

Like St. Paul, I urge you to ***live in peace***, to receive and to share the Lord’s peace, since as Paul says, “Christ is our peace.”⁸ If we have the mind of Christ, we must surely experience his peace. Indeed, as his letter to the Romans says, “*justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” It is through our Lord Jesus Christ that we have obtained access to this grace in which we now stand⁹: the grace of seeking pardon and of pardoning others – “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Hear deeply those profoundly astonishing words of the priest: “I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” This absolution restores us to communion with God and with one another. It is the grace of restored membership in the household of God.

We come to experience *peace* especially in this extraordinary way: while we are yet sinners, while still stuck in our sin, our Father comes much more than halfway to meet us with the reconciliation that Christ's dying has won for us. The risen Christ says "*Peace!*" before we even begin to say "Sorry!" It is, therefore, a *peace* that we do not deserve or earn, but which is bestowed on us as a gift. This gift of peace will transform us from within and transform our relationships. This gift of peace will make us bearers of peace in our communities, our nations and the world.

CONCLUSION

After his five exhortations, St. Paul promises that *the God of love and peace will be with you!* We began with Sister Geneviève's story of forgiveness and liberation, which we embraced with St. Paul's five-fold exhortation: Rejoice, Be perfect, Admonish or encourage one another, Have the same mind and attitude, Live in peace. After hearing Sister Geneviève's story, if we still dare to affirm God's nearness as the source of our rejoicing, then at the end, we can confidently invoke His abiding love and reconciling peace.

May God's abiding love and reconciling peace be on everyone who has sinned, and on everyone who has been sinned against, on those who have forgiven and on those still struggling to do so. May God's abiding love and reconciling peace be on everyone here in this great Stadium, and on all His people throughout the world.

May the God of love and peace be with you always, AMEN! ■

ENDNOTES

- 1 Cf. *Synodus Episcoporum Bulletin* no. 14, 9.10.2009.
- 2 Fratres, gaudete, perfecti estote, exhortamini invicem, idem sapite, pacem habete, et Deus dilectionis et pacis erit vobiscum (2 Cor 13:11).
- 3 Cfr. Heb 3:5-6
- 4 *Julius Caesar*, Act 1, Scene 2.
- 5 Ph 2:5. *to auto phroneite = idem sapite.*
- 6 Lk 23:34
- 7 *eireneuete = pacem habete*
- 8 Eph 2:14
- 9 Rom 5:1, 5:2

BROTHER ALOIS
PRIOR OF THE TAIZÉ COMMUNITY

A Passion for the Unity of the Body of Christ

THE CHRIST OF COMMUNION

THE first day of this Eucharistic Congress wishes to deepen the meaning of our common baptismal faith. Mutual recognition of baptism among the various Churches is a great gift that God has given us in the last century. Despite the certainty expressed by the apostle Paul: “There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph 4, 5), this recognition has not always been obvious. Definitively concluding a long period often marked by suspicion, the Second Vatican Council asserted confidently: “Baptism establishes a sacramental bond of unity which links all who have been reborn by it” (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 22).

Can I allow myself this afternoon to illustrate the question of the meaning of our common baptismal faith by sharing with you our experience in the Taizé Community? The life we live in Taizé is intimately linked to the rediscovery of our common baptism as, in the words of Vatican II, a “beginning, an inauguration wholly directed toward the fullness of life in Christ” (*ibid.*).

Our experience in Taizé is of course far from covering all aspects of the question. But it can be shown that—and I continue to quote Vatican II—on the one hand, baptism is already “the sacramental bond of unity existing among all who have been reborn by it” and that, secondly, it commits us to continually seek “a complete profession of faith, complete incorporation into the system of salvation such as Christ willed it to be, and finally complete ingrafting into eucharistic communion” (*ibid.*).

I want to tell you specifically how we seek to highlight the unity of the

faith that baptism implies and to anticipate it, both between the brothers of the community and with the young people of all denominations whom we receive week after week on our hill. And since Brother Roger, the founder of our community, participated in the entire Second Vatican Council, whose fiftieth anniversary we are celebrating, I would also like to speak about his personal journey, since he opened an original way to head towards the visible unity of Christians.

In the early days of our community, writing the Rule of Taizé, Brother Roger addressed to every brother of the community the appeal, “Make the unity of the Body of Christ your passionate concern.” It is that passion which fills our hearts.

If you had asked Brother Roger what the essential of the Christian faith was, the focal-point of the faith confessed in baptism, he might have quoted the words of Saint John, “God is love” (1 John 4:16). For him, the heart of the Gospel was there. The vision of God as a stern judge had wreaked havoc in the consciences of many. He took the opposite tack, affirming that “all God can do is love.”

He would also sometimes tell the young people gathered in Taizé, “If Christ were not risen, we would not be here.” The resurrection is central to the faith; it is a sign that God loves without limits. It brought together the disciples dispersed by Good Friday and it continues to bring Christians together; its first fruit is the new communion born of its mystery.

The center of our faith is Christ, the Risen Lord present among us, who is in a personal bond of love with us and who by a common baptism brings us together. Brother Roger called this reality “the Christ of communion.”

In his last book, published a few weeks before his death, Brother Roger wrote: “Christ is communion.... He did not come to earth to start one more religion, but to offer to all a communion in God... ‘Communion’ is one of the most beautiful names of the Church.”

Personally, I can say that it was this vision of the Church as communion that struck me on my first visit to the hill of Taizé. Still very young, I was impressed on the one hand by the prayer and silence, but also by the communion which was lived out concretely—the Gospel lived not individually, but in community. And I can affirm that, as a Catholic, it was in Taizé that I discovered more deeply the catholicity of the Church.

RECONCILIATION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

I would like now to begin with the question: what do the words “the Body of Christ” mean, and why is reconciliation in the Body of Christ so important?

In the letters that St. Paul addressed to various communities of his time, he refers to the Church as the “Body of Christ” to try to help them understand the mystery of the unity between Christ and Christians, and the mystery of unity between Christians. “You are a body,” he writes to the Corinthian Christians, “and this body is Christ, each of you is a part of it” (1 Cor 12:27)

Baptism is the foundation of the unity of this body. That is why he writes: “In the one Spirit we were all baptized into a single body.”(1 Cor 12:13)

Forming one body in Christ, we belong to each other. “Is Christ divided?” (1 Cor 1:13), Paul asks, concerned at seeing the Christians of the same community separate from one another. And he called for them to be reconciled.

His words remain so relevant today: there is only one baptism, and you are the Body of Christ, so do not waste so much energy in opposition, sometimes even within your Churches.

COMMUNION RECEIVED AS A GIFT

On the eve of his passion, Christ prayed, “May they all be one! As you, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21).

Often the words “may all be one” are construed as a command to be put into practice. But they express first of all the gift that Christ gives to humankind: he bears us within himself; he brings us with himself into the communion of the Holy Trinity; he makes us “sharers in the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). He does not only pray that all may be one but that they may be one “in us”.

Christ asks that “all” may be one: this gift is not restricted to a few individuals; it is offered to all those who bear the name of Christ, and is intended for all human beings.

This communion in God accomplished through baptism is an exchange. In becoming flesh, God chooses to take on human frailty. He comes to live amidst our divisions and our pain. Christ meets us at the lowest point;

he becomes one of us so as better to reach out his hand to us. In him God welcomes our humanity and, in exchange, he gives us the Holy Spirit, his own life. The Virgin Mary is forever the guarantee that this exchange is real; she sustains our hope that it will lead to the life of humanity in God.

We can be immensely grateful to Orthodox theology for having demonstrated this in such a profound way. Last year I went with some of my brothers and 250 young people from across Europe to take part in the Holy Week celebrations with the Orthodox Church in Moscow. "Christ is risen," we repeated umpteen times on Easter night. And I felt down to the depths of my being the certainty that Christ enables us to participate in his resurrection already here on earth.

When we discover that communion with God is an exchange, then we understand better that reconciliation is not one dimension of the Gospel among others; it is the very core. It coincides with what is central to our life as baptized persons; it is the restoration by Christ of mutual trust between God and humanity, the beginning of a new creation. And that transforms the relationships between people.

Christ makes all the baptized ambassadors of reconciliation in the world. We are the Body of Christ, not in order to feel good together and to withdraw into ourselves, but to reach out to others. The human body has the calling of expressing the person on the outside. Likewise, the Body of Christ has the calling to express that Christ wants to reconcile all humanity.

We cannot receive unity with God without receiving unity among all human beings. The purpose of the Church is to be the visible sign, the sacrament of this. The Second Vatican Council expressed it with great clarity by saying: "The Church is, in Christ, like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (*Lumen Gentium* 1,1).

ECUMENISM AND COMMUNION IN GOD

If communion, founded in baptism in one Spirit, is a gift from God, then ecumenism cannot be primarily a human effort to harmonize different traditions. It must situate us within the truth of the redemption of Christ, who prayed: "My wish is that where I am, they too may be with me" (John 17:24). The apostle Paul said, "Our life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3).

The first ecumenical effort is to seek to live in communion with God, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. Maurice Zundel, a Swiss theologian of the last century, explained admirably how “it is in a mystical union with Christ that ecumenism can find its ultimate realization,” otherwise, he said, “ecumenism is just idle chatter.”

It is true that Churches and ecclesial communities sometimes demonstrate different paths to achieving this communion. However, the more deeply each one belongs to Christ, the more they are enabled to see the others correctly, seeing them as sisters and brothers. We should even go further: recognizing the others as sisters and brothers is the sign that one truly belongs to Christ.

Dorotheus of Gaza, in the sixth century, described this reality with an image: if God is at the center of a circle, the more the radii approach the center, the closer they come to one another.

This vision of communion requires a purification of our way of believing, a “conversion” undertaken over and over again in an *Ecclesia semper reformanda*.

One of the documents of the “Groupe des Dombes,” a group of Protestant and Catholic theologians in France, provided a solid basis for this view by calling for priority to be accorded to baptismal identity over denominational identity. Attributing a priority to baptismal identity over denominational identity: is that not also what we want to reflect on during this first day of the Eucharistic Congress? The Dombes document explains that, to define Christian identity, today in all the Churches denominational identity has been put first. People define themselves first of all as Catholics, Protestants or Orthodox. The Dombes theologians show that, in reality, baptismal identity should be put first; all Christians should define themselves first of all as baptized persons. The document therefore calls on Churches to enter into a “dynamic process of conversion.”

RECONCILIATION, AN EXCHANGE OF GIFTS

We sometimes have the impression that, over the centuries, Christians have become accustomed to being divided, as if this were something normal. To prepare reconciliation, it is up to us to emphasize the best of the different traditions.

Then an exchange of gifts can take place: sharing what we have received from God, and also seeing the gifts that God has placed in others. And

this exchange is possible precisely because we have the foundation that unites us, baptism, in common.

An exchange of gifts has begun. Through common prayer and personal encounters, mutual appreciation has deepened. Many have realized that certain aspects of the Mystery of the faith have been exploited better by another tradition than their own. How can we go further in sharing these treasures? And what are these treasures?

Eastern Christians have focused on the resurrection of Christ, which is already transforming the world. Is it not because of this that many of them managed to survive decades of suffering in past centuries? The East has preserved the teaching of the Church Fathers with great faithfulness. Monasticism, which it gave to the West, has instilled in the whole Church a life of contemplation. Could Western Christians be more open to these treasures?

The Christians of the Reformation have emphasized certain realities of the Gospel: God offers his love freely; by his Word he encounters anyone who listens to it and puts it into practice; the simple trusting of faith leads to the freedom of the children of God, to the immediacy of a life with God today; singing together internalizes the Word of God. Are not these values, to which the Christians of the Reformation are attached, essential for us all?

The Catholic Church has kept visible, throughout history, the universality of communion in Christ. She has constantly sought a balance between the local Church and the Church universal. One cannot exist without the other. A ministry of communion at all levels has helped to maintain unanimity in the faith. Could not all the baptized go further in a progressive understanding of this ministry?

BROTHER ROGER'S PATH

After expressing how our common baptism is the foundation of the call for reconciliation in the Body of Christ, I now turn more specifically to the path of Brother Roger and our community. Is it because Brother Roger was so consistent with this vision of the Church bringing together all the baptized, and lived it out with all its consequences, that he was recognized by different Church leaders as a brother sharing communion in Christ?

Five years after his death, Pope Benedict XVI wrote, "May his witness to an ecumenism of holiness inspire us in our march towards unity."

Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople added: “This search for unity, in joy, humility, love and truth, both in relation to others, ‘sacrament of the brother’ as well as in the relationship with God, ‘sacrament of the altar’, sums up the essence of this approach, the path of Taizé.” “Combining fidelity to the teaching of the Holy Fathers with creative adaptation to the needs of today, in a missionary ministry among youth, characterized the path of Brother Roger and that of the community founded by him,” commented the Patriarch of Moscow, Kirill. And the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, Olav Fykse Tveit, recalled that what Brother Roger has done “has inspired churches throughout the world.”

Brother Roger lived in Christ. Is that what enabled him to discern the presence of Christ in others? He did not let himself be brought to a halt by the splits between different tendencies. He discovered Christ in the baptized of all denominations. He even saw as “bearers of Christ” women and men who, without professing an explicit faith, were witnesses to charity and peace: some of them, he wrote, “go before us into the Kingdom.”

In the course of his journey, he never worried about losing his identity. He saw the identity of a Christian above all in communion with Christ, working itself out in the communion among all those who belong to Christ.

He undertook a step that had no precedent since the Reformation, going to the point of saying, “I have found my own Christian identity by reconciling within myself the faith of my origins with the mystery of the Catholic faith, without breaking fellowship with anyone.” And sometimes he would add: “... and with the Orthodox faith,” since he felt so close to the Orthodox Churches.

Entering into communion with others without breaking with his origins: since this approach was so new, it was easy to misinterpret it and overlook its significance.

OUR TAIZÉ COMMUNITY, A LITTLE PARABLE OF COMMUNION

When he was still very young, Brother Roger had the intuition that a life of community made up of men constantly searching for reconciliation could become a sign. That is the primary vocation of Taizé, to constitute what he called “a parable of communion.”

But monastic life had disappeared from the Churches of the

Reformation. So, without repudiating his origins, he created a community which had its roots in the undivided Church beyond Protestantism, and which by its very existence was inextricably linked to the Catholic and Orthodox tradition.

Brother Roger was convinced that such a community could give visible expression to the unity of the Body of Christ, which not only lies before us as a goal, but which already exists in God. The Church is divided, but in its depths it is undivided. In the heart of God it is one. So it is up to us to create places where this unity can emerge and be manifested.

Brother Roger lived a life so deeply rooted in the undivided Church that, born in a Church of the Reformation, he wanted the community he created to anticipate communion with the Catholic Church and with the Orthodox Churches.

Our community sought early on to express a communion with the Orthodox Church. In 1965, Patriarch Athenagoras sent monks to Taizé to share monastic life with us for several years. Bonds of friendship and trust with the Orthodox Churches have become deeper and deeper down to the present day.

And when, at the end of the 1960s, the first Catholic brothers entered our community, the question of how to anticipate communion with the Catholic Church became still more urgent within the community: how could the barrier of the separation between these two traditions be overcome?

For Brother Roger in his personal life, gradually entering into full communion with the Catholic Church became a reality in two ways—by receiving the Eucharist and by recognizing the need for a ministry of unity exercised by the Bishop of Rome.

He did not see this as expressing an “ecumenism of return to the fold,” because in his eyes, beginning with John XXIII and Vatican II, the Catholic Church had welcomed the basic demands of the Reformation: the priority of the grace of God, freedom of conscience, Christ-centered faith and the emphasis on the Bible. And he would have been glad to learn that in 2008 the Synod of Bishops in Rome, devoted to the Word of God, recalled that two realities already unite all Christians—Baptism and the Word of God.

Brother Roger’s path is a delicate and demanding one, and we have not finished exploring it. In his steps, we want to anticipate reconciliation in

our lives, starting from the baptism that unites us, by living as people who are already reconciled, and this experience certainly prepares theological developments.

In the history of the Church, has not lived-out faith always preceded the theological expression of it? In the future, we will continue to rely on two steps which our community took at the beginning of the 1970s:

–The first step: since 1973, with the approval and encouragement of the bishop of Autun, the diocese in which Taizé is located, we have all been receiving communion in the Catholic Church. It was the only possibility given to us to take communion together. The progress of ecumenical theology, particularly the work of our Brother Max on the meaning of memorial, allowed us to come to a common understanding of the Eucharist.

–And the second basic step of our community is this: during the yearly council-meeting in 1969, the brothers had found that the mere presence of Catholics brothers in the community led them “to live ever more an anticipation of unity by remaining in communion with the one who exercises the ministry of the servant of the servants of God.”

Our community had become convinced that the reconciliation of non-Catholics with the Church of Rome would not be accomplished by indefinitely setting conditions, but by helping it to evolve from within. The twentieth century has shown how the Petrine ministry has been able to change.

John Paul II himself has appealed to non-Catholics to assist with this evolution. In his encyclical *Ut unum sint*, he wrote these words: “Could not the real but imperfect communion existing between us persuade Church leaders and their theologians to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject, a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us only the will of Christ for his Church?”

The brothers in our community who come from Protestant families accept these two steps—receiving Catholic communion and anticipating communion with the universal pastor—without repudiating their backgrounds, but as a broadening of their faith.

For their part, the brothers from Catholic families find their faith enriched by opening themselves, in line with Vatican II, to the questions and gifts of the Churches of the Reformation. This has become quite natural

for us. If these efforts sometimes involve limitations and sacrifices—can there be any reconciliation without sacrifices?—the broadening of a life of communion is incomparably more important.

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION TOWARDS RECONCILIATION

I have spoken up till now about the brothers of the community. What about the young people who come for a stay at Taizé?

For us, all that has to do with the young is primordial. It is even a daily concern: how can we find new ways to communicate the Gospel to the younger generations today?

Week after week, we welcome to Taizé youth from all the countries of Europe, and also from other continents, with all their differences. Prayer three times a day brings us together in the presence of Christ, and in praying together, the Holy Spirit already unites us. The biblical teaching given each day to the young people enables them to go to the wellsprings common to all. And we reflect with them about how to continue this search in their everyday life.

These young people are growing up in a fragmented society, which does not offer clear points of reference. They are faced with life-choices which are often difficult. In the domain of ethics as well, the divisions between Christians do not help young people find ways of living out the gospel in their personal lives. In this delicate area, rather than defining positions too quickly resolved, which distance them from one another, could not Christians take more time for dialogue and to look for a common path?

For our part, we try to help the young people glimpse “the one Church of Christ” in its visibility while respecting the traditions of the different Churches, and this necessarily involves a tension. Concerning the Eucharist, we give the young people the possibility of receiving communion in their own traditions. A Catholic Mass is celebrated every day. The Orthodox liturgy is celebrated when there are Orthodox participants who come with priests. When there are Anglican, Lutheran or Presbyterian groups, they are invited to celebrate a Eucharist according to their tradition.

We find that many young people, after having spent time in Taizé, are more active in their Church of origin, while at the same time having acquired a keener sense of the universal Church.

We do not claim to have found the solution at Taizé. Our ways of doing things are imperfect. We know that our situation is provisional, awaiting a fully realized unity.

The visible character of the unity that we attempt to live does not resolve all the issues. But we are trying to enter into an ongoing process of reconciliation. We would like it to lead separated Christians to become more aware of their common baptism, to learn that they belong to one another, to purify their respective traditions, to distinguish between the Tradition and traditions that are only customs, to go forward in an ecumenism which is not content to keep Christians on parallel tracks. In this way a period of transition towards reconciliation could be begun.

COMMON BAPTISM AND SERVICE

I now begin a final chapter to emphasize that the fellowship offered by Christ makes his disciples men and women with a universal outlook. It stimulates them to reach out to others, to be attentive to the weakest, to those who are poorer than they are, and also to seekers of God belonging to another religion or to those without any reference to God. In many places, Christians of different denominations live this openness together.

Brother Roger often repeated: "God is united to every human being without exception." He held in his heart all human beings of all nations, especially the poorest, young people, children. This vision of universal communion led us to send brothers in small groups to share the lives of the most destitute in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and also to try and forge links between cultures and peoples.

These brothers are not equipped to change countless situations of distress. But for some of them, remaining each day before the Eucharist is a source of life that allows them, by their mere presence, to "wash the feet," if I may dare say so, of the people in their neighborhood. And gradually modest initiatives of solidarity arise. They are only signs, but they can lead the way to Christ, who transfigures humanity and who opens, at the heart of the world, a horizon of hope.

I open a parenthesis here. Those of our brothers who live on other continents are in frequent contact with new assemblies of Christians which are arising in large numbers, especially in the Southern continents. Whether we like it or not, these new assemblies confront us all with a question.

Closing ourselves up in a categorical negative judgment can certainly be justified by good arguments. But a purely negative attitude ignores, in my opinion, all the reality of the situation. There is much diversity among

these new assemblies; they sometimes profess doctrines that the great tradition of the Church cannot accept. But, perhaps more than we think, those who belong to those communities have a genuine love for Jesus because drug addicts are cured, alcoholics give up drinking, men take up again their responsibilities as fathers...

Do not we Christians of the historic Churches have the responsibility to seek, with discernment, dialogue with these new assemblies? Instead of looking only at what they lack, could we not see the positive things they have as well?

Of course this question leads us away from our subject, that of baptism as a basis for communion, but Christ's call to unity requires this openness of us today.

One day, Brother Roger wrote these words that we would like to meditate and keep on meditating:

“When tirelessly the Church listens, heals, and reconciles, it becomes what it is at its most luminous—a communion of love, of compassion, of consolation, a transparent reflection of the Risen Christ. Never distant, never on the defensive, freed from all harshness, it can radiate the humble trusting of love right into our human hearts.”

I am coming to the end. I spoke a lot about Taizé this afternoon. This was not to put forward our experience, but to share with you our hope, and to express our certainty that it is possible already now to give visibility to communion in one and the same baptism.

Let me stress again: since Christ came “to gather into one the dispersed children of God” (John 11:52), it is essential in our eyes that our common baptism leads us to be visibly one in him. Christ is the Good Shepherd of all. He is also the Gate, to the Father and to others. Will we go through that gate to enter the Father's house to meet all together, visibly united? This would certainly lead to a new dynamism for our Churches, filled with the joy of Christ and the trust that the Holy Spirit will show us the future step by step. ■

TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE

A Spirituality of Suffering and Healing

I HAVE been asked to sketch a spirituality of suffering and healing. I confess that I would have been very hesitant to choose this subject myself. There are all sorts of sufferings: mental and physical, the suffering of loneliness and of war, the suffering of illness and anguish. What they have in common is a loss of meaning, a feeling of one's world coming apart and of nothing having any sense. Pain is acute discomfort but suffering is how that often results in an anguished loss of meaning.

If that is how you are feeling, you do not want someone turning up and making easy sense of it. You might want to shout: But you don't understand! You are not taking me seriously. Here am I living through this disorientation, when my world is falling to bits, and you explain it all away with some neat theory! That is a denial of what I am living! And so when one is with someone enduring a deep suffering, perhaps because they have lost someone whom they love or because they are terminally ill, the last thing that you want to offer is a simple spirituality suffering. Understandably they may get very angry.

What then can we offer to those who suffer? Obviously, the first thing is to be with them. When the Son of Man divides the sheep from the goats at the Last Judgement, in Matthew 25, they are blessed because they fed the hungry, gave the thirsty something to drink and clothed the naked. They did something for them. But what they offered the sick and the prisoners is to be with them: 'I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.'

Suffering often isolates people. They feel trapped in a prison of pain. We must be with them, even if we have no idea in advance what to say. A friend of mine lost his wife and son in a car accident. He was furious with God, furious with the Church, furious with everyone. The moment of healing

came when a young Dominican came to see him and said, 'I do not know what to say.' If there is anything to say, then we shall discover it with them. As Jesus says of the moment of great suffering, 'Do not be anxious before what you are to say, but say what is given to you in that hour, for it is not you who speak but the Holy Spirit.' (Mark 13.11)

I expect that many of you have seen that wonderful film, *Des homes et des dieux*, 'Of Gods and men', in English. It is the true story of a community of Trappist monks who are deeply embedded in a Muslim village. They love and they are loved. Then they are caught in the middle of the violent war between the army and Islamicist terrorists. The film plots their decision to stay. They cannot leave the villagers alone in this moment of suffering. They must simply be with them. The monks were taken into the woods and beheaded on May 21st 1996.

I went there a few weeks later to visit our brother Pierre Claverie, the bishop of Oran. He too had received death threats and his priests had begged him to escape. He said:

"Throughout the dramatic events in Algeria, I have often been asked, "What are you doing there? Why do you stay? Shake off the dust from your sandals! Come back home!" Home... Where are we at home? ... We have no power, but are there as at the bedside of a friend, of a sick brother, silently holding his hand and wiping his brow. We are there for the sake of Jesus, because he is the one suffering there amid violence that spares no one, crucified again and again in the flesh of thousands of innocents. Like his mother Mary and Saint John, we are there at the foot of the cross where Jesus died abandoned by his followers and bitterly mocked by the crowd.¹

On the cross Jesus speaks; his enemies speak, but Mary and the beloved disciples are simply there.

Forty years ago I had operations on both of my ears. For a few weeks I could hear nothing at all. In fact I feared that I would never hear again. My brethren were wonderful and came and sat by my bed every day. It was terribly distressing to be with them and unable to communicate, but it would have been worse alone. I now give thanks to this experience because it helped me to understand the loneliness of suffering.

St Martin de Porres was sixteenth century Dominican lay brother in Lima. He drove his Prior crazy by bringing the sick into the priory.

You could not walk around without falling over them. The Prior tried to stop him, but one day he found that Martin had put a leper in his bed. When the Prior said, 'But you have disobeyed me', Martin replied that compassion was more important than obedience, and he *still* got canonised!

Our presence to the sick is a sign that they are not alone. God is with them. Meister Eckhart said: 'Even if you cannot conceive of yourself as near to God, you should still regard God as near to you.'² For God is utterly and intimately present to us, closer to me than I am to myself, as St Augustine said. We are a sign that God forgets no one. 'Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should have no compassion of the son of her womb? Even these may forget yet I will not forget you. Behold I have graven you on the palms of my hand.' (Isaiah 49.15)

But we have to say something! I had just landed in Jerusalem, in 1993 when I received a phone call from Rome to say that my father was dying. I got back as soon as I could, three days before his death. On that last day, somehow we managed to get all of his six children around the bedside. He could no longer speak, and we needed prayers. All that I had was my breviary, and so we read the psalms, passing them from hand to hand. They are perfect examples of prayers for the suffering.

The psalms are filled with suffering and anger. The most common form of psalm is the lament, in which the singers shout out their anguish, their disorientation and pain. When Mark and Matthew describe Jesus' death on the cross, they put the words of Psalm 22 in his mouth: 'My God, my God why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night and find no rest.' The psalms give voice to his raw anguish.

The psalms do anger really well. When we are suffering, then we may well feel angry with God. If you have lost your child, then of course you will feel a rage. How dare God let this happen? And the Church does not say, like David Cameron to an MP, 'There, there, my dear, do not get upset.' It says, 'Let your anger rip. And we have the very best words to help you to do so'. When we are furious with God, turning on the spit of the pain, we may feel deserted and let down. Why have you forsaken me? The words of the psalm express that rage and legitimatise it. Walter Brueggemann says that the psalms give form to the formlessness of grief.³

And because these emotions are given words, words of the community, then in singing them you are no longer alone. Your distress is recognised and named. The silence is broken. Around the bed of my dying father, the

Church gave us no explanation, no theory, but ancient songs and poems, two and a half thousand years old. When we recited them, we became part of a vast community, stretching through the centuries and across the globe. By giving communal expression to the loss of meaning, we found a certain meaning.

These psalms are songs to be sung. When I arrived at my father's bed the first evening, he could still talk. And I asked him whether there was anything that I could do. He asked me to find his Walkman so that he could listen to music. He wanted me to bring Hayden's *Seven Last Words on the Cross*, and Mozart's *Requiem*. This music does not explain anything! It gives creative expression to our suffering. Faced with the confusion of pain, music gives it shape and hints at hope. In the face of suffering and death, we are offered songs, poems and music. The only way to meet what is destructive is with creativity, which is a tiny share in the creativity of the one who made the heaven and the earth and who raised Jesus from the dead?

One of the gifts of those who suffer may be to find words for us all. The words that they find in their solitude create a community among the suffering, who can say: Yes, that's me. Gerard Manley Hopkins was an English Jesuit who did not always enjoy his time in Ireland quite as much as I do. He went through a dark time, of almost despair and terrible solitude, but his poems are a gift for all who are in the dark. When they hear them, they are less alone.

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep⁴.

For young people today, popular music is of vast importance in articulating their sense of hope and joy and also sometimes their sorrow and distress. In trains, on the underground, walking in the street, you see young people wandering with headphones, listening to music that gives voice to their distress.

Surely, if we are to attend to them with compassion, then we must value that music, open our ears to it, and catch its riffs and resonances. Often their earphones seem to deepen their isolation. But we must give thanks to the composers and singers who offer our young water in the desert. Surely we must be open to the creativity of popular music and accept its gifts.

So, we must be with those who suffer, we must give voice to their

suffering. But the psalms suggest a third step. They are filled with anger and pain, but, with one exception, they always carry you on towards praise. You are never left stuck in the bog of despair. Your pain is articulated, and then you are swept on to praise. We have seen how Psalm 22 begins in desolation. But, without any explanation, the tone suddenly shifts: 'I will tell of your name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.' Every psalm, except 88, ends in praise. The singer gets caught in the movement of the song and carried out of the suffering and into joy, like a wave that carries the surfer onto the safety of the beach. This is the structure of the whole Psalter, which ends with exuberant psalms of praise. If you can speak your anger and distress, then maybe you are ready to be caught in the movement beyond it. Every psalm has a sort of dynamism, to which you can surrender.

At some stage, probably after the Exile, most of the psalms were ascribed to David. He was to Song as Moses was to the Law. This was not just because he was a harpist and was supposed to have composed so many psalms. It was because he lived a life which included just about anything that could happen to a human being. Success and failure, love and adultery, glory and humiliation, sin and sanctity, until he reached the peace of his ripe old age. Whatever happened, you could find yourself in his life: crying out your pain, asking forgiveness, filled with joy. When Israelites could make no sense of their lives, and everything was collapsing, then they could find themselves in the Songs of David. In the New Testament, the singer becomes Jesus. This son of David becomes the one of whose life the psalms speak.

Isak Dinesen said: 'All sorrows can be borne if you put them ...tell a story about them.'⁵⁷ When you are suffering, then it is easy to lose the plot. Your life comes to bits and you have no future. There is only the senseless present of the pain and that is why it can be hard to look beyond the suffering. You are in the night, and in the night time seems to stop.

As Christians, we are offered a story in which we discover hope. We are inside the story of Jesus, of whom the psalms spoke. Sometimes it may be Christmas, at other times it is Lent. For those who suffer it is often a long Good Friday. But we are inside a story which will carry us forward to the dawn of Easter Sunday and beyond. This is our story because we are the body of Christ. The pain is not explained away, but you may be able to live with it, because you are sharing Christ's life, and we know that for him the dawn did rise.

My father longed to retire so that he could devote his life to his family, to gardening and to sport. But when the moment arrived, he was deeply unhappy. He became very silent, and we had no idea what to do. One Easter Monday, he came to meet me from a bus, and I could see from a distance that something had changed. He walked with a lighter step. And he said to me immediately: 'I have lived Holy Week.' Christianity is a drama. It breaks the tyranny of the present moment. However bad it is, the story eventually opens the way forward. Go with the flow.

Once again it is great art that might help this to happen. Grünewald painted the most dramatic representation of the cross ever, the Isenheim Altarpiece. It shows us a tortured Christ. He painted for the dormitory of people suffering from St Anthony's fire, a terrible disease which turned the skin red and itchy, and then black and gangrenous, until the limbs literally fell off the body. The body of Christ on the cross appears to be suffering from this disease. Christ is sharing their illness and they are sharing his. They are in his story and he is in theirs.

When my community in Oxford became involved in ministry for people with Aids, we commissioned an icon of Christ with Aids. Actually, it ended up showing someone with Aids resting in the arms of Jesus. I think that the artist lost her nerve. We wanted to help people with Aids discover themselves in Christ. His suffering is ours and ours is his, and so we too are being gently borne beyond the tyranny of the present towards Easter. Christ has Aids.

So stories break the tyranny of the present, when a future without suffering seems unimaginable. There is a famous rabbinic story of King Solomon asking for a ring for the feast of Sukkot. Finally one is found and all that it has written on it are three Hebrew characters, meaning 'This too shall pass.' In his case, it was his glory, for the sufferer it is the pain. It has inspired lots of poems. Let me just quote one by Grace Noll Crowell:

This, too, will pass. O heart, say it over and over,
Out of your deepest sorrow, out of your deepest grief,
No hurt can last forever - perhaps tomorrow
Will bring relief.

This, too, will pass. It will spend itself - its fury
Will die as the wind dies down with the setting sun
Assuaged and calm, you will rest again, forgetting
A thing that is done.

The 2012 Eucharistic Conference

Repeat it again and again, O heart for your comfort
This, too, will pass as surely as passed before
The old forgotten pain, and the other sorrows
That once you bore.

As certain as stars at night, or dawn after darkness
Inherent as the lift of the blowing grass
Whatever your despair or your frustration –
This, too, will pass.

If the story breaks the tyranny of present suffering, then maybe we can rest with it, even learn to be at ease with it. Thanks be to God, we relieve a vast amount of pain with medication. I no longer need to be afraid when I go to the dentist. But our society panics faced with pain and we feel that we have a human right to a pill that will get rid of it. We fight against pain with the weapons of the pharmaceutical industry. Our faith offers a way to live with pain and transmute into something fruitful. Don't get me wrong. If I am in pain, I rush immediately for the Ibuprofen! Give me my pill! But I also know that sometimes we must face pain more positively. Facing pain spiritually can transmute barren suffering into fertile joy.

I had a good friend called Ursula Fleming. Whenever I went to lunch her vast Alsatian dog, Attila welcomed me. She would invariably grill lamb cutlets, Ursula not the dog, but become so absorbed in conversation that she always burnt them, and Attila always ended up eating them while we had bread and cheese. No wonder Attila loved me so much. Ursula worked in the Royal Free Hospital, helping people suffering from cancer to live with their pain. She claimed that she had learned everything from Meister Eckhart, a fourteenth century Dominican. In fact she founded the Eckhart Society. Pain is not to be endured with gritted teeth. That only makes the body tense and so we suffer more. It is to be lived with, accepted, and then immediately it lessens.

She wrote: 'Unless they ask me I don't tell my patients about God. I teach them to accept, to relax, to concentrate, to focus their attention on the pain and to let go into it rather than using effort and will-power to fight against it. The moment they do this the pain, both of mind and body, is eased. But if they understand for themselves that what they are accepting is the "will of God" then, what they learn about control of pain and suffering is a revelation for the rest of their lives⁶.' I am nervous of talking about telling people to accept pain as 'the will of God.' It sounds as if God might

send us terrible suffering so as to do good to us, which sounds odd and cruel. Rather I would say that we can learn to be at ease in the suffering, not struggling against it as an enemy, because God is there.

Eckhart says, 'Whatever a good person suffers for God's sake, he suffers in God, and God is with him in his suffering. If my suffering is in God and God suffers with me, how then can my suffering be painful when suffering loses its pain, and my pain is in God and my pain *is* God?'²⁷

So, I have argued, a spirituality of suffering and healing does not explain the pain. It does not give us easy words to say. First, then, we are to be present and ask that the Lord give us the right words to so, if any. The psalms give us wonderful words to articulate our anger and distress. Maybe the Church needs to be more attentive to words of popular songs. If they make sense to our young, then let's open our ears. Perhaps most beautifully, we offer a story that carries us beyond the pain, for that too will pass.

A final word on the gifts we can receive from those who suffer. When I was a student, I was befriended by an old French Dominican. He had had a difficult life, and bore many wounds. He wrote a novel called, *Les Cicatrices*, the scars. And when he gave me a copy, he wrote that I must always remember that our scars can become the doors of the sun. (*Les cicatrices peuvent devenir les portes du soleil*). We all have wounds, mental and physical. But they can become the doors of the sun. We need the sick for the light that they shed.

One of my American brethren, Ed Ruane, went to visit his brother, who has a nine year old daughter who is profoundly deaf. She went over to Ed and started signing to him, and Ed could understand nothing. So her father called her over and he said, 'You can hear with your eyes and speak with your hands. But your uncle Ed cannot. He can only speak with his mouth and hear with his ears.' And so she went over and said to Ed, 'Uncle, I am so sorry for you, that you cannot hear with your eyes and speak with your hands, just as I cannot hear with my ears.' She knew that she had a great complementary gift. Each was blessed.

In the West, we have cultivated an odd and unhelpful image of what it is to be human. Western individualism suggests that the real human being is the solitary hero. Often this is conceived of as the macho male. He depends upon no one. He is self-sufficient. He is the Lone Ranger, the hero of a thousand cowboy films. But this image of what it is to be human is a dangerous illusion. Human beings thrive by giving and receiving gifts from each other. We depend upon each other. God says to St Catherine of Siena:

I could well have supplied each of you with all your needs, both spiritual and material. But I wanted to make you dependent on one another so that each of you would be my minister, dispensing the graces and gifts you have received from me.⁸⁷

Many suffering people need help. This may be a painful humiliation. And yet it may be an invitation to us all to be freed from the monstrous illusion that anyone of us is self-sufficient. It is part of the beauty of being human, that I need others to be myself. People with disabilities, who need help to get up in the morning or wash or shop, remind me that I too need others if I am to be truly human. Let me give you the example of my brother Vincent, who died a year ago.

Vincent was blind from birth. He never saw another human face. He entered the Order when he was young and soon became one of the most beloved members of the Province. This is partly because he was a deeply lovable person, who was strong, humorous and has utterly no self-pity. He was very independent, in the best sense! Once when he was walking around Liverpool with his white cane, he came to a busy road, and he asked someone if they could cross together. And so they crossed the road, he heard the screeching of traffic and the sounding of horns. When he got to the other side he said, 'Thank you so much for escorting me over.' And the other person, 'No, you escorted me. I'm blind!' 'No, I'm blind!'

When I was Provincial, every community always asked if I would assign Vincent to their community. Not only was it because he is lovable. Vincent gathered community around him. You cannot have someone in the community who is totally blind unless you really are a community. You have to ensure that nothing is in his way when he feels his way down the corridors, that the milk in the fridge is always in exactly the same place, so that he can find it. All our decisions about our common life have to bear Vincent in mind. And this is not a burden but a joy, since around him, we discover each other. He summons us beyond the silly Western illusion that anyone is self-sufficient. In his needs, we discover our own need for each other. He frees us to be brothers, mutually dependent.

The letter of James says, 'Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.' (5.14). The community gathers around the bed of the person, but the sick person also helps us to be a community. Around that bed enmities are forgotten, and we each find that we have something to give and to receive.

The suffering person may also have some special gift for the community which no one else can give. Let us take Vincent again. Because he was blind, he depended upon his hearing. He heard sound bounce off the walls. He navigated around the rooms with his ears. And this meant that he was wonderfully sensitive to what the brethren say. He was appointed to the Formation team, because he could spot what was happening in the lives of the young, their strengths and weaknesses, more than most of us. His disability was a gift. He picked up the nuances that others miss. He heard our secret fears and hopes in our voices. We are all blind and deaf in some way, and sometimes the blind teach us to hear and the deaf teach us to see, and the lame give us the courage to take another step.

So, we can be grateful for the gifts that those who suffer bring to us. The symbol of our hope is a human being on a cross, wounded, vulnerable and soon to be dead. We meet him everywhere. ■

ENDNOTES

- 1 Jean-Jacques Perennes OP *A Life Poured Out: Pierre Claverie of Algeria* New York 2007 p.243f
- 2 *Talks of Instruction no 17* Quoted by Richard Woods *Meister Eckhart* p.163
- 3 'The Formfulness of Grief' Interpretation vo. 31 1977 p.265
- 4 *Poems and Prose* Selected and introduced by W. H. Gardner London 1953 p. 61
- 5 Quoted Raymund Gaita *A common Humanity: Thinking about love and truth and justice* London and New York 2002 p.98
- 6 Meister Eckhart: *The Man from Whom God hid Nothing*. Leominster 1995 p.53
- 7 Quoted Richard Woods *Meister Eckhart* p.174
- 8 Trans Suzanne Noffke OP *Catherine of Siena: The Dialogue* New York, Mahwah 1980 ch. 7 p. 38

RULE FOR MONKS

He must be silent, gentle, humble and full of compunction, so that God and the angels may rejoice in our holy ways of living.

Caesarius of Arles, Monk and Bishop, 6th Century



MICHAEL ELLIGATE

Reflection: Evangelisation and Scripture

BEING ordained just on forty years means that our seminary formation was enriched by a set of then young scripture scholars who brought us the fruits of their own doctoral studies. Names like Bill Dalton, John Scullion, Frank Moloney and later Brendan Byrne stand out in my memory.

International scholars visited, led by Raymond Brown, John Meir, Jerome Neyrey Donald Senior and Eugene Le Verdiere and they all extended our biblical appreciation even further. Emerging also were woman scholars such as Sandra Schneiders together with our own Mary Coloe and Elaine Wainwright.

Each and everyone of these scholars drew on amazing specialist depths in language, hermeneutics and theology and they all insisted that their scholarship be grounded in nurturing the faith of ordinary people. As seminarians we were constantly reminded of the strategic value of well researched and effectively presented preaching.

One remark that stands out was Frank Moloney clearly stating the relationship between Church and Scripture –

“The Church is where Scripture is formed and carried, but it is Scripture that keeps the Church honest!”

So it’s the foundational texts of the Gospels, the Epistles and the Jewish Scriptures that play a vital part in how we evangelise – how we teach and preach.

As I write this reflection I have just prepared the Sunday homily where the Marken narrative is about the paralytic being lowered through the roof in order to have access to Jesus.

What paralyses people in our day and age? Anyone who has experienced depression or lived with people who suffer severe depression know what the experience can be.

Not wanting to get out of bed is an emblematic symptom of the illness. And in Australia Professor Patrick McGory has documented the epidemic of depression that hits young adults in particular.

To evangelise, is to open up experience, to offer the possibility of glimpsing a way to hope and healing.

The occupational hazard in preaching and teaching is to moralise after presenting a Gospel narrative. The Gospel stories are so rich that we short change ourselves if they are reduced to narrow lessons about being nice, even good.

A key to a creative exploration of Gospel stories is to understand the overall context of the Gospel.

Read Luke remembering he is writing a Gospel that includes fringe dwellers and the stranger. Gentiles were the “blow ins” the new comers to

the people of God. They lacked the great heritage of the Jewish people. The apostle Peter struggled to see where they should be placed in the new Christian communities. Notice now outsiders become insiders in Lukes Gospel. The marginalized are invited in and given a place at table.

Now we still have the marginalized and the fringe dwellers. The stories of inclusion have much to offer when we work with people who feel outside the circle of worthy disciples. Worse still when they are often told they are not worthy disciples!

Again read Mark and see the constant struggle of the disciples to stay with Jesus. The road to Jerusalem has too many unanswered questions. As we say these days

“They just don’t get it!”

Jesus himself struggles with issues about his God and what it means to be faithful. Life can be bleak at times, but the faithful ones cry out to their God for help.

Matthew presents Jesus preaching the popular beatitudes. Jesus speaks with authority, but notice the bridge building. The values are all about being pure of heart, about mourning, peacemaking and searching for Justice. These human values are noble and shared by many people of goodwill. Yet here Jesus is inviting more as we come to faith. To live in His Spirit is to enter into life with him, the Father Son. Here we help bring about the new Kingdom that facilitates the presence of our God. We have crossed the bridge from good human values to a life in Christ. We take our humanity and let it be blessed by the grace of our God.

The context of Matthew’s Gospel is at work here. Matthew is presenting a Good News through the terms of bridge building. The Jewish converts to the way of Jesus brought their heritage with them to the new realm of life in the Crucified and the Risen Lord.

To evangelise is to announce or to proclaim. As we explore Gospel texts we may see the insights these narratives contain. Knowing the context both in which the various Gospels were written, enables us to apply these insights and values to the context in which we live. Here is the strategic link between evangelisation and scripture. ■

BRUNO FORTE
ARCHBISHOP OF CHIETI-VASTO (ITALY)

The “New Evangelisation”:

A Challenge and a Promise

1. WHY A “NEW EVANGELIZATION”? AN EMERGING CRISIS

THE Pontifical Council for Promoting the New evangelization was established on 28 June 2010. In October of this year 2012, the next Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops is called to reflect on *New evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*. For Pope Benedict, this topic is of the utmost importance. Addressing the participants in the first Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council (30 May 2011), He tellingly explains in words emerging from his personal history as a scholar and pastor:

When I announced that I wished to institute a Dicastery for the promotion of the New evangelization, I opened the way for a reflection to begin on a subject I had pondered over for a long time: the need to offer a specific response to a moment of crisis in Christian life which is occurring in many countries, especially those of ancient Christian tradition.”

The Pope shows how the realisation of a widespread crisis—particularly noticeable in “old” Christian Countries—underlies the urgency of a new evangelization. What, then, is this crisis? What are its causes? To face these questions is to begin planning for the new evangelization.

In the Apostolic Letter, *Ubicumque et semper*, September 21, 2010, establishing the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New evangelization, Benedict XVI describes the crisis referred to:

“In the course of history, the mission [of the Church] has taken on new forms and employed new strategies according to different

places, situations, and historical periods. In our own time, it has been particularly challenged by an abandonment of the faith – a phenomenon progressively more manifest in societies and cultures which for centuries seemed to be permeated by the Gospel... There has been a troubling loss of the sense of the sacred, which has even called into question foundations once deemed unshakeable such as faith in a provident creator God, the revelation of Jesus Christ as the one Saviour, and a common understanding of basic human experiences: i.e., birth, death, life in a family, and reference to a natural moral law”.

In the Apostolic Letter *Porta fidei* (11 October 2011) introducing the Year of Faith on the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, the Pope observes with the same sincerity:

“Whereas in the past it was possible to recognize a unitary cultural matrix, broadly accepted in its appeal to the content of the faith and the values inspired by it, today this no longer seems to be the case in large swathes of society, because of a profound crisis of faith that has affected many people” (n. 2).

The crisis is deep-rooted: culturally speaking, its origin could be identified in society’s progress to autonomy which began in the Age of Enlightenment. This has now developed into the various forms of modern ideology regarding the autonomy of the human being in history. The claim is that every human person, especially in ethical matters, is absolute. The transcendent is denied and the individual “ego” is alone.

Such an isolated person easily falls prey to the power of ideologies. When there is no connection to the Transcendent, humanity is vulnerable to oppression. The only way of escape is to open our eyes to understand the truth about ourselves, and to break out of our crippling egotistic individualism. We need to look beyond ourselves to see the truth of things, to face the reality of the Other whether this be close and immediate or transcendent and supreme. If modern ideology believes God to be “dead, useless and unnecessary”, (*mortuus, inutilis, otiosus*), any resolutely objective view of reality recognises the fundamental value of anchoring life and history in a source of meaning. Both the popularization of scientific positivism and ideological absolutism took the death of God for granted—as it is clear in recent writers such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Michel Onfray, Piergiorgio Odifreddi. However, the parabola of modern

ideologies underlines the crisis of human being left to himself. The need to be connected with the living God reawakens a kind of “Longing for the Totally Other” (Max Horkheimer - Th. W. Adorno). There soon follows,

“an awareness that an interior desert results whenever the human being, wishing to be the sole architect of his nature and destiny, finds himself deprived of that which is the very foundation of all things” (Ubicumque et semper).

The “post-modern” side of this crisis turns into a denial of any ideological standpoint as totalitarian and violent. Typically, ideologies forces the post-modern man to live on fragments: as a period of contamination (everything is contaminated, nothing is worthy) and fruition (it is better to live intensely, enjoying pleasures), the post-modern era turns out to be an era of frustration, a long good-bye to any sense of security (Gianni Vattimo).

Religion is also compared with ideologies, and, therefore, is rejected because of its prejudices. It becomes necessary, then, to clarify the character of the God of Christian faith as totally unlike the totalitarian violence of ideological reason: a God who decided to choose the abandonment of the Cross to show the world the depth of his endless love. Moreover, the denial of the possibility of universal outlook pushes many post-modern people to withdraw into themselves. A return to this kind of produces in fact a “crowd of loners”. The force of Christian charity must be commended as a remedy for loneliness and as a way of creating points of contact and solidarity with others.

Christianity sees the whole in fragments as when the Son who had been abandoned on the Cross is then resurrected to new life. Seeing “the whole in a fragment” can be considered another name for “beauty”. It is important, therefore, in the post-modern era that Christianity show itself as the disclosure of a humble, yet saving beauty—in the most beautiful realisation of our humanity, in the resurrection of the Crucified.

The cultural movements referred produce ethical consequences. The scattered islands created by the post-modern fragmentation turns others into “moral strangers” whom we must be wary of. This defines the so-called “liquid modernity”, which has been often described by the British sociologist and philosopher of Jewish-Polish origins, Zygmunt Bauman. Nowadays, there are no “given” nor “axiomatic” models and patterns: there are simply too many conflicting instances so that all of them end by losing their force authority. Since there are no absolute points of reference, everything can

be justified in terms of the current fashion. Ethical standards, given to the Western World through the Bible, now appear weakened, concealed and hardly evident.

The terms used are “relativism”, “nihilism” and “weak thought”. This fluid side of post-modernity can be particularly traced to the weakness of certainties promised by the “virtual economy”, which is increasingly distant from the real economy. Once the mask of maximum profit with minimum risk is gone, what is left is the rubble of an economic and financial situation which is unstable at all levels. Finding points of reference and reliable guidelines is an immense challenge for governments and regulators. As Benedict XVI highlighted in the *Caritas in veritate* Encyclical, even the economy looks for salvation by knocking at the door of ethics!

2. WHAT DOES THE “NEW EVANGELIZATION” MEAN?

Faced with this Western cultural context which has so affected human life, the challenge for believers in Christ is that of preaching the Gospel of Jesus to this world in a credible fashion. On May 30th 2001, Benedict XVI stated in his speech that:

“The term, ‘New evangelization’ recalls the need for a renewed manner of proclamation, especially for those who live in a context, like the one today, in which the development of secularization has had a heavy impact, even in traditionally Christian countries. The Gospel is the ever new proclamation of the salvation worked by Christ which makes humanity participate in the mystery of God and in his life of love and opens it to a future of strong, sure hope. Highlighting that at this moment in history, the Church is called to carry out a new evangelization, by intensifying her missionary action so that it fully corresponds to the Lord’s mandate”.

What changes is not the Gospel, but those to whom it is preached. It is therefore essential to be ready to accept new challenges, to learn new languages, and to try new approaches. The Pope insists:

“The new evangelization must try to find ways of making the proclamation of salvation more effective; a proclamation without which personal existence remains contradictory and deprived of what is essential. Even for those who remain tied to their Christian roots, but who live the difficult relationship with

modernity, it is important to realize that being Christian is not a type of clothing to wear in private or on special occasions, but is something living and all-encompassing, able to contain all that is good in modern life”.

At the basis of these new approaches, there is always the new experience of contact with the living Christ for those who believe: “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction” (*Deus caritas est*, 1). In this sense, the adjective “new” used for the term “Evangelization” needs to be clear: it is not a new idea, as if what has been done up to this point is wrong or incomplete, and as if a new proclamation of the Gospel to the world is starting now. Similarly, it would be misleading to forget that the past can show extraordinary examples of movements of renewal and reform in periods of great pastoral and missionary creativity. Take for example the missionary involvements of modern age that have spread the Gospel to so many different cultures throughout the world. New evangelization needs to have a genuinely “new” quality—in the Greek terms from the New Testament, what is meant to be *kainós*, that is, possessing the inexhaustible ultimate and eschatological newness of the Gospel, and not simply *neós*, not simply a newness occurring in the course of time. It is not by chance that Jesus calls his new commandment *kainé*: The *entolé kainé* (1 John 2:7s) means that only those who share in the newness of God’s communication in the Son, can live the new love he asks for and be credible witnesses to it.

Evangelization will be “new” if it springs from a deep commitment to renew and reform the whole Church and in all its members. Indeed, the grace of Evangelization does not belong only to the origins of the Christian faith. The source of this grace is not exhausted, but - as St Augustine affirms,

“this fount is revealed when it flows, not when it ceases to pour out. And it was in this way that the grace, through the Apostles, reached others too, who were invited to proclaim the Gospel... indeed, it has continued to be a call right up to these days for the entire body of his Only Begotten Son, that is, his Church spread throughout the earth” (cf. *Sermon*, 239, 1).

Benedict XVI, quoting these words of St Augustine, says:

“The grace of the mission continually needs new evangelizers capable of receiving it so that the salvific news of the Word of God never fails to be proclaimed in the changing conditions of history” (30 May 2011).

It is, then, justifiable to refer to models from the past, and to think, for example, that “new evangelization” is to the Second Vatican Council what the great Catholic Reform was to the Council of Trent. What the Spirit tells the Church through these great Councils is to be translated into the new life of Christians. It must find expression in new enthusiasm based on contact with the risen Christ. This is a continuing possibility for the Church, to provide credible witness to others out of lives transformed through discipleship to Jesus.

The summons to “New evangelization” includes what increasingly characterises this pontificate, namely, commitment *to reform the Church* – beginning from within with the Christianization of hearts. The Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of former days had already showed his distress regarding what he perceived as “grime” of the Church. As Pope, he has intervened with honesty and determination for the sake of purifying the Ecclesial Community. Of course, evil cannot be eradicated either by wiping the slate clean or, even worse, by ignoring it. The renewal of ecclesial life, according to the young professor and future Pope Benedict XVI

“does not consist of a quantity of exercises and external institutions, but in belonging, singly and entirely, to Jesus Christ...Renewal is simplification. Not in the sense of cutting down or diminishing, but in the sense of becoming simple, turning to that true simplicity that is an echo of our Lord’s simplicity. Becoming simple in this sense is what would be the real renewal for Christians, for everyone and for the Church itself” (*Il nuovo popolo di Dio*, Queriniana, Brescia 1971, 301. 303).

Real reform is evangelical *metanoia*, a radical change of heart, the only reform that can bring the Church back to its original beauty and to be sign for the nations. Renewal and reform of the Church go hand in hand: they depend on each other.

3. HOW TO PROMOTE THE “NEW EVANGELIZATION”?

How shall we proclaim the Gospel of our Faith in situations so different from the Christian past? Benedict XVI, addressing the participants in

the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization (30 May 2011), says:

“The current crisis – brings with it traces of the exclusion of God from people’s lives, from a generalized indifference towards the Christian faith to an attempt to marginalize it from public life. In the past decades, it was still possible to find a general Christian sensibility which unified the common experience of entire generations raised in the shadow of the faith which had shaped culture. Today, unfortunately, we are witnessing a drama of fragmentation which no longer acknowledges a unifying reference point; moreover, it often occurs that people wish to belong to the Church, but they are strongly shaped by a vision of life which is in contrast with the faith”.

There are two crucial guidelines: First, the renewal of the standard pastoral life, which aims to take advantage of all opportunities to demonstrate the freshness of the Gospel. Second, creativity and courage in adopting new initiatives of evangelization. Both these are needed if we are to communicate the attractiveness and beauty of Christ. In the wake of totalitarian influences and the post-modern fragmentation that has occurred, it is now more urgent than ever to propose to people today “the whole in the fragment”, that is, the beauty that saves, the Gospel of the good and beautiful shepherd, Jesus (cf. John 10:11).

Christian tradition shows how this beauty can be experienced through worshipping and listening to the word of God, in liturgy, in communion and in charity. In this way, the beauty of Christ attracts and changes us, both in traditional and in new forms, and so enables us to proclaim in a credible fashion this beauty to others. According to Joseph Ratzinger—a few weeks before he became Pope—,

“What we most need at this moment of history are people who make God visible in this world through their enlightened and living faith. The negative witness of Christians, who speak of God but live against him, have obscured his image and opened the door to unbelief. We need people who have their eyes fixed directly on God, and who learn from him what true humanity is. We need people whose minds have been enlightened by the light of God and whose hearts have been opened by God, so that their minds can speak to minds of others and their hearts can open others’ hearts.

The New Evangelisation

God comes back to us only through those who are touched by God”
(Subiaco, 1 April 2005).

Such kind of believers have expressed themselves in history and they will continue to do so through different forms of beauty, in the figurative and plastic arts, in music, poetry, literature and architecture, in witness of faith and charity. These are all possible channels of communication with God. Beauty is for everyone, and no one is excluded from its gift; and, in particular, the poor are most deserving of it.

One field in which the beauty of Jesus Christ needs to be proclaimed is the standard pastoral life: the celebration of the fundamental stages of life with the sacraments is a choice for what is truly of value, for it underscores the central proclamation of faith, the “kérygma” of the Resurrection of the Crucified. It is important, therefore, to put significant effort into the catechesis, both for children and adults. Likewise, there is the preaching of sermons – which are still too often under-prepared and long-winded – and the special occasions of holy days and pilgrimages, the celebration of sacraments and the meditation of the word of God (*lectio divina*), spiritual exercises for everyone, etc.)

A particular occasion of New evangelization is represented by marriage preparation courses, which are often addressed to couples who have not frequented the Sacraments for a long time or who are already living together. At the same time, taking care of families, especially young people, is an effective exercise of permanent Evangelization. Religious education in schools, in spite of the fact that it has a predominantly cultural and informative purpose, can be a precious means of Evangelization if it is informed by the teachers’ own meaningful experience. Thanks to all these forms and the daily testimony of parents and educators in particular, Christ will appear to modern men and women and especially to young people, not only as truth, which he is, not only as good, which he is and inspires in us, but also as a beauty that can save. In him is revealed the Whole of eternal love which is given into the fragments of our existence as it is touched by grace.

But there also new perspectives for Evangelization. There is one issue of interest to all Christian communities, and, more generally, for societies affected by the great cultural changes of recent decades. I am referring to the “educational challenge” which for instance Italian Bishops have chosen to focus on for the coming years. The reason for making education a focal area in the New evangelization seems clear once we consider how

difficult it is to convey our values to the younger generation. It seems like the gap between generations has widened all of a sudden, due both to the rapid rate of change and the new languages of the computer and of the Internet. “Digital natives” were born during the Internet era and are at ease in accessing it. They have difficulties interacting with the inhabitants of the old planet Earth, defined as it is by borders and distances. Well-intentioned instruction on the part of parents and educators can be negated by the Internet world. There, the young people surf the web for long periods, and often without caution and discretion. Whilst the “global world” of the young is more and more standardized on a planetary scale, national identities are rooted in history, use and customs; and there are of only relative interest to youthful eyes.

We have to acknowledge that pastoral work seems to answer questions that no one is asking, or ask questions that no one cares about. We often feel that we are living in a world without God. That may be the result of thinking of “God without a world”. That may be the case for many people we want to reach, who speak languages that are completely different from ours. Our love for young people, which is the reason why we want to pass on the best we have in our hearts, seems to struggle to find the right form of communication.

How can we face this challenge? How can we express what we really care about to new generations? Looking for an answer to these questions seems at the heart of commitment to the New evangelization. Let us meditate on the Biblical story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus. Jesus approaches them on their journey, and draws them into to the complete reality of his mystery (Luke 24:13-35). The way in which the Son of God educates the two disciples who are so similar to us and to the young, we who are “foolish and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken”, can help us to understand how to face the radical challenge of education and living our commitment to Evangelization.

First of all, the Emmaus story makes us understand that education, as well as Evangelization, is *a path*: neither takes place in an untroubled, once and for all, closed relationship. Rather, both occur according to the risk and complexity, between nostalgia and hope, of personal development. All this is represented by the journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus taken by the two disciples and the mysterious Wayfarer. The story suggests that we have all left the City of God, because we are the work of His hands, and we go as pilgrims towards the future at dusk, needing someone to be close to us,

someone we can rely on: “Stay with us because it is getting dark and the day is almost over” (v. 29). We are all going towards the ultimate silence! It is the confrontation with the mystery of death that gives us two radical and opposite possibilities: being “towards-death” (as Martin Heidegger suggests when reflecting on the human condition) or being “beggars for heaven” (as Jacques Maritain suggests), bound to a life of victory over the death in the heavenly Jerusalem. If man is alone in this world, the last word on his destiny could not be anything else but that of the final silence, when everything will die away. If, rather, there is a God who is love, every personal being is a singular and unique “you” to whom this love is addressed, and who will live forever, thanks to the eternal fidelity of the love that has revealed itself.

The choice is crucial between the two options, and must be made every day. The proclamation of life victorious over death must resonate every day, in a ceaseless witness. This is lived out through sharing the journey and through the humble and courageous promotion of the Gospel of love in the widest range of forms, languages and experiences. This is precisely the “new evangelization” that every generation needs. The proclamation of the meaning of life must never be taken for granted; for it implies the horizon of God and His eternal love. There will always be a need for people with a new heart, who are capable of singing the new canticle of hope and faith along the often winding paths which we human beings are called to walk. Anyone who evangelizes or educates must never forget that the crucial choice at stake—this fundamental option shaping each one’s life and the decisions each one will make. Educating means introducing others to the meaning of total reality through a process which helps them to see the truth and to make their own the account of life and hope proposed to them. The goal of complete education can be only the free and faithful choice of what is good in accordance with God’s plans for each and all, for there lies true peace. To reach this goal—for both education and evangelisation—demands that four conditions are fulfilled:

- a) The first condition necessary for the transmission of faith is *the gift of time*. The modern culture of progress has profoundly altered our conception of temporality. Reason, which aims to dominate all, has relentlessly accelerated the transformation of historical reality. This “reason in a hurry” is expressed in the rapidity of technological and scientific development, as it is in ideologically driven revolutionary urgency. The myth of progress is nothing but a form of desire for

reason to be in power. Modern philosophies of history not only interpret the world, but also attempt to transform it in accord with their image and likeness—and as quickly as possible. Emancipation – modernity’s inspiring theme—brings a special urgency to the task. The gap between “historical time” and “biological time”, is ever widened by the thirst for global solutions. That is the characteristic of the cult of progress, with devastating consequences of environmental deterioration and ecological imbalance. We need now to rediscover humankind’s dominion over time if we are to begin finding time for people again, in what they need for their overall development. We must *have time* for others and *give them time*, accompanying them faithfully for the duration, patiently experiencing the gift of our own time.

Who is ever in a hurry, unready to give time to others on their journey, will never be an educator, nor an evangelist. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus could have immediately revealed his secret, but did not. He knew that the two disciples needed time to understand what he was going to reveal to them. As in every relationship based on love, even in an educational relationship or in the process of Evangelization, giving time for others is the most credible sign of genuine service.

- b) A second condition for the effective transmission of faith is *care for interpersonal relationships*. As Romano Guardini states, “only life ignites life”; and it is therefore only within the warmth of interpersonal relationships that education can be effectively carried out. Historical parabola of modernity represent here an obstacle, because the general breakdown of ideologies and the strong allegiances they nourished, has produced in our post-modern condition a widespread experience of incommunicability and the dominance of the so-called “sad passions” shrouding the narrow horizon of the individual. As a result, interpersonal relationships have weakened. The “strong culture” built on ideology has splintered into countless “weak cultures”. A “crowd of loners” closes everyone up in a private world. We are increasingly alone because we lack a common dream. Building bridges, therefore, between those who are alone is now of vital importance. In that regard, Evangelization is relevant, as is educational process supportive of those sharing a common journey as they move on together. Educators and evangelizers must be *with* others before being *for* others. Education,

like Evangelization, occurs through listening, sharing and dialogue. Dialogue does not mean the quashing of differences, however: others cannot love themselves if they are not allowed to be themselves, and accepting of the inevitable differences between themselves and others. “If you love me, you can say no to me” is an indicator of an effective educational approach, presuming that the context is a network of care and love which does not exclude differences, but allows them to meet for reciprocal challenge and enrichment.

Likewise, essential to any educational experience is *communion in difference*. Here, we have an example in the mysterious Wayfarer on the road to Emmaus. He draws near, joins the two travellers on their journey, listens, and changes their way of seeing things: “Jesus Himself approached and walked along with them” (v. 15). He goes with them, asks questions, listens, reads their hearts—and makes their hearts burn within them at the proclamation of the word of life, sparking the desire, in their turn, to share what they came to feel and understand. This is what it means to transmit the meaning and the beauty of life through the eloquence of life itself. As Paul VI wrote, “Modern people listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers; and, when they listen to teachers, they do so because they are also witnesses” (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 41). The one who educates, like the one who evangelizes, must draw near to the other: the light of life is transmitted by interpersonal interaction, patiently allowing to the other the time that is needed, and encouraging their choices. As John Henry Newman loved to say, *cor ad cor loquitur*, “heart speaks to heart”. “Nulla maior est ad amorem invitatio quam praevenire amando”, wrote St. Augustine to a friend who asked him how to educate the difficult boys of his day (*De catechizandis rudibus*, 4), that is, “There is no greater invitation to love than loving first”. Educators, like evangelists, must love first and foremost, and without tiring. Only a loving relationship is truly life-giving.

- c) A third condition necessary for the transmission of faith is the ability to *keep memory alive*. After the strong claims of ideologies, post-modernism often arises like an “identity crisis” arising from a kind of loss of collective and personal memory. This amnesia is the result of a mistaken emancipation from the past and from our roots. We are in an era of “weak identities” affecting all the variety of memory in its personal, historical, national, cultural, spiritual and the linguistic

forms. But the eradication of the past undermines the very possibility of addressing the challenges of the present and the future. Without memory there is no identity—and no prophecy! In the story of the disciples of Emmaus it is significant that Jesus not only accompanies his two disciples, but also reminds them of things that have occurred, and enlightens their minds with the big picture of the history of salvation. In doing so, he rouses the two travellers by unlocking the meaning of what had been happening, touches their troubled hearts and opens their eyes to the wonder of the gift of divine love: “Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (v. 27).

By recalling the wonders wrought by God for his people, the mysterious Wayfarer introduces these two into how own living truth, and opens up the treasure of his heart by making them understand what all have received from the heavenly Father as the gift of true life. Here we have an instance of how the language of memory shapes and inspires the identity of those with whom we communicate, so that objectivity and passion, facts and emotions come together. It is not enough to simply recall the past; its meaning needs to be teased out and applied in such a way as to address the deepest questions of our present lives. The “new evangelization” involves keeping alive this vital, “dangerous” memory. It places personal existence within reality as a whole, and therefore within the living tradition of faith and love which nourish life. It radiates the light that comes from the history of salvation and opens life to the promise of the future.

In this respect, education deals with the whole person and the whole of reality— “Catholic”, in the etymological sense of the term (“kathòlou” = ‘according to the whole’). In the embrace of all reality, life gives life, the gift received becomes the gift given in love, just as the whole truth frees and saves. Therefore, memory must be like that which Jesus evoked – living and transforming, rather than sterile and inert: “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” (v. 32). Only the honest word and the genuine witness of what we have experienced are able to inspire life. Memory must be shared lovingly with others, just like Jesus revealing himself at the end of the shared journey in the gesture of the breaking of bread, thus of offering and sharing the gift of God through the gift of himself. “When he was at the table with them, he

took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him” (vv. 30 and 31). The gesture of blessing is linked to the symbol of the sharing of the bread, of word, of life, and heart. Only in a dialogical relationship rich with memory, and eloquent in gesture, is the life which gives life, between parents and children, between educators and students, between evangelizers and the evangelized...

- d) A fourth condition for the transmitting faith both through education and Evangelization is *respect for the freedom* of others—that also means encouraging them along the path of genuine *liberation*. In post-modern culture there is shortage of great hopes to open horizons of adult and responsible freedom. With the sun having set on ideology, the future does not appear as reliable as the great ideological narratives, of widely varying origins, wanted to represent it. When the lights have gone out it is a challenge to move forward with confidence—for both personal existence and social development. Once more, the Emmaus story offers surprising riches. For Jesus reveals a new future to the two disciples. He opens their hearts to steadfast hope and inspires *prophecy*, spreading the freedom of courage and of joy.

Evangelization aims to open horizons, to rise to challenges, and to ignite passion for the cause of God in this world. Neither the evangeliser nor the educator may intend to dominate others, but to lead them to true freedom. Jesus proceeds in this way: he draws near, he explains the Scriptures, he feeds desire, he allows himself to be recognised and offers the two men the proclamation of his victory over death—but in all this, leaving them free from fear and bringing them to the freedom of the mission: “As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus approached and walked along with them ... And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (vv. 15 and 27). He stirs in the hearts of these two a “great joy” (v. 41). Such a joy created a sense of urgency; they left immediately to take to the others the Good News which they had witnessed: “They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together, and said, ‘It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon’” (vv. 33-34).

When you witness to an encounter of this kind, there is no stopping at what you have been given. You must pass it on in turn—even if freely choosing to do so. Evangelization either produces witnesses who are free and convinced of what they are living—or, it fails in its goals. The evangelising educator must not create dependencies, but instigate life journeys for each and every one, thus radiating the light they have first received: “Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread” (v. 35).

Education has achieved its goal when its recipients are able to spread the gift that has come to them and changed them. The same must be said of Evangelization: to evangelize is not to produce clones, but to communicate and inspire life at its deepest, so to inspire journeys of freedom and expanding consciousness. In this way, the biblical icon of Emmaus gives us a description as much of education as of the new evangelization: an educator and evangelizer are alike in accompanying others from a sad meaninglessness to a life of joyous significance. This path opens from the precious depth of one’s own heart and leads into the heart of the Church, so that all can grow stronger in love. To be an educator means being able to repeat these words with St. Paul the Apostle: “Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy” (2 Corinthians 1:24). It is to be the guardian and promoter of freedom for everyone.

A CONCLUSION WHICH IS A BEGINNING...

The style of Jesus can be perceived in his dealings with the disciples of Emmaus, we must then all examine ourselves, asking ourselves if, and to what extent, our commitment to the new evangelization is similar to his way of acting—in regard to our society, our historical memory and in terms of prophetic hope for its future. This is as relevant for the vital, daily communication between generations as it is for the Church’s global pastoral action in the service of the new evangelization. We might easily feel that we are losing the battle. However, there is comfort in the fact that we are not alone. God – who has educated his people throughout the history of salvation – continues to educate us in the present: “The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26). The Lord is the great evangelizer, and the gift of his love is ever new. We cannot, therefore, give up either in rising to the educational

challenge, or to that of the new evangelization, no matter the cost. And we will trust in the divine Master. As Pope Benedict XVI stated in his speech of May 30 2011:

“Proclaiming Jesus Christ the only Saviour of the World today is more complex than in the past; but our task remains identical to that at the dawn of our history. The mission has not changed, just as the enthusiasm and courage that moved the Apostles and first disciples must not change. The Holy Spirit which prompted them to open the doors and made evangelizers of them (cf. Acts 2: 1-4) is the same Spirit which today moves the Church to a renewed proclamation of hope for the people of our time”.

We are not alone: the Lord Jesus travels with us in the strength of his Spirit, along with the Church, and the educating and evangelising community. The eyes of the Lord guide our steps; the ultimate goal is the beauty and peace of humanity reconciled in His love. In conclusion, I would now like to turn to Christ, telling him simply and faithfully on behalf of all those who wish to accept the challenge of the new evangelization and of the educational commitment it inspires:

Lord Jesus, you joined the two grieving disciples on their journey as they moved from the city of God toward the darkness of evening. You made their hearts burn, opening their eyes to the total reality of Your mystery. You agreed to stop with them at the inn, to break bread at their table and allow their eyes to be opened, so that they might recognise You. You then disappeared, because they – by now touched by You – left for the streets of the world to take to all people the liberating proclamation which You had given them. Allow us also to see You by our side, a wayfarer with us on our journeys. Enlighten us and allow us to enlighten others in turn, beginning from those who particularly rely on us to be companions on their journeys too, as you did with us, in order to remind them of the wonders of salvation and to make their hearts burn, as you made our hearts burn within us, so to follow you in freedom and in joy and proclaiming your beauty and the gift of your love which triumphs over death. Amen. Alleluia.” ■

RICHARD RYMARZ

The New Evangelisation and Religious Education

IN THIS presentation I will outline some of the challenges for religious education in Catholic schools that are implicit in Pope John Paul II call for a new evangelization. In response to these challenges, some foundational points of a renewed approach to religious education in Catholic schools will be given. These are, hopefully, harbingers of much future discussion, elaboration and reflection. In general terms, my proposition is that a renewed approach to religious education should incorporate a focus on content and pedagogy, have an apologetic, proclamatory dimension and at the same time retain an educational focus. This is in keeping with the founding assumptions of what, in a wider context, Dulles (1995) has called postcritical theology.

CHANGING CULTURAL CONTEXT

To provide contextualization for my comments I will make brief reference to some of the cultural changes in countries like Australia that have particular relevance to Catholic schools and religious education in these schools. While this general topic has been of great interest to me in recent years and has been the subject of much of my published work, my remarks here will be very limited and by no means exhaustive. This is to keep the presentation within reasonable boundaries.

For John Paul II the goal of the new evangelization is to bring about and nurture a closer relationship with Jesus through the Church. For him, the highest aspirations of the new evangelization cannot be seen in purely moral terms, as if evangelization was synonymous with the promotion of certain values or attitudes. Instead, the new evangelization sets for itself the lofty task of deepening and nurturing the personal relationship with Christ. And the most urgent need for the new evangelization occurs in secular contexts where religion is not, in the first instance, directly challenged but where it is

pushed away from the public square and into the realms of the personal and private. This type of secularization has been part of the changing cultural and religious landscape that Catholic schools have operated in for, at least, several decades. One feature of this landscape has been the general diminishment in the strong, unifying common experiences that can have a decisive effect in shaping personal and communal identity. This decline has clear implications for religious education today.

In the recent past, perhaps in reaction to the monolithic preconcular expression of Catholic culture where teaching was often passed in a passive fashion, many in Catholic educational circles sought to better integrate experience and belief. This was done by encouraging a critical, but by no means hostile, attitude to experiences of religious belief and practice. Groome, for example, in his most recent book, which he calls the capstone of his life's work, describes this as a series of critically reflective movements from life to faith. In these approaches individual religious beliefs and practises, acquired largely through family and buttressed by wider society, were taken as the departure point and used as the basis for further elaboration and critique in the RE classroom. Very few today though have an equivalent initial starting point when it comes to religious experience. I still remember a student teacher of mine coming back from her teaching rounds and telling the class of a most bizarre practice at the school she was placed in. With wide eyed amazement she recounted, "everyday at 12 o'clock all classes stopped and these prayers came over the PA system, every day and every day they were the same prayers!" If you know what she was referring to you are probably showing your age!

A more substantial illustration of the change in the religious background of students is found in a very common approach to teaching about sacraments. This is to emphasize a strong experiential foundation for the learning process in the classroom. For instance, when teaching about baptism teachers are encouraged, quite rightly, to invite students to share experiences or mementos of baptisms that they have been involved in. This then establishes a platform for a more spiraled cognitive approach. The difficulty with this methodology was driven home to me a number of years ago when I observed a student teacher giving the initial lesson on baptism in a primary school. After consultation with her mentor teacher she was showing the class a video of a baptism and then using this as a basis for what followed. The reason for this was, that because so few children in the class had any direct experience of baptism the teacher had to provide this experience, so to speak, by showing

them a video. With the passage of time this type of vicarious experience could become more and more dominant and if this does occur it raises serious questions about the over reliance of primarily experiential models in religious education.

In addition to a lack of personal connection, for many students, their *a priori* position is that any type of strong religious belief is both untenable and unattractive. The prevailing culture tends to contest all truth claims so religious positions are often considered to be almost indefensible. To illustrate, Cardinal Wuerl of Washington DC tells a story of a trip he made where he was asked by a couple of airline stewards to settle a religious dispute that they were having. After he had given his response the person sitting next to him interjected with incredulity – “how do you know that any of that is true!” Dulles (1995, 6) put the same notion well when he wrote: “Our contemporaries, well aware that religious tenets are capable of being questioned, need to be shown how firm religious commitments may nevertheless be responsible.”

Dean lays out a very explicit challenge to the Christian Churches in terms of the message that they need to be presenting in an increasingly secular culture. To reiterate, secular here does not mean hostility or overt anger about religious belief, practise and commitment. It is just that for an increasing number of people, and these are by no means just young people, religion has a relatively minor part in shaping what they believe and how they live. There is a very important distinction to be made here between overtly rejecting religion and regarding it, in practise, as having only a small impact of life. The latter position is one that is becoming normative in many cultures and is a good working definition of what secularization means *in situ*. And, to be sure, increasing secularization places clear challenges before religious communities.

Dean articulates well many of these challenges. For her, a key issue is the integrity of the Christian message in the face of attempts to domesticate it. In this view, which is very much in keeping with the call for a new evangelization, the Christian Churches need to provide a cogent alternative to the rising, and some would say relentless, advance of an *ersatz* Christian message. Here the pinnacle of the Christian life is reduced to a weak and generic morality. This is described as the triumph of the cult of niceness – where to be a Christian is to be nice, just as Jesus was nice. This is of course a parody of Christianity but the point the Dean raises, supported by much recent empirical work, is that it is becoming the default position of many

young and not so young people! And, it also represents the mentality of many Christians.

FOUR ASPECTS OF A RENEWED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

1. Having an answer

A postmodern consciousness is certainly well attuned to deconstruction of meaning. What is needed is an approach to religious education that builds up a web of meaning and following the some of the arguments of Andrew Wright recognizes the importance of truth claims. In addition, the Christian story should be presented as being about more than just a moral system amongst many other moral systems. Religious groups today can only rely on persuasion, rather than coercion or socialization, to get their messages across. To be sure this is a difficult, challenging, and, to some extent, counter-cultural task. The new evangelization implies, however, that Catholics, and by implication Catholic schools, have something to offer in a culture where people are open but have an almost bewildering range of options. One aspect of a renewed religious education in Catholic schools is to give careful consideration to what Catholicism has to offer.

This offering can resonate deeply with human aspirations. For instance, a critical issue facing young people today is the trivialization of relationships and sexuality. Many are uncomfortable with what has been described as the “hook up” culture. This is verified in much recent research on young adults. Regnerus and Uecker, for instance, note ten myths about sex and relationships amongst university aged students, which can easily be extrapolated to high school students. The refutation of these myths equates very well with the Catholic view on sexuality, relationships and marriage. The congruence between overcoming the ten myths and what I would call a Catholic sensibility is well worth noting. To illustrate consider just three of these myths: Myth One, “long-term exclusivity is a fiction”; Myth Six “porn won’t affect your relationships; Myth Ten, “moving in together is definitely a step toward marriage”. What is needed here, in general, is more thinking around questions such as: How best can Catholic schools, and in particular religious education in Catholic schools, articulate the best we have to offer even if this is increasingly counter cultural? In the specific areas of human relationships and sexuality how can we challenge inaccurate stereotypes and dangerously ill-conceived thinking?

To have firm, ready and engaging answers, is not to be simplistic or unaware of the present cultural realities. Indeed, such an approach is an

especially appropriate response in highly secular, or even what some have called post Christian cultures. To illustrate: A number of years ago I attended Mass in a parish conducted by a religious order. On this occasion a young visiting priest of the order was concelebrating with one of the older resident Australian priests. During the homily the older priest made the point, and this could be considered almost a generational refrain, that the Church was about getting people to ask the right questions. At the conclusion of Mass after being thanked and acknowledged, the visiting priest added a telling and bold rejoinder. He commented, noting the homily, that the Church as well as stimulating questions should also provide answers. He added people in Sweden have enough questions but they will listen to someone who has some answers. Sweden is a country that, perhaps better than any other, embodies the notion of modern secular culture. Why should anyone in Sweden, or more to the point Australia, listen to a religious group that does not have a distinct message, a clear and cogent sense of its own identity and mission and the confidence to provide answers and a direction in life? I think the Swedish priest here is reflecting well what Paul VI said in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, (22), when he noted that even the finest witness will prove ineffective in the long run if the Christian story it is not explained and justified.

All of this has resonance with what has called as a more apologetic style of religious discourse. Apologetics here does not have the connotation of something defensive and inward looking. Rather, it is a response to new circumstances where religious groups are required to provide a clear and cogent sense of what they have to offer and how this meets both human aspirations and divine mandate. It also recognizes that one very pertinent assumption the educators in Catholic schools can make, is that most of their audiences will not be easily swayed by arguments that are grounded in references to Church authority and which do not respect students' perspectives. Dulles (1985, 11) summarizes this approach well when he wrote, "the Christian interpretation of life, based on the biblical narrative, is not presented as obvious and irresistible, but as incomparably more meaningful and profound than alternative interpretations".

2. Search for truth and meaning: Content driven Religious Education

Another aspect of a renewed religious education is a greater emphasis on content. The philosophical basis for this approach is rooted in epistemologies that see knowledge as, in its essence, something that is discovered. Such an approach also has implications for educators working in Catholic schools, as

it is based on the notion that truth, in the broad sense is not arrived at through a process of construction. Rather, is it something that is discovered, usually not in an instant but in a gradual movement that is akin to a picture coming into focus. The search for truth transforms the primary epistemological basis of religious education. A key question, therefore, becomes how does religious education assist students to discover truth? By framing the question in this way a number of consequences follow which, in total, change the conversation about the structure of RE, especially its pedagogical dimension.

A more content driven RE is focused on presenting materials to students in a systematic, ordered and engaging way. A key consideration here is what is to be included in a religious education course of studies. Implicit here are judgments about what are critical content areas and what are less important topics. The content to be covered must be both sequential and spiraled, giving students exposure to an obvious development of topics, where key ideas are covered more than once in the curriculum. In a content drive approach to RE special significance is given to centerpiece topics that, in a sense, hold the whole Catholic metanarrative together. When I am working with aspiring RE teachers enrolled in education programs, I often ask them to challenge themselves by selecting topics for their practicum's that reflect key, substantive and difficult aspects of RE. I call this the, teach about the Trinity bonus! I am not by any means suggesting that RE in Catholic schools, in this renewed format, should be entirely focused on cognitively difficult areas. Rather, I think there is a definite need to address, in specific detail, seminal parts of what I am calling here the Catholic metanarrative. To give another illustration, a topic that I have done quite a bit of work on in recent times is teaching about eschatological themes in senior high schools. Eschatology is, literally, the study of the last things. One track that I am pursuing is using film and other forms of multimedia to explore classical eschatological themes that dovetail well with what the Church teaches about life, death and eternity. On one level this is a complex issue but on another it is quite a powerful theme because, in the first instance, it is not something that many young people know a lot about. And who can blame them, as eschatology is not a prominent feature of many RE curriculums in Catholic schools, at least as they are delivered and not just proposed.

3. Focus on Pedagogy

A content focus fits well with an emphasis on pedagogy, that is, how we teach in the most meaningful and effective way. It is one thing to commit

ourselves to a more content driven religious education but quite another to see this realized in schools. The key determinate as to how well this renewed RE will meet the needs of students, is how well it is taught in the classroom. Let me give a worked illustration of what I mean here. To return to my earlier example of the Trinity bonus, one of my students asked me about an effective strategy to teach about the Trinity in primary schools. And this is a good sign, by focusing on content and pedagogy, conversation about classroom practise should be generated. And, if after the example I give here, you are unimpressed by my pedagogical approach and think to yourself, “I have a much better way of doing this”, then the renewal process has begun because it is, in large part, centered on the conversations we have about what is effective RE, that is, what is good teaching and learning, and better still, what is good teaching and learning when we are dealing with cognitively rich content areas.

One method of teaching about the Trinity is to use icons. One of the most famous is the Rublev’s icon of the Trinity written in 1410. Much can be done with teaching from a traditional Trinitarian icon. Use of proportion, for example, is one way that the icon writer conveys meaning. Use of icons is, however, limited if it is introduced by the teacher without the active engagement of learners. Jigsaw puzzles can greatly assist the classroom teacher (in Canada jigsaw puzzles are very popular – it’s a very long winter!). If prior to teaching from the icon, the teacher can include a step where students build up a jigsaw puzzle of an icon, she is taking advantage of a key principle of active learning, namely, that student involvement helps create the context for learning.

If the icon that will eventually be used as a teaching tool in class is constructed by the students, and not merely presented by the teacher, there is every chance that the students will be more receptive to the complex conceptual ideas that icons can convey. To illustrate, use of colour is an important aspect of the art of the icon writer. The symbolic nature of colours, such as blue depicting the eternal, can be explained by a teacher. More engaging, however, is if this dialogue develops as students complete the icon jigsaw puzzle and see the distinctive colours slowly emerge. This allows the teacher to use another principle of active learning, that of, utilization of the anticipatory set. As students complete the puzzle they become aware of the different colours and probing questions arise, such as: What does this brilliant blue represent? Why is there so much gold coming out? This is a really beautiful deep red, I wonder what it means? Such prior questioning gives a

very amenable context for the teacher to work within. It also establishes a strong framework for peer mediated learning as these questions anticipate collaborative group learning

In a renewed religious education, on-going dialogue about pedagogical issue is critical. A perennial topic becomes how can the teaching and learning that goes on in religious education classes be more effective and student focused? This appears to be a simple consideration but it can often be neglected in the discussion of how to improve the quality of religious education in Catholic schools. To take two further examples of the questions posed by a more pedagogical focus in religious education consider the following. Firstly, how do we teach young people about the Christian concept of God when the prevailing culture seeks to reduce to God to a type of ineffable generic force in the universe? Secondly, how to best convey a sense of conscience and moral action as arising from fundamental conceptions of the human person and not something that is contingent only on the person and the circumstances they find themselves in? These questions do have a philosophical aspect to them but in terms of a renewed approach to RE in Catholic schools, a more critical issue is how do we convey in a clear and coherent fashion the core beliefs of the tradition on these and similar issues?

4. Role of the Religious Education teacher

In terms of a renewed religious education the importance of the RE teacher cannot be overstated. To fail to acknowledge this is to misunderstand the demands the new evangelization places on Catholic schools and to set schools up for failure by demanding of them something that they cannot deliver. RE teachers need to have strong content knowledge, professional skills, empathy with students, good human values and to be prepared to witness to what they teach. Let me draw amplify two of these aspects, in particular. Firstly, a critical part of the role of the RE is an enhanced emphasis on the role of the witness provided by the RE teacher. Benedict XVI (2007) powerfully reminds us of the need for authenticity when he commented, “Educators of the faith cannot run the risk of looking like some sort of clown, who is simply playing a role”. As a colleague of mine said sagaciously many years ago, students have an almost forensic capacity to detect insincerity and this sense is becoming increasingly acute in an era where the authority of the religion teacher is not dependant on any consideration of their inherent status or authority.

Secondly, in order to be able to respond to the questions of students

living in a secular culture and to teach in an integrated and educationally sophisticated way, RE teachers in Catholic schools must display substantial content knowledge and be able to convey this in a systematic manner. This encompasses not only the traditional areas of religious education such as theology and scripture but also a good grasp of what are predominately philosophical and pedagogical issues. The RE teacher should convey this understanding in a fashion that reflects the learning needs of the child and as part of an integrated approach to covering the essential features of the Christian message. In this way religious education can be seen as an interrelated whole and not a series of unrelated fragments. One of the key roles of the teacher is to be able to, in the first instance, synthesize for themselves a mature understanding of the Christian message and to then to pass on this understanding to students in a coherent fashion.

CONCLUSION

In this presentation today I have tried to give an overview of the need for what I have called a renewed approach to religious education in Catholic schools. This renewal is, in part, a response to the call of Pope John Paul II for a new evangelization and emerges from a particular understanding of contemporary culture. The renewed approach to RE requires on-going effort, planning and discernment if it is to be successfully undertaken. No small task but I remain convinced that the most important role Catholic schools can play in this movement is in the religious education they offer. ■

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PATRICK WEBSTER

Early Marist History in Australia

1.0 INTRODUCTION

THE MARIST Brothers are a religious institute founded in France in 1817 by French priest, Marcellin Champagnat. Champagnat grew up in a region that was badly affected by the turmoil of the French Revolution. His local community was run-down, materially poor, and opportunities for education were sadly lacking. Champagnat was inspired with the aim of bringing education to others, who, like himself, had suffered in childhood from a lack of educational opportunities. His vision of the Marists included the idea of teaching brothers, working alongside the priests towards the same objectives, and under the same administration (Hosie, 1987).

Champagnat's focus was the Christian education of country children. He saw it as his mission in life to make Jesus known and loved in this unstable political and socioeconomic climate and did so by creating schools which not only taught secular subjects, but also religious education and catechism (Doyle, 1972). The Marist tradition began with a network of small schools conducted by the Brothers who lived in the villages with the people. At the time of Champagnat's death in 1840, there were 278 Brothers and his system of education had begun to expand throughout France (Doyle, 1972).

The congregation, still in its infancy, proved more than capable of adaptation after his death. It seemed that wherever the Brothers were needed, they were prepared to go, provided the men were available. Many requests from dioceses throughout the world had been made for the Brothers to expand to their respective countries. Australia and the Pacific region were no exception. With the Marist Fathers (whose work focused primarily on establishing a parish presence) already established in

Australia since 1836, it was a logical move for the Brothers to join them to focus on establishing a schooling presence in a “bond of shared mission work throughout Oceania” (Doyle, 1972, p. 3).

This essay will investigate the leadership exhibited by the original Marist Brothers in its first 30 years of existence in Australia. In doing this, it is hoped that the reader captures an essence of how the Marist Brothers movement was founded in Australia. Specifically, it will examine the decisions and action taken by the early Marist Brothers and analyse the challenges they faced in their attempt to deliver their vision. It will do this by examining the following blocks of history:

Formative years: Pre-1872

Early days in Australia: 1872-1900

By examining some of the historical leadership from the Brothers in Australia, it is hoped that the reader can draw conclusions and learn from the lessons of the past. For Champagnat’s vision to continue and flourish into the future, it is essential that current and future Marist leaders understand and appreciate this rich history.

2.0 FORMATIVE YEARS: PRE-1872

2.1 *The decision to come to Australia*

Br Louis Marie was welcomed to the order in 1831 and after many years of being Assistant General in France, became Superior-General in 1860 and performed in the role until 1880. This period was one of great progress in which the number of Brothers increased by over 800 (Doyle, 1972). It was a period of great missionary activity with requests for Brothers coming in from all parts of the world (Doyle, 1872). In the late 1860s, Br Louis Marie made the decision to send four Brothers to Australia for the first time to begin their missionary work. The four were Br Jarlath (an Irishman, aged 25 years), Br Augustinus (a Scotsman, aged 21 years), Br Peter (an Irishman, aged 25 years) and Br Ludovic, (a Frenchman, aged 28 years) as the first Director (Doyle, 1972). As soon as the names of the four missionaries for Australia were made known in England and France, there came cries of blame against the Superiors: “What an act of stupidity” was the talk everywhere, “to send so far to a savage land four poor ignorant children on such an enterprise” (Doyle, 1972, p.28). “The Superiors must be mad”, said a former Director of the Province of the North to Ludovic, the new Director of Sydney, “to send you, Brother, at your age and untried in the direction of an establishment, and even more made still to name as

your companions three poor fools like these to share your disappointments and pitiful undertakings” (Doyle, 1972, p.29). The general consensus was that the four chosen were too raw and inexperienced. Despite widespread negativity, the four Brothers set sail for Australia in 1871.

3.0 EARLY DAYS IN AUSTRALIA: 1872-1900

Led by Br Ludovic, the four Brothers landed in Sydney on February 26, 1872 – they were led to St Patrick’s Presbytery, the same site where they would ultimately build their first school (Doyle, 1972).

3.1 *Challenges faced by Br Ludovic and the early Brothers*

(a) **Cultural challenges faced:**

- Culture shock upon arrival
For the first Brothers arriving by boat, there was the initial shock of being left among a culture and way of life that was markedly different from what they were familiar with in Europe. The Australian heat, too, was a huge challenge as the Brothers were unaccustomed and found it overwhelming. However, their biggest trial, possibly, was the loneliness of isolated posts, which was exacerbated by the infrequency, or complete absence of mail (Doyle, 1972). There exists archived letters written by the Brothers that show a wonderful restraint and resignation about their various trials (Doyle, 1972). Despite this adversity, the Brothers persevered and constructed the first Marist school in Australia, St Patrick’s at The Rocks in Sydney. The four Brothers opened the school on April 8, 1872 (Doyle, 1972).
- Language barriers
Language barriers were a problem for the minority of French Brothers within the congregation. This posed obvious problems in the day-to-day running of their respective lessons.

(b) **Challenges within the day-to-day running of the schools:**

- Small, overworked staff
Undoubtedly one of the major challenges faced by the early Brothers was the small, overworked staff trying to establish the fledgling St Patrick’s school. This problem was exacerbated when Brothers suffered illness. Br Augustine was one Brother who battled illness for a long time. Br Ludovic had no choice

but to take his classes, which meant his work, was vastly overloaded (Doyle, 1972). With a rapid growth of enrolments, space became a problem (Doyle, 1972). By 1875, the need for a Provincial Superior was becoming necessary. Br Ludovic had more than enough challenges. Not only was he director of the school with all the usual duties of a headmaster, he also was in class several times a day teaching Music and French. Furthermore, he was the Master of Novices with an increasing number of young men, a full-time occupation in itself, and also Director of the Brothers' Community (Doyle, 1972). Additionally, he had all the dealings connected with the openings at other schools once expansion became a priority.

- Pupil-monitor system

Br Ludovic trialed a system of pupil-teaching known as the 'Lancaster Method' (originating from Scotland), after realising his teachers were too overburdened. It was believed that all would run smoothly, but the first students soon grew tired of it, particularly when it is remembered that the teachers themselves had hardly been able to cope with disorder. Their parents considered peer tutoring a waste of their time and as they received no remuneration, were unwilling to let them continue (Doyle, 1972). The Brothers soon received the message that some parents would not tolerate their children being taught by their peers. It is important to note that this method was very common in New South Wales' schools at the time. As practiced at St Patrick's, it was not a great success (Doyle, 1972).

- Expansion

Although the Brothers were delighted to gain new recruits to the Institute in the early years, the increase in the number of Brothers and postulants meant that more building work was needed to house them (Doyle, 1972). Funding this was a constant battle. Another challenge was the decision to form a presence in New Zealand and the Pacific island region which had an obvious impact on the staff in Australia who were already clearly overburdened with unending duties (Doyle, 1972). The opening of the Novitiate in 1873 ranks as one of the most significant of any Marist acts in the preservation,

development and spread of the Marist Brothers in Australia.

- Student behaviour

The poor behaviour of the students in the schools' early years posed a significant problem for the early Brothers. Most students were Catholic, but two-thirds did not know the relevant prayers. It took a great deal of time "to reform behaviour to a desirable level as seen in the eyes of the Brothers" (Doyle, 1972, p. 55). When behaviour eventually improved, noise became the problem in over-crowded classrooms.

- Excessive use of corporal punishment

The question of discipline in the early days was always present. The heat, combined with the constant disciplinary restraints, were trials for the young teachers. Br Ludovic repeatedly warned them against severity in their punishments, but he reported that the cane was too often used. Young and inexperienced, the Brothers who had been accustomed to this system of corporal punishment knew only one way to maintain their authority – by the use of the cane (Doyle, 1972). Whatever sanction tradition or expediency had given the practice of caning in England; the Brothers were acting against the tradition and *Teacher's Guide* of their own congregation. The Conference of Inspectors for the Council of Education's public and certified schools permitted caning as a disciplinary measure for 'grave offences' and then only by the headmaster. Like all rules, it was often abused and the occasional regrettable case eventuated (Doyle, 1972).

(c) **Challenges stemming from the general community:**

- Public skepticism about the qualifications of the Brothers
Another challenge was the rumours circulating about the alleged lack of knowledge, qualifications, expertise and quality of teaching of the Brothers. There were fears that they were not qualified, nor up to the standards of public schools. Some parents were led to believe (by way of rumours) that "all that the children did and learned at St Patrick's was how to say prayers and sing hymns, and that the Brothers did not have their teaching certificates and, therefore knew hardly anything else" (Doyle, 1972, p. 81). There were more complaints about the

pupil-monitor system, with students teaching other students. Br Ludovic vigorously defended the Brothers' practices. In one of his letters he states: "We regret to have to state that not only were these tales given credence by many parents, but several ecclesiastics confirmed them amongst Catholic families; yet none of these gentlemen, reverend or lay, had ever visited the Brothers' school" (Doyle, 1972, p. 82). The criticism reached Archbishop Vaughan who was somewhat disturbed by the comments. He claimed that it was necessary to examine the Brothers' classes and to make certain that the teaching practices met expectations. Ultimately, the Brothers' classes were examined and they successfully passed all requirements (Doyle, 1972, p. 83).

- Prejudice in the colonial times
Hosie (1987) points out that prejudice in the general colonial community went two ways:
 - (1) *There was clear anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment, mostly from the English and European people of the population*
 - (2) *There was clear anti-English/European sentiment from the majority Irish immigrant perspective.*
 This prejudice posed the obvious challenge of trying to foster a positive culture within the schools.
- Socio-economic issues – reduction in pupils due to expensive school fees
Until the creation of 'Select Schools', students were enrolled, regardless of rank or fortune, to the same lessons and at the same fee, according to the class and division they belonged to. Several significant problems resulted:
 - (1) *Almost all the children of rich and respectable families left the Brothers' school on account of the roughness and uncouth conduct of the poor children. Rich people could not tolerate seeing the sons of their servants or employees sitting alongside their own children: the school was beginning to earn a bad reputation;*
 - (2) *School fees were becoming too burdensome for many poor families;*
 - (3) *The government schools, which up to that time, had*

maintained fees on about the same level as the Brothers' school suddenly made a sharp reduction in fees.

Parents took advantage of this, resulting in a third of the total students leaving the Brothers' school (Doyle, 1972). As a result, the reduction in pupils posed some economic difficulties, meaning that debts could not be paid in time. As a response, Br Ludovic conceived the idea of 'Select Schools', separate from the parish school, for children of families in comfortable circumstances. These were schools that offered a wide array of subjects, many not offered in public schools. Logically, "Br Ludovic lowered the price of fees in line with government schools and provided a discount for families with two or more children enrolled at the school" which went a long way to restoring public faith in the system (Doyle, 1972, p. 100).

(d) Challenges stemming from government:

- Strong opposition towards denominational schools
In the late 1800s, all religious denominational schools (including Catholic) were greatly disadvantaged in comparison to public schools as they were not given financial support from the government. In particular, the Public Schools' Act of 1866 operated in practice against Catholic schools. Certificates necessary to receive state aid, were not being granted, schools were being closed for lack of teachers, pupils were being attracted to state schools by the appointment or retention of poor teachers in nearby denominational schools (Doyle, 1972). Furthermore, there was an increasing shortage in trained Catholic teachers. The Archdiocese had no help, nor promise from the Council of Education in addressing this shortage. The Marists, therefore, had this major hurdle to overcome, waging several battles with the government bureaucracy. Archbishop Vaughan made his thoughts clear: "It is clear that our denominational schools will disappear unless they are supported in entire or partial independence of government" (Doyle, 1972, p. 113). Fortunately, Vaughan was successful in having his wishes granted, with the government eventually coming to the financial aid of denominational schools.

- Low wages and inability to attract quality teachers in denominational system

The Marists initially had problems attracting good quality teachers, as wages were far better in public system, a problem associated with government funding for denominational schools. The public system was a much more enticing career choice for aspiring teachers (Braniff, 2007).

(e) Politics within the archdiocese:

- Tension within the Church

Another major challenge in the community at the time was the anti-Irish/Catholic versus anti-English/Anglican sentiment (Hosie, 1987). These preconceived ideas and prejudice created tension amongst families of students. It would take some time for this to settle.

- Salary issues 1873-1880

Br Ludovic had several clashes with Archbishop Vaughan who would not consent to paying £60 annually to young Australian Brothers who were only amateurs, even though they still needed to be lodged and provided for (Doyle, 1972). Br Ludovic, looking for better conditions, particularly better support financially, received little help from the Archbishop during this time “as Vaughan could not justify spending school profits on novices” (Doyle, 1972, p. 89).

- The pursuit of a guaranteed salary (1892)

The Brothers requested a guaranteed salary. The idea of a guaranteed salary came from the rule and practice of the founder. Champagnat’s original objective was to provide religious teachers for small parishes. But here a great difficulty arose, that of finding the necessary means for the maintenance of the schools. On the one hand, it was necessary to provide for the decent support of the Brothers as religious men; on the other, the schools expenses had to be brought within the limited resources of the parishes (Doyle, 1972). To a school manager who considered the Brother’s salary too high (\$96 per-year for three Brothers) and did not pay it regularly, he pointed out that the Christian Brothers were paid \$48 each, a sum admitted to be absolutely necessary. Yet the Marist

Brothers only asked for two-thirds of that amount. Any further reduction would be harsh and inhuman. This was the benevolent thought behind the system of asking for a guaranteed salary in a parish. It was a guarantee, in its way, that “the Catholic children of poorer families would receive instruction at the minimum rate possible in Catholic schools” (Doyle, 1972, p. 316).

- Archbishop Vaughan’s skepticism of Br Ludovic’s leadership
Vaughan had reservations about Br Ludovic’s leadership and decided to investigate Br Ludovic’s suitability as Director of the Marist enterprise. Br Ludovic sought an exact statement of the establishment’s finances to see if it was as sound as he had been told. He was also anxious to ascertain what rights the bishop of a diocese had over the Brothers. Later, “there was tension between Ludovic and Vaughan over debts and promises made in 1875” (Doyle, 1972, p. 119). The Archbishop became angry, uttering threats against the Brothers, explaining that plenty of other orders were begging him to have a presence in the diocese. In general terms, there was a constant distrust about Br Ludovic in matters of finance (Doyle, 1972).

(f) Tensions within the Brothers’ communities:

- Cultural tensions within the Brothers community (ill-will towards the Irish)

Most of the trouble seemed to have started with meals at the Presbytery. There, some members of the community became very friendly with two Brothers of Irish nationality. Doyle explains that as young religious, these Brothers were lionised in this predominantly Irish parish. From meetings with “these ‘kindly, generous Irish folk’ came trouble in the shape of silly talk about nationality and discrimination, a taste for spirits and a loosening of reserve and prudence” (Doyle, 1972, p. 79). Vaughan accused Ludovic of showing preference for the French and ill will to the Irish, though there is every proof that it was Ludovic’s constant endeavour to foster the family spirit in the community (Doyle, 1972, p. 91).

- Discouragement amongst the young Brothers (1877-78)
Another problem Ludovic had to deal with was the reality

of disillusioned young Brothers. They had lost six beginning Brothers from the congregations and four or five others were as Ludovic described, 'like birds on a branch'. Ludovic gave the following reasons for the discouragement amongst the young Brothers:

- (1) Bad direction of the two houses at St Benedict's and Parramatta;
- (2) The young Brothers had been told they were not to confide in Br Ludovic after leaving the Novitiate;
- (3) The young Brothers wavering in their vocation were frightened to approach the Provincial.

Br Ludovic claimed that, when the novices teaching were allowed to talk things over with him, much of the discouragement disappeared. Br John Dullea saw it from another perspective, believing that there needed to be better training of the Brothers, as he wanted to restore the public's confidence in them. It was his endeavour "to pursue the recruitment of good men from Europe" (Doyle, 1972, p. 171).

3.2 *Significant leaders, their traits and their impact (1872-1900)*

Since the movement's inception, the Marist vision was to establish the needs of the people, and then to try to meet those needs in a practical way. This was no exception for the first Brothers in Australia whose vision was to open schools in areas where education was badly neglected. The following will examine the leadership and the decisions made by key people from the 1872-1900 era.

(a) **Br Ludovic Labouryas: Director 1872-76 ; Master of Novices 1876-1888 (died 1924):**

Br Ludovic, as mentioned previously, is regarded as "the founding father of the Australian Marist endeavours" (Etherington, 2007, p. 33). Etherington (2007) describes him as a man very human, with both strengths and weaknesses in his character. For example, he was considered a charming character, a good businessman, a man who disliked corporal punishment; but his letters also show a propensity for self-promotion, exaggerated stories, and a tendency to portray the Irish Brothers negatively (Etherington, 2007). A later Provincial, Br Brendan Hill, gave a description of him gathered from those who know him, as "fairly tall, suave and

polished, well-educated, popular with people and able to make a favourable impression on parents and influential people” (Doyle, 1972, p. 221). After his term as Director, he continued to have a significant impact remaining in Australia for another 12 years as Master of Novices.

- Laying the foundations

Br Ludovic started the first Marist Brothers’ school in Sydney in 1872. Exactly 50 years later, the golden jubilee of the Brothers’ arrival in Australia, two years before his death, there were 28 schools in Australia and New Zealand, two provinces, each with its own Juniorate, 218 Brothers, 15 novices, 13 postulants, 68 juniors and 7087 pupils (Doyle, 1972). These figures tell the story of how successfully Br Ludovic laid the foundation of the work of the Marist Brothers in Australia (Doyle, 1972). No single decision made in those first years was so fraught with consequence as Br Ludovic’s decision to begin a Novitiate only three months after the school had opened its doors. It would be stressing the obvious to say that the Novitiate has ever since been the mainstay of the Province. But within 18 months of its foundation, its few novices and postulants actually kept the movement alive, when two of the first four Brothers left the Order and a third had to spend five months away in New Caledonia (Doyle, 1972). As far as can be discovered, the Marist Brothers’ Novitiate was the first to succeed in Australia for religious men, and must be the most long-established of all seminaries or novitiates in this land (Doyle, 1972).

- Overcoming administrative hurdles

The beginnings had not been easy. Br Ludovic brought no administrative experience before arriving in Australia. His companions averaged about 23 years of age. When he did arrive, he walked into an administrative mess, not of his making, and into a situation where resentment, based on nationality and diocesan squabbles, still festered. The Catholic population and clergy were mainly Irish in origin. The Archbishop was English. Br Ludovic was French. There is a good deal of evidence to show that this was a handicap. Considering the difficulties and disappointments he faced, increased by the

enforced lack of speedy communications with his superiors in France, once could have understood his failure. Instead, we admire his success (Doyle, 1972).

- Dispelling charges of incompetency
Br Ludovic was forced to deal with charges of incompetency against his teachers and school. Ultimately, these were charges he could and did prove wrong. There were rumours of financial maneuvers, which were eventually dispelled by Archbishop Vaughan himself (Doyle, 1972).

(b) Br John Dullea – First Provincial of Australia/Oceania: 1876-1901 (died 1914):

Due to positive expansion in New South Wales, the first Provincial of Australia was appointed in 1876, an Irishman, Br John Dullea. He served in this post until 1901 (with a four year break from 1893-1897). Alongside Br Ludovic, he had a most profound influence on the establishment of the Marist movement in Australia. Doyle (1972) describes Dullea as a very thorough leader with high expectations, as well as a genuine concern for each of his Brothers. Additionally, Dullea's humility and respect for the work already established by Ludovic was on show from the beginning. In this letter, we see Ludovic paying tribute to his unassuming Superior:

“Br John acted very prudently. He refrained from criticising anything, from changing the least thing of the daily routine or even employments. especially did he show himself full of consideration to the Br Director, (Ludovic) and left him full liberty to continue the direction of the school and novitiate. He consulted him on all his projects and acted towards him more as an inferior than as a superior.” (McMahon, 2009, p.76).

Being Provincial of Australia did not mean that Dullea's duties were confined to the mainland. We need to bear in mind that Br John had to travel by ship to those many parts of his Province which included many of the Pacific islands. His words here give some indication on the challenges and extent of his responsibilities:

“It is the season of rain and hurricanes in this neighbourhood, but there has been nothing disastrous as yet this year, although we were in a state of anxiety last week because of the great winds and the rapid descent of the barometer. There has not passed a single day since my arrival that it has not rained, and sometimes it fell in torrents. Generally, there are great squalls, followed by brilliant sunshine, which dries everything very quickly. The extreme humidity makes the heat more oppressive, although the temperature generally indicates about 30 Degrees in the shade. Nevertheless; apart from exceptional days, it is hotter in Fiji.” (McMahon, 2009, p.76).

- Expansion – increase in number of Brothers:
Dullea oversaw huge progress in the Marist movement in Australia. Etherington (2008) shows the following statistics that give some idea of the growth that occurred under his period of leadership:

1876: Brothers (12), Pupils (715)

1912: Brothers (185), Pupils (5,378)

Most of the increased numbers of Brothers came from locally recruited subjects usually very young and often still school students when they entered the Marist juniorate or postulancy. Since there was none of very little post-novitiate formation, the responsibility for the religious and professional development of these widely scattered groups of younger Brothers fell to Br John. Like other aspects of his leadership, he was very meticulous in his management of the formation of the young Brothers (Etherington, 2008).

- Multiple nationalities within the Brothers’ community:
The difference in nationalities of the Brothers made things difficult at times – their heritages consisted of Irish, Scottish, English, French and Australian. Over time, Dullea played a pivotal role in being able bring all Brothers together towards the shared cause. A particular problem lay at St Joseph’s College in 1890, where a Frenchman (Br Emilian) was succeeded by an Australian (Br Stanislaus). Opposition to Stanislaus was broadened among some of the French Brothers.

It is interesting to note Dullea's attitude to all this. He wrote:

"I have always thought that the best way to deal with national susceptibilities was not to take too much notice of them, for schemers always take advantage of the rows and misunderstandings to pursue their own ends, and rarely know how to exercise patience in the presence of serenity. This ends up by revealing their schemes in their haste." (McMahon, 2009, p.76)

It was clear that Dullea showed great strength of character in these times. He clearly knew where to devote his energies when conflict arose and was successful in helping foster a positive culture within the communities he was involved in.

- **Improving teacher training:**
One of Dullea's most significant contributions was his involvement in improving the Brothers' teacher training. He saw his main challenge to raise the standard of teaching as high as possible. Dullea made the decision to establish a teacher-training school at St Benedict's in Sydney. This would give the teachers the necessary qualifications to receive the government salary (Etherington, 2008).
- **Dealing with financial affairs:**
Br John also showed remarkable capacity in the handling of financial affairs. We have no better example of this than in the construction of St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill which he oversaw. His leadership was considered authentic as he always responded tactfully and respectfully to accusations of mismanagement of finances (Doyle, 1972).
- **Administrative hurdles:**
Letters help us gain awareness into some of the frustrations of dealing with distant superiors which required huge amounts of time waiting for approval of projects, proposed purchases of land and other such matters. Often this led to opportunities being lost (Doyle, 1972). We come to realise the Province's precarious financial situation, tensions in dealing with local clergy and even personality and nationality clashes within the community of Marist Brothers itself. On the other side, we gain a feeling for the excitement associated with the growth

of a new province whose numbers locally recruited were expanding rapidly (Doyle, 1972).

- **Improving Teacher Training:**

It was this developing French concept of mass education that Br Ludovic and Br John, brought with them to Australia in 1872-1876 (Braniff, 2005). With the encouragement of Archbishop Vaughan, they sought, in those first few years, to acquire government recognition and registration, as Fr Champagnat had done in France, forty years earlier (Braniff, 2005). This was denied to them as being against government policy. Consequently, they sought to win acceptance and recognition from the Catholic laity and clergy by providing a curriculum that was at least equal to that of the public schools (Braniff, 2005). They added to this through the formation of 'select schools' where the Brothers embraced the teacher-centred, instruction-oriented Marist Brothers approach to education (Braniff, 2005). Thorough teacher training and thorough teacher preparation of lessons was fundamental to this approach.

(c) **Summary:**

Br John was prominent in consolidating the early work of Br Ludovic. He was Provincial for 17½ years in total over two terms (1876-1893 and 1897-1900). Reaching Sydney just four years after the first four pioneer Brothers and using the foundations Br Ludovic had laid down, he was able to extend the Brothers' work to New Zealand and Fiji and give it a fresh start in Samoa (Doyle, 1972). Combined with Br Ludovic, he was responsible for vast expansion of the Marist movement, which put it into the strong position it saw itself in at the turn of the century.

4.0 LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE BROTHERS' EARLY LEADERSHIP IN AUSTRALIA

This section will provide a comparison between the leadership approaches adopted by the early Brothers and contemporary leadership theory. It will also acknowledge some of the shifts in purpose, objectives and priorities across the two different eras.

4.1 *Leadership model used by the early Brothers*

- Trait-theory model of leadership

The Brothers of the early years followed a trait-theory model of leadership within the hierarchal structure of their religious order. A widely used theory at the time, trait-leaders lead from top-down, and with their responsibility comes power, authority and obedience from those below. Trait leadership suggests that leaders are born with, or at least display, certain key personality traits such as intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and sociability. These personality traits would be taken into account when the Brothers' positional appointments were determined. Current leadership theory dispels this model as not having enough of a 'human' element and suggests that leaders are indeed 'made' through their experiences, not simply born.

4.2 *Contemporary leadership approaches – the responsibilities of school leaders today*

- The role of *values* in school leaders
Contemporary leadership authors agree that in this cut-throat, profit-focused, bottom-line driven world, it is vital for organisational leaders to follow model of leadership where values are at the core. This is no exception in schools. Prominent authors are acknowledging the growing importance of leaders being able to know 'themselves' and know their values. Leaders must have a "deeper understanding of their own personal values" (Duignan, 2003, p.22) and those who know their own values are able to get the most out of those being led and "resist social or situational pressures that compromise their values" (Erikson, 1995, p.3).
- The need for *authentic leadership*
Associated with the role of values is the notion of authentic leadership. In order for leaders to be authentic, they consciously or subconsciously follow a process known as "values-controlled leadership" (Day, 2000, p.1). This is the process by which the leader takes control of the more dominant values in their make-up by being aware of the key values which influence them. When the leader knows what values are instinctual, it is much easier for that person to control his/her values. When a leader is 'values-controlled', they are aware of how they react

to different situations and why they might have particular biases in certain contexts. Being ‘values-controlled’, rather than ‘values-led’, means that one can perform their leadership duties from a perspective that is balanced and where emotion is removed from the situation. Once a leader develops this reflective dimension in their lives, a more authentic approach becomes more natural within their leadership. Furthermore, Senge, Scharmer & Flowers (2007) make the point that the more an organization learns about itself, the longer it will survive and the more successful it will be. They advise of the importance of *presence* and the importance of getting the *people* part right first and foremost. In order to do this, leaders must be able to understand the problem of others within the organisation, but to be able to do this, one needs to understand the problems within oneself.

- Complexities within contemporary schools – the need for *ethical leadership*

It can be argued that the roles and responsibilities of school leaders are becoming increasingly complex and challenging. For the most part, this complexity has resulted from the constantly changing contexts and day-to-day dynamics with which principals lead their schools (Ehrich, Kimber, Cranston, 2009). School leaders today are faced with having to make a plethora of decisions in an environment of competing priorities, and with consideration for the interests of students, teachers, parents, and the wider community. Many of these decisions present dilemmas for school leaders, where the choices for action often involve not just choosing from ‘right’ versus ‘wrong’ alternatives, but also frequently from ‘right’ versus ‘right’ alternatives (Kiddler, 1995). Encompassing many of these decisions are issues of ethical leadership. Ethics are concerned with the kinds of values and morals that an individual or society decides as desirable or appropriate. Branson (2006) defines ethical leadership as leadership behaviour that is deliberately founded upon, clearly understood, openly acknowledged, and where there are explicitly applied values. Ethical leadership is about leading in a mindful way, with simple honesty, where the leader knows the difference

between *what you have a right to do* and *what is right to do*. Because ethics are the building blocks upon which our whole society is based, it is imperative that they play a key role in the leadership of schools well into the future.

4.3 *Early vs. contemporary leadership objectives*

- Leadership objectives in the first 30 years from 1872:
The primary focus of the Brothers' early days was certainly 'making Jesus known and loved', but a strong emphasis was concentrated on 'saving souls' and raising 'good, obedient Catholics'. The following quote from Archbishop Vaughan, in a letter to Catholic parents in 1880, clearly illustrates this focus:

*"Bring up your children thorough Catholics.
Steep them during childhood and youth if possible,
deep in the Catholic faith.
Make them conscious of the burden they will have to bear."*

- Priority shift in Catholic/Marist schools—present day objectives
The traditional 'black and white' approach to Catholic schools existed for centuries until a significant shift post-Vatican II. This saw a movement towards upward social mobility, where the emphasis on 'eternal salvation' became less significant. A modern Marist approach remains 'making Jesus known and loved', but with a focus on assisting the spiritual dimension of young people so that they 'may have life and have it abundantly' (John 10:10). Marist schools today invite students to find meaning in their lives through the development of a mature relationship with their God, encompassing a strong focus towards social justice. Contemporary Marist leaders see these objectives as a shared responsibility between both Brothers and lay-staff within schools.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Marist tradition of education has evolved over 200 years and forms the basis of Marist schools that operates in 75 countries across the globe today. When movements on a scale as vast as that of the Marist Brothers, one can always expect significant challenges. Few can dispute the enormous efforts of the Brothers' in establishing the groundwork for

which future Marist students would benefit. The Marist Brothers remain a diverse group of religious men committed to making Jesus Christ known and loved within their schools. With the number of religious Brothers declining in Australia, the movement has realised the need for an emphasis on helping the current and future generations of lay Marists understand the Champagnat story.

There is no doubt that the success of schools and the degree to which it achieves its educational goals depends on leaders and their proficient governance. An emphasis on values, ethics, and authentic leadership allows principals to create an effective school environment and manage the dynamics fairly and justly (Kocabas & Krakose, 2009, p.126). Communities expect those who hold leadership positions to act responsibly and with concern for the greater good. There is no doubt that ethical dilemmas are inevitable in all schools, however, it is imperative that a school's leadership deal with these issues authentically so that negative cultures do not fester and become engrained in the soul of the school.

The Marist Brothers movement was fortunate to have had this strength in leadership despite having the odds against them and little-to-no resources. The vision, determination, sense of purpose and resolve in its leaders has seen the movement be able to overcome the many significant challenges mentioned. Their effective early leadership laid the foundations for the Marists to be able to develop into one of the premier educational institutions in the world today.

It is hoped that the reader has gained a more thorough insight into the first 30 years of its existence in Australia. By understanding the past, we can move towards the future from an informed perspective. With more lay people gaining an insight into this important story, one can be assured that there will be every chance that Champagnat's original vision can continue to authentically live on. ■

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YEARNING

The best things we do in life all testify both to a sense of the world as wounded, and to a sense that we all hunger to do good, as well as to be good. St Paul at his best was a yearner: we at our best our yearners; and if that is not the final story about Christ the Lord, we have nothing to say about him at all.

Father Peter Steele, SJ. A Local Habitation: Poems and Homilies, Newman College, Melbourne, 2010, 59

ROMEO J. BONSAINT

Dispositions for Ageing Spiritually

I. RECEPTIVITY AND RESPONSE

Courage to Grow

*Almighty God,
Source of
all the energy of life,
without You I am helpless.
Give me the courage –
the physical drive,
the emotional energy,
and the spiritual will –
to risk in order to grow,
to welcome every challenge
as my life unfolds.
~Rabbi Nachman*

Growing older, I learn all the time.

~Solon

SEVERAL YEARS ago on a trip to Rome I brought along with me a book I had shared with friends and had frequently referred to in spirituality courses I teach. This remarkable book, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* by Jean-Dominique Bauby, became a best seller in Europe when it first appeared in France in 1997, and then in the United States a year later. The great novelist Cynthia Ozick hailed it as “the most remarkable memoir of our time,” and the world-famous neurologist Oliver Sacks called it “a testament to the freedom and vitality and delight of the human mind.” *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* tells the tragic story of the 43 year-old editor of the famous French magazine *Elle*. On Friday,

December 8, 1995, Bauby suffered the symptoms of a massive stroke just as he was taking the wheel of his prized new vehicle, a gunmetal-gray BMW. He was showing off the car to his son Theophile, whom he had just picked up for the weekend, when the symptoms of stroke overcame him. Rushed to a nearby clinic, Bauby soon sank into a deep coma. In the book's Prologue Bauby explains that

Up until then, I had never even heard of the brain stem. I've since learned that it is an essential component of our internal computer, the inseparable link between the brain and the spinal cord. I was introduced to this vital piece of anatomy when a cerebrovascular accident took my brain stem out of action. In the past, it was known as a "massive stroke," and you simply died. But improved resuscitation techniques have prolonged and refined the agony. You survive, but you survive with what is so aptly known as "locked-in syndrome." Paralyzed from head to toe, the patient, his mind intact, is imprisoned inside his own body, unable to speak or move. In my case, blinking my left eyelid is my only means of communication." (p. 4)

Bauby's family, friends and concerned supporters "from every corner of the world" dedicated prayers in his behalf. He speaks of eloquently of trying to "organize all this spiritual energy." (p.13) Most precious to him, however, is "the small prayer my daughter Céleste sends up to the Lord every evening before she closes her eyes." Since both fall asleep at roughly the same hour, he imagines himself "setting out for the kingdom of slumber with this wonderful talisman, which shields me from all harm." (Ibid.)

Courage and faith, along with help from the medical staff, speech therapists, and publishing colleagues, enabled the paralyzed Bauby to undertake what would seem to be the impossible for a person in his state: writing a book about it! In a chapter titled "The Alphabet," he explains how a gifted speech therapist cunningly reshuffled the alphabet to suit his purposes, "with each letter placed according to the frequency of its use in the French language." The result was a simplified dictation process for the patient: the visitor-scribe read off the alphabet (ESA version, not ABC) "until, with a blink of my eye, I stop you at the letter to be noted." (p. 20) By this method Bauby composed and completed his book, building

words, sentences and paragraphs into chapters, and finally, into a fully-constructed book. The book was completed a year-and-a-half after the accident, in the summer of 1996, two months before his death.

In “The Love of God and Affliction” Simone Weil wrote that “affliction is an uprooting of life, a more or less attenuated equivalent of death . . .” (p. 118) Although there are no guarantees, most of us will probably be spared affliction on the scale that Bauby experienced, which Weil suggests has spiritual repercussions. We may, if we are fortunate, avoid serious illness. If we live long, though, the processes of physical and mental decline may mark the ageing process ineradicably. The changes we undergo in the process of diminishment often give “birth” to a new level of spiritual reflection.

To affirm that diminishment and suffering are creative in the reflective sphere suggests that the life of the spirit has roots in our reflective capacities. The tragic event that spurred Bauby to “organize all his spiritual energy” also made it possible for him to respond creatively to his altered circumstances. The true human person, wrote Nicholas Berdyaev, is not only a sinner, but also a creator. In losing a known and taken-for-granted life, Bauby was forced to reconsider the meaning of and the possibilities for his life.

Reflection reveals to us that even in ordinary circumstances the simplest of events of everyday life challenge and change us. Our life is always changing. Life, after all, Adrian van Kaam reminds us, is movement: “Our being by its very nature is always in movement, is always changing.” Without necessarily being aware of it, we are at some level of consciousness dialoguing with each new situation in our life, asking ourselves “What does it mean? This is especially true when illness strikes: We strive to know – to understand – what the illness means, how it affects my life.” Finally, van Kaam suggests, “The answer that you give is not only the answer that you speak, it is an answer that you *are*. In some way, in your dialogue with the new situation you have become a new being.”

Obviously, we can resist change. We can fight reality, refusing new meanings and possibilities for self-realization. It is quite natural to do so. But to refuse reflection in favor of continued resistance is to cut off access to the spirit and its power in our lives. According to Adrian van Kaam, there is danger in refusing change: If we try to get out of the natural rhythm of unfolding, we will be “unfaithful to who we are and to *where we are* ~ the situation that is inviting us. If we do that we are creating a

schizoid (split) situation in our own life, a split between the real ongoing dialectic in the situation and our trying to stand still, not to change. And we are not ~ with God ~ accepting who and where we are.”

As we grow older we are more apt to ask ourselves what is really meaningful for our life. We may question the meaning of past events, the meaningfulness of the future. Occasionally the questioning will be more proximate and personal: Is *my* life meaningful? Has what I have done amounted to anything of value? Does it ~ do I ~ make a difference? Such questions are value-laden. We are questioning/evaluating our worth. Elias Norbert relates these questions of meaningfulness to the way we will ultimately face dying itself:

The way a person dies depends not least on whether and how far he or she has been able to set goals and to reach them, to set tasks and perform them. It depends on how far the dying person feels that life has been fulfilled and meaningful ~ or unfulfilled and meaningless. The reasons for this feeling are by no means always clear ~ that too is an area for investigation that is still wide open. But whatever the reasons, we can perhaps assume that dying becomes easier for people who feel they have done their bit, and harder for people who feel they have missed their life's goal, and especially hard for those who, however fulfilled their life may have been, feel that the manner of their dying is itself meaningless. (*The Loneliness of the Dying*, p. 62)

We posit the following, then, as a fundamental principle: that what we create and contribute to the world is ultimately based on what we have *received*. The principle is exemplified in Jean-Dominique Bauby's exemplary response to the events that changed his life so dramatically. The creative act of memoir writing emerged from a situation he did not choose and certainly might have refused to accept to work with. Instead, he received and worked courageously with what was given. Receptivity of this kind is an innate form of spiritual potency that, hopefully, one learns to activate with humility through the providential experiences of one's life.

II. PERSONALIZING OUR SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Ageless Ageing
Teach me, God,
to live out my days
focused on
all that is meaningful in life.
As unaccountable aches and pains
multiply,
as memory and retention fade,
teach me to relate to my physical existence
with an ever-expanding recognition
of its transient nature;
teach me to relate to my soul
with an ever-expanding awareness
of her eternal nature
and ageless worth.
~Rabbi Nachman

Responding sensibly and wholeheartedly to the “givens” in our life is one level of incarnation. Incarnational spirituality is open to the Spirit and receptive to the call to *embody* faith. Faith proceeds by works and entails praxis, a second aspect of incarnational spirituality.

What is the role of spiritual practice as we age? We have all heard many times that in our later years and in retirement, when we have more time for it, prayer becomes the “age appropriate” gift we can offer the community and the world at this stage of our journey. Although we may need to be reminded and encouraged in this regard, it might be useful to consider the role of practice in expanding our prayer repertoire. The word “practice” emphasizes our personal responsibility in discovering modes of prayer that foster spiritual deepening and enable us to go beyond prayer forms which may have become routinized. In a word, growth in prayer requires *more* from us. We may be in the habit of saying certain prayers, attending liturgy, doing spiritual reading, and occasionally “surrendering” to the deeper invitation to meditation and contemplation. But, how do you pray when you’re not reciting the office, attending Mass, or doing spiritual reading? What do we discover about ourselves and our prayer when we reflect on such questions as the following: When and how do you pray when you are on your own? When do you *really* pray? When does prayer become more than recitation and ritual? What is individual

and unique about our life of prayer may be revealed in our answers to these questions. Forms of prayer truly congenial to our spirit may be disclosed to us.

The following practices may provide assistance in discovering ways of prayer that are personally congenial:

1. Opt for fewer words and less recitation. Rely less on vocal prayers. We are called not only to read the Word but also to *become* the Word.
2. Suspend the doing function during the time of prayer. Read less and spend more time in quiet reflection and meditation. Spiritual reading does not lose its importance; we need the written word. The formative impact of reading is enhanced, however, when we turn to it with a fresh mind, renewed by contact with the Lord in the silence of our heart.
3. Slow down. When you read, do it slowly. If, for you, walking is a meditative activity, find the pace that creates a sense of spaciousness. Quality of presence is primary.

These meditative practices have effects:

1. They help us to be receptive in the manner spoken of earlier: becoming sensitized to what is given in our current life situation and to the unique *response* that is ours to make.
2. They combat anxiety. We often find it difficult to break with activity and to sit quietly in a meditative posture. Habit takes over and constrains our movements. Yet, when we make time for spiritual practice, we gradually experience a diminishment of anxiety. The “now consciousness” of meditative practice restores us to full presence. When we are present to the moment at hand we gain contact with the Spirit within us. The effects of our practice will gradually flow into daily incarnation.
3. Meaningfulness arises from meditation. We look for meaning without, but ultimately, as St. Augustine affirmed, it is to be found within. (“Late Have I Loved You”) Meditative practices constantly surprise us: What we need for the daily journey is *given* if we take time to receive!

III. DRAWING NEAR TO THE MYSTERY

Living to the fullest
Dear God,
as I age –
as hours turn to days,
days to weeks,
weeks to months,
and months to years –
let none of my time be wasted or lost.
Let me use my life
to the fullest,
to become the person
I am meant to be.
~Rabbi Nachman

We have discussed the need to assess our life situation, to enter into dialogue with events, so that we may discern the unique response our circumstances call for and allow. Our response incarnates the call we have received. The second mode of incarnating our call has been considered in terms of spiritual practice. This mode leads to deeper presence in our field of life. It also facilitates the transition to a third mode of incarnation which transcends the previous two. Christian spirituality is a matter of presence. When we are grounded in the Lord, our presence becomes the essence of our ministry. Transcendent presence shines through our being and doing. Because it is not of our doing, this level of incarnation radiates God's love unself-consciously and in a non-discriminating way.

The discernment required in the first level of incarnation relates to the disposition of hope: hoping, that is, in the meaningfulness of our response, however humble that contribution may seem to be. Spiritual practice, the second mode, increases faith: it is active and represents an act of trust that the time we take for practice will be fruitful and efficacious. We do not know or have the fruits of practice ahead of time. Practice in this way is trusting. It contains an element of *not knowing*, of walking in darkness and being willing to risk what that darkness will lead us to. The third incarnation, being present in a way that radiates the mystery of God, is about love. To let ourselves be and become who we really are is a testimony to our belief that all of reality is ultimately held together by Love.

Christians commit themselves to a lifelong process of spiritual and intellectual growth. We value attainments in both realms for ourselves as well as for those we teach, counsel and direct. We believe that learning and spiritual formation are goods in their own right, transcending utility. Therefore, we prize study and spiritual practice throughout life. In “Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God” Simone Weil made the case that the attention we learn to develop through studying can serve the higher purpose of focusing our minds when we pray. While school studies develop only the lower kind of attention, she wrote, they are nonetheless “extremely effective in increasing the power of attention that will be available at the time of prayer.” For Weil, the love of learning facilitated “the orientation of all the attention of which the soul is capable toward God.” (*Waiting on God*, p. 105) Ultimately our dedication to the learning process serves humanity as well as the spirit in us, and we are enjoined to continue studying and learning throughout our lives for personal enhancement and for the witness value it provides in the world.

Spiritual writers throughout the ages have distinguished between two kinds of knowledge:

On the one hand, there is relative knowledge, rooted only in reason and ideas, and lacking in the kind of experiential perception of what one knows through active engagement; such relative knowledge is what we use to order our affairs in our present life. On the other hand, there is truly authentic knowledge, gained only by actual experience, apart from reason and ideas, which provides a total perception of the known object through a participation by grace.
-St. Maximus the Confessor, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Christ*, p. 126.

The spiritual traditions of humanity seek to keep alive the dimension of experiential, or perceptual, knowledge. At the heart of our life as spiritual persons is the call to *participate* in what Maximus calls “truly authentic knowledge.” There is knowledge about God, and then there is direct experience of the Mystery of God, which results in a different kind of knowledge altogether. A Christian spirituality of love grounds itself above all in experiential knowledge of Christ. The shift in later years from conceptual knowledge to experiential knowledge facilitates the

Ministry

witness aspect of incarnational spirituality—the growing ability to attract people of all ages to the Love of God. In a well-known prayer Cardinal Newman articulated the human aspiration for this kind of presence in the world, which reflects our potency for supra-conceptual knowledge and its manifestation in human presence:

Shine through us, and be so in us,
that every soul we come in contact with
may feel your presence in our soul. . . .
Let us then praise you in the way you love best
by shining on those around us. . . .
Let us preach you without preaching, not by words
but by our example, by the catching force,
the sympathetic influence of what we do,
the evident fullness of the love
our hearts bear to you.
(Quoted in *God Makes the Rivers to Flow*, p. 101)

Adrian van Kaam has said that we are meant to reflect to others the presence of the Mystery to us. Reflecting the Mystery of God is a matter of *being*. It is our participation in the Mystery that is reflected to others. The ageing process, and sometimes illness itself, offers opportunities to relativize our fixation on doing so that we can become the radiant witnesses of God that we are meant to be. The vicissitudes of life, which include illness and ageing, are the great awakeners. As we grow in awareness of the mystery that surrounds us, will we respond with gratitude or resentment for what has been given? There is so much we don't know and perhaps will never know, so much we may never accomplish! Our ability to be at peace with ourselves and others, to accept the past and to look forward in hope depends on our capacity to live with mystery. The medieval notion of *capax dei*, "capacity for God," included the ability to tolerate ambiguity, to live with the reality of mystery, and to go on radiating God's love and presence to the fullest of our potential.

In the words of Adrian van Kaam:

What we *are* is a mysterious divine plan that unfolds itself over a lifetime. The Mystery of Formation all-surrounding us, permeating us, and carrying us . . . is gradually disclosing to us who we really are. We don't know who we really are. Only God knows. But he lets us know by means of

gradual disclosure over a lifetime in meeting all kinds of providential situations that begin to tell us what we are. . . . You should never try to be more than you are (i.e., by means of perfectionistic ego-striving), but you should try to be what you are. But what you are you do not know totally. It is disclosed. We should have a great willingness to listen and to disclose.

Letting Go

Dear God,

help me grow old

with dignity and wisdom.

As the twilight years

cast their shadow upon me,

help my mind remain clear –

at peace with the world

and with itself.

Let me learn to let go

of my bonds with this world –

of my need for

honor and status;

of my attraction to

physical indulgences;

of my envy of others,

of my regrets

over all that might have been.

~Rabbi Nachman

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL AND/OR GROUP REFLECTION

1. How has the ageing and maturing process affected my understanding of “living a spiritual life?”
2. What practices constitute my spiritual life? When do I most feel I am living a spiritual life?
3. Have changes in my spiritual life tended to be the result of personal decisions?

Which changes in my spiritual life have been consciously made? (e.g., making more time for personal prayer, spiritual reading, reflection or meditation)

What changes in my spiritual life occurred “unconsciously”? That is, without my being aware of how the change(s) came about (e.g., discovering that I want or need to pray more; finding myself less anxious about the call to pray; experiencing periods of spontaneous prayer)

4. Has my prayer changed my relationship to:

My work?

Myself?

Others: community, family, friends, students, etc?

5. Have my prayer practices been worthwhile and beneficial in each of these categories? Or have I tended to feel that prayer “doesn’t work,” i.e., doesn’t make a difference in my life, the way I live, work and relate to others?

6. How would I like my prayer/spiritual life to be different?

What can I do to bring about the improvements I seek?

What must I stop doing, give up, or refrain from in order to enhance the formation of my spiritual life and prayer?

7. What persons, events or things have most inspired me to live a spiritual life? What have been the obstacles to prayer and spiritual living?

When have I felt most inspired and called to live a spiritual life?

What obstacles currently prevent me from living spiritually? ■

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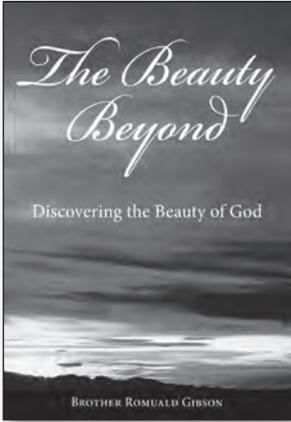
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TRINITY PRAYER

I am bending my knee
In the eye of the Father who created me,
In the eye of the Son who died for me,
In the eye of the Spirit who cleansed me.

*Carmina Gadelica, in Oliver Davies and Fiona Bowie,
Celtic Christian Spirituality, Continuum, 1995, 136.*

Book Reviews



The Beauty Beyond
Br Romuald Gibson, fms.
New Zealand Marist Brothers
Trust Board (2011).
ISBN 9780473186722

BROTHER Romuald fms is well placed to write such a beautiful narrative of the journey of a soul. He introduces us to his central character, Lemond, in the first page, and we are immediately immersed in the pain and struggle of a suddenly ended and previously splendid marriage.

The focus of the narrative and the writing itself emerges on a number of levels:

- There is the story of Lemond himself

- There is the descriptive uncovering of the trauma, loss, suffering and reflection of the central character as he comes to terms with the new reality
- There is the depth of understanding of the author as Lemond progresses somehow down the path from suffering and rejection towards healing and acceptance
- There is the underlying knowledge of the author providing the steps from trauma counselling to spiritual counselling, showing particularly the delicate role and the subtle understanding of a spiritual counsellor
- There is the beautiful display of biblical knowledge, themed in answer to the stages of suffering, love, repair and healing of Lemond
- There is the artist's heart that provides a series of full-colour paintings which come from the apparent hand of Lemond as he struggles to be honest with himself and his overwhelming grief
- Overall, there is the sense of the story-teller: that delicate

ability to take the reader ‘into’ the story deeply enough to touch the heart and to deepen our own understanding of some of life’s tribulations.

My own response is also many-layered:

- It is either curious or fascinating or perhaps both that the name of the main character is Lemond –which is a derivative in the French language for ‘the world’ – so in a way this is possibly meant by the author to carry the idea of Everyman! This is not a gender-laden term but is a revered concept in 20th century philosophy. I am reminded of John Wilson and his comment: ‘We may try our best to achieve genuine love with an equal, but fail. We may even try to achieve a ‘loving partnership’, but still fail ... and the question then arises of what sort of attitude or ideal is appropriate for us to adopt ...’ (Wilson, 2000, p. 281)
- Our author takes the reader deep into the journey of Lemond, and in doing so touches many a chord of memory in the reader. “The subliminal journey leads into the deep drama of life, where one is immersed in an interplay of life that is fuller, more vivid and colourful than any surface existence. The sparkling radiance of life is a light sharing in Divine Wisdom.’ (Stockton, 2011, p. 21)
- There is space for meditation for the reader as the biblical content becomes a foundation for personal reflection on a number of levels. As Eugene Stockton says: ‘Something new and powerful is happening to us as a nation ... a spiritual force is blowing to raise up a new people.’(Stockton, 1995, p.3)
- On a number of occasions, the text sent me scurrying for similar echoes in recent valued repertoire of previous publications. As Richard Rohr comments: ‘When we emphasize public, verbal, and social prayer forms, along with group rituals, while not giving people any inner experience of their inner aliveness (the “Indwelling Spirit”), it tends to keep religion on the level of a social contract ...’(Rohr, 2009, p. 72). It occurred to me that Lemond was affected by this experience perhaps. And many an Australian and New Zealander can find a critical chord of memory here.

It is worth highlighting some of the signposts I found, without spoiling the responses in the enjoyment of this narrative:

- The narrative begins with the crisis, taking us deep into how rejection can affect any person.
- As we accompany the sufferer on his journey, we learn about the underlying quest for life that is innate in us all.
- Regularly, we are shown how appreciation of beauty and love can lead to positive decisions.
- We learn along with Lemond the acceptance of, and experience of, a loving God in one's life, as the experience of these emerge and blossom, despite pain.
- We accompany Lemond in the struggle to express how the deepest feelings lead him, and us, closer to the passionate loving God of the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- We walk with Lemond as he discovers how the qualities of love give him strength to fashion personal responses positively and nobly, allowing understanding and sincere forgiveness to develop.
- We watch as Lemond discovers, and so do we, how emotional and social and spiritual pain

can be a conduit to a deeper understanding of self and the covenantal relationship with the Trinity—the Triune God of Christianity.

Finally, I wish to commend the author on his successful writing in showing how the Marist Way is encapsulated in a dramatic and insightful story of love lost, love regained and life recovered, as Lemond accepts the presence of an active loving God into his own life, colouring his future with covenantal relationship with the God of our Scriptures. I found myself rereading the monastic alphabet that Joan Chittister publisher (Chittister, 2000, p. 16), in which she states: 'Religion is about ritual, about morals, about systems of thought, all of them good but all of them incomplete. Spirituality is about coming to consciousness of the sacred. It is in that consciousness that perspective comes, that peace comes. It is in that consciousness that a person comes to wholeness. Life is not an exercise to be endured. It is a mystery to be unfolded.'

It remains only to remember something central and durable of the Marist Way by reference to the New Visions, New Dreams outline of Marist Spirituality, expressed by the author of this story, as we also carry on our shoulders in the

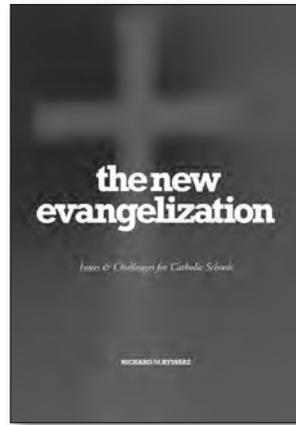
manner of Marcellin himself, filled with joy: 'Our mission, founded on the experience of being profoundly loved by Jesus, is to make him known and loved.' (Institute of the Marist Brothers, 2007, p.82).

As Gerald O'Collins makes clear, we must find our way to Jesus, deepening our knowledge and our relationship with his Divine Self: 'Both in his preaching and miraculous deeds Jesus was inseparably connected with the arrival of the divine kingdom. Through his person and presence, God's rule had come and was coming. Mark, followed by Matthew and Luke, clearly saw Jesus and his activity that way.' (O'Collins, 2011, p.114). ■

Berise Heasley

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**The New Evangelisation:
Issues & Challenges for Catholic
Schools**

Richard Rymarz, (2012).

*Ballan: Connor Court Publishing
Pty Ltd. 192pp.*

WITH the arrival of Richard Rymarz's most recent book, *The New Evangelisation*, we might well be witnessing the emergence in Australia of a theological idea whose hour has finally come. Although the missionary formula of the book's title has been in ecclesial parlance since at least Vatican II, Rymarz's systematic treatment of its meaning and implications, particularly for Catholic schooling, can validly be regarded as ground-breaking and required reading for Catholic educators.

In this eminently readable work,

the author has provided a concise and thorough understanding of the origin and scope of a theological idea that encapsulates the theoretical and pastoral momentum and continuity of conciliar, post-conciliar and papal thinking on the Church's mission today, especially in rapidly changing affluent countries. The primary mission-fields for 'the new evangelisation' are the post-modernised, post-Christian societies of the Western world.

After locating the provenance of 'the new evangelisation' in Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*, in documents such as Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio* (1991), and in the endorsement and development of these sources by Benedict XVI, Rymarz proceeds to list essential characteristics of a term that, though not novel, is still largely unfamiliar to many Catholics: 'the new evangelisation' is primarily relational and Christ-centred, evoking conversion; it involves all the faithful, with renewed appreciation of the role of the laity in the Church's mission; it elicits a freely chosen, personal, communal and publicly committed witness; it requires an understanding of the cultural context in which Christ and his Gospel are proclaimed; and it involves promotion of the Church's

social doctrine (cf, pp.30-34).

The breadth and depth of Rymarz's research and his demonstration of the "hermeneutic of continuity" in conciliar and papal thinking on this vital issue supply valuable instruments for evaluating the authenticity of emerging initiatives in the name of 'the new evangelisation', just as the author's comprehensiveness in identifying key aspects of this radical missiological concept permits appropriately generous scope for pluriform initiatives undertaken in its name.

Rymarz identifies that an understanding of the Church's relationship with culture is critical in implementing 'the new evangelisation'. If, in the pre-Vatican II era, the Church's stance in relation to culture was confrontational, and, post-Vatican II, assimilationist or synthesising, 'the new evangelisation' commits Catholic today more to a model whereby the Church not only offers a critique of wider culture and affirms its authentic aspirations and values, but also explicitly seeks to "transform it in Christ" (p.49); in other words, to ensure that anthropology and humanism are conceived and practised in their full Christological context.

The current cultural milieu for 'the new evangelisation' also requires

acknowledging and addressing the fact that the Church, which herself needs to undergo transformation or ongoing conversion to Christ, far from being able to assume today a captive audience among the faithful, "... must work much harder at gaining and retaining allegiance"(p.52). A significant challenge posed the contemporary cultural context is an increasing shift towards the dissociation of spirituality from religion, one of the symptoms of current individualism, identified as a "quest spirituality" (p.59) uprooted from sacramental ritual, creed and official teaching, and recognisable by a significant "... lack of strong, common, formative religious experiences" that distinguish a foundational Catholic socialisation for youth and younger adults. Upshots of this lack are selectivity of doctrine and practice, and the reduction of core beliefs and practices to the status of options, together with "vicarious religion" whereby baptised people delegate the religious sphere to the professional ministry of the state Churches" (Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates*, cited p. 114).

For his analysis and critique of the contemporary cultural and intellectual context, Rymarz, in addition to papal writings, draws heavily on various insights from

leading sociologists, philosophers and theologians (for example, Berger and Luckman, Greely, Finke and Stark, Polyani, Lonergan, Bauman, Taylor, Guardini, Rahner, Dulles). "Consumerist" western societies, where many flounder in post-modernity's maze of affluent aspiration, moral relativism and cultural fragmentation that has lost the bearings of any "grand narrative" for social and religious self-definition, ache, in a superficial void, for community, purpose and meaning which Rymarz believes can be delivered by a Christian community renewed in and confident of its divinely originate and sustained identity and historically durable mission. (cf, p. 98), and able to ... "make the connection between the faith community and the divine" (p.109) in the face of competing secular ideologies and narratives. Rymartz also strongly advocates a shift from emphasis on "making meaning" to "discovering truth", or at least reconnecting the two, in contemporary education; a recommendation deserving of elaboration beyond the scope of his present book.

As a researcher and a teacher who has demonstrated long and serious commitment to Catholic education, Richard Rymarz understands the importance of

rigorously examining new ideas, as well as the merely slogan potential of a term like 'the new evangelisation'. As well as testing the necessity of the idea itself, he offers penetrating critiques of various interpretations and possible models of it. His affirmation of the need for a 'new evangelisation' as heralded by Vatican II and developed in the pontificates of Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI is meticulously documented and convincingly argued; so, too, his articulation of the 'new evangelisation' in Catholic schooling.

Rymarz is confident that Catholic schools, by providing students and parents with "a lived experience of Catholic community, one that engages the mind as well as the affective dimension" (p. 132) and presents "... a strong and reconceptualised religious education program and a vigorous sense of identity" (p. 163) can become a revitalising and transformative evangelising leaven in the larger mission of the Church. The availability today of a vibrant Catholic school community in which faith can be shared and transmitted will depend on at least a "critical mass" comprised of educational leaders, teachers, parents and students – people "who are prepared to animate their religious dimension" (p. 167) and

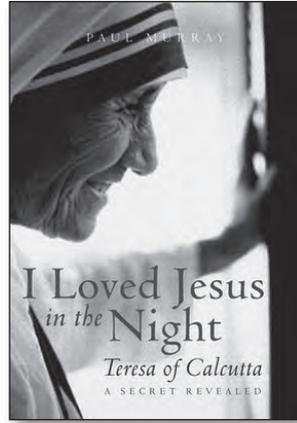
distinguishable by practice and commitment from the more loosely Church affiliated, the agnostic and the atheistic. A "reconceptualised religious education program" will not only raise relevant questions about God and living, but will also affirm sufficiently reasoned and faith-illuminated answers, both theoretical and existential. This program "will resonate deeply with human aspirations" (p.182) in a consumerist culture where "trivialisation" is too often the order of the day.

Carriers of 'the new evangelisation' in schools will "articulate counter-cultural messages" (p.172); in an ethos of consumerist superficiality and secular ideological assertion, they will provoke deeper questioning, and "... hope and meaning grounded in connection with that which is more than passing, partial and broken" (Bouma, *Australian Soul*, cited pp. 172-173).

From Richard Rymarz's work, this reader is led to conclude that at least in sociological terms the effectiveness of "the new evangelisation" will depend on the practice and witness of Christians – individuals and groups – prepared to take up the challenge of making Christ known and loved; disciples of Jesus whose response to the Gospel invitation, "Come and see ...",

extended through the Church and empowered by the Holy Spirit, is engaging and authentic; or, in other words, those who have a living appreciation and conviction of Paul VI's words that the Church (and by inference the individual Christian) is no more herself than when evangelising, and being faithful to her "deepest vocation" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, VI, 68). ■

John Kelly,
Sacred Heart College Senior
Somerton Park SA
August, 2012



I Loved Jesus in the Night:
Teresa of Calcutta
– A Secret Revealed
Fr. Paul Murray, OP.
Paraclete Press, Mass. (2008)
ISBN 9781557255792

FATHER Paul Murray OP is a priest, poet and professor at Rome's University of St. Thomas. Fr Murray details many memories in this small compact volume, of the saintly nun mentioning that we know much from her personal letters which were previously published. Teresa of Calcutta died in 1997 and since then the world has learned of her 'dark secret' of inner pain. Her published letters speak of her struggle, her dark night of the soul –when she felt so far away from the presence of God. Her experience is reminiscent of that of John of the Cross. We learn much about this

desert experience of the apparent absence of God in her life in this dark period, and Murray shows the inner pain that was present behind the joyful leadership and prayer life of Teresa of Calcutta, MC.

Murray writes with clarity and understanding about this tiny woman, of her deep feeling for the abject poverty of the people she served in Calcutta and elsewhere. He emphasizes her complete focus on Jesus, and her constant plea for those around her to pray for her. Her leadership duties seem to have separated her often from the psychological support of her Sisters and from human friendship, and highlighted a total reliance on Jesus. I can understand those who say that there are two kinds of people in Heaven, the Saints, and those who had to live with them! What comes through is a woman who is focussed on God and her mission to the poor, and it would have been a serious challenge to live under the conditions confronting her postulants and Sisters.

As we read, we begin to wonder whether depression was part of her experience, but Murray details why this is not so. He uses writings of John of the Cross and indicates Teresa turned to Therese Martin, the Little Flower, (and incidentally my patron saint!). We know that Therese Martin emphasized the

'Little Way' and now Teresa of Calcutta emphasized 'the gift of Nothing' (pg. 20 and pg.70). She highlighted that the gift was love-for, in particular for the poor and oppressed that she met in the streets of Calcutta. As Jesus said: 'As often as you ...' and she took that direction at its most extreme in her life.

As I continued to read, I was reminded of the biblical figures that appeared in Joan Chittister's pretty little volume lent to me by a colleague: 'The Friendship of Women – the Hidden Tradition of the Bible'. Chittister details twelve biblical women whose lives showed us the virtues and values of friendship. I wondered whether Murray had no chance to see the possible friendships of Teresa in her daily life.

Teresa joins the ranks of this tradition, following revered figures like Lydia, Phoebe, Martha, Veronica, Elizabeth, and Magdalene, finding connections -like Mary of Nazareth- to Jesus, to the Father and to the Holy Spirit. Chittister explores the sacred dimension of friendship through the lens of faith and tradition, through scripture and through social sciences of today. This approach clarified for me an understanding of the anecdotal evidence that Murray used that

indicated Teresa's enormous capacity for surrender to God's will in her life (pg. 50).

As I sat pondering about the little Albanian lady in Murray's brief profile, I began to think also of the diversity of women the world over, who reach out towards the sacred, the holy, the mystery that we call God. I pulled out an old favourite 'Chocolate for a Woman's Soul' by Kay Allenbaugh. She details seventy-seven stories, little cameos of life that recall experiences of women about commitment, courage, compassion, marriage, friendship, love and spirituality, and the experience of the presence of God – how some found God in unexpected ways and how others were inspired at crucial points in their life's journey.

To conclude, Murray stimulated a wide-ranging response in me to his memoir of Teresa of Calcutta. All three books that I mention are first class writing and reading; all are delving deep into the ways we find God. He made me smile at times and had me in tears too! While those in Allenbaugh's stories don't always have the same values and beliefs as Teresa of Calcutta, their underlying quest for God was one they also celebrated. It prompts the reader to celebrate the cause of compassion and care that Teresa of Calcutta, the Missionary

of Charity, practised. Chittister's profiles of the twelve female figures of biblical fame rests on her intense research into the main attribute that was present in the life of each one, as Teresa did.

One small memoir, but one enlightening and thought-provoking response! A fireside read or a resource for meditation – Murray allows us both ways. Teresa of Calcutta was an outstanding figure of her time, both holy and human. Murray's writing is sincere in his intent to allow us glimpses of her deep faith and friendship with God – Father, Son and Spirit. ■

Berise Heasley

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TERESA OF CALCUTTA

The Radiance, The Darkness

Mother's presence among us, her inner world (the unseen, hidden places of her mind and heart) were, for many years, and to her own great bewilderment, caverns of a seeming emptiness, zones of an almost total darkness. No wonder she would exclaim in a letter written once to a priest: "If I ever become a saint – I will surely be one of 'darkness'. This darkness was not, an experience of depression or despair. Rather it was the shadow cast in her soul by the overwhelming light of God's presence: God utterly present and yet utterly hidden. His intimate, purifying love experienced as a devastating absence and even, on occasion, as complete abandonment.

Father Paul Murray, OP. I Loved Jesus in the Night, Brewster, Massachusetts: Paraclete Press, 2011, 18-19.



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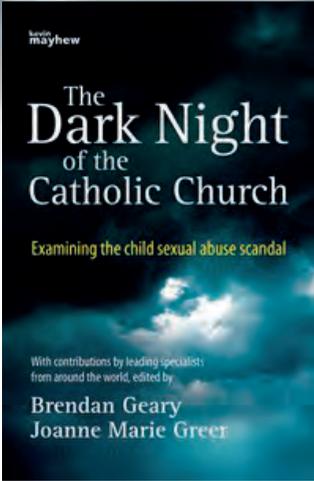
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