



St Peter Julian's Church - Haymarket

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

WHERE'S IT ALL GOING?

This month's reflection comes from St Francis' community member, Fr Tony McSweeney SSS. It is a much abbreviated version of one of three talks he gave last month to the church of Toowoomba. After naming some of the challenges facing the church at large today – her loss of prestige and privilege as a result of the sexual abuse crisis, the general loss of community in contemporary society, the "supermarket pick-and-choose" approach to organised religion, the separation of spirituality from religion, and a breakdown in the process of handing on tradition – he went on:

What kind of response does the Lord want us to make in this new situation? Three accents or lines of force seem to me of particular importance at the present time:

- the first is to opt for Catholic inclusiveness rather than any form of fundamentalism or any partial approaches that would exacerbate the current polarization of left and right
- the second is the pressing need to develop, and be deeply rooted in, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that shapes every aspect of our Christian thinking and practice
- the third is to have the courage to address the task of evangelizing our culture without giving way to discouragement whether on account of our personal poverty or the paucity of our resources.

A. Catholic Inclusiveness

Today, it is the conservative pole, which commentator John Allen prefers to call "the Catholic Evangelicals," that has come into dominance after a generation in which the liberal pole had most of the running. It should not be for our church an either-or choice between these two. Ideally, it is question of two poles, not two alternative churches – often in tension, it is true, but contained somehow within Catholic unity. One urges us to creativity and openness, the other insists on firmness of identity and continuity with tradition. The danger with the liberal pole is that of surrender to culture in a way that severs the link with tradition and dissolves identity; the danger of the other is that of reducing the dynamic richness and variety of tradition to something rigidly static and immobile. In the words of the great historian of doctrine, Jaroslav Pelikan, "Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living."

We need to say at once that certain courses are to be ruled out as impractical. We cannot hope to return, for example, to the earlier situation, to the pre-conciliar church, the church of the fifties. Nor can we try to build

a church of pure faith, for faith needs to be incarnated in a life and a culture. Nor again should we dream of a pure church of the ultra orthodox that would constitute a bulwark against the times. That has been a recurrent temptation over the centuries.

At a time like ours, of dwindling numbers, diminishing resources and growing frustration, there is a great danger of exacerbating differences. All of the great religions are experiencing similar stresses and tensions in our day. Not only in Islam, but in Judaism, Buddhism, even Hinduism, as well as Christianity, intolerance and fundamentalism are gaining ground as people feel their very identity under siege. In a world in which complexity baffles us and the sheer scale of the forces in play overwhelms us, the individual feels frustration at his or her powerlessness to determine her destiny. Karen Armstrong warns us:

It is important that we understand the dread and anxiety that lie at the heart of the fundamentalist vision, because only then will we begin to comprehend its passionate rage, its frantic desire to fill the void with certainty, and its conviction of ever-encroaching evil.

Recent studies in the United States reveal a shrinking middle ground both in politics and religion, a waning of the will to converse with those with whom we disagree, as people retreat into safe enclaves of the like-minded. Such an artificial clarification impoverishes us all, for we need each other in our diversity. None of us possesses the whole truth and all of us need to be disabused of the illusion that we are always right. Catholicity demands this of us. It is the genius of our church.

B. Personal Relationship With Jesus Christ

It may seem too obvious to insist upon personal rootedness in a relationship of trusting love with Jesus Christ. Yet I fear that all too frequently we take it for granted to our cost. For how else are we to temper our arrogance and calm our fearfulness? Whether it be in the liturgy wars or the struggles between social justice people and anti-abortionists, or whatever other field of battle in our church today, we must ask where such bitter anger and intolerance come from.

It is precisely in such a climate of intolerance in which anger leaves little room for conversation that the understanding of the church as a community of disciples is so important. In the gospels, especially in Mark, the disciples are always failing, yet the Lord never gave up on them, notwithstanding their consistent obtuseness and their endemic rivalries. Without stint he continued to give them his presence, sharing his word with them as

he shared with them his bread and his cup.

The truly amazing thing is that his greatest gifts were given to them in the moments of their most dismal and abject failure. On the eve of their cowardly abandonment of him, leaving him to die a lonely death, he gave them the most precious gift of all, his Eucharist. Then, thirty or so years later, in the aftermath of the cruel Neroian persecutions, when some terrified Christians had betrayed their own brothers and sisters, he gave them the first of the gospels. It is believed by many, in fact, that Mark's gospel was written in order to respond to the situation of a community shaken by the experience of failure and betrayal.

How strange, that in the moments of our greatest misery and moral penury, he should abound in his most lavish gifts! As we in our time walk the journey of faith in the midst of our fellow disciples, he continues to address our anxieties, admonishing us not to be afraid, but to believe, inviting us to discern what lies beneath our rivalries and our conflicts and our harsh judgments of one another. As Ronald Rolheiser has put it:

You have to say, 'Look, you're worried about politics, you're worried about your mortgage, you're upset about who's going to be ordained, and you think your pastor's too liberal or conservative. That isn't your real issue. Underneath, there's a frightened, lonely person, who has these extraordinary qualities but who's also frustrated about them. All that other stuff has its relative place, but that's not really it. Let's talk about what's really going on.

It is only in fidelity to the triad of Community–Word–Eucharist that we will slowly become church. If we are really serious about becoming a community of disciples, we may then find that we really do have something to say, after all, to the people of our time.

C. Evangelizing Our Culture

Evangelisation means the making known of the gospel to those who have not heard it at all or at least have not heard it as good news. It may occur in many ways, through explicit announcement, for example, but it may also be realized by the witness of one's life. Jesus spoke of his disciples being a light in the world, salt to bring savour, leaven to lighten the whole batch (cf. Mt

5,13-16; 13,33). He told us explicitly that "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 16,35).

The Asian bishops have stated at their 1996 Synod in Rome that "dialogue is the Asian way of evangelisation." This is where evangelisation of culture comes in. A culture is basically the way a group or people gives meaning to its life. This expresses an understanding of life and the values by which people choose to live. It is incarnated not only in institutions and monuments, in expressive forms such as the arts, in dance and music, but even more basically in language and sensibility, in manners and a multitude of other ways.

The Christian who, on the basis of the gospel, is discriminating and discerning about what attitudes and modes of behaviour he or she accepts from the reigning cultural norms, and what ones he or she rejects is by that very fact engaging in evangelising. By the ways we demur and by the ways we concur, in short, we are reinforcing the good or being complicit in what is evil and unhealthy in the culture in which we live. In the latter case, our presence in our society is anti-evangelical; in the former, it is an effective and real proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ even when we may not explicitly name him.

In our culture the church seems to be living through an era of inexorable decline. Yet history and the gospel itself tell us that there is always more to it than we suspect. Every time, in fact, is a *kairos*, a moment of opportunity when God is acting, even when what we see most obviously around us bears the appearance simply of decline and death. It seems that the Lord is especially, but hiddenly, active precisely in such times of apparent diminishment and loss.

Tony McSweeney, SSS

Jaroslav Pelikan. *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrines*. Chicago: Uni of Chicago Press, 1971.

Karen Armstrong. *The Battle for God. A History of Fundamentalism*. New York: Ballantine, 2001.

John Allen, "To be fully human: Rolheiser goes to the essentials," in the *National Catholic Reporter*, May 25, 2010.

Walter Carter Funerals

Seminar: Understanding Christian Funerals
Date: Tuesday 20 July 2010
Time: 9.30am to 11.00am
Venue: Mary Immaculate Parish Room
 45A Victoria Street, Waverley
Cost: Free

Healing Weekend with Sr Margaret Scully RSC

Date: Saturday 10th July Time: 9.00am—4.30pm
 Sunday 11th July 10.00am—4.00pm
Venue: CCR Centre, 19a Quirk Street, Rozelle
Cost: By donation
 Booking is essential
 For further information ring CCE Centre—02 9810-2499

Scene

"Catholic Underground": The Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.
Date: Saturday 10 July
Time: 7.30pm—10.30pm

Eucharist: THE BASIC SPIRITUALITY

With 30 Witness Stories
 Questions for group discussion
 An ebook by Fr Frank O'Dea SSS
 Available free on-line at
theeucharist.wordpress.com

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St Peter Julian's Mass Times

1st & 3rd Saturday:	2.15pm (Indonesian)
Saturday Vigil Mass :	5.30pm
Sunday Mass Times:	9.30am, 11.00am (Chinese) 12.30pm, 3.30pm & 5.00pm (Korean)
Monday to Friday:	7.30am, 12.10pm, 5.30pm
Saturday:	12.10pm & Vigil at 5.30pm
Public Holidays:	12.10pm

TWO GOLDEN JUBILEES!

Congratulations and best wishes to Frs John Morton and Pat Negri SSS who celebrate their golden jubilee of priesthood this month on the 16th and 24th respectively. Frs John and Pat are the two remaining members of the remarkable "Group of Nine" that joined the Blessed Sacrament Congregation together in 1953 and stayed together as an unbroken group all the way through to ordination and their 10th anniversary of priesthood.



Fr John Morton joined after serving in the war then working in local government in his native Albury. Once ordained he undertook various leadership roles in our Melbourne, Sydney, Bowral and Toowoomba communities. He also served as parish priest in Perth. Always with an eye for practical property matters, John was elected as Provincial Treasurer time and again for an extraordinary 19 years in office. These days he is in declining health and lives as a retired member of our Sydney community.



Fr Pat Negri entered the novitiate on finishing his secondary schooling in Sale. After ordination he went on to serve in Sydney, Melbourne, Bowral and Lower Plenty, especially in the fields of faith education and retreat ministry. He led the Australian Province for two terms as Provincial Superior from 1972-78. In 1984 he travelled to Berkeley, California, to pursue higher studies which saw him eventually gain a doctorate in art and theology. On return he lectured at Yarra Theological Union while also flourishing as an artist. He currently serves as Provincial Treasurer. Characteristically he will celebrate his jubilee with an art exhibition in the St Francis' Pastoral Centre in Melbourne.

Heavenly blessings on both!

Writings of St Peter Julian Eymard

Jesus, The Good Shepherd, Model for Eymard as Priest-Religious

1—Presentation of the theme

Pastor, after the example of Christ who gives his life for those he loves, Eymard, in his pastoral commitments, tries to practice that great compassion for the true needs of men and respond to them. His ministry as a priest and religious of the Blessed Sacrament is an eloquent witness to this: a rich, creative, and generous apostolate through which he finds ways to concretize God's mercy again and again in new situations.

This image also inspires him in his preaching, wherein he tries to create an atmosphere of trust in this God who comes to our rescue when we are lost. And those men and women who were looking for a companion guide and spiritual father found in him the incarnation of the warm welcome, typical of the Good Shepherd. He recommended this attitude to his religious as a model for all pastoral activity.

2—Texts of Eymard

February 28, 1836 Sermons on the motivations for conversion founded on trust (OC IX, 452)

Now when this good shepherd notices that one of his sheep is missing and starts calling for it, and he notices that his voice is recognized, that the lost one now obeys and runs to him, expressing his deep sorrow for having gone astray, and professing finally that he will never leave again... what an abundance of caresses and goodness would it not experience? That is the parable and you certainly understand it. You can see that it is about sinners, and the extreme goodness of our God in forgiving us.

1855 The "Jandel" Project of the Constitutions. Ch. III: "Concerning the Eucharistic ministry" (OC VII, 29)

3. In the very useful but very difficult ministry of the Sacrament of penance, the religious shall avoid the strictness that discourages and tends to despair, as well as the laxity that irritates and creates in souls a blind security. Like the good Shepherd, they shall receive the poor wandering sheep with great charity, and, like their divine Master, they shall have only a heart of mercy for sinners.

April 1840, Sermon on "The mercy of God", 2nd reflection (OC X, 165)

Is the love of this God-made-man satisfied with his very gentle calling? No. See how his good shepherd runs after the wandering sheep; it matters not the fatigue and effort he makes, providing he gets back this unfaithful sheep who is so dear to him [cf. Lc15,4-7]. Ah! He will feel amply rewarded for his trouble. In no way will it be through punishing treatment that he will bring it back to the sheepfold; he will even carry it on his shoulders in order to spare it the trouble of walking back.

YEAR OF EYMARD

The worldwide Blessed Sacrament Congregation began celebrating a **Year of Eymard** on **4 February, 2010**.

This will conclude with the bi-centenary of his birth on **4 February 2011**.



DIARY DATES ~ JULY 2010

Sundays: Year C

July 4th 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time
 July 11th 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time
 July 18th 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time
 July 25th 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

LITURGY

Memorials:

July 3 St Thomas
 July 15 St Bonaventure
 July 22 St Mary Magdalene
 July 26 St Joachim and St Ann
 July 29 St Martha
 July 31 St Ignatius of Loyola

Mass celebrated in INDONESIAN ~ *Misa Bahasa Indonesia* ~ with the CIC/SPJ Community on Saturdays, 3rd and 17th July at 2.15 pm.

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. Contact John Wong.

Mass celebrated in KOREAN every Sunday at 5.00 pm. Contact Esther Kim—0416 100 499.

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 - July 10th and 24th

For more information please email - holytrinity@catholic.org.au

The next gathering of The Associates of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation will be on Saturday 10th July, 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 on 1st Sunday—4th July at 1.30pm.

All members of the Filipino Community are warmly welcome.



Contact us:

Telephone:

Community Leader:

Reception & Community

Fr Joe Fernando SSS

(02) 9211 4100

Fax.: (02) 9270 6933

Street address: St Peter Julian's Church 641 George Street, Sydney NSW

Postal address: PO Box K 334, Haymarket NSW 1240 (Australia)

Website: www.stpeterjulianhaymarket.org.au