

"Remember, we are but TRAVELLERS HERE"



Mary MacKillop



St Mary's Matters

Spring Edition

Donation \$2

VENERABLE, BLESSED AND SAINTLY CREATURES

St. Bess of the compassionate gaze.
Canonized for her work among the
urban depressed and for the miracles
associated with her healing eyes. St. Bess
was never known to speak in her entire life



The most Blessed Waldo the innocent
of Yarraville. Waldo, the gasworks
canary, was beatified for his devotion
to liturgical and sacred music, in
spite of being cruelly incarcerated
for life.



The Venerable Roger of the cobblestones.
For one half of his life, Roger of the
cobblestones lived a life of utter depravity.
Then for the other half, he devoted
himself to prayer and contemplation: prayer
and contemplation by day; utter depravity
by night.



St. Marjorie of Gippsland. She lived on
prickles and weeds yet achieved serenity
and managed to nourish the weary
multitudes with her miraculous
abundance of cream and milk. Marjorie
was martyred late in life as a result
of a deal between her owner and a
pet food manufacturer.



Leunig

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EDITORIAL

This edition of our magazine has a focus on a quote of Mary MacKillop, 'We are but Travellers Here'.

As a community we have always identified with Mary because of her work at the school that was next to our old St Mary's church. We do so even more in the aftermath of our being rejected by the church. We can only wonder that Mary managed to find the energy to continue her work in the face of similar opposition.

We, on the other hand, have certainly had a few nasty moments on our way to where we are, but, having arrived, are feeling pretty liberated by our new circumstances.

However, we must keep remembering that we are 'but travelers' and never imagine that we have really arrived.

As we travel we keep in mind what we are doing here. If we lose sight of the main goal we are lost. Jesus said, 'Now is the Kingdom of God'. We are travelling in it and if we keep our fellow travelers in our hearts as we go we can try to really live Micah's words,

*'Live justly, love tenderly
and walk humbly with
your God'.*

Marg Ortiz (Editor)

PS I got a lovely email from Michael Leunig wishing us well and giving permission to use his cartoon. It is so good and helps us not to



take ourselves too seriously.



ENTER THE THICKET

The silent, candle-lit procession that marked our community's final leave-taking of St. Mary's Church to begin anew in the 'Upper Room' of the TLC, was the beginning of a sacred pilgrimage towards a yet unknown destination. It was a very tangible experience of leaving behind a particular way of experiencing and celebrating our spiritual life to begin a new mode of being and becoming church. Like Abraham, we have been called to 'Go from your ...father's house to the land that I will show you'.

We have exchanged the 'vaulted cathedral' atmosphere and the wonderful acoustics of St. Mary's for the cave-like atmosphere of TLC. Here, as we listen to the readings and the homily, a tangible silence envelopes us, and like Elijah who stood at the mouth of the cave on Mount Horeb (1 Kings), we hear God pass by in 'the sound of silence'.

Like Elijah, we have heard the great wind of anger and resentment, and the splitting rocks of ex-communication, and now wrapped in silence and stillness, we can touch the still place within, and allow insight

and wisdom to arise. When we sit in silence, it's like being in a womb, gestating, until the time comes to be born anew.

We began our pilgrimage gathered around the Cross in which gnarled wood and twisted branches had been skillfully woven with new and treasured pieces, a tangible reflection of the shattered hopes and dreams of the community, gathered like precious fragments and blended with new possibilities to form the 'thicket of the cross', through which the 'riches and wisdom of God' is reached.

We have been inspired by homilies that showed the mysterious way in which the Gospel readings had reflected our journey as we moved through Easter, and now 'he is going ahead of us to Galilee' (Mk.16:7).

We have been able to hear the Word in its 'here and now'.

It is as if we are being guided by the Spirit 'to a still more excellent way' (1Cor.12:31), the way of love 'that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things' (1Cor.13:7), so



we may be a sign for the Archdiocese, and play a prophetic role in the Australian church. While the differences between the Archbishop and ourselves seem overwhelming, 'the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine'. (Eph.3:20).

The journey towards the Promised Land is through the desert, the place of challenge and testing, of refining and sifting. Gradually we are being drawn more deeply into 'putting on the mind of Christ', guided by the Spirit who dwells 'within and among' us, caring for us like a mother bird nourishing her chicks.

Some years ago, the Archbishop launched a campaign of prayer for a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the life and mission of our Archdiocese. Faithful

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Enter the Thicket

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prayer changes hearts and minds, and the prayers of the people of the Archdiocese will not go un-answered, though they may be not be answered in the way that is expected. Though we are no longer acknowledged as belonging to the Church, we know ourselves to be church in a way that is different, developing a shape that is not yet clearly defined. At present we find ourselves 'in exile', and through our faithfulness and preparedness to wait, are silently contributing to new life within the Archdiocese. The insight of true wisdom is still incubating within us, until the time comes for new birth.

For the present, we can go forward in the joy of Resurrection Life by drawing inspiration from the great saints and mystics who lived and taught the riches of Christian spirituality down through the centuries, reforming the Church at crucial times in her history.

Among them is St Francis of Assisi who desired to love rather than be loved...to be 'an instrument of peace', changing despair to hope, and the light of his prayer has sustained and nurtured Christians in times of darkness, turning sadness to joy. As we left St. Mary's church following Easter, the words of St. John of the Cross gave meaning to our experience, and can continue to do so. '...it is quite impossible to reach the thicket of the riches and wisdom of God except by first entering the thicket of much suffering, in such a way that the soul finds there her consolation and desire. The soul that longs for divine wisdom chooses first, and in truth, to enter the thicket of the cross'.

Another is St. Teresa of



Avila who reformed the Carmelites at the time of the Inquisition. We can find encouragement in her words:

'Let nothing disturb you, let nothing dismay you. All things are passing. God never changes. Patience attains all that it strives for. She who has God finds she lacks nothing. God alone suffices.'

Margaret Smith.



Clearly the children have fun at their liturgy. Thanks to Annette (not visible) who was presiding on this occasion

PROPHETS WITHOUT HONOUR – MARK 6:1-6

Notes for a homily
Sunday 6 July 09

In the reading today, Jesus places himself squarely in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets.

A biblical prophet is one who conveys a message from God to a particular time and place. They're not, contrary to popular belief, people who can foresee the future. They are rather people gifted with an ability to see deeply into the present, to look below the surface of society and see the undercurrents and hidden realities that determine what is happening or will happen. The word "seer" is a good description. An example might be that of a builder coming to your house, your beautiful house with polished floors and newly painted walls and a view of Mt Coot-tha, and saying – "You've got termites in the timbers under your house and the stumps are rotten. It's not going to last. It'll collapse unless you do something." The builder can foretell the future only because of his ability to see under the surface of the present.

Most of the classical OT prophets lived at a time of prosperity. They saw the corruption and oppression, the manipulation of the

poor that had contributed to the wealth and they condemned it in the strongest terms.

And they weren't well received in their own country. We know little of the lives of any of them, apart from Jeremiah, but if the way he was treated was any indication, they had a hard time. Jeremiah was arrested and jailed more than once, he had death threats, he was eventually thrown down a well to get him to shut up, and ended his life in exile. Jesus saw his rejection as part of that pattern.

This gift of prophecy has always been in the Church. We've heard more about it in recent years, perhaps because it's

harder now to keep people quiet than it used to be. People like Martin Luther King, Archbishop Romero, Teilhard de Chardin, and Mary MacKillop were all prophetic figures in the same tradition. All of them, by word or by deed, conveyed a message from God to the situation of their day. King and Romero were killed, Teilhard de Chardin was silenced and Mary MacKillop was excommunicated.

The gift of prophecy is found also outside the Church. For me, examples are the environmental movement, the black consciousness movement and the women's movement.

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Prophets Without Honour

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These movements told us — tell us—something profoundly true about the human condition or about the unfolding of the universe. And they have also seen a lot of opposition, and still do from some quarters.

I want to mention finally our own community here at St Mary's. I believe it's possible to see our present situation, under the leadership of Peter Kennedy and Terry Fitzpatrick, in the light of this idea and this history. This is partly because of the social justice ministry of Micah projects and the hundreds of other activities supported by this community, which have a prophetic dimension. But also because several of the very things that some people found offensive in our community were, I believe, prophetic actions. People took offence at these things — and it's interesting to note that the Gospel reading today uses the same words for the peoples' reaction to Jesus.

I think for example that the blessing of gay and lesbian unions is a prophetic act. It results from a determination to look beneath the surface



and beneath the conventional derogatory view of homosexuality and see two human individuals who are worthy of our respect and God's blessing.

I think the presence of the Buddhist statue in the Church was a symbol of the openness in the community to the ways that God might be revealed in other religions and other traditions — and a more general openness to difference.

I think the welcoming of women to present homilies is a similar thing. It's a prophetic act because it recognises the injustice of excluding women from certain areas of ministry and it's an affirmation of their dignity and their equality.

I think that the absence of vestments is an act which cries out for a greater awareness of the priesthood of the laity and a breaking down of the huge gap that has opened up between clergy and laity — a gap which seems absent from the early Christian communities.

Most of all, I think that our seeking to find new ways of speaking about God is a prophetic act. We do this in baptism when we use the words creator, liberator and sustainer of life. It can be seen as a recognition that all the language we use about God has to be metaphorical language. The one thing we know for certain about God is that God is Other, God is

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Prophets Without Honour

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different. God does not belong to this universe of which we are a part. And yet the only language we have to speak about God is human language. So when we apply human attributes to God, we're doing so metaphorically. We do this all the time in everyday speech – when we use the word “tree” for a chart showing the names of our ancestors – a “family tree” we're doing so metaphorically. We know that the chart is not really a tree. We can say “the sea is angry”, but we know that the sea cannot experience anger. So when we say that God is compassionate, wise, merciful etc, we have to recognize that these are essentially human qualities and can only apply to God in a metaphorical sense. God is infinitely bigger than these attributes. So to describe the Second Person of the Trinity as the Son is to use a metaphor, just as it is when we use the word Liberator. In using alternative language, as we do in baptisms, we're trying to explore what it means to say “Father Son and Holy Spirit” And we have to do this with all the language we use about God. What reality are we trying to express when we say

“God is Three, God is One”? What do we mean when we speak about the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection? We'll only come to a deeper understanding of these realities if we use different language.

We know from ordinary conversation that we sometimes have to say things two or three times in different ways before we can adequately express a feeling or an experience. There must be a million ways to describe the experience of being in love, all of them probably inadequate. But if some authority were to come along and say, “Look, all this multiplicity of words is downright confusing. From now on, we're going to have one formula for expressing this experience, and here it is – blah blah blah. From now on this is the only orthodox way of expressing this experience. All other expressions are inaccurate and invalid”. Well, we can see how ridiculous that is. But we're tied to certain fixed expressions of the experience of God, and I believe it is a prophetic act – the act in fact of adult Christians - to look for other ways of expressing our experience.

So all these things we do at St Mary's and which have caused such offense to others, can be seen as prophetic acts. And predictably, they have landed us in hot water and resulted in our presence here today in the Trades and Labour Council rooms instead of the old St Mary's building.

And now, we gather here this evening to share in perhaps the most dramatic prophetic act of our Church – the celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist can be seen in many ways, and one of them is that it is a great symbolic act in which we look beneath the surface appearance of difference and diversity and disharmony in the world and express our belief in the essential unity of all humanity - by sharing bread and wine. We believe that in this act, God becomes present to us and among us in a new way and with a new intensity and immediacy.

Many of you, like me, may feel uncomfortable here; we may find it unpleasant to be here as outcasts rather than in the church building. But at least we cannot say, after reading today's Gospel, that we weren't warned.

Dermot Dorgan

I WAS BUT A TRAVELLER THERE

It was quite a magical mystery tour, that journey from St Mary's to St Mary's in Exile.

It's just a stone's throw from one to the other, but it took a good six months. And there were many twists and turns, ups and downs along the way.

First up, I went to St Stephen's Cathedral and was treated to a recorded debate via loudspeaker. Quite a change from the peace of the meditative Saturday night mass at St Mary's!

Next, I 'snuck' back to St Mary's, feeling like a traitor. There were about 20 people there - and not one I recognised! A man met me at the door and directed me to a pew on the opposite side from where I usually sat. Out of my comfort zone. Unlike in Peter and Terry's time, there was no gentle lighting.



The full glare of undimmed lights revealed many cracks in the walls and lots of peeling paint. St Mary's no longer felt like home at all.

Next stop, the nuns' chapel at the Mater. A lovely place, with a spiritual feeling similar to St Mary's. Encouraged, I went a few more times. I even bought a Mass book so I wouldn't be shown up as a "ring-in" when they recited

prayers. I enjoyed the homilies, but at the end of the day, even though I could speak the language, I still felt like a foreigner.

Finally, I could no longer resist the call of St Mary's in Exile. I returned, never to leave, last Saturday. I may have got there the long way around, but I finally made it!

Christine Cormack

THE TRINITY

A Personal Reflection

In the early 1980s as the RCIA was introduced to the Kenmore parish I became the catechist for

one of the small groups. The Trinity was one of the dogmas I had to ponder on and pray about before I felt I could discuss it with those considering becoming Catholic.

I knew God as Creator and as Love and I had certainly invited the Holy Spirit to help my belief and understanding but Father, Son and Holy

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The Trinity

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Spirit seemed too male oriented, (two men and a bird as one friend described it) and did nothing for my faith understanding. *Father* I know was an image that was very difficult for those who had suffered abuse from their fathers and though *Abba* brings God closer, there is nothing in the Trinity, as usually described, that suggests the mothering role; Son certainly suggests generation from and subservience to; and the Holy Spirit was often something of a shadowy figure.

It was then that I realised that we too are trinities. According to scripture we were made in the image and likeness of God, and realising this all began to make sense. We have three aspects that affect our lives – our physical being, our emotions and our reason. God described himself to Moses as “I AM” - this was Being itself, of which our *being* is a pale reflection. God is LOVE (our emotional side) and God is TRUTH, (well that's where we hope our reasoning takes us). We are like God, but in us the three aspects reflect only dimly the Being, Love and Truth that are found in the infinity that is God and we only rarely

get the balance right.

Now the Trinitarian nature of God made sense and had much to say to me about my understanding of God, myself, others and indeed all creation: God the Father, the *I am*, Creator of all, God the Son - Love, Infinite Love for each of us and for all of creation, (Jesus as the Second person of this Trinity requires further discussion) and The Holy Spirit – the Spirit of Truth that Jesus promised to send to his followers after his death.

I have since realised too that this understanding of Trinity means that the arguments over the Generation of the Son and Spirit, which was the major reason (or excuse?) for the separation of Eastern and Roman Catholicism are now completely irrelevant. Being, Love and Truth have always been as much a part of the nature of God as my

physicality, emotions, and reason have always been an integral part of who I am.

For me the realisation dawned that we had to endeavour to pursue each of our three aspects to the fullest, for it is only in the Infinite that the three become one. My Being is not just my body but includes my relationship to the source of all, God, and the rest of creation; Love must be the overriding emotion if I follow Christ, Love of God, Love of self, Love of others and indeed of all creation; and Truth must be sought with an open mind so that eventually we arrive at an understanding that more nearly approaches Ultimate Reality.

May each of our small trinities become closer images of our God and may our community in seeking the fullness of the Trinity become more fully the Living Body of Christ.

Patricia Ryan

A TRINITY FOR GOOD FRIDAY

Where was the good when such a man
Was done to death for any plan?

Where was the pardon through love done
Rather than break an only Son?

Where was the father's love for a child
Forsaken to change a will so riled?

William Blake (submitted by Dennis Hale)

APPROACHES TO EUCHARIST

The swine flu saga has been of interest mainly because the responses to it have shown what Australians consider to be important. That is also true of the response within Australian churches. Some Catholic churches have discouraged parishioners from receiving communion from the cup, and from shaking hands at the ceremonial greeting during the Eucharist. The response to such measures has been mixed. Some accept the restrictions easily, others resentfully.

These responses may correlate with different, though complementary, approaches to the Eucharist. And since in the Catholic Church the Eucharist is the central symbol of the joining of God to humanity in Jesus Christ — the core of Christian faith — the divergent responses may also indicate two different emphases in understanding this core belief.

In the first account, the teaching that the coming of the Son of God into our world shows that the world and all we encounter in it are precious. God's becoming human means

nothing if our world is bereft of God's presence. All reflects God's glory.

The second account emphasises the unique transformation of whatever God touches directly. It sees Christ's humanity as uniquely graced. It sees human beings who turn to Christ as endowed with a unique relationship to God, and sets the miracles worked by Christ and by Christian saints on a quite different level from the daily miracles of life.

Those who come to the Eucharist with this second view focus sharply on the mystery of Christ's presence through the elements of bread and wine. They also emphasise the solemnity of the action by which Christ becomes present. This emphasis on mystery is expressed most clearly in Eastern liturgies where the central part of the Eucharist takes place behind closed doors.

In the celebration of the Eucharist, the emphasis on mystery and transcendence is conveyed by the use of distinctive vestments and incense, by fine music, and by formality of gesture and word. The



celebration calls for a deep reverence displayed in formality, silence and inwardness.

This approach also stresses the boundaries between the sacred and the profane. It stresses, for example, the different reality of the bread and wine before and after they are consecrated, and may restrict to the clergy the right to touch the cup and plate used in the sacrament.

Those who see the Eucharist in this way are unlikely to object to restrictions placed on the reception of the cup and on shaking hands during the Eucharist. For them, respect for the mystery of God's presence in Christ in the Eucharist can be shown by not receiving as well as by receiving. And shaking hands is

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Approaches to Eucharist

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incidental within the celebration of the Eucharist.

Those who see God's becoming human as an affirmation of God's presence within our daily world will also set the Eucharist within a broad context. They will attend to the connections between people in the congregation, the local and universal issues of the day, prayers for particular intentions and small gestures. Because they see the presence of God in the tangible world in Christ as central, they will also make touch and connection central in the celebration of the

Eucharist.

They will also express reverence in a more complex way that respects the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but also respects Christ's presence in the members of the congregation and the world in which they belong. They will see reverence expressed appropriately in greetings and attention to other people, in laughter at what is humorous, in intense silence at moments of deep prayer. Reverence is about attention and not about withdrawal.

From this perspective, the restriction on the chalice and on shaking hands are significant measures. They restrict the tangibility that is

integral to the Eucharist and they limit connection. So those who see the Eucharist in this way will accept such limitation only grudgingly, and will ask for strong evidence that the discouraged practices present a serious threat to public health.

Of course these two approaches to the doctrine of God's presence in the world are not mutually exclusive. Most Christians will incorporate each into their faith in different contexts. Neither should be exclusively canonised in the liturgy.

- Andrew Hamilton

Andrew Hamilton is the consulting editor for Eureka Street. He also teaches at the United Faculty of Theology in Melbourne.

Use with his permission

A POEM TO MY FATHER

Farewell dear traveller
As you embark on a new stage
Of your journey.
I cannot come, although I long to hold your hand.
But this part you must go
Alone.
Without suitcase in your hand.
Just you, yourself and nobody else,
To discover
The Promised Land.

Penny Wearne

MICAH PROJECTS INC HAS MOVED

On Wednesday 12th August Micah Projects moved out of the St Mary's House into its new home at Shop 6/7 162 Boundary Street West End, phone 3029 7000

There was sadness with this move as it is the severing of our final links with our old church. But despite this there was plenty of fun and laughter as the Micah people plus about 30 of the SMX community had a working bee to get the stuff taken

up to the new premises.

Lyndal's scones with jam and cream were the reward enjoyed by the workers after a degree of toil.

The location of Micah's other offices has not changed.

- Brisbane Homelessness Service Centre
62-64 Peel Street,
South Brisbane
3036 4444

- The Esther Centre and Lotus Place
26 Merivale Street
South Brisbane
3844 0966

- Young Mothers for Young Women
11 Sussex Street
West End

St Mary's in Exile and Micah Projects continues its strong association despite our physical separation.



BARAK OBAMA

I have increased respect for the American electoral system since the election of Barak Obama. Compared to the Australian system, their campaigns are incredibly expensive and time consuming. But I do not think that our system could have selected Barak Obama. Our prime ministerial candidates are selected by the other members of parliament, advised by their factional leaders and political advisers. Only after this selection can the voters choose. In an election that they expected to win, professional politicians would surely pick a 'safer' candidate than a black man whose second name is Hussein.

Of course President Obama is only half black. His mother had fairer skin than I. In his book, "Dreams from my Father," he says that he decided to identify as an African American when he was in his early teens. Later on, he was a black student activist at university, but his limited degree of blackness lurked in the background of his relationship with his fellow activists.

"Dreams from my Father" is a well written and

thoughtful memoir about Obama's formative years, but not a page turner. One incident in it caught my attention. As a student activist in the 1980s, he made this speech at a lunch time rally of students opposing South African apartheid.

There's a struggle going on. It's happening an ocean away. But it's a struggle that touches each and every one of us. Whether we know it or not. Whether we want it or not. A struggle that demands that we choose sides. Not between black and white. Not between rich and poor. No – it's a harder choice than that. It's a choice between dignity and servitude. Between fairness and injustice. Between commitment and indifference. A choice between right and wrong....

Twenty-five years later, the setting for President Obama's inaugural address could hardly have been more different. But other



things had not changed at all.

Firstly, the naked idealism. Student radicals never talked about the "choice between right and wrong" when I was at uni. And the inaugural address is chock full of idealistic exhortations and aspirations. It finishes: *With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.* You can immediately tell that this is not John Howard speaking.

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Barak Obama

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Secondly, the emphasis on doing the hard yards – hard work and hard choices. They are alluded to briefly by the student Obama, in a context where most would have concentrated on the plight of the victims and the evil of the villains. In the inaugural address, I counted ten references to hard work, and four to making hard decisions.

And finally, his brilliant use of language. The final sentences of the inaugural address might appear over-blown and corny as an isolated quote, but listen to the whole address on the internet, and you will be cheering along with the two million who were there to witness the event.

Peter Brown



A MODERN PARABLE

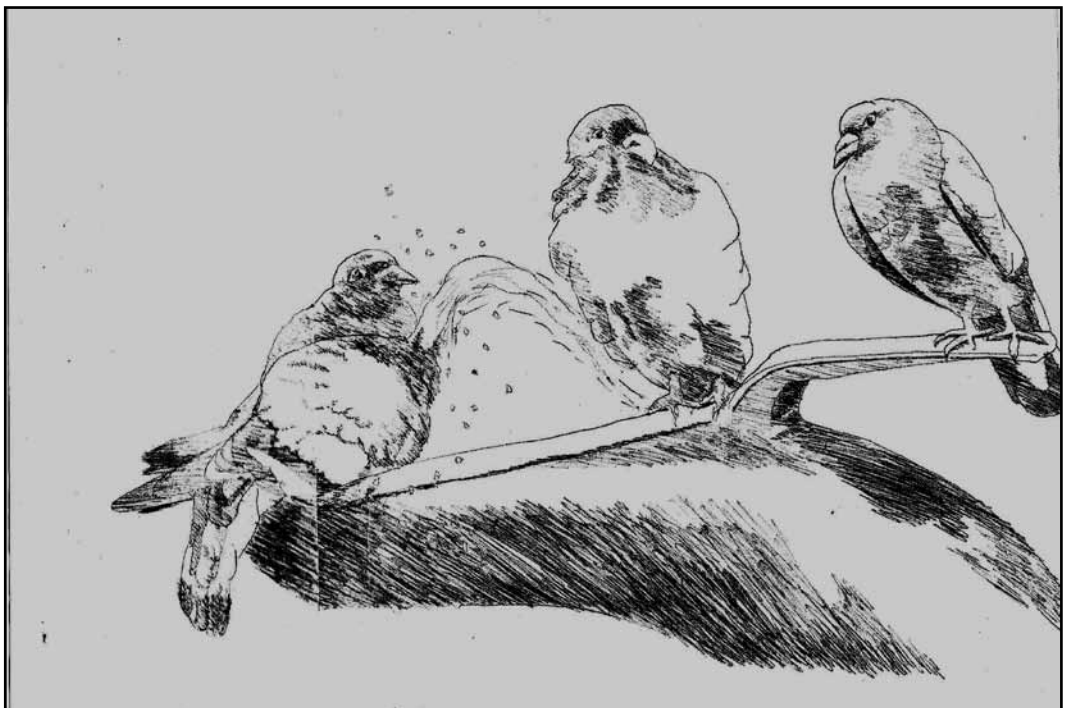
Did you see the photo in Sunday's Courier (9th Aug) of three pigeons in the Brisbane Mall? They waited till there was no one at the drinking fountain then took over. One landed on the lever and the water began to flow, the second took up a position on the rim of the bowl to watch over his peers and the third drank and frolicked till he had had his fill. Then they changed places and after almost ten minutes they flew off thoroughly refreshed.

Like the

pigeons we are making our way in a new and strange environment. Like them we must be open to new ideas; we must help each other, for on our own we cannot take advantage of all the blessings that are there; and we must not forget to

look out for the dangers in our situation. If we listen as they did to the voice of God within, we will find the fountains of refreshing water we need not only to survive but to flourish.

Patricia Ryan



A WOMAN FOR OUR TIME

Born in 1842 the girl left the city behind
And it was in this harsh hard country
Her life-work she did find;
She found a people in a land where
Life was far too cruel,
They had little time for Faith and fun
And saw no hope of school.

CHORUS:

*And Mary MacKillop is a
Woman for our time;
Her legacies are many,
And now, they're yours and mine.*

Children of the outback station,
I'm sure they could recall
And miners, shearers, mother, cooks
Her heart went out to all.
She brought them peace and dignity,
A strength that they could hold.
She worked humbly with her love and Faith
And her spirit said, "Be bold!"

Mary was a woman in a
World with rich man's rules.
They said that Mary's work was wrong
"Don't waste money teaching fools!".
But Mary didn't falter under
Hardships, threats and lies;
Her work was never-ending
As she answered children's cries!

It was against the odds that Mary
Worked until succeeded;
Building schools for wild and untamed kids
In cities where they were needed.
She saw God in every scruffy child,
In every ragged kid.
There was love and peace and charity
In everything she did!

*Copyright: Words and music by Mary Fletcher; found on "MacKillop Legacy" CD by
GUSTO 2009)*

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

The observation of John Quincy Adams, three days before he died, is very interesting:

John Quincy Adams is well, but the house in which he lives at the present time is becoming dilapidated. It's tottering on its foundations. Time and the seasons have nearly destroyed it. Its roof is pretty well worn out. Its walls are shattered and tremble with every wind. I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it pretty soon. But he, himself, is quite well, thank you.

What John Adams is saying here is that he does not see himself as a body or a mind. This is the key to ending suffering. John Wheeler in "Awakening to the Natural State" puts it very clearly – "All suffering comes from not knowing your true nature. Suffering and doubt come to an end when you clearly see who you are." So how do we come to an understanding of our real identity? How do we find the "Christ within" or our "Buddha nature"? One thing is for sure, and that is you will not come to this understanding through your mind. Again

John Wheeler puts this beautifully, "Trying to understand your true nature with the mind is like a dog trying to understand calculus." Have a look at the poem below by the Sufi poet Rumi. It is called "The Guest House".

*This being human is a guest house,
Every morning a new arrival.*

*A joy, a depression, a meanness,
Some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor.*

Welcome and entertain them all!

*Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house
Empty of its furniture.*

Still treat each guest honorably.

He may be clearing you out

For some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.

Meet them at the door laughing, and

Invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,

Because each has been sent

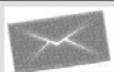
As a guide from beyond.

Your life is the Guest House. The guests are all the thoughts,

emotions and experiences that come into your life. Guests are not meant to stay. They come and go. Some stay longer than others and some keep returning more than others, but they are all only temporary visitors. The host is always there and is the Consciousness which is aware of the guests coming and going. All that changes is not you. You are this Awareness. You are the host. The host welcomes all guests, meeting them at the door laughing, and inviting them in because the host is conscious that there is something to be learned from each guest. So when you can be aware of all your thoughts, feelings and experiences without judgment, and with a sense of humour and gratitude, you have become the "detached witness" that Buddhists talk about. You are then living from your true self rather than mistakenly identifying yourself with your body and mind.

Mike Sherman





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The move of the St Mary's community into exile has for me been a liberating experience. It has made me reflect on and learn so much about Catholicism and examine what beliefs underpin my personal faith in Jesus and a God presence in our world. Though I'm still pondering some big questions I know in my heart that I want to be a part of a community that 'walks the talk' of Christianity. So as our

community takes refuge in the TLC building I see this time as an opportunity for personal and community renewal. While many will see us as Totally Lapsed Catholics, I prefer to see myself as a Totally Liberated Catholic.

Louise Powell

I have been attending St. Mary's for around 11 years now, and I want to say that I have found

recently a "new connectedness" at the masses within the TLC building. I think this is happening because of the close proximity of us, the people, within the room.. We connect more with each other. It is easier to meet new people and make friend. Maybe this is part of the positive" side of the TLC building. Maybe this is a part of Gods big plan for St. Mary's in Exile!!!

Swami Chinmayi Ma

Vale Linda



We celebrated her 70th birthday with a cake after 9am mass, and, as the picture here shows, we celebrated her 80th with flowers.

Linda was always delighted to get a mention at mass (although she feigned the opposite) and we all loved her. While she never really appreciated the various changes at mass she was fiercely loyal to 'Father Peter and Father Terry' and always felt sure if they did something it must be for good reason.

She was a person who had worked hard all her

life. As one of twins, Linda had two other sets of twins in her family of eight children. Her father died when she was young and she and her twin sister Violet went out to work when they were both twelve years of age.

When Linda's twin sister became unwell and went to Darwin to live with her son, Linda was bereft. Then the huge sadness of her beloved church tumbling about her was all a bit much... She died, As Peter said, of a broken heart.

We miss you Linda, and remember you with much affection.

Marg Ortiz

Linda McKeon loved her church. She had always lived life a stone's throw from our old St Mary's building and it had been a very significant part of her whole life. When she went to school it was the one that was part of the St Mary's site.

THE SEARCH FOR THE SPIRIT....LOVE

My name's Tracey, my husband is Andrew and Aly is our son. Our daughter Rose is doing the trifacta today, she's being baptised, making her first communion and being confirmed.

It's a bit strange for me to be speaking because we haven't been coming here very long. About 4 months. And the reason we're here is because Rose wanted to be baptised. The reason I'm speaking is because the other mothers applied gentle persuasion and said it would be a good idea to tell people why we came to St Mary's. And I'm grateful for the opportunity because it's a chance to say thanks for welcoming us so warmly.

When Rose asked me if she could be baptised my first question was, 'Are you sure?' When she said yes my second question was 'what do you want to be? A Catholic, an Anglican or a Presbyterian? And she said, "I want to be what you are". Which was lovely but I didn't know what that was.

I haven't been inside a church much for 20 years and it's been rare for me to find God in a church. I had a great sense of it at

school and the last church I attended was St Mary's.

So I thought we'd come and check it out. Unfortunately while I was procrastinating and making absolutely sure Rose wanted to be baptised, St Mary's was thrown out of their church.

I know that there's been a lot of sadness associated with that but it's also a new beginning. For someone like me it's exactly the sort of place I'm happy for my child and family to be part of.

I want my children to be part of a community where they are valued equally, both boys and girls, and a place that gives them a broad and liberal view of the world.

To me St Mary's is a bit like a large, slightly eccentric family. It has two fathers, a lot of outspoken mothers, gay, lesbian and straight brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles and lots of kids who are all part of one big mob. You never quite know what's going to be said but it's always interesting. For me the ideals of St Mary's are summed up by the forward to a book Michel Leunig wrote. It's called



When I talk to You, A cartoonist talks to God.

He says, "A person cannot see their soul but can feel the enormous impact on his life. Its outward manifestations can be disturbing and dramatic and its inner presence is often wild and rebellious or elusive and difficult to grasp; but the person knows that from this inner dimension, with all its turmoil, comes his love and his fear, his creative spark, his music, his art and his very will to live ... He believes in this spiritual dimension, this inner life, and knows that it can be strengthened by acknowledgement and by giving it a name. He

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The Search for the Spirit....Love

(Continued from page 19)

may call it human spirit, he may call it the soul or he may call it god. The particular name is not so very important. The search for the spirit leads to love and a better world, for him and for those around him. This personal act is also a social and political act because it affects so many people who may be connected to the searcher. An important and perhaps essential part of this process seems to involve an ongoing, humble acknowledgement of the soul's existence and integrity. Not just an intellectual recognition but also a ritualistic, perhaps poetic gesture of acknowledgement: a respectful tribute".

And that's why we're here. To celebrate the inclusion of all our children into this community, as a gesture of acknowledgement that we believe in the importance of the inner life.

For the children making their baptism, first communion and confirmation and their families Andrew would like to offer this prayer, and respectful tribute.

Dear God
Today makes our children part of a bigger family that will always accept them and not judge them.

We give thanks to be part of a family where our children will be able to say what's in their hearts, speak their minds, ask questions and receive answers to help them in their search for meaning.

This is a place to listen, to challenge ideas and be challenged by them. This is a diverse family with many different life experiences. I hope we can learn from other's experiences and share the wisdom and pain they know.

I hope this is a place our children will come to share their joy and love and a place where they'll find peace .

I hope they can leave to find their way in the world, but always be welcomed back.

I hope they appreciate the uniqueness of a place that has a very real sense of love.

I hope they learn from the community here the importance of standing up for what you believe in.



And I hope because of Terry and Peter and all the people here, this place will flourish and help them to have an understanding of God, that God isn't just about a building, or dogma or a club with a set of rules. I hope they'll grow here in heart and spirit. I hope they'll understand creativity, love , family, humility , and truth are all just ways of showing the idea of God and that idea has many different names and faces.

So for the kids here today being welcomed into this community and reaffirming their belief in this way of connectedness with others, we'd like to offer our hopes for their futures and our thanks for being part of it.

Amen

Tracey Lennon

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AT ST MARY'S IN EXILE



A POEM FOR ST MARY'S

This is our time to stand and say
That your rules and authority are the source of dismay
Instead of listening to the peaceful and thoughtful
Notice only is taken of the violent and vengeful

Faith so weak it's threatened by a statue of a monk
Talk of Papal authority, Magisterium is just so much bunk
They hate the fact gays and lesbians are given a place at the table
They still cling desperately to the male domination fable

Many here are refugees from our parishes elsewhere
Who failed to stem the outflow of Catholics in despair
Vatican II gave one's conscience a lease of new life
But the local Magisterium have given us nothing but strife

We come for the homilies about justice and action
We come for the music, although it's not the main attraction
Because it mainly about the Spirit that is alive in this place
That challenges our minds and hearts – it's our holy space

It was hard to imagine a Sunday without gathering together
But here we now are, without the Episcopal tether
For it might just be we may humbly enquire
That this is start of a new justice empire

For we yearn for a world where every child is fed
And it won't take long for the word to spread
That there is a new way of being Church you know
And the old failed hierarchical model has just got to go

I can't be a part of a Church of division
Where women are told of their inferior disposition
For unless we stand up and embrace this upheaval
We become part of the problem, part of the greater evil

We are now part of a new uprising
Now out of the bottle its power is surprising
We should not be afraid to shout and say
We are St Mary's in Exile and we are not going away !!!

David Cantwell



UNDER THE TREE

What people are reading



***Doubts and Loves* Richard Holloway Canongate 2005**

In *Doubts and Loves*, Richard Holloway sets out to interrogate traditional ways of understanding the Bible. He re-examines the doctrines of Christianity in order to craft a practical ethic for our own time, seeking to liberate the power of these great themes from

their sometimes antiquated settings. Holloway's radical book revels in pluralism, making cultural, political, sociological and philosophical connections that offer spiritual hope.

Doubts and Loves is a heartfelt and passionately argued case for reclaiming the challenge of Jesus by revealing the essence of his teachings and showing why they remain

revolutionary. "This book offers the churches something to hope but, more importantly, has something to say to each one of us" (Joan Bakewell)

Taken from the dust jacket

This is the most exciting and interesting book I have ever read on theology. It gives me hope that there is something left in Christianity for people like me.

Marg Ortiz

***The Lost Gospel Q: The Original Sayings of Jesus"* Ed Marcus Borg 1996**

Many biblical scholars believe that the unknown writers of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke relied on a growing oral tradition and copied much of their material from a pre-existing document which German scholars have named 'Q' (from "Quelle" which means "source").

The Gospel of Q remains a hypothetical document. Its existence is inferred from an



analysis of the text of Matthew and Luke. Much of the content of Matthew and Luke were derived from the Gospel of Mark. But there were also many passages which appear to have come from Q.

Q does not mention events like Jesus' virgin birth, his selection of

twelve disciples, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension to heaven, etc. It represents those parts of Jesus' teachings that his followers remembered and recorded about 20 years after his death. He is presented as "a charismatic teacher, a healer, a simple man filled with the spirit of God". (Marcus Borg, Consulting Editor, "The Lost Gospel Q: The Original Sayings of Jesus.")

This is a fascinating book and one that may well give a better idea of what Jesus was all about. It sits well with the exploratory nature of many in our community.

Marg Ortiz

MEN'S MEDITATION (aka "Fishing")

Cast your line in
See what comes up
Tide in, tide out
Breathe in, breathe out

Standing on a rock
Kneeling on the floor
Waiting for a bite
Or a bit of insight

Looking out to sea
Looking inside of me
All the same to me
No big mystery!

Penny Wearne



FROM THE COMMUNITY

Connections

The problem with our community is that we don't get to see each other much outside Mass. The Connections group exists to help us to meet others in the community. We provide welcomers at Mass and organise other events to help with this. We had Mass in Orleigh Park and a great concert at the end of August. We are planning a Community Dinner at COTAH in September. At SMX we have a strong commitment to Social Justice and part of this is in our care for each other.

If you would like to join

this group,
email Marg

Oodgeroo

We had an amazingly good theatrical experience when we attended Sam's play Oodgeroo at La Boîte Theatre. About 160 of us were there and were moved and entertained by the story of Oodgeroo (Kath Walker) – poet and political activist. She was a woman with a deep and abiding commitment to the search for a peaceful, spiritual coming together of her people in the quest for full recognition within



the Australian political and social landscape.

This play, beautifully written and with inspired direction and set design, is one that should not be missed, so we hope there will be other chances for you to see it if you missed coming with us.

margdoc2@bigpond.net.au

Marg Ortiz

Some of the 160 who went to see Sam's play



Connections

The Connections group works at setting up small groups around Brisbane as part of the community strengthening process. In reality, of course, the small groups simply enjoy getting together. Each group is completely autonomous, deciding when and where they will meet and what they will do.

New Groups

There is interest in forming groups in the Oxley/Inala area and on the Redcliffe Peninsular. An online discussion group will be up and running soon. Also there has been a suggestion that a group form to do some formal theology such as the IFE "Foundations.

Other groups that have been mooted are: Catholic teacher's group, Enneagram group and Foster carer's group.

If you would like to join a group or start a group email Marg margdoc2@bigpond.net.au.

Marg Ortiz

Northern Cluster

This group meets on the third Thursday at the home of John and Mary

Long, . We begin the agape meal or ritual at 6.30, mostly using Michael Morwood's "Praying a New Story". This is followed by a shared meal and discussion which ends at approx. 9.00pm. Previous discussions used selected questions from Michael Morwood's book "From Sand....." and in July we celebrated women's role in the church under the banner of Mary of Magdala's feast day.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 17th Sep. Because it is the feast of Hildegard of Bingen, it was agreed that participants might like to share anything they have about her. Our discussion will arise out of this material.

maryd@people.net.au.

Tarragindi Cluster Group.

The Tarragindi Cluster Group meets on the first Wednesday of each month for coffee, cake and discussion.

The discussion topics are determined by the group prior to each meeting and one of the group volunteers to lead the group discussions. Our next topic is "Conscience". The



Kiddies corner at 9am mass

Tarragindi group is very well attended with a strong bond being established among the members.

Erin McGrath

Camp Hill

Meet at Jo's home in Camp Hill for a cup of tea and discussion. Jo's lot is talking about 'Obedience or disobedience – what works best for church?'

Central

We meet fortnightly on a Wednesday at Micah's new premises at 7:30pm. The next meeting will be September 16th. Our focus has varied from discussing material in "From Sand to Solid Ground" by Michael Morwood to contemplative reflection and sharing. Our next meeting will begin with

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THE DROP SHOP

Most churches have a piety stall with rosary beads, holy books and all manner of 'improving' products.

We, on the other hand, have a 'Drop Shop', despite the fact we haven't actually sold any 'Heavenly Drop' for a number of years. Although in recent times we have sold a rather nice drop of wine labelled 'On the Way to the Promised Land'.

The real purpose of our shop is to sell fairly traded tea and coffee. This is a small attempt to 'live justly'. And we have had an amazingly big turnover considering

the size of our community.

Just recently we have had on our table some coffee brought to us from East Timor by Brother Bill. He has organized some growers and can guarantee that half the money goes back to them.. His coffee is more expensive at around \$12 a bag. You will know that you are doing a really good turn if you buy some.

Perennial favourites at the shop are the books. Generally controversial and often subversive, the books we have for sale

include *Doubts and Loves* by Richard Holloway and *The Lost Gospel Q: The Original Sayings of Jesus*" edited by Marcus Borg. Both these books are reviewed on page 25.

Thanks to Doc who organizes the drop shop and buys the stuff we sell and to the many good folk who help do the selling at each mass.

I am really pleased that we keep the Drop Shop going even though it is much more work now. Our shop is like us—quirky but doing a pretty good job.

Connections

(Continued from page 26)

some meditation.
Contact Mike
mike.spiller@hotmail.com

Western Group

Eleven people from the western suburbs gathered at the Brookfield home of Brendan and Pat (or Shar) Ryan to share food and ideas. We each told of the path that led us to become members of the St Mary's community. It was a time of getting to know each other better

and discussing what we wanted from this group. The next meeting will again be at their home on Tuesday evening 15th of September. If you are interested in joining this group please email the Ryans at brookfieldryans@gmail.com or phone them at 3374 1660. You will be most welcome
Shar Ryan

Sunnybank

This group meets together monthly for a few drinks and pizza combined with laughter and talk. We have just begun to get more serious with a discussion at the start of

the evening based on the John Crossan DVD 'Victory and Peace or Justice and Peace'
Marg Ortiz

North-West

This new group is hosted by Kathi, Wayne and Lyn. It is for people in the Gap-Mitchelton-Hills-Samford-Albany Creek areas. It will concentrate on Faith and Discipleship, Pastoral Care, Social justice. We usually all bring something for a community meal. Details from 3351 6571 or email greygum2@bigpond.net.au

Wayne Sanderson

FIRST COMMUNION 2009

