

Simply,
what
would I do
without
you.

K.L.

Mum died just
before we moved
and in response
to the bishop's
actions, some of
her last words
were, 'I thought
it was the SPIRIT
of religion that is
important.'

Bernie

Great
leadership
-priestly and
lay-what a
future we have!

Phil

FIVE YEARS ON

Change,
like nature
will just
happen

Love
at first
sight

Pattie

'The truth
will set
you free.'

Greg L

ST MARY'S MATTERS

A haven amid
the turmoil of
church practices
that no longer fill
the needs of those
who seek justice
for all. That we
have continued
and flourished is a
testament to the
whole community.

I see love in
every photo,
every face,
every gesture,
well done on
bringing it
here with you
all.

I feel absolutely
devastated by
the actions of the
Catholic Church
hierarchy. Thank
you to Peter and
Terry in assisting
me to get out of
it. What a joy and
liberation down
here at the TLC.

Val

mummy wahtched
on tv when we
lived in Sydney 5
years ago and she
cried.

I am still impressed
by the amazing
gracious process that
was around the whole
negotiation process
from St Mary's side. A
badge of honour, of
grace, of kindness.

Peter B

Hard to put into
words but you
just know when
you feel 'at
home'. Wonderful
people.

Annette

The Leaving

*It took courage
to walk
to leave that beautiful, welcoming place
of white stone, ancient icons and enchanting echoes
to leave that sense of security and belonging
that connectedness to a bigger story and to our past
and to walk
away from it all
down the hill
to an empty room
to an unfamiliar place
and begin to give birth to something new.
It was a big step
to walk.*

*It was a wrench
this leaving.
For some, impossible. Beyond imagining.
Some drifted away. Confused. Disconnecting.
Some felt let down. Angry
that it had come to this.
Others had a sense of knowing, though with uncertainty
that the garment imposed from Rome
would no longer fit
it lacked authenticity
refused to stretch
and so the leaving was inevitable.
But many grieved
the leaving.*

*It's hard
this birthing.*

*Five years on the loss lingers for some
others believe they didn't leave
for many the hurt has gone.*

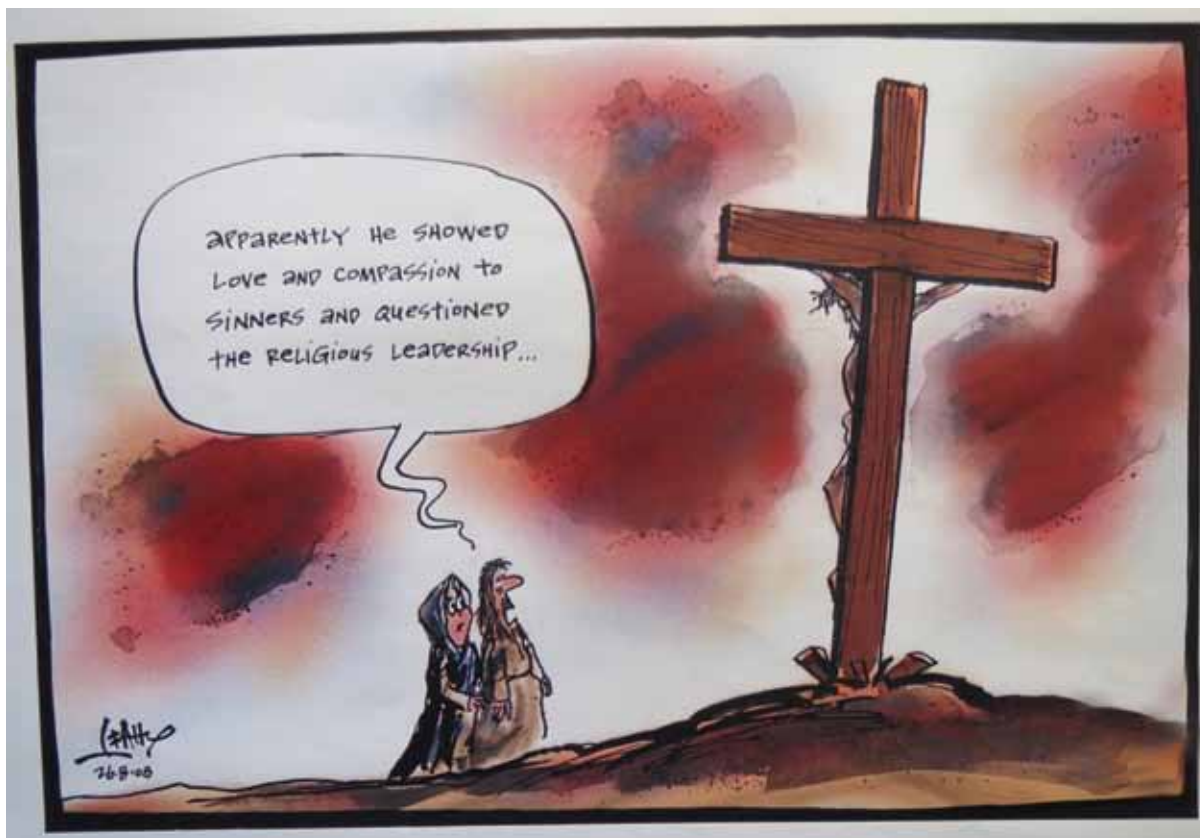
*Now, a new way of being is emerging
still struggling to find its true self
still a mix of disappointments, freedom and joy
but there is a spirit in this place
in this flat-roofed room
a warmth, a caring aura
an authentic way of being
that captures the hearts of newcomers
and offers refuge for the disenchanted.
It gives hope
this new gathering.*

*Yet this new way
is still forming.*

*We gather around the word and around the table
with the reality of our lives
and speak words, seemingly closer to the truth
share stories of joy and pain
respond to needs, speak out and celebrate life
and seek to live mindfully and justly
love tenderly and walk humbly
connecting to all
knowing nothing is perfect
that all must die
to give new life
So the leaving is over
and a new way of connecting
beginning.*

Margaret Clifford

*Thanks to those who contributed.
Apologies to those whose expressed
feelings weren't fully captured.
April 2014.*



Contents

The Leaving

Margaret Clifford

Crackpots, Heretics and Activists

Bob Aldred

Reflection of an SMX Traveller

Tony Pressland

St Mary's in Exile

Anne Maguire

Five Years On

Neil Flannagan

The Treaty, the Bunya Tree, How Things are Now

Marg Ortiz

Exclusion? or Freedom?

Joan Mooney

What the prophet Micah told us to do

Marg Ortiz and Karyn Walsh

Campbell's Club

Yvonne Dunne

Faith Statement

from The Lloyd Geering Reader

What the Christian Eucharist is really about.

Peter Kennedy

Liturgy of the Eucharist St Mary's in Exile

To Resurrect is an invitation to wake up

Terry Fitzpatrick

Jesus Then and Now

Greg Jenks

Keeping in Touch

Shar Ryan

Welcome

Barbara Fingleton

From the Editor

The story of the fall and rise of St Mary's in Exile is such a good one. The writers who contributed to this edition have told the story in different ways, but always with passion, authenticity and a little humour.

Many of the photos come from the pop up exhibition of Tony Robertson, and the letters on the cover were written at the time and are simply spontaneous responses to the memories evoked by the photos..

Many emotions are expressed in the articles, grief, anger and a sense that an injustice had been perpetrated. However there is an overarching sense that we are actually liberated and enjoying it. The communal sense is that we no longer have to be worried too much about what we believe. Rather we are concerned about how we should live. Particularly about how we deal with those others who are the victims of injustice.

In the following pages you will find pointers to what the community is now like. I for one am a very happy member.

Crackpots, Heretics and Activists

Branded as heretics, stigmatised as crackpot rebels, cast aside like lepers, the Catholic community in South Brisbane moved slowly and with dignity across Hope Street, to become St Mary's in Exile.

It is a brand of which we are proud. With the audacity and defiance of the underdog, we have tasted and enjoyed the freedom needed for our faith to lead us to new spiritual insights and to connect us in a strong bond of love and fellowship.

Our changing paradigm of belief and growing sense of belonging is strengthened through participation in the Eucharist, Connections, Clusters, and social justice campaigns.

It has been an adventure into uncharted waters. Despite our fears and sadness for the friends to whom we said goodbye, our journey has given us a community experience full of memories. In Exile, we connect more strongly as we share together through social, spiritual and practical experiences.

We have shed the trappings of Rome. Our priests wear civvies. There is no sanctuary or statues, incense, or altar. A spiritual bond of love and friendship, compassion and celebration has replaced traditional Catholic ritual.

The warm welcoming of one another sets the scene for our celebration of Mass. Alive and vibrant, the Mass is not the



sombre recognition of a son slaughtered by a father as a scapegoat for sins. In fact "sin" is no longer on our liturgical agenda, be it original, mortal or personal.

We now come to "renew our unity with one another" through the expression of our spirituality, zest for living, identification with the poor and needy, and commitment to social justice.

True, we have retained some wordings that are open to interpretation as references to Christ's crucifixion, but they are non-specific with respect to Christ being the scapegoat for our sins. Our emphasis is more on community celebration and spiritual oneness.

The attributes of our persona are visible in the genuineness of our welcome to friends and visitors, spontaneous applause for inspiring homilies, the genuine joy for someone's good news, our combined empathy in the prayers of the faithful, and inclusiveness of

male and female, gay and straight, Catholic and Protestant, Muslim and Buddhist. The authenticity of our humanness is most forthcoming in the humour that flashes its smile across our faces in our notices and homilies.

However, the bravado of the early weeks at TLC, reinforced by hearty singing and not so veiled references to the Archbishop and Rome, could not be maintained. There was also the post-rejection trauma and a sense of disbelief that the Church, who loyal Catholic families had served for generations, was discarding us on such petty issues as the baptism wording and the clothing of priests.

Petty as those issues are, more importantly and more hurtful was the issue of the role of women. However, this was not the end. To everyone's disgust was the Church's treatment of Catholic Education teachers, and the removal of the authority for Peter and Terry to function as priests.

Down, but not out, and seen as underdogs fighting the Roman bully, journalists and disillusioned Christians from all denominations gave their support.

The stark contrast between a “rebel” priest who gave women equality in worship, but didn’t see the “magical” utterances in the rite of baptism, and the cover up of paedophile priests, was not lost on the media. The Courier Mail highlighted the irony and hypocrisy across a two-page spread.

While some did not, or could not, cross Hope Street with us, many others who were disillusioned with the medieval church and its irrelevancy today came to join our community.

We licked our wounds, and came closer together in our determination to survive and discover together the meaning of life through spiritual experience shared in the Eucharist and given expression in our Cluster Groups and Connections activities.

This opened the doors to radical change. The questions fundamental to our faith are confronting. Did Jesus exist? Does the Bible have authority? Does God answer prayer? Is there life after death?



It is a brave priest and community that will face these questions, for they demand a deep spiritual and emotional response with the risk of causing division.

We have peeled the theological onion, casting aside key Nicene credal beliefs and antiquated doctrines. Many in our community doubt or disbelieve in the historical Jesus, virgin birth, life after death, and an interventionist God.

In our journey, we have shown acceptance of the faith struggles each person experiences. Respect and acceptance is expressed in our motto to “act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with our God”.

Consequently, it is not a common belief that binds us together, but the sense of belonging to a community of love.

The Eucharist is a symbolic community meal, like the Agape or Love Meal of the early church. Clusters, after Mass dinners and morning teas, Bronco’s Breakfasts, Café Briz, Christmas parties, tours at home and abroad, and other social events build our inter-relatedness. Our participation in rallies and

protests binds us together in common purpose as we fight for justice.

It is said that three things are needed to maintain a sense of community. Firstly, that we receive something; secondly, that we have the opportunity to give and serve; and thirdly that we feel we are accepted for who we are, giving us a sense of belonging. In other words, the secret is relationships, not doctrinal belief. True community accepts diversity.

Five years ago, we were a community with a sense of unity in face of persecution. With passion and conviction we sang, “We shall not be moved”, but we did move. We then changed our tune to “From little things, big things grow”, and we have grown!

Our growth continues as we each seek out meaning in the spiritual dimension of life, continue to nurture our community through Connections, and fight for justice and a better world.

*Bob Aldred
Coordinator of SMX Connections*

Reflection of an SMX Traveller

Five years on

I thought I would go back to the letter St Mary's Community forwarded to Archbishop Bathersby at the end of 2008 in response to his saying that we were not in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. It is rather enlightening - and refreshing - to see how we have moved from that time - yet remained true to the words sent to him, as the following demonstrates.

St Mary's and its liturgical celebrations offer a warm welcome to all, including those who struggle with their faith. We do not demand they leave those struggles, ambiguities and questions at the door. Indeed, we believe that opening the door to them enriches us all.

Do we always agree with everything the priests, Peter Kennedy and Terry Fitzpatrick, and other homilists say? No. Do we agree with every statement issued from Rome? No. Do we believe that we at St Mary's and our practices are always right, and our insights always more "truthful" than those of Rome, Your Grace, and other parishes? No, we don't.

What binds us together is that we listen, reflect, discuss and pray about these matters and believe that, no matter where any individual is placed on any issue, they share equally in the love of God. Further, they share it to no greater or lesser extent than any other human being. Therefore, all are welcome without any guarantee that they sign on to a particular doctrine.

We do still welcome all; we are still a questioning community; and we are all still trying to understand our faith, and indeed, its meaning for us as individuals in this very secular world.

We believe we do our very best to put into practice the statement delivered recently by Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops of France, which must apply equally to all within the church: "Everyone has a place in the church. Every person should be able to feel at home and never feel rejected."

Nothing has changed here - we still believe all have a place in God's Church.

We do also believe that if God is indeed omnipotent and all-loving - the breadth of which is beyond the limitations of human language - then other descriptors of God are also valuable in helping a broader spectrum of people enhance their understanding of God to the greatest extent possible. In this we are in communion with the intent of Catechism 42 of the Catholic Church which states: "God transcends all creatures. We must therefore continually purify our language of everything in it that is limited, image bound or imperfect, if we are not to confuse our image of God 'the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable' with our human representations. Our human words always fall short of the mystery of God."

Further, Catechism 40 of the Catholic Church states: "Since our knowledge of God is limited, our language about God is equally so. We can name God only by our limited human ways of knowing and thinking".

We have changed the liturgical expressions not to be different from those of the Catholic Church, but to better reflect the 21st century and our continuing struggle to live the life of Jesus, in all our doubts, queries and limitations of understanding of "who - and where - is God".

Archbishop Bathersby referred to Pope Benedict XVI's 2004 writings about the importance of worship or prayer. We said we believed that we are in



Walking down from St Mary's to the TLC we had Tony as our guide

communion with the Pope on this matter, and that it was troubling to many in our community to read his concerns about St Mary's faith practice. We assured the Archbishop that our liturgical expressions of faith were central to the community, and that we celebrated daily Eucharist (three every weekend), with an estimated 700–900 attending these three liturgies.

Now in 2014, we still celebrate three Masses each weekend, albeit with lower attendance, and these liturgies are still the prime expression of faith for most who take part at St Mary's – as they were pre-2009.

Social justice is an absolutely fundamental aspect of the community's life. Like other parishioners across the Church around the world, most of us attend our liturgies and struggle to make Christ's message of justice, respect and love for all a reality in our lives. In this regard, we attempt to reflect in our Eucharist and live in our lives the words of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1965:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. (*Gaudium et Spes*, art. 1)

We continue to express our views on social justice, perhaps more so than before. Consider our recent participation in street marches on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers, and many other actions taken by members of St Mary's in Exile in support of more humane treatment by governments of those less fortunate than ourselves.

We cannot state the exact beliefs of every community member. We can say, however, that prayers within our liturgies reflect a Triune God and our prayers are enthusiastically expressed by the community. Like other churchgoing Catholics, many believe without question in the Triune God whereas others struggle with the concept, and some may even reject it. We do not ask people to sign a pledge or nominate to which "team" they belong.

We believe there should be no issue with our welcoming those who may not believe in a Triune God, because everyone is exposed to the core message of Christ's life in our liturgies. In fact, we believe turning such people away from communion with the St Mary's community would be a rejection of Pope Benedict's statement that "Everyone has a place in the church. Every person without exception should be able to feel at home and never rejected."

What has changed? Nothing!! Therefore, on the matter of faith, surely, as we said to the Archbishop in 2009, we are in communion with the Catholic Church.

We take very seriously the call of Vatican II to encourage the "fully conscious and active participation by all the faithful". (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, art. 14). As in many other parishes our liturgies are highly prayerful and reflective; we hear readings from scriptures and share hymns; we use appropriate liturgical music and a number of standard Catholic prayers.

We agree that the sacraments are "actions of the Holy Spirit at work in his Body, the Church. They are 'the masterworks of God' in the new and everlasting covenant" (*Catechism*, 1116). We endorse St Augustine's statement as cited



Chris and Annie preside at the Eucharist in the TLC.

at the Council of Trent that the "sacraments are visible signs of an invisible reality". (*Catechismus Concilii Tridentini*, n.4)

We believe if any error is to be made, it is better to err towards inclusion rather than exclusion. Inclusion will do no spiritual or other damage to those participating, and it will extend to them a sign of grace, acceptance, love and forgiveness. Exclusion, on the other hand, can cause damage to individuals. It extends to them a closed hand, and brings about feelings of rejection, "less than", unworthiness and lowliness. This, we believe, is at odds with the Catholic Church's own statements on the very point of the Sacraments; it is out of step with Pope Benedict's words of inclusion and Christ's words "love one another as I have loved you" (a welcome hand to sinners, tax collectors, lepers and prostitutes). We believe it is not possible for a sacrament acted and spoken in love to be harmful.

In practice this means that the entire community is free to join with our presiders (Peter

and Terry) in all aspects of the Eucharist. To do less would be exclusive, and we believe this to be contrary to the full depth and inspiration of the Catholic Church.

We have extended this now with community members, irrespective of gender, leading the celebrations of the liturgy, and with all members voicing the words of consecration during the Sunday liturgies. We also place importance on the community having full input into the content of our liturgies. This is part of inclusiveness, and part of a non-hierarchical structure – a structure developed by man, not God; I say “man” deliberately – where are the women in that Roman structure? This confirms then our statement to the Archbishop as follows:

At St Mary’s, we focus on the inspirational call of Vatican II for all to share equally in “the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ” (Lumen Gentium, art 31). We focus not on what, if anything, is different between priest and lay; instead we focus on what binds us all together as equals before Christ.

We also believe that the Church, established by Christ, practised by his immediate disciples and carried on by their followers for more than 300 years, was indeed congregational in nature. We believe that the governance of our community is a partnership between the hierarchy, Peter and Terry, our Council and the broader community.

As stated in our letter of 2008, we do not believe in absolutism. We said that the tradition of the Catholic Church teaches us that human attempts at absolute truth are always capable of error.

The Church’s history is full of error and full of good. Our community



Presiding at liturgies in our old Church - two versions of a liturgical look.

is no different from other Catholic parishes in this regard. We believe that, on matters of authority, the informed conscience of every member of the community in their personal relationship with their God is the final arbiter in this life. As the Second Vatican Council said in *Gaudium et Spes*, its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World:

In the depths of our conscience, we detect a law which we do not impose upon ourselves, but which holds us to obedience. Always summoning us to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience can when necessary speak to our hearts more specifically: do this, shun that. For we have in our hearts a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of the human person; according to it we will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a person. There we are alone with God, whose voice echoes in our depths. (*Gaudium et Spes*, art. 16)

Our remarks to the Archbishop included the following:

- Families and children flock to our community, including teenagers who often feel alienated elsewhere.
- The liturgies are vibrant, inclusive and seek to engage the heart, mind and soul of our members.

- Participants sing, pray and reflect in a full, active and conscious manner.
- No one is turned away.
- We set up Micah as a collective commitment to social justice in our community, complementary to many expressions of social justice that are carried out by individual members in their own life, and as an integral part of our collective belief in social justice as a matter of faith.
- Families encourage their children to embrace the sacraments.
- The homeless and wealthy happily pray side by side.
- We are invited to be challenged by new ways of thinking, praying and reflecting on our personal and collective faith.
- We attract people who would not attend any church if it were not for St Mary’s.
- We connect to other communities seeking justice in the world, including unions, women’s groups, gay people, Indigenous people, and victims of abuse from within and outside the Church, to name just a few.

How many of these points are still valid for St Mary’s in Exile? I leave that up to you to decide, but I do think we need to seek ways to encourage younger members and the marginalized to our

community. We have evolved into a community which has many social functions and opportunities for discussion on our faith, but also promotes actions related to social justice and integrity and humanity in decisions of those in authority and responsibility. We should be proud of these, and continue to stand alongside our marginalized brothers and sisters in affirmative action – as Jesus did.

In the end, we look to the history of the Church — a Church that excommunicated Galileo, condemned Joan of Arc, barred Mary Mackillop, led the Inquisition and stood idly by while children were abused. We embrace that history because it teaches us much about absolutism and unbridled clericalism.

We also embrace the history and tradition of the Catholic Church because at the same time we know it has spoken in favour of workers' rights, poured countless millions into working with the poor, encouraged a tradition of learning and questioning, provided shelter

and hospitals, and sacrificed the lives of its martyrs for the promulgation of Christ's message of love.

We concluded our letter to the Archbishop by saying that we at St Mary's struggle every day to allow God's boundless love to become real in our lives, through the power of the undefinable Spirit of Christ at work within the Church and in the hearts of its members. None of us is perfect, and we don't belong to a club whose membership is determined by signing on to the Rules. We are all members of the living spirit of God. We are all striving to find that spirit in ourselves, to provide the still point in our turning lives.

What has changed in five years? Very little – we have remained true to our individual faith and to the basic calling of Jesus Christ. Let's celebrate that we have done this by ourselves, with no support from the mainstream church or its hierarchy. But let's move on now; learn from the past, be creative, and continue our journey

wherever it leads. We owe that to ourselves and to those who supported us – and continue to support us – in our search for meaning and spiritual guidance.

Thanks to the team involved in the negotiations between St Mary's and the Office of the Archbishop late 2008 and early 2009: Tricia Cook, Chris Perkins, Terry Fitzpatrick, Peter Kennedy, Jemma Taylor, Kate Flamsteed, John Fitzwalter, Vince Knauth, Chris Harkin, Roger Dewar and Marg Ortiz. Incidentally, it may be of interest to some that there were 190 emails shared between these members between 1 November and 31 December 2008, and a massive 504 emails between 1 January and 9 April 2009!

Tony Pressland



Standing around the Eucharistic Table at the TLC

The architecture may not be so ecclesiastic but the commitment and enthusiasm has not waned.



St Mary's in Exile

They have gone
From the tall white church
With the altar and high ceilings.
They follow Father Peter
To another place of worship.
Like a shepherd with his sheep
They sought fresh pastures
Where they could celebrate the scripture's
message
In a new and refreshing light
Away from the stale dogmas
That weigh down their mother church
Like a millstone round her neck.
They are reinterpreting the Word
In a modern and enlightened way
Extending a welcome to the disenfranchised
And to those whose lives
Have suffered the pain of existence.
They were seen by Papal authority
To have stepped outside the boundaries
Of what was acceptable to Catholicism
And so a new church was born
With new values and new beliefs
And they reinvented
What it means to belong to church.

Anne Maguire May 2014.

Five Years On

Five lessons from an SMXer's experience

SMXers are Trendsetters and have just celebrated another birthday. Most of us consider that birthdays are good for us: the more we have, the longer we live. There have been five of these annual events since SMX-Trendsetters opted to move on. This decision suited most parties, including the bureaucracy that is 'The Church'. Given that bureaucracies don't solve problems, they shift them, we Trendsetters had to go.

One of the other good things about birthdays is that they encourage reflection. Here are five Trendsetter reflections that might help to account for why moving on was an inevitability.

Trendsetters are change-champions.

Back in the sixties, Bob Dylan assured us that 'the times are a-changin'', but even back then Bob would never have predicted that we'd see the day when flight attendants could get pilots pregnant; when Viagra, Botox, and anti-ageing cream would become part of everyday life for many people; when picking your nose (from reputable cosmetic surgeons' catalogues, of course) was OK; or that a Trendsetter-group in Brisbane would say, 'Enough!' and do what millions of others would love to do.

When Bob Dylan was at the peak of his popularity, many SMXers were little more than blips on the outer extremes of the radar screen. In the blink of an eye, the blip became a bulge. It's not surprising that the group that many SMXers are part of are Trendsetters and are championing some significant social changes



other than within The Church bureaucracy. SMX-Trendsetters are part of a worldwide movement of change-champions. Rome can't hope to dictate how this group should think and act. (SMX 'youngsters' take note. You haven't been forgotten. Given the speed of life, you'll become a Trendsetter in the blink of an eye.)

Trendsetters have plenty to bark about.

By their actions, Trendsetters have shown that you can teach old dogs new tricks. Trendsetter accomplishments are hardly those of the stay put and stodgy. Trendsetters have

- been to the moon and back many times;
- led many workplace reforms and flexible work practices;
- fuelled the plastic surgery boom;
- introduced telecommuting, which, in turn, motivated the need for better technology;
- made multi-millionaires out of fitness club owners;
- demonstrated the need to build friendships among people of all ages; and
- become increasingly vocal about a wide variety of social issues.

Trendsetters are setting new standards.

Trendsetters are raising the bar, and that makes life difficult for a

bureaucracy that doesn't need the associated hassles and discomfort. Not only do Trendsetters know that a positive attitude is one of the secrets of increased longevity and life quality, but they also believe it and act accordingly. Roger Bannister recorded the first sub-four-minute mile (May 1955); yet, by the end of that year, seventeen others had equalled or bettered Bannister's mark. The main barrier wasn't four-minutes: it was belief.

If you nod your agreement to this observation, then there is definitely more to adding years to your life and life to your years than exercise and muesli. Surely, one of the challenges for all of us is to make sure that we adopt a positive attitude – and stay that way. As Herm Albright commented, 'A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort'. (Does this mean that SMX can expect more 'olive branches' from 'the Arch'?) The bureaucracy predicted that these damn Trendsetters would soon return to the fold. Five years down the track and the number of Trendsetters is on the increase.

When it comes to attitude, the choice is ours. If it's so, that one day our life will flash before our eyes, the choices we make will

ensure that what we see is worth watching.

Trendsetters present a different view.

A familiar observation associated with the speed of life has been that once you're over the hill, you begin to pick up speed. By their actions, however, (and with the help of Peter and Terry) Trendsetters have found that the view from over the hill is worth the effort in getting there. The FAQ of many Trendsetters has become 'What's next?'

Trendsetters pursue happiness and their search for meaning in many different ways. For some, the secret of happiness is to make others believe that they are the cause of it. Others support George Burns's definition of happiness: having a large, caring family in another city. Some males like Michael Leunig's more practical method of calculating how far they are from finding true happiness—a distance equal to the length of their neck ties placed end to end. Tony de Mello's encouragement to focus on what one has; not on what one does not have finds support among others. Then there are those who agree with Ben

Franklin's observation that beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy.

When it comes to a search for meaning, I love the story of the monk who implored the Zen Master to help find the solution of the mystery of life. The Master said, 'I am willing to help you in every way I can, but there are some things in which I cannot be of any help to you; these you must look after for yourself. When you are hungry or thirsty, my eating food or drinking will not fill your stomach; you must eat and drink for yourself. When you want to respond to the calls of nature you must take care of yourself, for I cannot be of any use to you. It will be nobody else but yourself that will carry your body along this highway.' This friendly counsel at once opened the mind of the truth-seeking monk, who went happily on his way. Trendsetters get help in their search, but are never told what to think.

Little wonder that Trendsetters present a different view. They are an Internet-savvy group, who

- pride themselves on their surfing-the-Net discoveries;
- have developed a voracious

- appetite for online learning;
- pursue paid, volunteer, or both types of opportunities for work;
- make use of the many available online facilities;
- scour the Net for travel bargains; and
- devote themselves to new hobbies and interests they discover during their online explorations.

Little wonder that Trendsetters are not knocking on the door of St Stephens begging to be invited back in out of the cold. When they were knocking at the door, no one was answering, so they went away.

Trendsetters never resort to excuse-making.

Achievement doesn't have a use-by date – you're never too old or too young. Trendsetters have an impressive list of role models whose achievements help to reinforce the message that rarely is age a limiting factor. Most people have their favourites. Some of mine include the celebrated conductor Leopold Stokowski, who signed a six-year recording contract when he was 94; Ichijirou Araya, who climbed Mount Fuji when he was 100 (he had climbed the mountain in each of the four previous years); Mohandas Gandhi, who was 72 when he was negotiating India's Independence from Great Britain; Coco Chanel, who admitted to being 70 when she was actively involved in designing; and Sir Francis Chichester, who sailed solo around the world when he was 65 – six years after being diagnosed with cancer and told he had six months to live.

George Burns erred in his observation that people who live to be 100 had it made. Very few people, he maintained, died past the age of a hundred.

Continued on page 15



The Treaty, the Bunya Tree and How Things are Now

Back in the old church we were always happy that we had a great relationship with our Indigenous neighbours. We flew the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Island flag in our church and we loved it when, on special occasions, our Aboriginal friends danced for us or had a smoking ceremony in our church.

A great moment was when Sam Watson, Dennis Walker and Peter Kennedy signed a treaty in the church and later helped us plant a Bunya Tree in commemoration.

We have celebrated Eucharist and picnicked with the mob at the

Shed in Dutton park and we have had a number of cultural trips to Aboriginal sacred sites, led by Sam.

On Sorry Day we get a chance to meet up with those old friends of ours and the SMX people as well as Micah support and enjoy this important event.

We don't see many of our Indigenous friends at the TLC, which is such a shame. Although we are really happy that Sam, his wife Cath and sister Rosalyn regularly are leaders in our celebration.

Marg Ortiz



Starting a Smoking Ceremony



Dennis Walker, Peter Kennedy and Sam Watson after the signing of the Treaty.



Giving a homily (above) and dancing (below) were part of the indigenous connection in our old Church.



Planting the Bunya Tree.



Sorry Day May 2014



Many from SMX and Micah were involved in Sorry Day



Uncle Sam welcomes us all



*Joan Mooney conducting
the Meanjin Choir*



*Emily Foster -
beautiful singing
and beautiful singer*



Five Years On

Continued from page 13

Times certainly are changing. An increasing number of people are receiving that can't-be-bought congratulatory letter from the Queen when they make it to 100, and in Australia that number of recipients is doubling every 7-10 years. (Of course, this phenomenon should not be interpreted to mean that people want to live for ever.)

Change is happening at blink-speed. It's exponential and there's no turning back— the toothpaste is out of the tube. One hundred years ago there was no such group in society as 'adolescents'. 'Children' went to sleep one night and woke up as 'adults'. The new and emerging group of today is Trendsetters, who are leading a transformation in all sorts of ways.

If The Church is ready to learn, SMXer-Trendsetters have much to teach it, but holding your breath while waiting for the bureaucracy to change is not recommended: you'll die waiting, methinks.

Dr Neil Flanagan has achieved Trendsetter status. You can find out more about him at www.neil.com.au

Exclusion? or Freedom?

The long line of people filed silently out of the Church. The last one passed through. Then the massive wooden door was closed and bolted. Entry is henceforth barred.

Did it feel like exclusion? Or was it, rather, freedom?

The Bishop had been receiving information concerning the 'goings-on' at St Mary's – some of it true, some partly true, and some of it downright lies. Who were the informants? People who not only disagreed with certain practices, but who were obviously out to destroy a thriving community. And the Bishop's response? The Bishop couldn't cope with practices outside the norm. He believed the stories, made no attempt to verify their validity. Peter and Terry were summoned to account. They did not, they could not, revert to outdated and unjust practices – the wearing of vestments, a liturgy strangled in outdated language and rituals, the exclusion of women from effective liturgical participation. The tensions between authoritarianism and living practice simmered uneasily.

Finally the Bishop delivered his ultimatum – shape up or ship out!

We resisted. We wrote to the Bishop, we begged him to come and observe our liturgies, to engage in dialogue, we held non-threatening candle-light vigils. The response – silence! The Shepherd ignored the pleas of the flock, drove us into the wilderness. We had to go!

Like the Jews expelled from Egypt and driven into the wilderness, we girded our loins and went in silent procession through the huge

wooden door our beloved Church on the hill and into the wilderness of the city – Peel Street. It was the weekend after Easter, 2009. It was another exodus, that of the Jews, fleeing from their oppressors, that set the scene for that paschal meal which was the forerunner of our Eucharistic Celebration.

We wended our way down Peel Street, across Hope Street, our River of Jordan. Now that could be significant. In this cruel expulsion, could there be a glimmer of hope? Continuing down Peel Street, to the unprepossessing TLC building, up two flights of stairs to our Upper Room. We were exiles, but someone had given us a hand, had provided a temporary home. The generosity of the Trades and Labor Council has softened the trauma of exile.

All that was five years ago. In the ensuing years there have been difficulties, adjustments, but at least survival, and more than survival – a living community flowing with the milk and honey of freedom, of love, a community bursting with ideas and positive action in the pursuit of justice for all, a community with the potential to evolve, to consider new ideas, to experiment with liturgical practice, to be seekers, to keep on being pilgrims in the search for freedom, justice and love.

One has only to consider some of the community activities of recent weeks to see evidence of this vitality. We have had two outstanding homilies, from John Fitzwalter and Chris Paguna, raising our awareness of the

plight of our natural world and of asylum seekers. Jenny's party was a hoot, and raised money to assist refugees. Terry's lantern parade gave us an opportunity to stand in solidarity with refugees. On Sunday last we had the opportunity to attend not one but two morning teas, plus, if you are a woman, Dorothy's morning tea for ladies. Marg took us to a concert to show support for a community member, with lunch thrown in. Carolyn's next round of dinners is coming up. Bob has invariably some event/project up his sleeve. At Brian's meditation mornings you can also take in lunch. If you are a child you can participate in Annette and Rebecca's skipping morning, and raise money for a good cause. Then there are the countless hidden ways in which people are helping those who are in need. And all this with the weekend liturgies on the side!!!

I can surely never say that I am at a loss for something to do, or that I am lonely, or have no friends. Gratitude to all those people who do so much to ensure not only our survival, but keep us ever kicking on.

Joan Mooney



Being a welcoming community is one of our goals.

What the prophet Micah told us to do

**To Live justly
To Love tenderly
To walk humbly with your God**

Back in 1986 we had a community gathering whose aim was to consider our future directions. A small group of people including Karyn Walsh put to the community that as part of our 100 years jubilee we should look at what is our collective response as a community to social justice.

Many of us are engaged in our areas of social justice but how do we put some collective resources as a community into making a difference? We were a community that was proud of our position on social justice. We stood up and protested, when required, to support the marginalised as an act of our faith and our commitment to create justice in our world. The group continued to work on this idea with the support of the community and many conversations over a couple of years when it was decided that St Mary's would put one tenth of its income commencing from the Jubilee Year and work to create an independent not for profit organization.

Project Micah was incorporated in 1995 and in 1997 we changed the name to Micah Projects Inc managed by a Board. Hundreds of people from the Community have been involved in activities and projects of the organization. So many of the people, indigenous and non-indigenous, who used to live around the grounds of the church at St Mary's, are now, we are proud to say, in their own homes and supported by

Micah Projects and a number of other community agencies. After years of homelessness some are celebrating their fifth year in their own housing.

The work that Micah does for the disadvantaged in Brisbane is accepted as being one of the really good things that has happened in this city. A list of their areas of involvement demonstrates their diversity and real commitment to nose out where there is need and do something about it.

We still consider Micah as the social justice arm of our Community and many who work there either as volunteers or paid workers celebrate with us at the TLC. St Mary's is the foundational partner of Micah Projects and with many other partners we continue to work together to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged and marginalised people in Brisbane.

Marg Ortiz and Karyn Walsh



Christmas Hamper packing and distribution is one of the ways SMX works with Micah Projects



Campbell's Club

through the experiences of a volunteer.

My association as a volunteer with CC goes back to when it first started, about 10 years ago. I responded to a notice in St. Mary's notices and subsequently went along to a meeting where a group of people from Micah and other related services were working on an idea to bring together people who lived in supported accommodation in Brisbane. All of them have a disability and most of them suffer from mental health issues of some form or other.

The idea seemed to be not so much an activities-based place as somewhere where residents could meet up with each other, socialise, participate in various activities of their choice, and also be catered for in caring ways – more of a club atmosphere that would encourage a sense of belonging. I thought my skills as a reflexologist might be of some use – and so it started.

Campbell's Club is named after Malcolm Campbell, a long-time and well known social worker in West End.

CC was originally held in the Uniting Church Hall at West End one morning a week and later twice a week.

Residents from supported accommodation hostels arrived by taxi and the morning started with a lovely morning tea and then a range of activities which residents were free to participate in or just chat. Activities included everything from cards to bingo, singing to jigsaws, foot massage (something I used to do) to darts.

Over the years CC has evolved. Many of the residents are the

same ones who first came along and they still love it. Micah staff do a wonderful job running the club and are aided by volunteers, many of whom are like me and are now "hooked".

CC is now held in the Anglican Trinity Church Hall at Woolloongabba each Thursday morning. It is a happy, busy, often noisy environment where wonderful experiences happen. To be welcomed with hugs and smiles on arrival from people who receive so little of that, and to be updated on the latest exciting bit of news in their fairly mundane and often tragic lives, always makes me feel so humble and so fortunate.

From now until the Moonlight Magic Dinner Dance things really "hot up". This is the highlight of the year for most. The downstairs room at CC becomes a boutique where wonderful "after 5" outfits and suits are tried on and chosen, complete with all the shoes and accessories. Upstairs in the grooming section where I seem to be these days, it's hair cuts and colours, beard trims and shaves, make-up and nails. The excitement and the pressure builds each week as we try to find an acceptable middle ground between the blonde lady wanting to go jet black or fiery red and the gent with the beautiful, thick wavy



Style cut? No problem.

hair deciding he wants it all shaved off. An Elvis style cut? No problem.

So whether it's beading, making cards, cooking or whatever is on for the day, workers, residents and volunteers alike have a lovely time. It is interesting to see the individual social development in this environment as well as the learning of new skills. Many of our volunteers are members of St Mary's and some of them have taken on the role of volunteering in a similar way at one of the residential hostels. This seems to be a great success. Who knows where CC will go next. As a volunteer, and I know it's the same for many of the others, Campbell's Club is a special day of the week. My family certainly knows that Thursday is my day for Campbell's Club and nothing should interfere with that.

Yvonne Dunne



Faith Statement

from The Lloyd Geering Reader

It is my belief that there is no ultimate meaning or purpose permeating the universe, amazing and mysterious though it is. The universe is as it is! If we want to find any meaning within the short time any of us are here, we have to create that meaning for ourselves.

And we create the meaning of our lives by the way we live.

For me "God" is a useful symbol, inherited from the past, to refer to that meaning, to those values I find to be supreme and to those goals I feel myself called to aspire. So when I say "I believe in God", I

mean something like this; "God" is the symbol which holds together in a unity all my bits of knowledge about the world and all the virtues I have come to value such as love, justice, compassion. The more I respond positively to all this and learn to trust my fellow humans and the world at large, the more I find human existence to be of great worth and meaningful.

Surprisingly, I find much of the language of the bible and the Christian tradition is still very helpful to me.



For God, as I understand the word, is to be found in people, in human relationships, in my own thinking, as well as in the mystery of all living creatures and in the stars and distant nebulae. So when I say I believe in God, I mean a whole bundle of things, including such things as: I trust my fellow humans. I trust the world. I say Yes! to life. I look forward to each new day in hope and faith.

Submitted by Ingerid Meagher

In Solidarity with our Asylum Seekers and Refugees



Taking part in a Protest March.



Lantern Parade to show support for refugees.

What the Christian Eucharist is really about.

Professor Robert Crotty has spent a lifetime studying the Bible, the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Scriptures. In his book, *Three Revolutions, Three Drastic changes in interpreting the Bible*, he speaks candidly and authoritatively about the drastic changes that took place in his understanding of the Bible. His conclusions deeply resonate with me. However for some Christians they may be too challenging.

The purpose of this homily is to suggest that we of the St Mary's in Exile community need to change a few words in our Liturgy of Eucharist in order to make sense of what, in my opinion, it is really about. To make a meaning that is consonant with the Gospel stories of table fellowship that was central to Jesus' ministry.

For the moment we have to go back to one of these 'drastic changes' that Robert Crotty talks about in his book. 'Undoubtedly'

'It is the literary Jesus that is of importance'

Crotty says 'there was an historical Jesus'. However the Christian faith is not based on history – history in fact is a distraction for the biblical interpreter. It is the literary Jesus that is of importance. This is the figure that challenges Christians, determines their faith, that controls their belief. The literary Jesus never existed but the construction of a mediator is common practice for all religions. 'Christian believers', says Crotty, 'from their leaders to the people in the pews must give up the

conviction that their religion is based on history'. It is based on a story, a very clever story. Importantly, the sacred story will only work if its basis is accepted as a story and not mined for history.

If you follow the conclusions of Robert Crotty, you come to see that the search for the historical Jesus is as valid as the search for Julius Caesar. It can tell us many things about our past and how we came to be the sort of people we are. The sources must be carefully assessed by an historian, for the Gospels are not primarily historical documents contributing to this historical search; they have been manipulated.

They can only be used by the historian with the greatest care and in fact very little can be said about the historical Jesus, apart from extraneous nuggets of historical fact, usually handed on by chance. In the end they have no importance for the final product.

Now, if you accept the conclusions of Robert Crotty that the historical Jesus is a distraction and that it is the literary Jesus that undergirds our Christian faith, then it follows that the event we describe as the Last Supper is not historical but is part of the story concerning the literary Jesus.

The Gospel stories portray the literary Jesus as one for whom table fellowship was an essential part of his ministry. In fact it was central to his ministry. His table fellowship was inclusive of all but especially inclusive of people who were considered as outsiders, sinners and ordinary people who were despised by the religious elite: the poor, the homeless and the victims of injustice.



When you come to John's Gospel which was much later than Matthew, Mark and Luke, there is a story of a Last Supper but no mention of changing bread and wine into his body and blood. Rather, a very symbolic event happened - a humble washing of the feet of the disciples and a command to do likewise. In other words, the Eucharist is not about transubstantiation (the Real Presence of Jesus in the bread and wine: eating his body and drinking his blood which is the Roman Catholic understanding of the Eucharist). No, the Eucharist is about identifying with the broken, the rejected, the poor and being of service to them. For we are all the body of Christ but especially those with whom the Literary Jesus identified himself – the victims of injustice.

Matthew's Gospel sums it up: the Literary Jesus says, 'Come, possess the kingdom because when I was sick you visited me, when I was in prison you came to see me, a refugee and you welcomed me'.

That is how we live the Eucharist in our daily lives.

Peter Kennedy

Liturgy of the Eucharist

St Mary's in Exile



- 1:** What do we bring to Christ's table?
All: We bring bread, made by many people's work, from an unjust world where some have plenty and most go hungry. At this table all are fed and no one is turned away.
- 2:** What do we bring to Christ's table?
All: We bring wine made by many people's work, from an unjust world where some have leisure and most struggle to survive. At this table all share the cup of pain and celebration and no one is denied. These gifts shall be for us a recognition of the mystical presence of Christ, our witness against hunger, our cry against injustice and our hope for a world where love abounds and every child is fed.

ACCLAMATION

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| Cantor: Holy, holy, holy | All: Repeat |
| Cantor: God of insight, God of Love, | All: Repeat |
| Cantor: Each one of us is full of your being. | All: Repeat |
| Cantor: Hosanna, bring compassion. | All: Repeat |
| Cantor: Blessed, blessed are we, | All: Repeat |
| Cantor: We who come to bring justice. | All: Repeat |
| Cantor: Hosanna, bring love. | All: Repeat |
| Cantor: Hosanna, bring peace. | All: Repeat |
| Cantor: Hosanna! | All: Repeat |

You have woven an intimate tapestry and called it life and called it good. In love you have formed a universe, diverse yet related.

- 2:** To you, each of us, as each blade of grass and each star, is an irreplaceable treasure, a companion on this journey of love.
- All:** Creator God, let your Spirit move within us and our earthly gifts of bread and wine.
 On the night before he met his death, Jesus came to table with those he loved. He took bread and blessed it; he broke the bread among his disciples and said: Take this, all of you, and eat it!

Elevation of the bread

Do this in memory of me.

- All:** When supper was ended, he took the cup of wine and gave thanks; he passed the cup among his disciples and said: Take this, all of you, and drink from it!

Elevation of the wine

Do this in memory of me.

- 1:** As we break the bread
All: We acknowledge the brokenness of the world and like the Gospel Jesus, we are willing to reach out to others in compassion.
- 2:** In eating this bread and drinking this wine
All: We commit to the transformation of ourselves and our world.

ACCLAMATION

To love more truly this is my goal;
 To care more deeply with all my soul;
 To show compassion,
 Extend forgiveness, to make a difference,
 I give my all.

- 1:** The table of bread and wine is now made ready.
All: It is the table of company with Jesus and with all those who follow him.
- 2:** It is the table of sharing with the poor of the world,
All: with whom Jesus identified himself.
- 1:&2:** So we come to this table to renew our communion with the earth and our interwovenness with the broken ones of the world.
All: We come to this table to renew our unity with one another and with all those who have gone before us.
 (We pause to remember them)

PRAYER from the Aramaic

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| Cantor: O Silent Sound | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: Whose music plays | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: At the heart | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: Of each and all | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: Untie the knots within us | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: Let your rhythm | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: Move through our lives | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: So we may move | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: Whole being | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: With your song | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: For from you | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: Springs forth | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: All harmony | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: And balance | All: (echo) |
| Cantor: Dona Nobis Pacem | All: (echo) |

To Resurrect is an invitation to wake up

An elderly man lay dying in his bed. While suffering the agonies of impending death, he suddenly smelled the aroma of his favourite biscuits wafting up the stairs. Gathering his remaining strength, he lifted himself from the bed. Leaning against the wall, he slowly made his way out of the bedroom, and with even greater effort, gripping the railing with both hands, he crawled downstairs.

With laboured breath, he leaned against the door frame, gazing into the kitchen. Were it not for death's agony, he would have thought himself already in heaven, for there, spread out upon waxed paper on the kitchen table were literally hundreds of his favourite biscuits.

Was it heaven? Or was it one final act of heroic love from his devoted Italian wife of sixty years, seeing to it that he left this world a happy man?

Mustering one great final effort, he threw himself towards the table, landing on his knees in a crumpled posture.

His aged and withered hand trembled towards a biscuit at the edge of the table, when it was suddenly smacked with a spatula by his wife....."Get lost!" she said, "they're for the funeral."

The old man assumed the biscuits were for him. Someone once said "you know what happens when you assume- you make an ASS out of you and me".

The disciples in this resurrection story from Luke assumed Jesus was dead. A valid and reasonable

assumption; but they had forgotten the words Jesus spoke to them while he was in Galilee, "that the promised one had to be handed over into the power of sinners and be crucified, and rise again on the third day (Lk 2:44) and then they remembered Jesus' words, we are told. It was like a light bulb moment and in remembering, they too entered into the resurrection experience- they did as St Paul writes to the Galatians.

"Because I have been crucified with Christ I live now not my own life but the life of Christ now lives in me." (Gal 2:20)

'This is the awakening, the resurrection experience'

The Jesus story was to be their story. The small self, the egoic me, the separate self, recognizes its non-existence and dies. What happens in its death is that it takes on the life of Christ, the universal self, the larger self, the self immersed in the whole.

I live now not my own life (which I once thought was the only life), but the life of Christ now lives in me.

This is the awakening, the resurrection experience St Paul speaks of when writing to the Ephesians.

"Wake up from your sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you".

When we move into the light of the resurrection it is like waking up from a dream, we see things now with fresh eyes and spirits.

We are not encumbered with our old self, interested only in selfish endeavours, our concerns now are the concerns of the universal self, immersed in the world of oneness – where there is no separation- where what we do to the one we do to the all.

When we move from the me space to the Christ within and without, our concerns and life choices change. We do not allow ourselves the luxury of despair and assume that nothing can be done in the face of some of the huge problems facing our planet today.

During our Good Friday liturgies we reflected on how Christ's crucifixion is paralleled in the crucifixion of our home, planet earth, by our mindless consumption and exploitation of its precious and fragile forests and eco-systems.

Many people inspire us to move out of the universal Christ space. People like Ma Yongshun (1914-2000), a Chinese forestry worker, who, during his career, chopped down 36500 trees for China's development. In a moment of meta-noia and profound change and awakening, he changed his ways and starting from the 1960's. Each spring he would plant trees using his free time before work,



Ma Yongshun, who planted more than 50 000 trees in his lifetime.

To Resurrect is an invitation to wake up

after work, during lunch time and after his retirement. Later, at age 78 he recruited the help of his family and thus he was able to fully fulfil his promise to the mountain by planting in total more than 50000 trees. By 1996 he had built a breeding base for trees of high quality. Over his life time, he had inspired many people to help the environment and had taught many people to plant trees.

The Billion Tree Campaign, launched in 2006 by the United Nations Environment Programme as a response to the challenges of global warming, is another resurrection story. Its initial target was the planting of one billion trees by the end of 2007. One year later, in 2008, the campaign's

objective was raised to 7 billion trees, a target to be met by the climate change conference that was held in Copenhagen, Denmark in December 2009. Three months before the conference, the 7 billion planted trees mark had been surpassed. In December 2011, more than 12 billion trees had been planted.

These two stories encourage us to continue to believe that the crucifixion of our planet will not be its fate.

That collectively people who awoken to their larger, universal self, can act selflessly for the betterment of our planet and all who find a home in her.

Allow me to finish with this Gerard Manley Hopkins Poem

God's Grandeur

*And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the Bent World broods with warm breast
and with ah!
bright wings.*

Terry Fitzpatrick

Memories



Celebrating Christmas and First Communion in our old church. These young people are now quite grown up.



John Fitzwalter made this Easter brush cross. His creative ideas are still enhancing our liturgies.



It was a baptism like this that helped seal our fate.



Ted and his Big Issue have long been a part of the story of the St Mary's Community.

Jesus Then and Now

Let me begin by bringing greetings from the Christian community in Palestine, and especially those communities with which I am most familiar: St Luke's Anglican Church in Haifa and the Sabeel community in Nazareth. This is a difficult time to be a Christian in the Middle East, and I would seek your prayers for my friends there, just as they offer their prayers for us.

My task is to reflect with you on the significance of Jesus for our kind of faith community here at St Mary's in Exile. Rethinking Jesus is a big part of our project, I suspect; even if not always at the top of the agenda.

As we say at the beginning of most liturgies, "We gather to reflect on our lives in light of the Christian mystery ..."

After five years, the conversation about what kind of community we are at SMX is not yet finished. My focus in this homily today is the part that Jesus plays in our collective and personal lives.

The Book

First of all, and especially in this context, it seems appropriate to begin with my recent book, *Jesus Then and Jesus Now: Looking for Jesus, Finding Ourselves*.

Yes, it is yet another 'Jesus book'—and there have been quite a few of them in recent years. As the subtitle seeks to suggest, this one has its own character and focus. It is as much about the meaning of Jesus for today, as it is about Jesus in the first century.

A few times recently I have been asked to describe the book. When that happens I like to outline the

three major sections of the book in order to indicate its own particular logic:

The first section draws on my involvement with historical research:

- history of the Galilee and Second Temple Judaism more generally
- the work of the Jesus Seminar, of which I am a long-time member
- and my involvement with the archaeology dig at Bethsaida

This part of the book is very much about getting a fix on 'Jesus back then' in first-century Galilee.

The second section draws on my work as a lecturer in Biblical Studies, and focuses on selected Jesus themes in the NT Gospels:

- Jesus and the kingdom of God
- Jesus and the afterlife
- calling Jesus names
- the death of Jesus

This middle section of the book is very much about getting a fix on the Jesus tradition during the first 100 years after Easter. What were people thinking about Jesus and saying about him in that formative period for Christianity?

The final section draws on my personal perspectives as a person of faith myself, and it deals with the relevance of the person of Jesus and the traditions about Jesus for us here and now:

- Jesus as one of us
- The significance of Easter

- Jesus in a world of many faiths
- Being a follower of Jesus today

This part of the book is much more theological and much more personal. It is probably also more controversial.

Brevity is a key virtue in this context, so let me just say a few words about my reading of Jesus as a first-century Galilean Jew and then offer some reflections on the significance of Jesus for me as a progressive Christian.

Jesus Then

I locate Jesus within Torah-observant Jewish settler communities in the Galilee. "Settler" is a term I have chosen with intent. It disturbs both my Jewish and Palestinian friends, not to mention other Christians.

It is important to keep in mind that Jesus was neither an eco-theologian nor a first-century feminist. He was a person of his time and place, and he is a stranger to us and our values.

We may well criticise credal Christianity for divinising Jesus too easily, but we also tend to



Greg practises his conversational Arabic while visiting a Bedouin village in the south of Israel.

domesticate him. We recruit Jesus into our social and political agendas.

In very brief terms, then, I see Jesus ('back then') as coming from a small Jewish settler community at Nazareth, with maybe not more than a dozen or so families in the settlement. The people of that newly-established community were deeply attached to their Jewish identity. This included loyalty to the Temple and cultural resistance to Hellenism.

Jesus of Nazareth was more like a prophet (Elijah, Elisah, Hosea, Jonah, et al) than a sage or rabbi.

'Prophet' may not be a perfect category, but it is better than most others and no better one comes to mind. This seems to have been his preferred self-description and to get us about as close to his own self-understanding as we are ever likely to reach. His prophetic mission put him on a collision course with imperial Rome and its local puppets.

However we may care to label him, Jesus seems to have been a catalyst for a Jewish renewal movement centred on the "reign of God". He was, after all, a disciple and successor to John the Baptiser, so a focus on the kingdom is not surprising.

Jesus Now

Assuming that this description is reasonably accurate, and even if it is not, I still need to address the relevance of such a Jesus here and now.

Because I am a Christian, Jesus is central to my understanding of God and my understanding of myself. To be like Jesus and to see the character of the Christ develop within me is my religion in a nutshell.

It could have been otherwise, and most likely would have been otherwise had I not been born and raised in a family that took its Christian faith very seriously. But my family set me up to experience life through the lens of Christian faith, and thus Jesus has been at the very centre of my worldview from as early a stage as I can recall.

One helpful way to explore the significance of 'Jesus then' and 'Jesus now' is offered to us by Marcus Borg, who speaks of the difference between "Jesus before Easter" and "Jesus after Easter."

I think Borg is onto something very important for Christian faith in this idea, as the formula upholds the essential continuity of Jesus on both sides of Easter while also recognizing that Jesus is 'something else' after Easter than he had been before Easter. In using these terms we are not speaking about the ontological essence of Jesus, but rather our perceptions of Jesus and our reception of the blessings that God offers us in and through Jesus.

The prophetic identity and mission of Jesus before Easter was expressed in his actions as he healed and exorcised, taught in private and public spaces, called disciples and sent them on mission to act on his behalf, as well as when he challenged and confronted those with privilege and power. His prophetic role is seen in his teaching activity, and especially in his aphorisms and parables. In addition, his prophetic character is anchored in his



Greg on location. All in a day's work: accurate records are essential for the archaeologist

personal integrity, culminating in his death on the cross.

That Jesus—the one we knew before Easter—continues to be a significant prophetic figure with much to say to us today. That faithful humanity is enough for us, and it is as a prophet that Jesus is honoured within Islam.

Indeed, as I see it, the faithful humanity of Jesus is itself a prophetic act that cuts across the centuries and invites us to get ready for the coming reign of God. Jesus speaks for God, and he does not always need to use words.

But something happened to Jesus at Easter.

This is not the moment when Jesus became God, but it is the moment when we see Jesus differently. Jesus after Easter is a combination of radical transformation and profound continuity with Jesus of Nazareth.

It is the same Jesus. The Jesus who cared about the poor and the sick, is the Jesus in whose face shines the eternal light of God. Yet something significant has changed.

Jesus after Easter relinquishes his role as prophet, becoming instead an epiphany (revelation) of God.

Not surprisingly then, the Easter traditions in the New Testament are as much about epiphany as they are about resurrection.

Almost certainly none of the first disciples stopped to ask themselves what had become of Jesus' flesh and bones. It seems crass even to contemplate such a question in this context. They had glimpsed the human face of God. They knew the truth of the saying that to see Jesus is to see God. (John 14:9).

Perhaps we could modify this statement slightly. Can we suggest that to see Jesus after Easter is to see God, while to see Jesus before Easter is to catch a glimpse of God?

Jesus after Easter is the Christian encounter with God.

This God has a human face, and it is a Jewish face.

This God is not just compassionate, but suffers and dies and rises again.

This God knows what it is like to be alone, cold, hungry, loved, mocked, and touched.

This God sets a table and calls us to eat.

This God overturns the crass transactions at the centre of our lives and challenges us to become houses of prayer for all nations.

This God has become the Spirit poured out on all flesh, so that Paul could also say, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor 3:17).

Conclusion

As disciples of Jesus, as people who respond to the call of God who was deeply present in Jesus of Nazareth, how do we live out from that encounter with God in Jesus in our own time and place? This

encounter with grace and love and forgiveness and life transforms and radicalizes my own life. How am I to put it into practice?

However I answer that question to myself, it will not be a solo project. It will involve others and it will require me to be part of a community of people seeking to fashion their own response to God in Jesus.

We see this dynamic in the story of Jesus. The human face of God did not drop out of the sky in splendid isolation. Rather, the Word of God was born into a human family and nurtured within the village life of first-century Nazareth. Even in his death, Jesus was surrounded by people: the other victims, the perpetrators of the violence, the vested interests that stood to benefit from the violence, and the intimate circle of those who would most deeply feel the impact of his violent death.

In between that communal birthing and dying we have the public years that leave no mark on the creeds and confessions of Constantine's church. The hallmark of those years was that Jesus gathered a community of people around him. Our God is a gregarious god. She likes company!

God's preferred company are the broken and the misfits, the blind and the lame, the poor and the outcasts, widows and hemorrhaging women, parents with sick children, collaborators, and women with reputations. Cast the first stone, our God says, if you have no sin! Come as you are. Come and eat at my table.

Given the importance of community in the life and ministry of Jesus, this is going to be a priority as I respond to my experience of God in Jesus. I am looking for a community of disciples of Jesus that is committed, supporting each of its members in their personal and collective response to their encounter with God. As a priest I long to shape and serve such a community. As a Christian I want to be a part of such a community.

In fact, I think I have found such a community here at SMX.

Ours is a community that reflects the character of our God, the God encountered in Jesus. We seek to be generous community, a church that takes our humanity seriously. This will not be a church where everything is tidy and all the questions have been answered. Most likely this will be a messy church, a church that is living with the questions rather than clinging to traditional answers, and a place where we do not have to be right in order to be loved.

I suspect it is also the kind of church where God likes to be seen.

Greg Jenks

*Senior Lecturer / School of Theology
(Academic Dean, St Francis
Theological College, Brisbane)*



The Bahai Gardens in Haifa are an amazing expression of mission: making the world beautiful for God.

Keeping in Touch with the Others

A letter to the Archbishop

April 30th 2014

Your Grace, since I wrote a dozen letters to your predecessor and another after we had been at the TLC for a year I thought it appropriate to write and give my personal comments now that we have been 5 years just down the road from our previous centre at St Mary's.

I can only re-endorse the sentiments that I expressed four years ago. (I have included a copy below). Yes we have lost some from our community but most of those have been because of death, age or moving out of the Brisbane area and we, as a community, have certainly not lost any of our commitment to God. The average person there is fully committed and you have only to read our quarterly magazine with most articles coming from those in the 'pews'. A friend of mine (still a practising -but not very happy catholic) read the summer edition and commented that it was the best yet. Her reasoning was that everyone who was represented there had somewhat different beliefs but we all seemed to be in perfect harmony with one another.

Yes we are all still trying to deepen our faith and our love

of that supreme being we call God - though that word has so many overtones that we should no longer accept - the judgmental God, the God who would lead a people to success in battle to



A woman gives a homily. Not allowed in the Catholic Church. At SMX women and men give homilies and preside at the Eucharistic table.

obtain their land, the remote God, the God who plays favourites and so on. We have become increasingly aware of the God within us, the God who is in and through all things and wants to draw us always to a deeper and closer oneness with the Being Love and Truth that He/She is.

When Peter and Terry are no longer able to take the leading role in our community, I feel sure we (following the pattern of the early Christians) will have no difficulty in accepting someone from the community in that role.

No, I do not think we could return to the main body of the church - at least not until the institution changes radically. We are all called to follow Christ and become more Christlike and science is showing us more and more that we are one with everything that is - that every sub-atomic particle has some form of consciousness and we are in essence a collection of atoms that unite to form a human being with each particle playing its part in keeping us alive. God is in all things and just by being we are part of that wonderful chorus of praise for our creator that the psalms rejoice in when they describe the trees

and animals, the stars and oceans singing forth the glory of God. We are called to an awareness of this and are offered the opportunity to be instruments of God in bringing about the coming of God's Kingdom. We still have a long way to go but may we all align our wills with that of our Creator God and help hasten this. Without this the human race is truly in danger of extinction and it may take millions of years for another species to be given the opportunity to accept the offer to embrace our God more fully.

*Yours in Christ Jesus, our Lord,
Patricia Ryan*

St Mary's Matters - Edition 37

Editor - Margaret Ortiz
Finances - Doc Ortiz

Sub-editors - Jan Murray
Joan Mooney

Printed by John Hallett
Xavier Grafix

Articles, poems, letters, photos are always welcome. Send to ortizmargaret506@gmail.com
You are invited to contribute financially to the work of St Mary's Community in Exile by donating to: St Mary's Community Ltd, BSB 064- 131 Account 10339414, Commonwealth Bank, West End.



Welcome

*Whoever welcomes
The little child
Welcomes ME
And THE ONE*

*Whoever welcomes
The refugee
Welcomes ME
And THE ONE*

*Whoever welcomes
Whatever, whoever
Welcomes Me
And THE ONE*

*Whoever welcomes
The little child
Within one's Self
Is (in) THE ONE*

Barbara Fingleton