

St Mary's Matters



Whither to?

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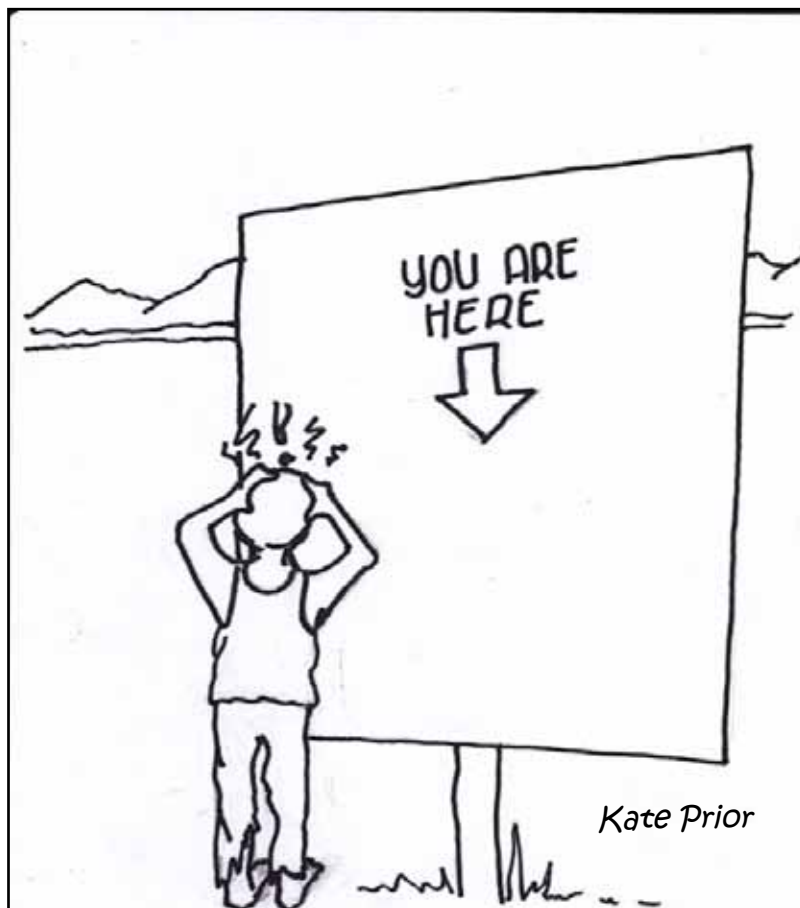
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From the Editor

When Thomas said to Jesus, 'We know not where we are going so how can we know the way'. He replied, 'I am the Way'. I wonder what the disciples made of that reply. Perhaps a little unsatisfactory as a response to a query about direction!

There are those in the community who are asking the same question as Jesus' disciples asked. They worry that maybe we have lost our way. Perhaps they are echoing Thomas' anxiety. But Jesus' response was meant to reassure him and it should reassure us. We don't have to know where we are going. We can step into the unknown together with confidence because we do know who we are. Like the disciples, we too are followers of Jesus. We choose to celebrate Eucharist together and we attempt to live the way that Jesus taught.

Editor

Whither To ?

In light of the recent AGM meeting I thought it might be an opportunity to state clearly what my understanding of this community is. I believe that the nature of our community is very simple. It is an intentional liturgical community – nothing more and nothing less.

By intentional I mean people make a decision to come and be part of the community. We are not a parish demarcated by boundaries – in fact we are not even a parish in this Archdiocese – we are not recognised as part of the Catholic Archdiocese – which is why some people made a decision not to come to the TLC building. Moreover we are a community on the edge – without the generosity of the TLC building we might not exist. What this community St Mary's in Exile offers and what the leadership of this community offers is a spirituality which is enunciated every Sunday through a liturgy of word, music and a liturgy of the Eucharist. In my opinion it is as simple as that and as difficult as that. Community creating and sustaining community.

And the important point I want to make here is that the spirituality that is offered is a Christian spirituality that is essentially about a practical concern for those who find themselves on the margins of society. It's about the reign of God.

It's also a spirituality which is not focussed on creeds and dogmas and the necessity of

brokers (priests, bishops, pope etc) but one that encourages you to claim your birthright here and now – to embrace life as it is in all its magnificence and horror, with its wondrous multiplicity of life forms and with its tragedies and sufferings and discover that at the heart of life, I use that word heart deliberately, to discover the essential oneness of all life – then compassion naturally emerges for those who are homeless or marginalised in any way. That sense we are separated from each other and from all other life forms is the cause of suffering.

This is an authentic Christian vision. In today's gospel we see the conflict between the vision of John the Baptist and the vision of Jesus – the Kingdom (reign of God).

John's understanding of the Reign of God begins with repentance from sin through the ritual of cleansing of baptism. John Dominic Crossan suggests that for John the Baptist, once there was a critical mass of purified people God would not delay. "God's Great Clean-up of the World" was imminent – and it was going to be violent, those who did not repent and be baptised would be thrown into a fire that would never go out. This vision of John the Baptist is still very much at the centre of literalist Christianity.

The vision of Jesus is very different. For Jesus the reign of God was already present. For Jesus the world belonged to God – and God as the householder/



Knowing who we are is the main part of knowing where we are going.. Peter Kennedy makes clear his image of who we are as a community.

parent was typically concerned that all God's children had access to a sufficient amount of this world's resources. So apparently the reign of God is already here – but there is this obvious disparity – the haves and the have nots – in order for the reign of God to be fulfilled – this disparity between the haves and the have nots must be addressed – not by God – but by us. We have to collaborate and advocate for a just society or otherwise the vision of God and Jesus – the reign of God on earth is thwarted.

'For Jesus the reign of God was already present.'

And lastly this vision, unlike the vision of John, must be non-violent. We are invited to advocate on behalf of those on the margins of society but non-violently and in so doing resist the violent normalcy of our world. "Forgive your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute you".



We are an intentional liturgical community – nothing more and nothing less.

This, says Dominic Crossan, is the subversive vision that Jesus gave every ounce of his life, to the point of death itself. That no greater love can any of us know than that which leaves a river of justice carving out a better world for those relegated to the outside.

While St Mary's in Exile has nothing in the way of structures we are fortunately embedded with Micah Projects that 15 years ago came out of the concerns of this community – this inner city community. Helen Styles last week in her homily kept making the point that this community was very important to Micah Projects inviting us to continue to be involved with them. Last Wednesday at the turning of the first sod for the Common Ground Project in Hope Street for which Micah Projects is the service provider, both Kevin Rudd (Federal Minister and Local Member) and Karen Struthers (State Minister for Department of Communities) were fulsome in praise of the work of Micah in helping to house the homeless.

While many of us in one way or another are involved with Micah Projects, many people in this community work professionally in those same areas of need and many others work as volunteers in any number of places whose focus is on the marginalised. In my opinion this community needs the minimum of governance structures.

'..a people of like-mind supporting one another in our quest to make sense of this life..'

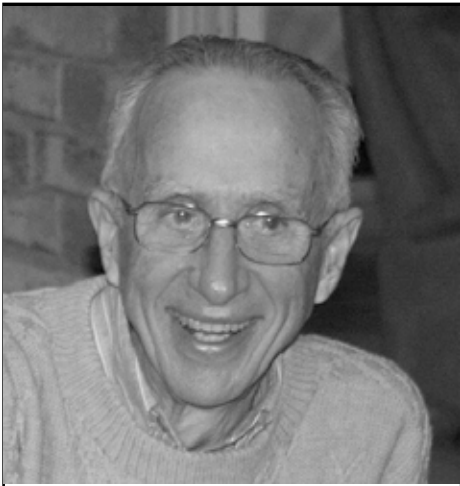
Because we are no longer part of the Catholic Archdiocese we had to set up a company to comply with the legal prescriptions of company law. But we don't need to make it overly complex.

We are above all, a community of faith, a people of like-mind supporting one another in our quest to make sense of this life,

here and now. Not in some fantasy world after death – there may well be life after death, but it is totally impossible for you and me to have any concept of that life – “I have come to give you life in all its fullness” – so it must be our concern that that fullness be extended to all - that reign of justice and peace – if you want peace, work for justice for all.

Dairmuid O'Murchu in his book “Catching Up with Jesus” writes that when we travel down that road, as Jesus did, perhaps the most painful martyrdom will not be the shedding of our blood, but in the misunderstanding, criticism, ridicule and rejection we will experience at the hands of our very own – family, friends, communities, country, church. Authentic Christian discipleship is not for the faint hearted – rather it is often a lonely and isolated road – the less travelled road. But one which in the end, I imagine, you do not regret.

Peter Kennedy



David Pincus, in his homily last year, talked about the importance of our liturgy. It's here by popular request.

Part of the Christian Church *OR* a sidelined sect

The Jesuit Andy Hamilton writing in Eureka Street about Peter Kennedy's book said that the greatest challenge facing St Mary's is to make sure that we are part of the Christian church and do not become a sidelined sect. Andy Hamilton gave as his considered opinion that the most important criterion of whether or not we are meeting this challenge is the form of our liturgy. Today, I will try to show why I consider that aiming to continue to be a part of the Christian Church is a worthy ambition for St Mary's and why I believe that our form of liturgy is helping us achieve that ambition.

The first issue is the place of Christianity in our lives.

The history of the human race is the history of the increasing domination by us of all other living creatures, accompanied by an inability of men to live in harmony with each other. Conquering other forms of life has been easy; what has been difficult has been finding a way

for people of different races and backgrounds to live together in harmony. No one had found the perfect formula until a poor carpenter in an out of the way Roman province called Judea called on men and women to give up selfishness and anger and greed and instead to love God and to do unto others as you would that they should do to you. Jesus had a simple message - to love God and love your neighbour as yourself. Let us now look at what this has accomplished.

The best of Western civilization, its acknowledgement of the rights of each person, its search for equality, its tradition of caring for the disadvantaged, its emphasis on ethical behaviour –

of the abuse of power. History gives many more examples – of the Crusades, of the Inquisition, of the declaration that those who do not toe the official line are heretics and either repent or can be killed. But notice what the average Christian is doing while these horrors are going on. Most Christians are living their lives quietly, striving to continue to worship God in a way that is in accordance with their personal beliefs and to help those of their neighbours who are more unfortunate than they.

Parish priests ministered to their parishioners and the people lived ordinary lives, remembering Christ's precepts to love God and their neighbour. And if we think

'.. that Christ is the centre of our lives and that we should study and follow His teachings.'

all these have followed from the flowering of the ideas of one man born 2000 years ago.

What has been the downside of Christianity? Unfortunately, like any human institution, men more interested in personal power than in the good of the community have often seized the reins of power and used them for personal aggrandisement, rather than doing what Jesus wanted the leaders to do – to serve others. I need hardly remind you of the recent example of the way that Peter Kennedy has been treated as an example

we are badly done by, we should be glad we are not in the time of the Inquisition and in danger of being burnt at the stake!

I consider that most people in this congregation would be like me. I wish to be a part of the quiet Christian Church which acknowledges that I am created by a greater power and wish to worship that power, which I call God, but will have no truck with the hierarchical Catholic Church when it abuses its power and tells me what I must believe and what I must do, even if my mind and heart tell me that the official

church is wrong. I wish to worship God among like-minded people and to find a community that is prepared to look at modern scholarship and recent insights in theology, but still retains the core of Christianity

What will be the form and content of our liturgy?

– that Christ is the centre of our lives and that we should study and follow His teachings.

So we come to the second challenge posed by Andy Hamilton's words – what will be the form and content of our liturgy? For me, the question of liturgy is in three parts – the fixed prayers, the prayers relevant to that day and the input of the congregation.

Firstly, the fixed prayers. As we all know, the Roman missal has become ossified as the old images of God and the old ways of saying that we acknowledge our indebtedness and gratitude to God are trotted out; often it is conducted in a way that emphasises the rote aspect of



Our liturgy has always been important to us,

Mass and it is hard to hear, let alone relate to, the celebrant. Compare this with St Mary's. We have a modern, enlightened ceremony with a form of words for the consecration which I think is brilliant. Whoever composed it should be congratulated as it incorporates enough words from the gospel accounts of the Last Supper to remind us of the purpose of the Mass – to do this in memory of me. All the important sayings are there, in particular the words 'this is my body'. Now, I would be the first to admit that I do not know what these words mean. I reject the idea of transubstantiation. But, whatever Jesus meant by them, the words were obviously important to Him as He was prepared to put up with the desertion of many of His followers because they thought He was committing blasphemy. So, if 'This is my body' is so important for Jesus, it is fitting and right that the words are included in our liturgy.

Secondly; the prayers of the day. I would prefer some readings from the Bible as the Old Testament, with all its faults, was the basis for Christ's understanding of theology and what Jesus would have read and discussed in the synagogues.

I appreciate hearing readings from the New Testament because, while I reject the institutionalised Catholic Church's idea of the importance of tradition, I acknowledge this is the only source we have when seeking to know about Christ.

There seems to be a growing tendency for the homilist to pick readings and prayers relevant to the theme of the homily and this

has resulted in a more logical and coherent ceremony. If some of the readings at our Masses are from recent writings and express ideas not usually part of, but are consistent with, the St Mary's tradition of caring for others, seeking justice for the marginalised and regarding our spiritual life as a vital part of living, I am sure that they are welcome.

Finally, the input from the congregation. The tradition at St Mary's that the prayers of the faithful are offered by people who wish for the congregation to join them in their grief or concern is a marvellous one and has become one of the features which make coming to Mass here such a moving experience.

I think most people here would think of themselves as Christians who choose to worship as members of St Mary's congregation. I acknowledge that there are some who wish for acceptance of other traditions and of new ideas and I trust that we will acknowledge the rights of anyone to believe any of the possible answers to the eternal questions about creation, morality, a spiritual life, etc.

On the other hand, the liturgy is what we do in common and it should express and foster the ideas we have in common of the importance of justice, freedom and acceptance. We wish to worship our concept of God in the company of like minded people and in a form which avoids the repetition of meaningless prayers. The form which has been chosen has been used for long enough to have become a tradition and

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St Mary's in Exile..Whither to?

St Mary's in Exile (SMX) presents its members with a challenge. Whither to? Does the leadership of like-minded individuals suffice? Or are the skills of managing a club required? The skills in managing an organisation are expected of us all. And, even harder, do our leaders exercise the skills in managing an institution with accountability to the general community? Given that members do not live in the same locality, old skill sets are being challenged. SMX is taunting us to expand our minds, our emotions and our spirit to create a new source of spiritual succour in the world.

Because SMX is a spiritual community with temporal concerns, its strength exists in both the world and the spirit. Institutionalised religions have faced these dilemmas for centuries. The benefits to individual members of all religions lie as much in a sense of belonging in an institution with its place in the world beyond our control, as they do in knowing that historical events that formed the world have been influenced by the religion that forms part of our identify.

Identity is formed by leaders. As the leader in a family, organisation, institution or community sets the limits for the goodness of what is possible, the spirit within SMX limits each of us. That most of us do not experience a sense of limitation, but rather one of expansion is a statement of the strength of the

spirit that is SMX. Spiritual strength is a little like magic. It exists because we choose to see it. It exists because we listen for it in our interactions with others. It sits between two people and groups as we speak. It is of our making and outside our grasp. It is like love in that, once it is created, it cannot be destroyed.

'listen to the spirit in people to whom professionals have assigned limiting labels'

SMX, in taking a stand for the dispossessed, challenges us to expand our assumptions to include all people, including those we don't understand. SMX has chosen to listen to the spirit in people to whom professionals have assigned limiting labels. SMX is a leap of faith that takes us beyond our day to day limits. It makes more possible, not only in South Brisbane, but throughout the world.

The strength of SMX is that contemplation is shared and visions are exchanged in a safe place. How do we keep our comfort and challenge ourselves to recognise and express our vulnerability? The love and respect that Jesus taught us is at the core of our spirit. It is created together, by reaching out to people we don't know and can't trust to act in ways that bring us comfort. Our challenge is to create a community that honours



'In attempting to act justly, we are called to conduct our own community affairs justly, but especially to give priority to the marginalised in our society in the allocation of resources' says Kerry McGovern in this essay.

the people in Brisbane who have given up their wealth and who live among us following Christ.

The challenge of SMX is to change the definition of leadership that is acceptable in Australia.

Kerry McGovern

Part of the Christian Church OR a Sidelined Sect

Continued from page 7

this form has a relevance which makes coming to Mass here a refreshing and enjoyable part of our week.

I believe that, if Andy Hamilton observed our Mass, he would judge that we have a liturgy that ensures we remain a relevant part of the great heritage of Christianity.

David Pincus

It was a time for the travellers to move out from the safety of the hut. The Hut they were in was familiar and well-lit, but they knew that it could no longer serve them. It was time to venture out into dark and unfamiliar terrain, to seek out a new place of life.



from the adventure, another started to turn back to the light of the hut.

It was a strange and unprecedented situation for them all. The only ones who knew where they were going were the ones who turned back, for they were turning to light and familiarity.

As they moved away from the hut, the light its windows cast on the world outside grew dim, until there was very little to guide them. They had to move along tentatively. The directions they decided on were often mistaken and they

had to rely on each other for any progress they made.

Not all shared the same feelings about what they were undertaking. Where one grew frustrated, another continued to trust. Where one took heart

But anyone embracing the future was at a loss. The only knowledge they possessed was the wisdom that accumulated as they explored their way forward.

By Jan Novotka
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Judith Lucy's Spiritual Journey



Production has started in Melbourne on a new six-part series, written by and starring Australia's favourite funny lady – Judith Lucy.

Judith Lucy's Spiritual Journey follows Judith's very personal path from devoutly religious child to determined young atheist to an adult searching for something to believe in.

Judith visited us at St Mary's last year and is coming back to give the homily at 9am on February 27th. She chatted with community members and really enjoyed being part of our celebration. I do believe that St Mary's and the homily she gives is an important part of her journey.



Judith talks to Scott after mass

We look forward to watching the series.

Editor

A Pilgrim Community

Blessed are the poor,' Jesus shockingly said in the sermon on the Mount, and adds 'blessed are the humble.' This must be the most succinct yet challenging manifesto of the Christian revolution . The rest of the world was saying , and still says, 'blessed are the rich and powerful for the whole world belongs to them.' In the first, the listener is asked to behave humbly because there is no cure for the sickness of pride. It is as deadly as Old Testament leprosy.

In the novel *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco there is reference to an occasion when some Franciscan friars challenged the pope of the time with being unfaithful to Christ, because he lived in obscene luxury and wealth and exercised the power of a worldly emperor. His Holiness responded by having them executed. His name is forgotten ; but his influence and those of people such as Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Oscar Romero and Mary MacKillop give the lie to those who insist the poor and humble are really weak and useless and have no value in the real world.

A 'dramatic and challenging image'

One of the more dramatic and challenging images from the documents of Vatican II *The Church in the Modern World* is the metaphor of 'a pilgrim people'.

It described the church in the modern world as inexorably linked to the suffering and dispossessed and powerless of the world – nothing there about the need for wealth to spread the good news.

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of this age, especially of those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes ,the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.

Such words are inspiring to organizations like Vinnies and the Salvos and Micah.

Much of what the Council had to say was disturbing, especially to those who believed that the church after both the Council of Trent and Vatican I (with its insistence on the infallibility of the pope) had 'arrived', and therefore enjoyed the fullness of truth, so that nothing more need really be said. It is all there in the doctrines and dogmas proclaimed over the centuries

John XXIII's call for aggiornamento was insulting to them, if not dangerous.

Experience tells us how hard it is to have a genuine discussion or argument on any topic with those who have 'arrived', for such people have no more to learn and exhibit a certainty that cannot be questioned.



Tony Carroll sees us all as Pilgrims.

Unquestioning and unquestionable certainty has resulted in the destruction of much that is beautiful in art and literature . The senseless and heartless smashing of the praying monk from the old St Mary's is a reflection of the dynamiting of the ancient statues of the Buddha by the Taliban in Afghanistan. The perpetrators operated on the same principle , beloved by the Pharisees , you must be wrong because we are right .

A truly poor in spirit person admits imperfection in knowledge and experience and is always open to change for the better. The opposite of humility is pride and the opposite of poverty of spirit is self-satisfaction. If we are part



of a pilgrim people we must be poor and humble enough to try to follow where the Spirit leads.

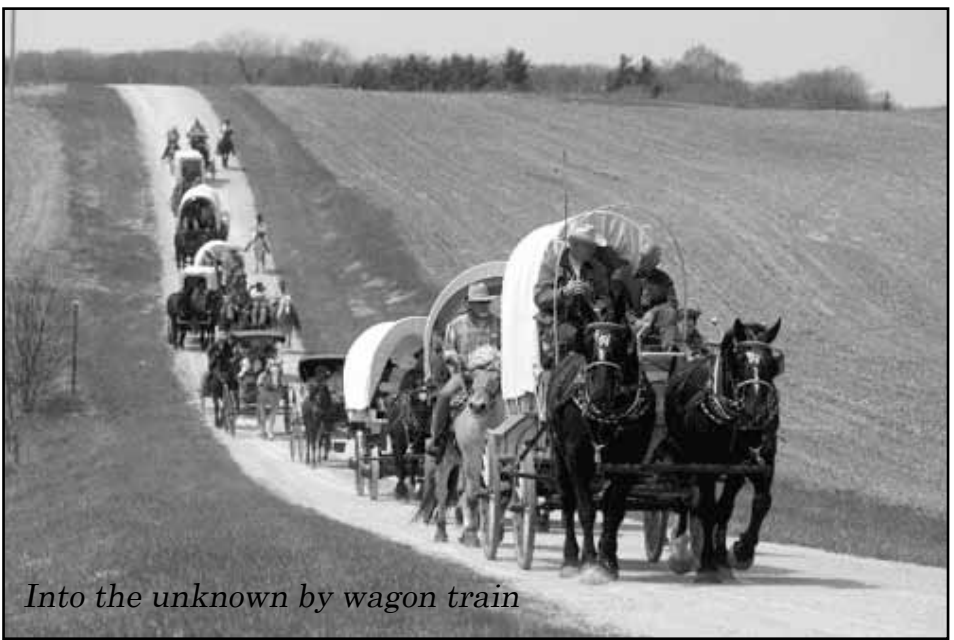
the image is certainly threatening

Thus for some the image of a pilgrim church on the move is certainly threatening and uncomfortable, and it is. A lot of former certainties are no longer around to cling to, like some of the things that we innocently accepted as set in stone before we learned more history and began to seek answers.

Let us look at three types of pilgrim:

Firstly a pilgrim of medieval times usually travels poorly with only the basic necessities, is not self satisfied, certainly needs others along the way, like the kindly innkeepers and good companions in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, is prepared to go a long way , yet yearns for a real home. Nevertheless , such a pilgrim believes with faith and hope that the fullness of life is not found by standing still and is prepared to risk being part of a loving and united community on the same journey. Even when they must leave behind places where they had experienced peace and comfort-as we did with the building up the road. I find great comfort and peace in my membership of St Mary's in Exile, especially celebrated in our Eucharists at TLC.

Another image of the pilgrimage comes from Africa . The Swahili word "safari" has changed to mean organized hunting expeditions for well-



Into the unknown by wagon train

heeled tourists. However the term originally referred to a community's long and arduous journey to find food and shelter with the changing of the seasons. They sought a home where their group's needs would be satisfied and their inner yearnings truly satisfied , otherwise they would die.

Finally an image for the oldies . Remember a TV series starring Ward Bond called "Wagon Train"? The early movement of settlers across the United States was typified by the covered wagons featured in Hollywood movies . The people involved were generally families who were prepared to risk everything in the hope of finding a new and better world across the plains and over the mountains. They did not know where they were going, but they knew what they were leaving behind. They found comfort and support in each other .When threatened they tended to move their wagons in a circle and wait till they felt free to move on. They were pilgrims.

If you apply this metaphor of pilgrimage to the church in history then the people of

God are in the moving wagons seeking a new life; the rangers and scouts who go ahead looking for the safest way through an unknown land are the theologians and mystics. That leaves the wagon master to inspire and strengthen and comfort his uncertain, poor and humble family on the move. He has to be the spirit of Jesus showing wisdom and grace. His words, as found in the Gospels , will keep the community together and on track;or everyone will end up dead , or at least hungry and thirsty and up a blind canyon somewhere.

We should accept that we are a pilgrim people who try to follow the way that Jesus showed us. We hope to feel his presence around the table when we break bread together. In faith and hope and love we can humbly try to be faithful in seeking justice and peace on our journey together , especially for the least of his sisters and brothers.

Tony Carroll

A PLACE I HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN

In October, I looked after the home of a couple of St Mary's people who were overseas. Whilst they were away, the council removed their old road and replaced it with a new one. I wrote to them:

'By the time you return there will be a new road outside your house. The new road will be in the same spot as the old road, but, without any doubt whatsoever, it will be a new road. Why there will be a new road is a little beyond me since the old road seemed to me to be a perfectly good road. It was neither an unused road nor a well-worn road. Indeed, to my admittedly untrained eye, although it was a long and winding road, it was also a humble and useful road.'

I liked the old road partly, because the old road did not seem so old and, partly because it oozed character and hidden knowledge. Now all the old road's familiar lines and markings which told a thousand stories of a community becoming, the dips, the plateauings, the arrivings and the goings, the first kisses and the secret flings, the disasters averted and the million other things: gone, all gone, but for this little ode left by the old road.'

I arrived at St Mary's sometime in 2005, I think. I say I think, because, unlike a social club or a political party, no evidence exists that might tell me the exact day, month, or year of my

arrival. I didn't have to register or sign anything, I didn't have to subscribe to a particular set of beliefs, nothing was asked of me. I was not encouraged by anyone to return but I nevertheless wanted to return.

'we are the body, we are the bread'

But, whilst I don't remember the exact day of my arrival, I do remember the exact feeling of it. I felt as if I had come to a place I had always known. This feeling was no more profound than in the ritual of the Eucharist. Just before coming to St Mary's I attended an all-day seminar on the Eucharist by Fr Frank Anderson MSC. One of his conclusions is that the Eucharist is 'in a deeply mysterious but nonetheless true sense the holy and living sacrifice of ourselves'. In other words, we are the body, we are the bread, and when the bread is eaten we each receive the nourishment of the whole. 'The primary issue of the Eucharist,' says Anderson, 'is not whether – or how – Jesus might be present but whether we are truly present'.

So the feeling I had when I first arrived at St Mary's is linked to the mystery implicit in a caring community that nourishes its own and, in so doing, gives each the reinforcement to carry on with the work of loving others and being loved.

On that first arrival, St Mary's was modestly full. But between October 2008 and Easter 2009

when its future was threatened, a tsunami of people came to defend her. This told me that the people of St Mary's were both a visible and less visible community, greater than the sum of its regular clientele.

Perhaps the most important question we can ask about those times is what exactly were all these people defending? Because surely whatever we were defending then is still worth defending now. I can only speak for myself so let me begin by making clear what I wasn't defending.

'I'm quite happy to leave my spirituality there, in the realm of mystery;'

I wasn't defending a specific dogma or doctrine. No one exerted any pressure on me to follow a particular brand of Catholicism, Christianity, or any other kind of spiritual practice. No one excluded me because of my particular belief or non-belief. In the old St Mary's, I sat next to a Christian Brother, a true believer, whereas I would only ever describe myself as agnostic. Him being a believer and me a non-believer did not stop us from communing around the breaking of the bread. I have no knowledge of God because I have no understanding of God. As a friend of mine once said to me, if I understood God, I would be God. And I'm quite happy to leave my spirituality there, in the realm of mystery; a mystery which

has not come to me primarily through religious beliefs but, incongruously, through science. Like science, I have no need to create a fantasy in order to live fully in the mystery. It is not through the fanciful but through the real that science is constantly reminding us of the mystery of life. Has anyone noticed how the more scientific discoveries there are, the more madly mysterious everything becomes?

What I was defending was the right of a community of people genuinely committed to social justice to continue to exist (even as an irritant) within the framework of an institution that espouses social justice but whose many rules and, in some cases, practices, deny it, even to its own. My defence of St Mary's was itself an act of social justice.

For social justice to exist there must first be injustice. And in the face of injustice, the social justice person has no option but to do whatever can be done to correct or relieve the injustice, which is not necessarily about storming the ramparts; sometimes it may simply be sitting with somebody for a while who needs to be sat with. The spiritual power of just being present for someone in need, I've never felt more profoundly than when I've visited a friend of mine who is a volunteer at the Campbell Club. There is absolutely no room for ambition, grand plans, or corporate strategies at the Campbell Club. Members of the Campbell Club are very real, and very present, as are their needs. There, there is only the space and time for compassion.

Social justice says: If someone is hungry you feed them. If



Robert and Atticus - Photo by Mark Crocker

someone is homeless you give them shelter. If someone is physically, psychologically, or emotionally oppressed or abused you give them the assistance they need to become more whole and more free. Or if someone dribbles, like some often do at the Club, you wipe it from their face. Social justice exists in the present and acts out of the real.

'its faith is not borne out a romantic belief that justice will prevail eventually in some mythical kingdom.'

Take everything else away, including the personalities and the funny little agendas which have existed, as far as I can tell, at St Mary's forever, and, however it came about, and for whatever reason, St Mary's is primarily a faith community. But its faith is not borne out a romantic belief that justice will prevail eventually in some mythical kingdom. Rather, its faith is reignited

and reinvigorated every time a refugee is given safe harbour, a water well in Ethiopia begins to function, or when dribble is wiped from a face. This kind of faith is worth keeping.

Has anything really changed because the community is no longer the oppositional irritant within the institution? I don't think so. Whilst it might have been useful, I don't think being oppositional was ever the purpose of St Mary's. Rather, I think it was an assumed position that St Mary's found herself in because her faith was borne out of practice rather than out of rigid laws and superstitious beliefs.

'the common welfare comes first'

Indeed, one of the reasons this community grew is because of the courage it found to face residual institutionalised cultural fears and discard the rules and superstitions. If we hadn't done

so, I don't think the St Mary's we know today would exist. I, for one, would, at best, be spiritually marginalised, and, at worst, excluded.

We should think very deeply about this before we go down the path of making our own rigid rules. For it is the history of all institutions that with rules also come internal struggles for wealth, prestige and power.

There are important traditions from which others stem. The common welfare comes first; personal recovery depends on group unity. If one part suffers, every part suffers? If one part is honoured, every part rejoices? The body is the most important thing and individuals avoid any action that may bring it unnecessary harm.

The second tradition addresses authority. The only authority is a loving God as she may express herself in the collective conscience. Leaders do not make rules or govern. They serve. Most importantly they are also trusted by the body to serve. For example, Peter and Terry, as our spiritual leaders, are trusted by the collective conscience to identify those persons, texts, or activities which are the ingredients of the spiritual bread we break and eat to nourish us in our daily works. Imagine how much harder our work would be without it.

There are many other principles that may be relevant and worth considering: the administrative and the spiritual arms remain distinct and separate minority opinion often proves to be right and therefore is afforded great respect; no major important decision is made without

substantial unanimity no matter how long it takes; and so on.

If there is currently a crisis of confidence among some of us, then perhaps we doubt the power of our collective conscience. Which, to me, is strange because this community has always demonstrated an uncanny ability to deal with challenges and threats. All threats, no matter from whence they come, or however good their intent, are self-seeking.

'this community has always demonstrated an uncanny ability to deal with challenges and threats'

The Archbishop issued threats of his own against St Mary's, but St Mary's didn't relent. Rather its ranks swelled with rightful defiance. I think this tells us something about St Mary's that should reinforce our confidence rather than diminish it. Surely our experience tells us that our own collective conscience, by whatever mysterious means it is

arrived at, is enough to counter any leader who tries to impose his or her will about doctrine or belief, or rule with impunity.

In considering the future, I think the starting point for us as a community should be the old tried and true St Mary's road: Let's first identify the spiritual principles which, to use the words of Frank Anderson, "in a deeply mysterious but nonetheless true sense" have always sustained us. Then let's go about discovering the administrative principles by which the spiritual whole can be preserved. If we are respectful, patient, humble, non-threatening, and open, I don't think the process necessarily needs to take long. But what if it does? So what?

I'm very fond of the slow old St Mary's road: with its twists and turns, its uncertainties and doubts, its resting places, its surprising and sometimes awesome views. Mostly though, I'm fond of it because it appears to be without destination. And it seems to go on forever - into the present

Robert Perrier

"When we finally understand the facts of life and rid our minds of the delusion that we shall find immortal life after we die, then we shall seek more diligently to awaken the spiritual man within us and strengthen and build up the spiritual domain of our being until, like Jesus, we shall be able to control the atomic energy in our bodies and perform so-called miracles."

*from "Atom Smashing Power of the Mind" by Charles Fillmore
Contributed by Helen Shaw*

Community Dinner at Adam's Restaurant

Photos by Peter Harriss



The Darl's - Margie and Christine sing for us.



Baptising at the TLC



Maple watches closely as she is baptised. Terry officiates and parents, Rimu and Ann and Godparents look on.



Paul and Rose with baby Grace. Godmother, Cathy looks on.



Terry presides as Ryan is baptised. Mothers, Kath and Naomi assist.



And some more dinner photos



Paul and Louise entertained us

Carmen, who painted the portrait with Kerry, who won a copy.



Leadership

Greg Latemore talks about models of leadership

The literal meaning of 'leadre', a Norse/Viking word, is the "furrow in the field" or "the wake of a ship". Leadership is taking people somewhere with you.

There are many frameworks or theories of leadership. Here is just one:

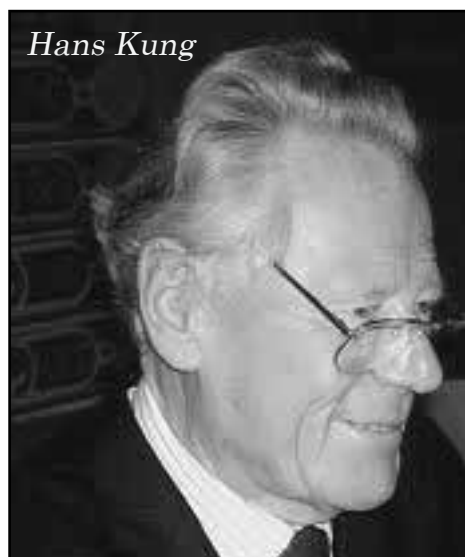
Kouzes and Posner in *The Leadership Challenge* (2002) say that leadership is about five 'practices'.

Leaders:

- challenge the process
- inspire a shared vision
- model the way
- enable others to act and
- encourage the heart.

We could well ask, "Do leaders – our leaders – challenge, inspire, provide a good example, empower us and motivate us?"

Great leadership is transformational not just transactional, that is, it transforms how people think, feel and behave. They help people find meaning and make sense of their world. This is



Hans Kung

indeed rare. Barack Obama, the American President, has been truly inspirational but has had a few recent 'wicked problems' to address; leadership is more than just giving a few inspirational speeches. The Catholic hierarchy doesn't even do that – they seem to have 'gone missing'.

Further, the sobering reality is that hubris often affects those who acquire authority. Manfred Kets de Vries (*The Leadership Mystique* 2001) says it is no surprise that a fish rots from the head down! He says leaders need a 'healthy narcissism', enough self efficacy to be effective, but not too much to become tyrants. To cure hubris, de Vries advocates humanity, humility, humour, hope.

Leadership and the Church

The truth is that the hierarchy and the papacy are largely irrelevant to thinking Catholics and have been for years. Is this such a bad thing, when all the Roman Curia expects and allows is dependency? Just look at the fan club websites for Benedict XVI and George Pell. These are merely sycophantic testaments to childish dependency. Is that who we are supposed to be as modern Catholics? I think not. Modern research says that authentic leadership empowers followers: it does not elicit mere naïve obedience.

The pope should be 'servant of the servants of God' that he proclaimed himself to be. This is what Hans Kung highlighted in his book *Infallible?* (1971) and which got him silenced in 1979. The list of those silenced by the

Congregation of the Faith is long and distinguished. Many are some of our greatest Catholic thinkers: Eduard Schillebeckx, Charles Curran, Leonardo Boff, Jon Sobrino, Matthew Fox, Yvonne Geberra, Hans Kung.

If I could draw a brief parallel with the story from the Gospel of St Luke in which Jesus chose Zacchaeus as his host for dinner even though he was unconventional. Zacchaeus still "welcomed Jesus warmly". Surely, liberal theologians like Kung are also worthy hosts of the Jesus story?

Instead, thankfully, here at St Mary's-in-Exile, we do not look to the pope for "royal consciousness" but we explore the truth for ourselves with a "prophetic imagination" – to use Walter Brueggmann's phrase (*The Prophetic Imagination* 1978).

Leadership at St Mary's

Who leads us at St Mary's and how do we lead ourselves? As Rob Goffee from the London Business School asks "Why should anyone be led by you"? I often use his question in the leadership programs I conduct through The University of Queensland – it personalises the challenge of leadership.

We are all equals in the eyes of God but with different gifts. Might I ask you and myself, 'How well do we exercise leadership?'

At times, my own contribution to this faith community and to those in need has been less than enthusiastic. I too am challenged by what I say.– and by the

courageous example of Hans Kung and Fr Terry and Fr Peter and all of us who choose to live 'in exile'.

'how well do we exercise leadership?'

I ask, "In this exile, who are we becoming, and what are we doing?" We will ever have an exodus out of exile to the promised land?! But you know what? Maybe like heaven, this already is the promised land!

Conclusion

Kung's answer to the 'missed opportunities' under Benedict XVI is not despair or schism. He ends his 'Open Letter to

the Bishops' with six positive proposals to give voice to the current crisis:

- Do not keep silent
- Set about reform
- Act in a collegiate way
- Unconditional obedience is allowed to God alone
- Work for regional solutions
- Call for a Council.

My own proposal is this –

Let us conserve but not preserve our faith. Much of conservative Christianity today is only interested in belief in dogma. Faith is not belief in dogma. Not an active, dynamic, adult faith anyway. Faith is not something wrapped in dogma preserved in formaldehyde. It is a journey



Greg Latemore

of wonder to the sacred, taken intelligently and taken together. Let's not just pray, pay and obey! As fellow exiles, let us continue to enquire, challenge, explore and hold on to the *truth which sets us free (John 8:32)*.

Greg Latemore

Now for Something Completely Different

These sentences (with all the BLOOPERS) actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services:

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

Contributed by Bob Aldred

Naked Crabs

A Parable for St Mary's



At the seashore, every pool and puddle left by the retreating tide seems to have a crab in it. Little ones scuttle sideways, squeezing under rocks, peeking from a patch of seaweed, occasionally venturing out to nibble on unwary toes.

Now and then, you may see bigger crabs, in deeper safer pools. With ponderous majesty, they wave huge claws as a warning to stay away.

On the beach, shells of crabs lie washed up by waves. Some are from crabs that died. Others are simply discarded, a dwelling too small for its growing occupant. That's how crabs grow bigger - when their shells get too tight, they split the shell open and grow a new one.

I've never talked with a crab. However, I imagine the process of splitting open a shell must be painful. I'm sure that until they grow a new shell, they feel terribly defenceless and vulnerable because that's how we humans feel when we crack open our shells.

Our shells aren't visible, like crabs; however, they are just the same. Shells formed by years of habit, shells that protect us from other people, shells that are the roles we play as parents, or children, or bosses, or employees.

Every now and then, we crack open and emerge into a new world, quivering and defenceless.

Teenagers do it as they become adults. No wonder they get crabby sometimes. Adults do it as they learn to quit running their kids' lives, or when a wife or husband dies, or a relationship ends, and they have to start over again, alone, when an investment fails, when a dream disappears.

In all these traumas of life, a shell is being broken. A new, vulnerable life is started. Like a crab, the longer the shell has been growing around us, the harder it is to break open, to start again and the more painful the breaking becomes. Some of our shells we have worn for generations. Our Christian faith can be a shell handed down by our ancestors. Some faith

shells are worth keeping. Others may have become prisons – shells so encrusted with barnacles of the past, so burdened with trailing weeds, so constricting, that we can no longer move when God calls.

No one looks for painful experiences in life. To avoid pain, we may prefer to stay locked into shells that no longer fit very well rather than risk the vulnerability of cracking them open.

However, when a crab's shell becomes too thick, too protective, too rough to crack open and start again then the crab can't grow anymore. That's when it dies.

And, so do we.

*Author unknown - Contributed
by John Hallett*





Our political commentator, Peter Brown, casts an eye over law suits and termination payments. Is virtue its own reward?

Arise Sir Mark, Earl of Jones

He left David Jones “by mutual consent”. She settled out of court for \$850,000, of which she probably got about half after paying her legal team.

Even after the end of the case, there was still scope for media discussion of whether she was a victim who had used the law to fight for justice, or a gold digger who had found a nugget. Personally, I was more interested in Mark McInnes’ termination payout of approximately \$2,000,000.

\$2,000,000 strikes me as a lot of money. How long did it take you to earn your last \$2,000,000? A particularly hard-working engineer at my work was terminated last year for unprofessional conduct, and all she got was whatever recreation leave was owed.

Since Mark McInnes was CEO, the termination payout must have been decided by the board of directors. These would all be capable, experienced, sensible people, whose duty is to look after the interests of the shareholders. The question that intrigues me is how they decided that they should pay Mark McInnes \$2,000,000.

Another story, a fictional story, that appears on television on a regular basis is Charles Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*. As usual with Dickens’ stories, some characters are from the upper classes, and some from the lower classes; whereas other contemporary authors like Jane Austin wrote only about the upper classes.

There are two villains in *Oliver Twist* - Fagin and Monks, both nasty types involved in criminal activity. Fagin, the lower class villain, is arrested and executed. Monks, the upper class villain, is given half his family inheritance, and exiled to the United States.

My guess is that it is this kind of thinking that made the payment of \$2,000,000 to Mark McInnes seem reasonable. The people in charge of public companies have started thinking of themselves as modern day aristocrats. The standards which govern their lives are simply different from everyone else’s.

It is true that public companies are structured as democratic institutions, but they are democratic in the style of the English parliament of the sixteenth century - only the aristocrats get a meaningful vote. This lack of effective oversight has led to a situation where people expect company executives to help themselves to shareholders’ funds like it

‘..they are democratic in the style of the English parliament of the sixteenth century..’

was monopoly money. A CEO of a large company like David Jones who decided to limit his salary to, say, that of the Prime Minister, would be regarded as some sort of radical, and would undoubtedly get more criticism

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When they think back on the past year, newspaper editors and media moguls will say a special prayer of thanks for the David Jones sexual harassment case. Not only was it a great drama, but the contestants were photogenic and articulate, and the incident controversial both at the level of what happened, and the values behind the conflict. Both sides even employed public relations consultants, so the newspaper reporters could just wait for the press release, rather than having to go out and track down the story.

In case anyone does not know about it, Mark McInnes, the CEO of David Jones, allegedly made a pass at Kristy Fraser-Kirk, a 25 year old employee in his public relations department. Several passes apparently, accompanied by a bit of pawing, and he had trouble taking no for an answer. She sued David Jones for sexual harassment for \$37,000,000.

Christmas 2010



On Becoming a Roamin' (ie not Roman) Catholic



Lorraine Brosnan looks back on the path which lead to the TLC

Several months ago I had a huge desire to write both to John Bathesby and to Peter to ask them what were their reflections on the St. Mary's debacle that finally ended with much of the community of St. Mary's walking out of their home. This thought would rise up during my morning bus ride to work, but I never did write. Even though I really wondered (and still on the odd moment do wonder) what their reflections on those tumultuous nine months are, and what things they wish they had done differently or things they are glad perhaps that they did, I don't have the same passion to know anymore. ... and surprisingly, in some ways, I no longer care.

No doubt about it, the "cross-fire" of dialogue that was played out for all in the media did get people of all ages talking, thinking, even dialoguing in a wide range of places and with a wide range of people of faith and no faith. And that didn't just stop when the nine months drew to a close, and the community of St. Mary's walked

in varying directions. Up until July this year I found myself in conversations with people I hadn't spoken to before and in the oddest of places (on a bus, at an art exhibition, on a street corner, at a concert) where the conversation somehow came around to the events of last year that has put "St. Mary's South Brisbane" on the consciousness map of life forever. And not all the stories were "good" stories, as people shared their passion, their frustration, and in some cases, talked about how now they no longer go to any church and have become Easter and Christmas Catholics or the pain that has come about within their family as people took varying stances.

So why am I still talking about it? Why do the events between July 2009 and April 2010 still play an important part in my life, in my grieving, in my anger and frustration at clerical leadership in particular in the church, and in my more directed searching for my 'home' and 'place of direction

and sustenance'? It is precisely because there are things to grieve about.

'There are people whose presence I valued whom I no longer see.'

There are people whose presence I valued whom I no longer see. There is a space that was hard to leave – especially when there was the added connection to the building as my paternal grandparents were married there (even if a good part of the ceremony would have been in the sacristy, as my grandmother wasn't a catholic). And there are questions of relevance, trust broken, lack of communication with the general community, and failure in leadership. It wasn't that I didn't already have questions about the institutional church, as like so many others, I

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Christine's Last Hoorah

Christine Frances Roberts

11 October 1949 – 3 December 2010

I cannot remember how we first came to sit next to Chris and Chris. I cannot remember how they became cherished participants in our family life. I can remember that they eased so quickly and irrevocably into our family love.

Girl Chris was fiercely loyal. If she was for you, she was for you entirely, passionately and dependably. This loyalty was never more evident than when Chris spoke about “the boys”. She managed Aussie Rules teams at Churchie and it was a sacred role. Her unwavering commitment to them was maternal, one-eyed and irresistible.

Chris was definitely for the



Chris made a superhuman effort to come visit her friends at 9am Mass. It was so good to see her!

Cliffords. I think our most cherished memory is her presence at Caitlin's birthday party last February. Although things were grim, she was relatively well on that occasion. The only indication that she was different from the other gathered family was her lack of hair. She brandished her baldness; it was a testament to her suffering. I do not think she was garnishing sympathy or pity. This proclamation to the world was that she was not hiding her illness. I sometimes felt that she used it to assess character. One's reaction to her appearance was a litmus test and gave her the evidence with which to judge people according to her criteria. Her assessments were lasting and hard to change.

I shared many irreverent laughs with Chris. She hated pretention, arrogance and ignorance. Her views were strident and I am glad I was on her good side. An acquaintance said to me that once her husband failed to observe the organisational schema Chris had instituted at the Churchie Shop. After his re-education, he was of the view that a trip to Iraq (a previous employment destination) was less frightening than incurring the wrath of Chris.



My children never saw that side of Chris. She was adept at separating various parts of her life and keeping them private. I had no idea about her stellar career in Melbourne that preceded her move to Brisbane. I was enjoying lunch with Chris at the Art Gallery and I was moaning about my difficulties in finding high paid part-time work that used my qualifications and experience. It was only then that she disclosed her impressive previous career and her battle to find a suitable job when first here. Although the Churchie Shop was not as large an organisation as she had previously managed, she loved the work and brought all her skills to the position.

Chris and Chris cared for our children. They were indulgent, supportive, interested and proud of Caitlin, Felicity and Manning. Chris shared our parenting highs and lows but seemed to be on the children's side. This was evident at a football match where Manning was playing rugby union. It was not her game but she was certain that the referee needed glasses and a rule refresher course.

Margaret Ridley

She Returns

*In the beginning was the word
And the word was Woman
She was one with the Goddess from the
beginning
All life was created through her*

*In her is life
and that life is the light of the world
the light shines in the darkness
and the darkness has not overcome it*

*Three million years ago
the earliest humans
created stone images
of the divine woman*

*Peaceful matriarchal societies
flourished and spread
all inclusive
all had bread*

*Till across our world
Invading horsemen
Brought patriarchy
by death and rape*

*Moon cycles
ocean tides
Woman's blood
flows unstoppable*

*Sophia shouts:
I AM
From the beginning
I create, dance, love*

*Genesis lied
Goddess denied
Woman and snake
Her companions vilified*

*Women and men
Remind Jeremiah
libations to the Goddess always
brought bountiful harvests*

*Jesus and Magdalene
show the Way
till faceless men
make Christ's cross bling*

*Winged goddess
flies from Rome
Victory flees
spiritless throne*

*Diversity pruned from the vine
KNOW THYSELF Delphic oracle reminds
Hecate hears – muses dance
throughout the years*

*Early church
history rewritten
by men, of men
for men*

*Women's healing
hands hated
by inadequate men
sisters slaughtered*

*Women religious leaders
women priests presage
full female fellowship
as She returns*

*She who was – IS
and ever shall be
She who never left
returns*

Joan Medlam

Jenny, Morgan and Lizzie



I have never doubted that Education is a noble profession but when I look at my career as a teacher and Principal, three deaths stand out as times of the deepest sadness and the greatest learning.

As Principal of Mt St Michael's, each afternoon I used to stand daily on the corner near the school with the College Captains and together we would ensure that students crossed the road safely and were in correct uniform. I often marvelled at the depth of conversations I would have with Jenny Sheehan and how many solutions we would canvas for the world's problems. It was an amazing experience of relationship and I still so easily picture Jenny with her straw hat perched on top of her pony tail, her faithfulness to duty and her warmth that always invited inclusion. Her loss to the world in a car accident just two weeks after Schoolies left a hole in our school community.

One flower that no longer blooms for us to see in life's garden.....

At Lourdes Hill, regularly at the start of new Semester we would honour academic achievers. I clearly remember one such occasion when Morgan Innes

in Grade 10 won her Academic Award. I can see her now moving towards me to receive it. As I gave it to her, I was struck by the dignity and poise of this young woman proud of her efforts with a sense of shy graciousness. Just a short time later, following the Sydney Ferry Disaster, I watched with no comprehension as her coffin was brought into our Good Samaritan Centre to be farewelled by us with heavy hearts.

Another flower that no longer blooms for us to see in life's garden....

And now Lizzie Crothers....I knew Lizzie as one most faithful to Amnesty International and as one with a deep social conscience that treasured not the things of this world as much as the need for justice and fairness. She had no time for the seeming giddiness of the social whirl. Instead, in her senior years at school she used her creative efforts to ensure that the college Amnesty group was doing its job and engaging as many girls as possible. I used to see her at St Mary's often and was captured by a sense of awe and wonder when I would give her Communion for this one so young had such incredible depth. I

distinctly remember Lizzie when our community was suffering deeply in the old Church and I saw her regularly gather with us, not saying anything – just being there. It did not surprise me when we came to the TLC Building, that resolute Lizzie came too. Her dignified funeral with the raw emotions of love in loss was a moving tribute to this fine young woman.

Another flower that no longer blooms for us to see in life's garden.....

..but, you know, so many other flowers continue to bloom with greater vibrancy and richness of colour because of Jenny, Morgan and Lizzie.

Narelle Mullins



Lizzie Crothers.

On Being

An SMX-perience: Impressions (Part 1)

Be still and know that I am
God

Be still and know that I am

Be still and know

Be still

Be

Chant from SMX - St Mary's-in-
Exile - liturgy

In November 2010 I spent a
little over 3 weeks in Brisbane
experiencing life in the SMX
fellowship.

* I had read in Victorian
newspapers of developments in
St Mary's Parish during 2008
and 2009.

* On 15 August 2010 I attended
Sunday evening Mass during a
brief visit to Brisbane.

* I was most impressed with
the quality and relevance of a
number of the articles I read
subsequently in St Mary's
Matters Winter Edition No. 23
Realising Identity.

* I had already decided not to
be bound by what were for me
unsatisfying aspects of church
life. Hence my empathy with
St Mary's and my desire to
investigate its fellowship further.

Following correspondence, Marg
Ortiz arranged "homestays" for
me with six families to whom
I am most grateful for their
warm and generous hospitality.
Not least they plied me with
a wide range of books to read/



Melbourne visitor, Ted Holmes was photographed with some of his new friends at St Mary's. He writes here the first part of two of his experience when staying with families in our Community. Bernie, Peter, Frankie, Tony, Ted and John. Bernie and John were also visiting from Melbourne.

sample including Kung's My
Struggle to Freedom, King's
Spirit of Fire (biography of
Teilhard de Chardin), Fiand's
Awe and Wonder and several
books by, in effect, Jesus Christ
deniers. I am most grateful to my
hosts and others for numerous
conversations which helped
clarify my understanding of a
wide range of ideas in the context
of what is happening at St Mary's
– at times like being caught up in
a cement mixer!

In the following paragraphs I set
out briefly initial impressions of

**'The symbolism of
including extended
families in baptising
their (grand-)child blew
me away.'**

St Mary's. In Part 2 I give some
indications of how my own faith
has been clarified, simplified
and strengthened during and
subsequent to my visit.

Impressions

The Spirit present in people
gathered for the Mass was
palpable. As I thought about
it I came to realise it was not
so much a mass phenomenon
as something that radiated
out from people as individuals.
In Pentecost terms it was like
people, each with their own
flame, coming together! The
result: a happy fellowship,
inclusive, welcoming and
informal, with people,
predominantly women and
children, sharing freely in the
rituals, Eucharist and homilies.
The symbolism of including
extended families in baptising
their (grand-)child blew me away.
Priests Peter Kennedy and Terry
Fitzpatrick are self-effacing,
happy to serve behind the scenes.
A friend likened the group's
happiness to that of people who
have recently escaped from the
control of a sect!

I was astonished to hear how
informal the decision-making

process was when members of St Mary's Parish decided to move out of the Roman Catholic Church's authoritarian structure into exile. Father Kennedy kept them informed at Mass on progress, or lack of it, in their priests' ongoing discussions with the Archbishop, leading to discussions during Mass and, subsequently, informal discussions amongst members. But no special meeting with a motion and a vote deciding as a body to move out from the control of the existing Catholic Church structure took place.

When Father Kennedy finally was informed that he had been relieved of his faculties and his office terminated, he announced that he would be proceeding to the adjacent Trades and Labour Council Building and invited those who wished to follow him to join him there. One prominent member said she had to go there to find out who was joining them! Some 600-800 parishioners voted with their feet.

'A number of people seemed generally unconcerned about the specifics of what they believed.

More important to them now was how they behaved.'

I was intrigued to discover that frequently individuals did not know their friends' family names, where they worked, what they believed. I wondered what they talked about! Presumably their everyday lives, especially family and social contacts, which they were obviously enjoying.

A number of people seemed generally unconcerned about the specifics of what they believed, reflecting perhaps a lack of structured Bible teaching in their tradition. More important to them now was how they behaved. Another important factor could be the apparent absence of pressure on individuals to evangelise. The Protestant world's preoccupation at the congregation level with "mission" often has resulted in activism, with good works becoming a substitute for life-changing, a case of the good being the enemy of the best.

More importantly there seemed to be near total acceptance that Christ was, as are we all, Divine, that something of the power/presence of the Cosmic Christ, dormant if not active, is present in every heart. This belief is in marked contrast with the traditional Christendom preoccupation with Christ the God-Man and Christ, God-the-Word and, since St Anselm c.1300, with Christ's vicarious suffering and redeeming death.

(This understanding of Christ's and our Divinity, would seem to stand the arguments of the Christ-deniers on its head!)

It is also significant in an age when Church mission activities, conceived of and delivered from within the context of four walls and a controlling priestly hierarchy and focusing on Christ the God-Man and God-the-Word, have failed to touch, move and inspire even people within the church, let alone the mass of humanity outside. Teilhard,

Tolle and Fiand's greater understanding of the Cosmic Christ, and of the universe, how it evolves/creates and how we can each be part of it with him and in him, is powerful enough to fire the imagination and capture the heart of 21st century humanity.

I was impressed by:

- * the challenging nature of the books people are reading, reflecting the questing minds and hearts of a group who, at this time, are indeed a pilgrim people on a journey;

- * the powerfully relevant homilies by Robert Perrier on guidelines for the fellowship on the way ahead and by Priests Peter and Terry on living in the present moment;

- * the cluster group which reported it had been meeting for 23 years, used to do "formal stuff", now just meets as friends. A perfect context for individuals to discover the Spirit's inspiration on how to live a 1st century transformative faith in the 21st century.

(continued in the next edition of SM Matters)

Ted Holmes



Continued from page 21

peacefully (and sometimes not so peacefully) co-existed with some aspects of it. But on the other hand there were and are aspects I value, as a 'way of being and thinking 'justice' goes back a long way before St. Mary's, to my reading of liberation (liberating) theology such as Gutierrez, Camara, Periot, Metz and others, plus the challenge of modern day prophets such as Thich nhat Hanh, Nelson Mandela, and Aung Sun Suu Kyi, continue to challenge me and have enabled me to become the person I am. And it was (and is) good to have to decide how I would and will 'walk my talk' and why.

There's a poem by Henry Lawson that I'm sure all who are my age or older remember from Year 9 – "Andy's Gone with the Cattle". (Perhaps my memory of it is mainly because I and a couple of my friends used it as the framework of a poem we wrote about one of our teachers.) In any case, the poem goes

*Our Andy's gone to battle now
'Gainst Drought, the red
marauder;*

*Our Andy's gone with cattle
now
Across the Queensland border.*

*He's left us in dejection now;
Our hearts with him are roving.
It's dull on this selection now,
Since Andy went a-droving . . .*

**'It is important, in fact,
imperative, that we
listen to each other.'**

There are things that I still struggle with in regard to our move from being "St. Mary's" to our being "St Mary's-in-exile". And there are things I wonder about as our community develops, and concerns I have for our developing future. And there are things that I have let go of which have surprised me. We need to do some roaming and droving around what we have learnt, what we (individually and collectively) are holding dear, or what we (both individually and collectively) are, or may leave behind. Always mindful that

going roamin' or droving means that movement is made only to enable one to return home and in better condition.

One thing I do hope that we do not forget, is that it is important, in fact, imperative, that we listen to each other. Not just those whom everyone knows, or those who speak the loudest or surest. In my books, the greatest downfall for John Bathesby was that he (and the other three bishops), didn't make the effort to talk with and listen to the everyday St. Mary's person. And as the press would have us believe, Kevin Rudd's downfall was that he only really listened to and talked with the inner four.

So we too, if we are going to move on together, need to listen to, be listened to, and be with each other gently and compassionately, so that together we can be challenged in our acting for justice, our loving-kindness, and our entrusting of our present and our future to the One-who-is the source of all being.

Lorraine Brosnan

Arise Sir Mark, Earl of Jones

Continued from page 19

directed at him in the media than Mark McInnes received.

It is not just about the money.

More importantly, the kind of view of the world that sees some people as important, and others as expendable is dangerous. Unspoken assumptions like this can lead decent, thoughtful people to make very bad decisions. I would put forward as an example of this the Catholic Church's hopeless

handling of its own sexual abuse scandal. Not the existence of the paedophiles, but the widespread failure of their fellow clerics to deal effectively with them.

Peter Brown

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