



## St Peter Julian's Church - Haymarket

The Blessed Sacrament Congregation's Sydney centre of Eucharistic life and spirituality

### A DYING AND RISING CHURCH

We pass the fire burning brightly by the front door. We wait in the dark until the single flame of the great Easter candle illumines the whole church. We delight in the spreading sea of flickering lights as the tapers of all present catch fire from the one flame. We thrill to the ancient song in praise of the Light of Lights. Now we settle in for the long haul as the word of God is proclaimed in one powerful passage after another. We begin with the roll-call of creation from the first chapter of the first book of the scriptures, "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth .." The proclamation of the text is punctuated by the refrains chanted by the cantor and repeated by all: "And so it was", "God saw that it was good", "Evening came and morning came the first day".

God saw that it was good. Our hearts agree. The world is good, the world is blessed and graced, and it is good for us to be here. How shocking then to discover a line in a prayerful poem that reads, "God saw that it was very, very bad." It brings you up short, it makes you stop and think, and in the end persuades you of its truth. What poem, you may be wondering, and what it was that God saw as very bad. The poem has not yet been published. It concludes a doctoral thesis entitled "Telling the Stories: The Martyrs of San Francisco Gotera" written in 1995 by an Irish Franciscan named Peter O'Neill. Sadly, Peter died of a heart attack in San Salvador just a few weeks ago. He spent thirty-five years as a missionary in Central America, including the dangerous decade of the civil war in El Salvador. Now he's buried among his adopted family, the people of his parish.

In Peter's poem it was the dark reign of terror, lies and violent death in El Salvador that God saw as "very, very bad". Above all, it was the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero on 24 March 1980, killed by an assassin's bullet fired from the back of the church while he celebrated Mass. Like Jesus himself, Romero lived the last years of his life acutely aware that his prophetic witness for the poor put his life on the line. Inspired by the testimony of Jesus' non-violent victory over death, Romero dared to speak in advance of his own

resurrection. Writing recently in the *National Catholic Reporter*, Jesuit peace activist John Dear repeats what Romero said to a Guatemalan reporter just two weeks before he was shot: "I have often been threatened with death. If they kill me, I shall arise in the Salvadoran people. If threats come to be fulfilled, from this moment I offer my blood to God for the redemption and resurrection of El Salvador. Let my blood be a seed of freedom and the sign that hope will soon be a reality."

Peter O'Neill's thesis is a tribute to the courage and faith of the ordinary people who were assassinated by the death squads of the military regime. Their stories, Peter wrote, are "stories from the heart . . . steeped in symbolism, in spirituality, in courage, in sadness and yet in hope. By connecting these stories with that of their beloved Monsenor Romero and eventually with that of Jesus, the communities are overcoming the 'narrative of the lie' which has been so prevalent in El Salvador through the centuries." He went on: "My heartfelt hope is that these stories will not die. They illustrate that even in the most tragic and terrifying circumstances of life and death there can still be hope. . . Monsenor Romero shines out in them, not as a remote figure but as a dearly beloved brother who leads people to the story of the crucified Christ even in the darkest hour. The cross is not separate from the resurrection. It is the courage and faith and hope of these people that signifies both. The love that they had in their hearts shines forth even from their cross. It is easy to apply to them a line from Yeats: 'A terrible beauty is born'."

Some of you on first reading that phrase "God saw that it was very, very bad" may have first thought of the scandal that is getting so much media attention in the Western world at present: the sexual abuse of children by church personnel and the handling of this issue by bishops and the Vatican. The chorus of criticism is growing day by day. The official response so far has been a blend of condemnation for the criminal behavior, compassion for the victims, acceptance of responsibility by some bishops but not others, and denial of

responsibility on the part of high-placed Roman church officials. It was unfortunate, to say the least, that Pope Benedict's letter to the Irish bishops was issued just as further allegations against the late founder of the Legionaries of Christ, Marcial Maciel, were being publicized. How this serial abuser of men and women succeeded in securing decades-long protection and patronage from Pope John Paul II is all but inexplicable. For most of his long ecclesiastical career Maciel succeeded in living his own personal "narrative of the lie". To his credit it was Pope Benedict who finally began calling him to account.

Some would sum up the core issue in the sexual abuse crisis with the accusing phrase "culture of secrecy". Not all the critics can be simply discredited as enemies of the church. In 2007, in his book *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church*, Bishop Geoffrey Robinson wrote this:

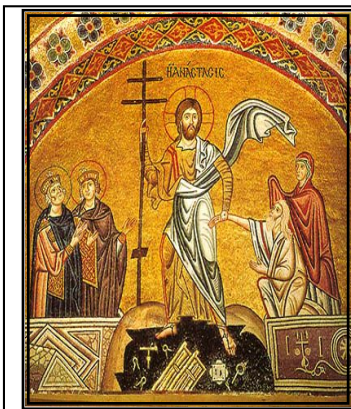
"I am convinced that if the pope had spoken clearly at the beginning of the revelations, inviting victims to come forward so that the whole truth, however terrible, might be known and confronted, and firmly directing that all members of the church should respond with openness, humility, honesty and compassion, consistently putting victims before the good name of the church, the entire response of the church would have been far better" (p 9).

It may be the case that a certain kind of church is dying. If so, we can take heart at the paschal promise of a new church being raised up in the power of the Spirit. What kind of church would be want it to be? If you were asked to name your seven dreams for the church, what would you say? Last September, respected Australian Jesuit theologian Gerald O'Collins wrote in *The Tablet* of his seven dreams for the church. It really isn't fair to him just to list them without explanation or comment, but here they are, slightly re-edited but in their original order:

- a church with priests who are biblically literate;
- a church that ordains married men;
- a church that hears the cry of the poor;
- a church of loving and faith-filled families;
- a church enriched by diverse ministries, including women deacons;
- a church that reaches out to alienated Catholics and to other Christians;
- a church reformed by conversion to Jesus.

Whether Oscar Romero would have named his seven dreams in quite the same way we will never know. What is absolutely beyond doubt is that he himself lived and died hearing the cry of the poor. And if in El Salvador "a terrible beauty" has been born, then we must all hope and pray that the ugliness of sexual abuse and ecclesiastical self-interest may give rise to a new and transfigured church.

**Tom Knowles SSS**



**We, the Blessed Sacrament Community wish you, our friends and benefactors a Holy and Happy Easter.**

**Thank you for your support and your participation in the ministry at St Peter Julian's Church.**

St Peter Julian's Mass Times

<b>1st &amp; 3rd Saturday:</b>	<b>2.15pm (Indonesian)</b>
<b>Saturday Vigil Mass :</b>	<b>5.30pm</b>
<b>Sunday Mass Times:</b>	<b>9.30am, 11.00am (Chinese) 12.30pm &amp; 3.30pm</b>
<b>Monday to Friday:</b>	<b>7.30am, 12.10pm, 5.30pm</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>12.10pm &amp; Vigil at 5.30pm</b>
<b>Public Holidays:</b>	<b>12.10pm</b>

**"The Gift of Children"**

Life, Marriage and Family Centre is offering an afternoon on 17 April for married couples who are trying to have children or who desire to learn more about various options which are in harmony with the dignity of married love.  
Saturday 17 April 2010

**Catholic Adult Education Centre**  
3 Keating Street  
Lidcombe

Enquiry and Registration  
lifemarriagefamily@sydneycatholic.org.  
Phone : 9390 5283

**Korean Catholic Community**

will begin their weekly Sunday Eucharist from 25 April at 5 pm at **St. Peter Julian's**.

If you know any Korean Catholic friends, Family or neighbours, please pass on this information.

Writings of St Peter Julian Eymard

**April, 1868—3rd Meditation—Eucharistic Vocation**

Our Lord has called me to his Eucharistic service in spite of my unworthiness.  
He has chosen me to work for his society in spite of my incompetence and my poor health.  
He has led me from death and by death to the life of the Society.  
Everything that was thought impossible happened easily and in God's good time.  
To God alone be love and glory!

Evidence of graces:

*God has led me gradually to the Society.* He showed me its sacrifices a fraction at a time. Finally, at La Seyne, he demanded all of them unto separation (from the Society of Mary), unto the cross, unto disownment.  
How gladly I said *yes* to everything after that wondrous Mass! And God accepted everything, brought everything to a successful end.

-So much serenity, which lasted so many years and ever on the increase through the Eucharist, tells me God's *yes*.

The strength it generated like the flower its fruit, assures me of God's love.

*Then:*

The sacrifices of death .....

And yet life follows death; it is the life of the Society and mine.



**YEAR OF EYMARD**

The worldwide Blessed Sacrament Congregation began celebrating a **Year of Eymard** on **4 February**. This will conclude with the bi-centenary of his birth in 2011.

**DIARY DATES ~ APRIL 2010**

LITURGY

Sundays: Year C

April 3rd      Easter Vigil  
 April 4th      Easter Sunday  
 April 11th     2nd Sunday of Easter  
 April 18th     3rd Sunday of Easter  
 April 25th     4th Sunday of Easter

Memorials:

April 1st      Holy Thursday  
 April 2nd      Good Friday  
 April 26th     St. Mark  
 April 28th     St. Peter Chanel  
 April 29th     St Catherine of Siena

Mass celebrated in INDONESIAN ~ *Misa Bahasa Indonesia* ~ with the CIC/SPJ Community on Saturday, 17 April at 2.15pm.

All members of the Indonesian community are especially welcome.

Information: <http://www.cicspj.org>

Mass celebrated in CHINESE: In Cantonese every Sunday at 11.00 am

Information: [www.chinese.sydney.catholic.org.au](http://www.chinese.sydney.catholic.org.au).

Contact John Wong.

Mass celebrated in KOREAN every Sunday at 5.00 pm commencing 25 April

Holy Trinity Prayer Community at St Peter Julian's

The Community gathers for Eucharistic Adoration on the 2nd & 4th Saturday evenings of each month at 6.45 pm at St Peter Julian's after the Vigil Mass.

Next dates - April 10th and 24th

For more information please email - [holytrinity@catholic.org.au](mailto:holytrinity@catholic.org.au)

The next gathering of The Associates of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation will be on Saturday 10th April 2010.

Contact person: Fr Marcellus Glynn SSS (Director) 02 9211 4100

St. Peter Julian's Altar Auxiliary

The 12.10pm Thursday Eucharist is offered for the Members of St Peter Julian's Altar Auxiliary. For information on becoming a member please speak to the Receptionist.

The Filipino Community monthly Community Mass (First Sunday is Easter Sunday)

All members of the Filipino Community are warmly welcome.



Contact us:

Telephone:

Street address:

Postal address:

Website:

Email:

Community Leader:

Reception & Community

St Peter Julian's Church

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