

# WATAC NEWS



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WOMEN AND THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH

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## WATAC Celebrates the Journey and wishes you Peace and Joy for Christmas

'Life is a journey' as we all know, but how we experience it, and what path and style our journey takes is unique to each of us. Maybe, Julia MacGuinn's poem touches on the truth and differences of this journey:

*Some travel in straight lines,  
Sitting in metal boxes, eyes ahead,  
Always mindful of their target,  
Moving in obedience  
to coloured lines and white lines.*

*Some people travel round in circles,  
Trudging in drudgery, eyes looking down,  
Knowing only too well  
their daily, unchanging round  
Moving in response to clock and habit,  
Journey never finished yet never begun.*

*I want to travel in patterns of God's making:  
Walking in wonder, gazing all around,  
Knowing my destiny, though not my destination,  
Moving to the rhythm of the surging of the Spirit,  
A journey which, when life ends,  
in Christ has just begun.*

'How We Travel' - Julia MacQuinn

With Christmas just a month away, the WATAC year is rushing to a close, and what a significant journey 2010 has been for us all. In this Newsletter you can read of many of the highs and lows in the WATAC journey during the months since August. It is always amazing to

look back and see how much we have achieved; none of it could happen without the 'hands-on' work of the wonderful WATAC Inc women and the various group members. Our combined WATAC thanks goes out to you all and especially to Helen Coles, our over-worked Administrative Officer who enables so much to be achieved!!!

How sad we were to say "Goodbye" to the beautiful Camille Paul who slipped away from us all in September this year. Camille was truly a person who lived 'life to the full' and in part of that living she envisioned the dream that became WATAC. Her life enriched the life of each of us. Thank you Camille.

In June, Rosemary Breen represented WATAC at the International WOW Conference which gathered in Paris. She has written for us of that experience, and we have also included a WOW Report of their presence in Rome at the closing of the 'Year of the Priest' celebrations.

As usual the Inter-Faith session for year 11 and 12 students was held at NSW Parliament House in November. In terms of the journey of life this event is always so very significant partly because of the wonderful women who speak their truth and share their life's journey of searching. Then there are the intelligent and honest young people who enter into dialogue with these women, uninhibited and enthusiastic. The Spirit is truly present in these special moments of WATAC life.

Carol Hogan, a Blessed Sacrament Sister who lives in Victoria, rang me earlier this year to let us know about the 'Cycle Against the Traffik' event and asked if WATAC in NSW could help

promote the ride and perhaps provide support along the route for the cyclists and their management group. You can read about the marvellous Milton-Ulladulla group and their response in extraordinary circumstances. 'Cycle Against the Traffik' was organised by a group who is committed to working to stop illegal human trafficking – children, women and men. The aim of the event was to raise awareness of this evil, and to raise funds to keep their campaign alive.

Two wonderful women who have long been very involved in WATAC and whose names you will no doubt recognise are Margaret Knowlden and Alma Madden. How great it is to have articles from each of them in this Newsletter. Both articles are fascinating, and I think they echo the poem of Julia MacGuin: "I want to travel in patterns of God's making: Walking in wonder, gazing all around, Knowing my destiny, though not my destination..."

My personal thanks to all of you who heard I wasn't well and sent me your care and support (postcards, letters, emails, phone calls and visits). Beautiful flowers coloured my world in hospital and at home. Thank you, thank you so much! I

am doing really well now due to lots of care and love. The journey moves on – Alleluia.

The WATAC Inc committee met last week for our last meeting for 2010. Lynette Allen, Jan Barnett, Janet Cain, Margaret Day, Chris Edwards, Kaye Hodge, Margaret Keyes, Alma Madden, Helen O'Brien, Bernice Moore and Judi Powe along with Helen Coles and Maureen Watterson. Our main discussion was the 2011 Conference which will be on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September. Put the dates in your diary; it promises to be an outstanding and unique event – hold your breath on this one! We're going to be 'Moving to the rhythm of the surging of the Spirit'!!! As we journey toward Christmas may we each find ourselves blessed with peace and joy.

*It is not over, this birthing. There are always newer skies into which God can throw stars. When we begin to think that we can predict the Advent of God that we can box the Christ in a stable in Bethlehem, that's just the time that God will be born in a place we can't imagine and won't believe. Those who wait for God watch with their hearts and not their eyes. Listening, always listening... for angel words."*

Ann Weems – Kneeling at Bethlehem

**Bernice Moore**

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## A Date for your Diary

The WATAC Conference will be held next year on Friday evening and Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The venue, as usual, will be Sydney Turf Club Conference Centre at the Canterbury Racecourse.

The WATAC Inc working committee has begun serious planning and will give you all the vital information in the next Newsletter, February 2011 but, put this date in your diary NOW!!!!

One exciting decision we have made was to invite Bishop Patricia Fresen to be our keynote speaker at our WATAC Inc Conference. Patricia is a South African woman who was a Dominican Sister who studied theology widely in Germany and America before deciding to be ordained a Catholic priest. Hers is an amazing story and it should generate enthusiastic dialogue, many questions and future thinking about 'Church' and Ministry of the Baptised in the Catholic Church.

# ‘Don’t even think about it’ just isn’t working any more

Joan Chittister osb

*National Catholic Reporter*

October 25, 2010

Change always happens one way or another. If it happens through the system, we call it evolution. If it happens despite the system, we call it revolution. The problem is that the spirit of revolution — that unguided burst of change so often triggered by frustration or despair — is in the air now, politically, economically and spiritually.

Almost half a century after the opening of the first session of the Second Vatican Council in October 1962, there is a new spirit in the church.

But the spirit that is rising in this church no longer pulses with the promise and energy of Vatican II. There is little sense of new possibilities now. The council’s mandate to welcome the fresh air of the Spirit has gone stale.

But not completely.

The echo of council documents still rings in those who have a living memory or an intuitive fear of what it was like to live in the shadow of the 16th-century Council of Trent. These are the people who experienced the clerical domination that shaped its definition, the medieval caste system that marked its identity, the authoritarianism that shaped its culture. These are the people who took Vatican II seriously. Its call to the laity “to make their needs known to their bishops” began to overflow into church renewal groups.

New life erupted everywhere.

For a while it looked as if things were really changing.

Laypeople took the kind of responsibility for the church that was reminiscent of early Christian communities: They became eucharistic ministers to the sick and elderly in the parish; they became hospital chaplains; they took responsibility for parish marriage courses and RCIA programs; they accepted positions on parish and diocesan

boards; they became credentialed church ministers in what had once been exclusively clerical preserves.

An electrifying spirit bubbled up and overflowed in the wake of Vatican II. Renewal groups since then have been intent on making the council documents real. It seems that the list will never end: The Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church seeks to make the priest-lay relationship plain. Call to Action seeks to bring laity, religious and clerics together to continue the discussion of renewal of the church. Corpus, an association of laicized priests, brings their willingness to minister to bear on the question of married priests. Future-Church, Women-Church Convergence and the Women’s Ordination Conference began to call for the expansion of the role of women in the church. New Ways Ministry and Dignity seek to bring the attention of the church to the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Catholics; Voice of the Faithful emerged to enlarge the model of authority in the church; and Priests for Equality and Elephants in the Living Room call for the enlargement of roles for both women and men in the church.

And that’s not the whole list of them.

Of special importance to the history of these groups is that all of them set out to function within the rubrics of the church.

But the church, it seems, chose not to take any of them as seriously as the groups themselves took renewal.

They simply closed discussion. Correction: They couldn’t close it. They simply refused to be part of it.

The problem with that approach is that the longer an organization — any organization — ignores major internal questions, the more the

pressure builds up within it. Like too much water against a dam for too long a time, the cement begins to crack. First, it's only little cracks, hardly noticeable. Then, if nothing happens, the cracks get larger. Finally, there are more cracks in the dam than the dam can withstand.

For years now, small intentional communities have begun to develop around pressing questions to form their own opinions on them. And brave individuals rose up across the years, plagued by conscience and committed to the Gospel, to speak the unspeakable, louder and more clearly every time. For instance:

- Maryknoll Fr. Roy Bourgeois, founder of School of the Americas Watch, which is one of the most effective groups in the country in the monitoring of the U.S. military's teaching of torture tactics, spoke out in favor of the ordination of women. The church that took years to expel pedophile priests put Bourgeois out of the priesthood in four months.
- Fr. Michael Tegeder, pastor of St. Edward Parish in Bloomington, Minn., spoke out against the recent Minneapolis-St. Paul archdiocesan DVD campaign against committed same-sex relationships. As a result, Communion was denied to a group of students wearing buttons and sashes to protest that campaign at Archbishop John Nienstedt's Mass at St. John's Abbey.
- Sr. Louvenagh Heffernan, an Irish Sister of Loreto, in the light of failing Mass attendance in Ireland and a shortage of priests there, spoke out in favor of the ordination of women.
- Jennifer Sleeman, a grandmother from Cork, Ireland, called "faithful women" to a one-day boycott of Sunday Mass to demonstrate to the

church the importance of women while it denies the Eucharist to many because of the lack of male vocations to a celibate clergy.

And all the while, the waters of frustration and despair bubble and stir:

- Charity Sr. Louise Lears was placed under interdict and refused sacraments for attending the ordination of two Roman Catholic Womenpriests in November 2007.
- Charity Sr. Louise Akers of Cincinnati was prevented from teaching or making any presentations in the archdiocese when she refused to publicly disassociate herself from the issue of women's ordination.

Women have begun to open their own seminaries and ordain their own priests. Priests for Equality published a non-sexist edition of the scriptures in the face of the Vatican's refusal to admit that God is speaking to all of us, not simply to men.

Even bishops from various parts of the world, and as a group in Asia, have called for the church to explore such questions in their own synods.

From where I stand, it looks as if "Don't even think about it" just isn't working anymore. It looks as if the dam is threatening to break. It looks as if Jesus is walking the road to Galilee again, raising women from the dead, curing the sick on the Sabbath, contesting with the scribes and Pharisees, calling for change so that the churchmen of that time would finally be true to the scriptures they teach.

It looks as if the church may have to choose whether it will foster evolution or risk revolution one more painfully unnecessary time.

Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister is a longtime contributor to *NCR*. Her Web column, *From Where I Stand*, is found on the *NCR* Web site: [NCRonline.org/blogs/from-where-i-stand](http://NCRonline.org/blogs/from-where-i-stand)

### **REMINDER FOR DVD RETURNS PLEASE**

A number of the DVD's 'A Well-Founded Fear' by Phil Glendenning which were distributed at & after the 2009 conference are yet to be returned. These DVDs are the property of SBS and are only on loan to WATAC.

If you have one please return as soon as possible to:  
Alma Madden, 83 Caldarra Avenue, Engadine 2233

# WATAC Celebrates the Life of Camille Paul

Bernice Moore and Elaine Lindsay

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2010, St Mary's Church, North Sydney was full of women and men from far and near. We had all gathered there on that day to celebrate, in the midst of our sadness, the wonderful life of an extraordinary woman – Camille Paul. Her life and love had touched our lives deeply – no doubt in different ways, but from whatever perspective, the connection was meaningful and precious to each of us individually and as a community.

I was part of that celebration of Camille's life because I had met her in the early eighties when WATAC was in the early days of its amazing history. Looking around the Church it was obvious that many of the women there shared that same experience. Camille has been key to the development of WATAC and was totally committed to its growth. We all owe her a great depth of gratitude for her vision, inclusive theology and undying energy. The name, WATAC, Women and the Australian Church, was part of Camille's thinking; the path it took, and the events we organised were part of her vision. Camille lives on in the life of WATAC.

Camille was invited in 1982 to be a member of a steering committee to explore a 'Project on Women' by the Religious Women and Men of Australia and the NSW Catholic Bishops. In her own words Camille wrote of the early experience of this committee: "In January 1983 Pauline Smith, Patricia Bartley and I met at my home all feeling a little overwhelmed by the size of the project. A month later, we met again – and at this meeting decided that the suggested title of the project 'Women's Ministry in the Church' was far too narrow. We had to reach out to women who possibly saw themselves as Catholic but ....

Outside the Church structure. I was aware of the many women who fitted into this category, and knew of the invaluable insights they could contribute to the project." And so WATAC was born with the support of Sr Mary Roynane SGS who guided and inspired this steering committee's journey.

Camille's story is well captured in Elaine Lindsay's eulogy "... the woman who is wise is to be praised." Not that words, however beautiful or eloquent, will ever capture the person that is Camille; they give us but a glimpse. The world is lessened by her absence but our lives are much richer for having been touched by hers.

Thank you Camille.

*Bernice Moore*



## Camille Agnes Becker Paul

**'... the woman who is wise is the one to be praised.'**

I come as a long-time friend of Camille to speak of her as a thinker, writer, activist, pioneer feminist theologian and social justice advocate.

Not that you could have predicted any of this, looking back at her early life.

Camille left school (St Declan's at Penshurst) after completing her Intermediate Certificate. She trained first as a physical education instructor with Graham Burrows, followed by secretarial training. No thought then of tertiary education.

And Camille's early religious formation could only be described as traditional .... as she

recalled in 2007, in the final edition of *Women-Church* journal:

As a schoolgirl and young woman I was a “good girl” who did the nine First Fridays (so that the Virgin Mary would collect me from Purgatory the first Sunday after my death and take me to Heaven) and I was in the Children of Mary, went to Confession each month and would never have dared to miss Sunday Mass. (95)

Camille was exposed to the wider world when she married Ken and they went travelling overseas, imbibing the finer points of architecture and town planning in South Africa, the UK, Scandinavia and Europe. In London she made good use of her secretarial training, working as a Dictaphone typist.

On returning to Australia, Camille and Ken joined the Family Apostolate, an association of the Grail, that movement of spirited women who work in the world to bring about spiritual, cultural and social change. The Pauls’ commitment to community activism started here, in their West Como parish, and, inspired by the Second Vatican Council, moved outwards.

But Camille’s life was not one of comfortable certainties. As she described it:

Life changed forever in 1972 with the drowning death of our 16-month old son Adrian and again in 1974 with the stillbirth of a daughter [Camilla]. These two events ... left me with ongoing and unresolved searching. (95)

It was this searching that prompted her to undertake study at the Institute of Counselling, where she made many life-long friends. Through her study at the Institute she gained admission to St Patrick’s Seminary at Manly, culminating in a Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology in 1982.

As you might imagine, she was something of a novelty to the male students – a full-time student who was not a religious but a wife and mother. In this she followed closely behind Jackie Wall, who was the first laywoman admitted to St Patrick’s.

Camille records how quiet, how passive she was in her first year there.....

But, as you might expect, knowing Camille, this wasn’t to last. Perhaps Neil Brown, with his Literature course in Moral Theology and his reference to feminist writers, should accept some responsibility for her growing outspokenness....

It was at St Patrick’s that Camille became interested in feminism and religion. The Library gave her access to writers like Phyllis Tribble, Mary Daly and Rosemary Radford Ruether and her lecturers challenged and stimulated her, something she relished.

In her final year, she was elected as Student Representative on the Board of Studies – a first for a female student. As one of her classmates confided to her, ‘We voted for you because we didn’t think any of the lecturers would argue with you’ (94).

Camille so enjoyed study that she went on to do a post-graduate course for Religious Education Coordinators at St Scholastica’s at Glebe. In 1984 she returned to St Patrick’s to do a Licentiate in Sacred Theology, based on books by the US feminist theologian and wild woman, Mary Daly.

Not content with two Gregorian (or Roman) Degrees, she enrolled at the University of Sydney, completing her PhD in 1993 with the thesis ‘On the Condition of the Working Women, or, Women and Social Justice’. This was published in 1999 as *Equal or Different? Women, the Papacy and Social Justice*. It’s a mark of the calibre of Camille’s scholarship that the eminent US feminist scholar and Benedictine nun, Joan Chittister, wrote the Foreword to the book.

*Equal or Different?* is testimony to the belief that lay at the core of Camille’s commitment to social justice, a belief in the full and equal personhood of both men and women, and recognition of their rights and dignity. (149)

Camille enjoyed study, but she also accepted the responsibility of sharing knowledge, teaching Fundamental Moral Theology at St Patrick’s Seminary; Feminism and Christian Ethics at the Catholic Institute of Sydney; Bio-Ethics to student nurses at North Sydney; and Feminist Theology for the Marist Fathers at Hunters Hill. And, of course, giving wise and witty papers at conferences and to women’s groups.

Camille was the consummate activist, recognising the power of women to achieve change when they work together in joyful cooperation.

Her most enduring memorial may well be Women and the Australian Church. It was she, Pauline Smith RSM, Patricia Bartley SJ and Mary Roynane SGS who virtually dreamt up WATAC in 1983 ... an organisation which gives a national voice to all women, and particularly those who see themselves as Catholic but, for one reason or another, have problems with officialdom within the Church.

It was at the first national WATAC conference in 1987 that the journal *Women-Church* was launched, edited by Erin White and Hilary Carey. Camille joined Erin as co-editor in 1989 and I succeeded Erin in 1993. Together, Camille and I edited *Woman-Church* until its final issue, number 40, in 2007. While the journal was an invaluable means of articulating Australian women's theologies, it was also an excuse for raucous AGMs at the Paul home - Camille would ensure business was despatched quickly so we could settle down to food, drink and general hilarity. The AGMs, needless to say, continued even though the journal ceased publication.

Camille was a tireless conference organiser - WATAC conferences, national feminist theology conferences ... . And she was an enthusiastic

committee member - a foundation member of the Australian Feminist Theological Foundation, a member of the WATAC Inc Working Group, a member of the Archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations, a member of the Catholic Moral Theology Association of Australia and New Zealand .... and so on.

In all this she had Ken's loving support - Ken, who would welcome the countless women's groups to their Mosman house and then slip away, an invisible but comforting presence.

Camille was a wise woman ... a welcoming woman ... a generous, free and feisty woman ... a fun-filled woman and an immensely practical woman who devoted her professional life to giving women the opportunity to explore and voice their faith.

She gathered us together and she cared for us.

As Elaine Wainwright, Head of the School of Theology at the University of Auckland wrote this week, Camille made an outstanding contribution to the women's theological movement in Australia.

We shall miss her mightily.

'... the woman who is wise is the one to be praised. May all value who she is, and may all applaud her integrity.'

*Elaine Lindsay*



# 33 years of a conventional mantra

On sexuality, the hierarchy has usurped the  
entire teaching office

Regina Schulte

Commentary - *National Catholic Reporter*  
15 October 2010

For more than three decades the Catholic Church has seen no progress in formulating a contemporary understanding of human sexuality, one that will provide principles for pastoral accommodation to new insights. If this were a board game, the church's piece would still be sitting on "Start."

Last month we witnessed a reoccurring event. This time two theologians at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., Todd A. Salzman and Michael G. Lawler, who have been attempting to bring lay insights into the subject of human sexuality, were sharply rebuked by the Committee on Doctrine of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for defending the moral legitimacy of homosexuality, contraception, premarital sex, and other hot-button issues in sexual ethics.

The Sept. 15 doctrine committee, in addressing the men's book, *The Sexual Person: Toward a Renewed Catholic Anthropology*, found serious error, saying the work could not be considered authentic Catholic teaching.

"The book proposes ways of living a Christian life that do not accord with the teaching of the church and the Christian tradition," according to the statement.

By rejecting the book as in opposition to "authentic" teaching, the bishops once again reeled this vital issue back to the 1966 papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. It was then that Pope Paul VI stunned the church by writing that allowing contraceptive practice as a moral choice for married couples would break with traditional church teaching.

By then the majority of laypeople had already concluded that artificial birth control was a necessity, and therefore a right for them and their families. The theological community (lay men and women among them by that time) felt that their role in serving the church community compelled them to dissent from *Humanae Vitae*. "Traditional" moral

teaching was woefully inadequate, many concluded, and imposing it with this unilateral decision was a misuse of papal authority.

Thus it was that the Catholic Theological Society of America commissioned a study of sexual morality to be undertaken by a committee chosen from their members. Theologians Anthony Kosnik, William Carroll, Agnes Cunningham, Ronald Modras and James Schulte took on the task. In 1977 they published *Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought*.

In a near instantaneous reaction that bordered on hysteria, it was condemned by the hierarchy, despite the fact that the Catholic Press Association that year gave the book its first-place award in the theological category.

The denouncing of *Human Sexuality* then and *The Sexual Person* now — 33 years later — indicates nothing has changed and that we are hearing the repetition of a conventional mantra: They are not in accord with traditional/authentic (i.e., hierarchical) church teaching.

In both cases, this judgment was delivered with neither prior dialogue with the authors or invitation to enter a dialogue. That both of these studies took the matter into territory dictated by contemporary need received no consideration. The grace experience of the laity, known as the *sensus fidelium*, remained outside the pale.

True, a nod to the person-centered natural law used in both studies can be found in a few church documents. Pope John Paul II nudged this forward. However, these concessions seem never to get translated into praxis. In the end, conclusions and rejections continue to revert to "authentic" teaching.

In both of these scholarly works, theologians found the seed for their thought in the 1965 document *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican Council. Article 51 states that the moral aspects of conjugal love and procreation derive from "the nature of the human person and his acts."

Society has since come to realize the many and deep complexities embedded in "the human person" and how sexuality engages our very "nature." New advances in science, biology, psychology, genetics and medical sciences are creating an accumulation of situations and possibilities not even dreamed of when the church's traditional sexual moral code was formulated. Consider surrogate motherhood; sex-change operations; in vitro fertilization; homosexual,

bisexual and transsexual orientations; the distinction between sex and gender, to name a few. Add the AIDS epidemic and cultural changes and it becomes obvious that the center (of hierarchical teaching) will not hold.

Among the issues needing to be addressed are cohabitation, physical expression of homosexual love, remarriage after divorce, gay marriage, and, yes, abortion. And then there is the elephant in the room: the growing and unsustainable overpopulation of our planet.

In neither *Human Sexuality* nor *The Sexual Person* did the authors consign traditional precepts to the trash bin. Rather, they recycled them into interpretations applicable to contemporary realities. Continuity implies growth and development; it does not mean sameness. For instance, the unitive and procreative ends of marriage remain operative, but their meanings have been broadened. "Natural law" for humankind has moved out of biology and into experience-fed reasoning that neglects none of the insights of the past.

Eternal, unchangeable laws built into creation, and thus mandated by God from on high, form the starting premise of the "deductive" approach from which past teaching was developed.

Marrying this "classicist" view to a "physicalist" one yields a static conclusion: Sexual morality is discerned from the compatibility of male to female genital anatomy and the automatic biological processes of the human reproductive system. Human participation in ongoing evolutionary change is not acknowledged.

The tenets of stoicism, Gnosticism, dualism and Platonism in the Greco-Roman environment of the early church contributed to the negative attitude toward sex that continues in the church's stringency regarding sexual activity. Sex was painted as unworthy at least, sinful at best. It was to be merely tolerated, but only for procreation and to alleviate concupiscence. To remain "pure" from it was a grace.

The inductive model, on the other hand, used in both *Human Sexuality* and *The Sexual Person* approaches sexual ethics from historical consciousness in analyzing human experience. Behavior protective of human values is judged by principles rather by immutable laws. This view of natural law recognizes that humans not only have a history, but that they create it – and are themselves changed in the process.

Logically, then, this person-centered version of sexual morality is in accord with the statement of *Gaudium et Spes*, because the nature of the human person is foundational to it. But human nature is ever-changing – both vertically and horizontally, and so our knowledge of it is also always in process.

Blessed John Henry Newman wrote: "To live is to change; to live long is to have changed often." Principles allow development and provide relevant guidance in the wake of change.

By the mid-20th century a new force emerged on the global scene: the liberating awakening of women. They found their voice and brought to the public's awareness a pivotal fact: Human experiences and conscious reflection on them are mediated through the sexuality/gender of the persons doing the communicating. The entirely male-run church had been operating bereft of feminine experience.

As did laymen, women infiltrated the theological enclave long open only to the clergy. They began adding their insights and expertise, based on experience, to the study of sexual morality. Today there are more lay theologians than clerics in the field, and a vast number of them are women bringing richer and more diverse experiences and insights.

Is it reasonable, then, to derive sexual guidelines only from the more limited experiences of males committed to lifetime celibacy?

Should final decisions regarding sexual morality for all persons be filtered only through such a single mindset and then imposed dictatorially on all members – men and women, married and single, homosexuals at all androgynal points on the spectrum?

It borders on the ridiculous to disallow contributions that the very people possessing the requisite wisdom born of experience can bring to the discussions.

Pope Paul VI rejected the consensus of lay members (only one woman was included) on his commission to study birth control. The 1977 Catholic Theological Society of America study had a broader representation: two priests, two married men, and a woman religious.

*The Sexual Person* is an offering from two married men, bringing moral insights from both their academic profession and their lived family experiences.

The roles of theologian and bishop in their complementary relationship are badly in need of re-examination and carefully nuanced distinctions.

It is apparent that the hierarchy has usurped the entire teaching office – the “magisterium” – for themselves; yet they are only one of three components endowed with this charism. Theologians and the wisdom born of experience in the “sense of the faithful” comprise the other two. It would seem, then, that appropriate exercise of their distinctive roles requires that bishops collaborate rather than compete.

Finally, theologians must constantly emphasize that their role is not catechesis. Theology’s mission is not that of mere communicator between hierarchy and laity. When denunciations such as that pronounced on this latest scholarly work by Salzman and Lawson cease to be standard operating procedure, then, and probably only then, will Catholic moral theology move forward, offering light and guidance to contemporary Catholics – and to society at large with whom it will undoubtedly resonate.

Regina Schulte is a theologian and the wife of the late James Schulte, co-author of *Human Sexuality*

## WATAC Supports the WOW Conference

**W**ATAC was gifted to have Paul Collins and his wife Marilyn Hatton present at our Annual Luncheon in Parliament House this year. Marilyn has been the Australian representative on the international organisation Women’s Ordination Worldwide (WOW) for some years and her recent contact with WATAC led her to invite us to send a representative to their most recent meeting in Paris.

Happily, Rosemary Breen was planning to be in England about the time of the meeting so she agreed to go on our behalf and she has written about her experience (see page11).

The WATAC Inc committee has agreed for WATAC to be in membership with WOW and to lend our support to them in their work.

WOW’s recent June meeting coincided with the formal closing of the ‘Year of the Priest’ and the Roman celebrations of it, so we are including this account of the WOW response to that:

### WOW at the Vatican

**W**hen they planned their massive celebration for themselves, we decided we had to be there to raise our voices for women and all those whom the Vatican excludes – married people, gays, lesbians, and many others. With our partners from around the world, Women’s Ordination Conference (WOC) convened a press conference and public demonstration that was covered by more than 2,000 international media outlets including CNN, CBS, ABC, Associated Press, BBC, and National Public Radio (NPR). In addition, local papers, feminist blogs, religious news outlets, and even morning television shows including *The View* reported on our actions.

Despite attempts to silence us – including the Italian police confiscating our passports, detaining us for hours at a time, and threatening us with jail time – our call for an inclusive priesthood was heard loud and clear. In the blazing Rome sun, we distributed thousands of flyers and ‘break the silence’ postcards to visitors in St Peter’s Square, including many priests, bishops, and cardinals. We raised public awareness around Rome and in Vatican City, by carrying our banner and wearing purple stoles. For the first time ever, WOC updated members with up-to-the-minute details about our actions via Facebook and Twitter.

While the Vatican promoted images of a solitary male priest, we showed the world women-led liturgies and community-led prayer. We organised and publicly celebrated a liturgy in Rome with Maria Vittoria Longhitano, the first womanpriest ordained in Italy, and other women’s ordination leaders – some ordained and others who claim their priesthood through Baptism. Gathered with us on the altar was Italy’s first lesbian, gay, transgendered and bisexual choir.

As Catholics around the world read, day after day, about yet another scandal perpetrated by the male hierarchy and its culture of secrecy, WOC is demonstrating another way of being Church and living social justice. With your support, we are showing the world a church that is welcoming.

# Rosemary Breen Reports on WOW Conference in Paris

I went to the WOW Conference in Paris in early June 2010. The WATAC Inc committee had asked me to attend on behalf of WATAC.

A small group of WOW members had gone to Rome for the final Mass to mark the end of the Year of the Priest. At the end of the Mass, they bravely unfurled their banner 'Ordain Women Now' and were promptly escorted out by the police. Actually, being arrested is often quite a good move because the media got hold of the story and it was on a bout 2,000 media outlets throughout the world.

Although I would support any woman who felt she had a vocation to priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church and although I know there is nothing theologically or scripturally against the ordination of women, I have never felt inclined to push it in the present climate. It always seemed that women priests would simply be part of the 'Boys Club' and that it was ministry itself which should be discussed.

In the event, I discovered that I knew some of the participants and that my reservations were accepted cheerfully because not all delegates wanted to arrive at ordination in the same way. It was such an open atmosphere, that all felt able to speak freely - for some, ordination had already happened, I nearly fell off my chair when I found out I was sitting next to an ordained bishop (hers is a story which needs telling!) and that across the room, was an ordained priest in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Others in the group wanted to wait until women were accepted for ordination in the more orthodox manner with the blessing of the Church and they too, were busy keeping the lines of communication open.

To say I learned a great deal would be an understatement. I met these amazing women who have the courage to step out in faith (it reminded me of those women who risked their reputations in their efforts to get women the vote - it seems most of the same arguments were used then!) They had original ideas and were willing to put them into practice. For example, during the recent Papal visit to England I believe one group got advertisements on the sides of London buses in and around Westminster proclaiming 'Benedict, Ordain Women Now'.

The whole exercise certainly opened my eyes to what women are doing in different parts of the world. It also reminded me that, like it or not, we are members of the Roman Catholic Church (not the Australian Catholic Church as some would dream of!) because one of the delegates was Ukrainian and from another Catholic Rite. I hadn't really given that particular point much thought before then.

It was a learning experience and I was grateful for the opportunity to attend the Paris meeting. On my return to England and staying with an Anglican bishop and his family, he said smilingly, "Ro, I would ordain you tomorrow if you were interested." Alas I'm not, but would it were so easy for our Catholic women in the Roman Catholic Church.

\* \* \* \*

*Regular readers of the Sydney Morning Herald will be well used to seeing Rosemary Breen's name in print on the Letters page - this is her latest offering from 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2010.*

## When the church's no didn't mean no

Some years ago I was with an ecumenical group visiting a Catholic AIDS centre in South Africa. The manager gave an introductory talk and the inevitable question came up: "What do you do about condoms to help prevent HIV?" We were told that the Catholic Church forbade the use of condoms, full stop.

Later, as we went round the AIDS centre, I noticed a large condom dispenser on a shelf. I asked discreetly about this apparent anomaly. "Sometimes in practice," I was told, "we have to choose life over death."

Perhaps the latest papal pronouncement will do away with the hypocrisy that many Catholics are forced to live with because of rules that defy commonsense and which, in the most part, are ignored ("Vatican makes first concession on condom use", November 22).

It is also encouraging for those who choose to remain in the Catholic Church yet continue to challenge some of its unjust rulings and those arbitrary decisions made without consultation with the laity. It seems that after years of lobbying for change in a certain ruling, suddenly the Vatican changes its position and says, "As we have always taught ..." hoping that lay folk have short memories.

**Rosemary Breen Inverell**

# The Church Needs People Who Speak the Truth

**F**ather Greg Reynolds, 57, parish priest of Western Port in the archdiocese of Melbourne, delivered a homily in his three parish churches, saying it was God's will for the church to have women priests and that, by refusing them, the church was obstructing the work of the Holy Spirit.

So none of his congregation would feel the need to report him, he sent his homily to Archbishop Hart.

"I am convinced in my heart that it is God's will that we should have women priests ... I feel prompted by the Holy Spirit to share my position publicly, and yet very reluctantly," he said in his sermon.

"I believe certain women are being called by God to the ministerial priesthood, and our official church is obstructing the work of the Holy Spirit. I feel I can no longer sit back and remain silent."

Father Reynolds has since had amicable discussions with Auxiliary Bishop Tim Costelloe, and also with the archbishop himself, who warned the priest that if he went public the archbishop would be forced to dismiss him.

Father Reynolds said many Catholics agreed with him, including priests, and that he is a loyal Catholic who believed in loyal dissent: "the church needs people who speak the truth".

Archbishop Hart said yesterday that Pope John Paul II had stated with his authority that the Catholic Church did not have the power to ordain women priests. "That's the church's position, and that's my position."

Fr Reynolds feels guilt for burdening his already overworked brother priests and the archbishop. "He's got the toughest church job in the country, and I'll be creating another little headache for him. But generally I feel at peace and right about what I am doing."

*Cath News 19<sup>th</sup> November 2010*

The full story can be viewed on The Age newspaper website. This news has made its way across the globe to be reported in the US on the National catholic reporter website and amongst the Latest News on The Tablet's website.

## TIME TO ACT NOW!!!

**T**he WATAC Inc Committee was very touched by Greg Reynolds courage and we agreed that it would be great if we could indicate to him our 100% support of his courageous stand in speaking out on this key justice issue. Why not write/email NOW:

Fr Greg Reynolds, PO Box 76,  
Hastings Vic 3915  
or email [immacul@bigpond.net.au](mailto:immacul@bigpond.net.au)  
Immaculate Conception Parish  
Ph: 03 5979 4374

*"No journey carries one far unless, as it extends into the world  
around us, it goes an equal distance into the world within"*

Lillian Smith

# More in common than not Student Inter-Faith Dialogue

9<sup>th</sup> November 2010 - NSW Parliament House

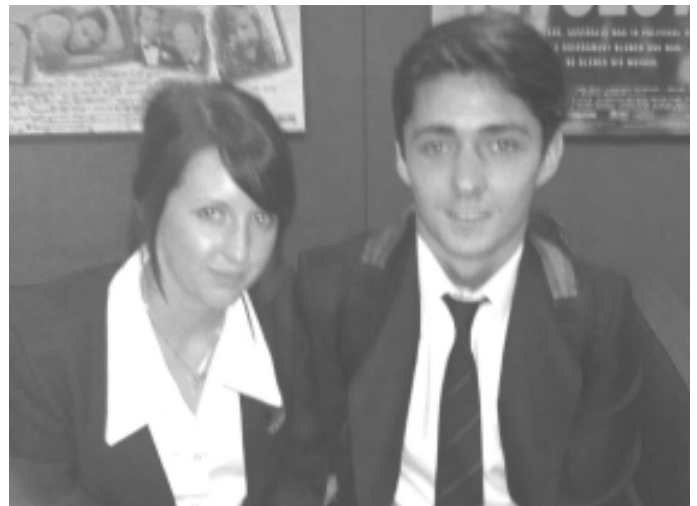
Yet again the WATAC Interfaith Dialogue for senior students proved an inspiring event. On 9<sup>th</sup> November more than 120 students with teachers came to NSW Parliament House for the Interfaith Dialogue on Women, Religion and Peace. It was great to have students and teachers from Mount Carmel High School, St Joseph's East Gosford, St Vincent's College Potts Point, Stella Maris College Woolwich, Kincoppal Rose Bay, St Peter's Tuggerah, Monte Sant' Angelo North Sydney, Mount St Joseph Milperra, Bethany College Hurstville, St Scholastica's Glebe, St Ursula's College Kingsgrove and St Leo's Wahroonga.

Over the last eight years we have been hosted at Parliament House for the Interfaith Dialogues and our WATAC Luncheons by Marie Andrews, the member for Gosford. Just days before our event Marie announced she would not be standing for re-election in March. We are very grateful to Marie for her support of WATAC and wish her well in her retirement. Marie and her staff have always been very gracious, generous and helpful in their assistance. On 9<sup>th</sup> November Marie welcomed us again and spoke briefly to the students before we got underway.

Margaret Day, from the WATAC working group facilitated the proceedings and started by outlining some of the things we hoped to achieve in making the day informative, as well as relevant to the students curriculum before inviting our speakers, from each of the three Abrahamic traditions, Tamkin Ansari, Rabbi Jacki Ninio and Sr Jan Barnett to share their understanding and knowledge with us.

Tamkin Ansari is a young Muslim woman born in Afghanistan. As a child her parents fled with their family in fear of their lives spending time in India waiting to be accepted as refugees in Australia. Tamkin arrived to live on the Northern beaches of Sydney and to this day has no birth certificate. She described this 'Women, Religion and Peace' as a 'dynamic topic' explaining that the word Islam itself comes from Salaam which means peace, a state to aim towards living in accordance with God's law, thus for each of us it will be different. She talked about the true meaning of Jihad, an internal struggle for inner peace which one must first attain between oneself and God. Tamkin also introduced us to the Muslim concept of neighbour being not just those who live in the house next door but rather one's neighbour is all the houses 40 doors to the left and 40 doors to the right, 40 doors to the front and 40 doors to the back of where one resides. She gave us some quotes from the Sacred texts - 'Let there be no compulsion in Religion' and 'Tell my servants to speak verily of those of other religions' and told us of Aisha who was a wife of the Prophet and played a very significant role in jurisprudence and Rabia Basri a woman who was a slave whose master overheard her praying that if she were free she would spend her days and nights in prayer and he decided to free her and instead serve her. Rabia was the first in the Muslim religion to introduce worship for the love of God alone.

Jacki Ninio became the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian born female Rabbi when she was ordained in 1998. She is a Progressive Jew and Rabbi at Temple Emmanuel and is interested in the interpretation of Jewish texts and



liturgy. Peace is one of the most common words in the Torah and one of God's names, hence the greeting Shalom Aleychem – may God be with you. We heard from Jacki how in Judaism peace is a 'meta value' that goes over everything else, such as with the three pillars – Truth, Justice, Peace – it is peace that over rides all including truth and justice. She spoke of peace being about a wholeness and completeness for self and relationships with others: 'one must do all to build peace in your relationships with yourself and others'. Jacki said the Jewish concept of neighbour went further than 40 doors away in all direction, in Judaism 'my neighbour' encompasses everyone and there is a looking forward to a time when we will have inner peace and peace in communities and our world. Jacki finished by leaving us with this blessing:

*Oseh Shalom bimromav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu ve al kol Yisrael ve al kol yoshvei tevel veimru amen*

*May the One who makes peace in the heavens bring peace to us, all Israel and all the world Amen.*

Sr Jan Barnett reminded us of the challenge set by the United Nations in 2000 – the Decade to Overcome Violence and told us that the students from St John's in Nowra had set up a Facebook page to promote peace. She talked about groups such as Pax Christi, the international Christian Peace movement. Jan told a stories of people who took courageous decisions to choose peace instead of hatred.

Jan referred students to documents released by the Australian Catholic Bishops and other Christian Churches at the end of the Decade to Overcome Violence. Jan, a proud Josephite finished with Mary Mackillop's words, 'Keep your mind in peace'.



#### Joseph's story

Joseph lived in the Sudan. One day the militia arrived in his village, pack-raped his mother in front of her husband and children, then killed her husband in front of his children. 15 years old at the time Joseph was filled with hatred and wanted revenge, but his brother, only two years older, reminded him, "We are Christians, we must love our enemy".

#### Azim Kamisa's story

Azim Kamisa's 20-year-old son, Tariq, was shot dead, while delivering pizza, by a 14-year-old boy, Tony, as part of a gang initiation. As a Sufi Muslim Azim kept 40 days of prayer and mourning for his son and on the 40<sup>th</sup> day knew there were victims at both ends of the gun. He chose to forgive his son's killer and embrace his family. Azim started a not for profit foundation dedicated to ending youth violence. Since that time Azim and Ples, Tony's grandfather, have traveled together across America and the world to spread their message of non-violent resolution.

## QUESTIONS:

As is always the case at these student events it is when the students themselves join the dialogue that a unique energy fills the space. The questions from students to our speakers were nothing short of fantastic – this is just a sample.

- “What do you see as the challenge of peace in Religions that are so patriarchal?”
- “Culture is going against women, how can religion stand strong and firm so females and males are treated equally?”
- “How does each of your religions define peace?”
- “Since you come from Abrahamic faith traditions do you feel you have the same God?”
- “How do you find the balance between traditional interpretations and your more liberal values and mainstream focus?”
- “How do your faith communities deal with discrimination?”
- “A common argument from atheists such as Richard Dawkins is that one’s origin impacts on one’s own faith preference – do you think about that for yourself?”
- “How do we put peace on the agenda today?”

Listening to the thoughtful questions of these 16 and 17 year-old students reminds us that if these young people are the shapers of our future church we can look forward with great hope. And hearing the erudite voices of our three faith-filled women speakers reminds us yet again that, between our faith traditions, there is more we have in common than not.

*Helen Coles and Margaret Day*

## Some student responses to the symposium:

On 9 November, five Year 11 girls and Mr Nolan attended the WATAC (Women and the Australian Church) symposium at Parliament House. We had the opportunity of listening to and learning from three women from three different religious traditions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Together we learnt about peace in religion and how the three religious traditions shared similarities in their views and approaches to peace – inner and global. It was a chance for interactive dialogue between speakers and students which will aid us in our Studies of Religion course. It was a truly enriching experience.

*Lucy Carter, Margaret Prince, Tamara Adzic,  
Georgia Watson and Ana Eksouzian  
Bethany College*

On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> of November a group of year Elevens and Ms Parker ventured to Parliament House to hear three women of three different faiths discuss the role of peace and women in their religion. This was WATAC’s (Women and the Australian Church) ‘Women, Religion and Peace Symposium’, an example of interfaith dialogue which is taking place in Australia. This aims to bridge the gap between different religions and increase people’s understandings of the unique beliefs held by different people.

We listened to three different religious women – a Muslim, a Rabbi and a nun – talk about their faiths. They each discussed how peace is explored and achieved through their different religious world-views, which culminated in a resounding message that to be at peace with oneself or others, one must first be at peace with God. Their talks highlighted the underlying similarities shared by these faiths, which allow us to build connections and promote interfaith dialogue. We had previously learned about the Semitic faiths in our preliminary course, however it was enlightening to hear adherents of these traditions underline their inherent similarities. This also enhanced our understanding of interfaith dialogue – our current topic in HSC Studies of Religion.

After these talks the audience was given an opportunity to ask questions to the panel of speakers. This allowed us to pose questions to all faiths and receive individual responses which showed both the differences and similarities in each religion. When asked about the patriarchal and hierarchical tendencies of their religions – the response was unanimous – it was merely a product of culture and history, not an actual tenet of the religion. Each speaker outlined the vital roles women have played in the formation, establishment and continuance of their religion. Another question progressed into a debate about the fine line between tradition and progress. This gave us the opportunity to witness how these faiths function as dynamic, living religions, especially in the context of a believer’s life.

It was an inspiring and invaluable excursion, in which we learnt about three distinctive, yet similar religions and the role they play in the wider world. No doubt it will be extremely beneficial to our Studies of Religion courses. I am sure all of the girls who attended gained much from the experience.

A big thank-you to Ms Parker for taking us!

*Jen McGrath and Ellen Walsh  
Year 11 Students  
St Vincent’s College, Potts Point*

# Spirituality and Radicalism of the Elders

Alma Madden

Alma Madden is a long-time WATAC member who belongs to the Engadine WATAC group. She has been vitally involved and engaged with her Church, parish and community for as long as she has lived in Engadine. WATAC meetings are often held at Alma's welcoming home. The following talk is what she wrote and then spoke at Spirituality in the Pub on 17<sup>th</sup> August at the United Services Club, Sutherland. The responses and questions from the floor that night were very enthusiastic and almost unending. Alma agreed to let us share with all WATAC-ers what being part of WATAC means to her.

I was born pre-Vatican II. I was educated in Catholic schools. Some of you will remember the green catechism 'Who made the World?' 'God made the world' 'Who is God' and so on. We knew the questions – we knew the answers. We went to Mass on Sundays, confession on Saturday, especially before Children of Mary, Holy Name and Sacred Heart Sundays. We received the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion (no ribbons on your hair) hands joined and you would not dare turn your head, as you waited solemnly to receive Jesus.

As you grew up you joined the appropriate sodality. However only boys could become altar servers. I well remember being taunted by my brothers, "Ha, ha, you are only a girl, you can't serve on the altar." How my blood boiled "Why not?" Perhaps the seeds of bigger questions were sown then. Most of us toed the line. What Sister said, what Father said was the whole truth.

A vocation to the priesthood or sisterhood was keenly promoted and many a young boy and girl was persuaded to take this step, generally to the delight of his or her family. It was a badge of honour for a family if any of your children entered religious life. Our family of six children did not produce any religious and I did feel we had let the side down.

Most of those who did not 'enter' married – 'a fellow catholic please' – 'mixed marriages' were frowned upon and could not be celebrated in the church but only in the sacristy and there are many who express their resentment of this to this day. Membership of the Catholic Youth Organisation helped us to keep on the 'straight and narrow' and resulted in many stable marriages.

If the tenor of my remarks sounds somewhat derogatory – let me hasten to say I do not regret those days. Perhaps it gave us discipline and a basis for belief. Our Sisters were very caring and worked

hard to educate us. Our priests took their vocation seriously and tried their best to show us the way to heaven, even though the Mission priests could be a bit heavy on the devil and hell.

They were very different times, but changes were coming and we had no idea how far they would go.

In those days our spiritual beliefs were given to us, we were taught what to think, our spirituality, our 'inner life', was not our own. God was a mysterious and powerful spirit who was always watching us and waiting to judge. Our relationship with God was not close. We were taught in the green catechism that God is everywhere but we could not see him, but did we grasp that he was a loving and benevolent spirit, that God was in us as we were in God?

My understanding of a close relationship with God, I believe, has come about through my membership of Women and the Australian Church (WATAC), of which I will say more later. In those times we concluded that God was in the church building, that we should not pass the church without a visit and if you were a female you must cover your head, even with a handkerchief would do. Mass was celebrated in Latin and the priest had his back to the people who often said their rosary instead of trying to follow the Mass.

So we meandered on for many years – and then something WONDERFUL happened – we had a new Pope, he was John XXIII, who determined to 'open the doors and windows of the church to let in some fresh air' and announced Vatican II in 1959, less than three months after his election.

After some years of preparation the Council was formally summoned on 25 December 1961. It was the largest gathering of any council in church history with 2100 to over 2300 attending. One of

the first issues considered by the council, and welcomed by the laity was the greater participation of the laity. The mass was to be celebrated in vernacular languages and the priest faced the congregation. The clergy and laity were to make the study of scripture a central part of their lives. The role of all the bishops of the church was brought into prominence, this meant that collegiality was to be an essential part of the functioning of the church.

Vatican II said, as successors of the apostles, the Bishops must be part of teaching and governing the Church, with the Pope as its head. This was a wondrous time, we, the people, became participants rather than spectators. From these changes we had a new appreciation of church and we all benefited spiritually immediately.

The 'spirit of Vatican II' is about the teachings and intentions of Vatican II, in other words the 'spirit' is more than literally the 'letter' of the council. As the bishop of Hong Kong said recently, "We are guided by the spirit of Vatican II. Only dialogue and negotiation can solve conflicts."

*Gaudium et Spes* - which is one of the four constitutions proclaimed by Vatican II is the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World - states 'authentic freedom is an exceptional sign of the divine image within the human person. The dignity of human beings demands that they act according to a knowing and free choice. Such a choice is personally motivated and prompted from within. It does not result from blind internal impulse or from mere external pressure. Let it be recognised that all the faithful, clerical and lay, possess a lawful freedom of inquiry and of thought and the freedom to express their minds humbly and courageously about those matters in which they enjoy competence.'

This progression, 'green catechism' to 'freedom of conscience', I accepted wholeheartedly and gratefully - at last, faith by conviction, not by rote and rules. For me to be a Catholic now means to believe what one, in conscience, accepts one can be a Catholic, born into the 'culture', but it is essential to be personally committed and informed.

We have witnessed the works of theologians who were active in the council or who closely adhered to the council's aspect of reform, such as Hans Kung, being criticised as espousing a belief system that is radical and misguided but on the whole the changes were welcomed by a majority of the laity, priests and bishops. There have always been a small and vociferous minority who objected and their voices are sadly increasingly being listened

to by a determined and powerful clique in the Roman Curial hierarchical church.

One change which did not eventuate in the institutional church was practical recognition of the gifts of women. Maybe this is a hangover from the thirteenth century when Thomas Aquinas is quoted as saying, "Woman is an occasional and incomplete being - a misbegotten male. It is unchangeable that woman is destined to live under man's influence and has no authority from her Lord".

Women are still not part of the institutional church's decision making structure. When researching for this talk I was struck by how little has significantly changed regarding women in the church in the last 20 - 30 years. Despite the rhetoric about women being valued and listened to.

Society has changed to some extent but not the church. However a great benefit for women has been WATAC, which started in the early 1980's, a movement of women and men committed to total inclusivity and equality in the church and society. The women religious of NSW dreamt it and determined that its goal would be:

A change in the understanding of the role of women in their participation in the Australian church and in society.

Its aim is - consciousness raising of women on Christian feminist issues.

In NSW WATAC organises small local groups, produces a quarterly newsletter and organises seminars, workshops and conferences. It is involved in providing speakers to schools and adult groups and in education at all levels and has a Website.

This leads us to the spirituality of elders and the radicalism of age and I would add 'wisdom'. I have given an outline of our church in former times, as one elder remembers it, but what is the future?

We follow Jesus. He was a radical, he took direct action. He did not hesitate when he saw a need and the authorities killed him for it. He left us his teachings and a way of life. How seriously has our church translated his words and actions, do we really 'love god and love our neighbour as our self' in our everyday life?

What has the church institutional hierarchy done to raise the status of women in the church? Women are more than 50% of the laity and this is 2010. Women continue to serve our church in every capacity they can but are denied the right to serve in decision-making positions, which they are called to by their baptism.

As a woman, observing women in the church I have always had a sense of something missing, not in my own spirituality but in how our church represents Jesus, his teachings and his acceptance of women as equals. The laws of the church – Canon law, male made – are never greater than love says Joan Chittister who says ‘be intent on pursuing the values of life, not simply its rules.’

Recent developments in the church indicate an attempt to wind back the reforms of Vatican II. We are facing a new translation of the mass – which is actually more ‘old’ than ‘new’, it has been imposed with little consultation of bishops, priests or laity. Paul Collins has written a booklet “And Also With You” setting out the proposed changes and their implications, WATAC has sent copies of this booklet, together with a response sheet, to every parish priest in Australia and we have had a number of very interesting replies, indicating that many priests are very unhappy with the translation and its imposition on us all. A summary of these responses is being sent, without any identification of the respondents, to the priests and bishops of Australia.

Our spirituality is our inner life. It is between God and ourselves. We know what is right in our hearts and it is our duty to speak out against what we believe is not right. We support our church loyally and in the spirit of Vatican II call on our hierarchy to enter into full consultation with our bishops, priests and the laity regarding significant changes in our church practice.

We, the people, are the church, defined as such by Vatican II, the highest teaching authority of the church. We are radical elders – exploring the roots of our church. The spirit of the Lord, I feel, is here with us who **ARE** the church and with WATAC members.

In conclusion, let me share with you a very challenging reflection written in 1954 by Lillian Smith –

“A century from now, what shall be said of our journey in these times? And who shall the shapers have been? Who shall have shaped the future more? The hopeful dreamers who were strong enough to suffer for the dream? Or the fearful pessimists who were convinced that dreaming and hope are for sleepers only, not for those awake to the age? A century from now, shall hope and humour have been strong enough to enable living with unanswerable questions, or shall the pain that a transitional age necessarily brings have caused a retreat to old answers that no longer acknowledge new questions? A century from now we shall have indeed journeyed – backward or forward. Direction can no longer be given by circumstance; real journeyers know that the direction is always chosen by those who make the journey. Who shall choose the direction? So the question is still the same...a century from now what shall be said of our human journey in these times...and who shall the shapers have been?

From ‘The Journey’ 1954



From *Women-Church 6, Autumn 1990*  
© Graham English

# What a legacy!

## Margaret Knowlden

(née Boase)

**N**ews that the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem was to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary may not have been noteworthy for most people. But it held a particular significance for my family: My father, Arthur Boase, was Warden of this hospital over the time of its construction and opening in 1960, and my mother, Alice, has written of their experiences. Published under the title *We Reach the Promised Land*, she gives a very graphic account of their time from 1956-1969 in this fascinating part of the world. Together with her fortnightly letters to me, I always felt part of their life and their surroundings although, as the third eldest of their family of ten, I did not actually experience this side of their lives. By that time I was married with my own family, living first in England and then migrating to Australia. My three youngest brothers, on the other hand, were at boarding school in England and spent many school holidays in Jerusalem. It was not until November 1966 that my youngest son, Kevin, and I visited my parents in Jerusalem. It was an amazing experience. Jerusalem at the time was a divided city, with the hospital firmly in Jordan. With its mainly Palestine population in typical Arab dress and a prevalence of donkeys as beasts of burden, it felt like stepping back into biblical times. Kevin was particularly taken by the donkeys! It was heart-warming to see how much the local people respected St John's work and anyone connected to the hospital. My father's indefatigable reputation earned him the sobriquet (in Arabic) of 'Father of Eyes'. What a legacy for our family!

Six months after my visit, the infamous 'Six Day War' took place in 1967 when Israel annexed the whole of Jerusalem into its territory, including the St John Hospital. Initially my parents did not even know if they had a future since Israel already had a good eye department in its own hospital. However, it soon transpired that, whilst the Israelis were keen to take over the land, they were not that interested in taking on its mainly impoverished Arab population and were happy to leave them to St John. The hospital has continued to service the poorest and the most needy ever since.

When it was suggested that our parents should be represented at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, my two brothers seemed the obvious choice but only Charles, the youngest, was able to go. For myself, though I had an overwhelming yearning to be with him, the idea was initially dismissed as I felt that I had to be near my husband (now in a nursing home). So when I finally accepted that he is being well cared for and that I should go, it was a last-minute dash to secure the last possible seat on a plane to get me to Tel Aviv in time for the festivities.

Immediately remarkable today – after my earlier visit in 1966 – was the omni-presence of black-hatted and black-suited Jewish men. I had arrived on some holy day and they were all rushing along to do whatever they do on these occasions. Arab dress and the donkeys, which had so gladdened a two-year-old's heart, have now virtually disappeared from the city. So too have the craftsmen (copper and tinsmiths, leather-workers and jewellers) whose intricate creations had so fascinated my mother: Also gone are the colourful hand-embroidered dresses worn by the peasants which gave a walk through the crowded streets a special ambience. Is that progress? However, feminism doesn't seem to have had much impact – all shops and cafés in the Old City are owned and run by men, even for ladies' underwear! Religions still dominate: Muslims are called to prayer; Jews chant from the direction of the Wailing Wall; Christian pilgrims re-enact the 'Way of the Cross'; clerics from rival orthodoxies vie with each other for supremacy in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; and the Angelus drowns out a tour-leader's spiel.

Charles and I stayed at the Lutheran Guesthouse. Situated in the Old City it was the temporary headquarters of the St John Eye Hospital from 1948 to 1960. My mother described it as 'rambling accommodation with uneven stone stairways' and a 'charming garden – almost unique in the Old City – which commanded such a fascinating view of that very interesting locality'. This was where my father worked. Charles says the building has been considerably improved since those early days and he thinks that what had been the operating theatre



is now the bright, airy breakfast room. I found it immensely satisfying to picture my father being delivered each day by the hospital driver to the Jaffa Gate and then wending his way on foot, down a series of steps through the Old City, turn right into St Marks 'street', up a steep flight and then a short walk to his place of work. My heart went out to his patients, many of whom would have been blind, fumbling their way along the same path.

It was here that we were visited by a long-time hospital supporter, Manuel Helou, who worked in administration during the early 60's under our father. He has since become a good email friend and a fount of information on the Holy Land and the early days of the hospital as well as a fan of my mother's book. He also kindly booked my accommodation, so it was wonderful to meet him in person.

As we were included in the hospital celebrations, we made our way by taxi to Sheik Jarrah district on the Thursday evening, 30 September, in time to stroll around the hospital premises before joining staff, Board Members and other St John dignitaries for a delightful barbecue dinner under the stars. We were very touched by the warm reception we received, especially from a few people who knew our parents or had heard of their reputation. The present CEO Rod Bull, the Hospitaller John Talbot, and the Grand Prior of the Order Anthony Mellows were most welcoming. Many other supporters of the Hospital from overseas were also present, including one from New Zealand. To Charles' delight a long-time staff member and great friend of our family's, Nazar Bannayan, was there. We were shown an impressive PowerPoint history of the hospital and were included in the historic group photograph.

The hospital itself wears its age well and is still a very imposing building, with the light sandstone gleaming in the hot sun and beautifully landscaped gardens providing an oasis of greenery and flowers for those many patients who live in the dreariness of refugee camps and general conditions of poverty. The attractive house built for the Warden where our parents lived could only be viewed from the back. It is now leased to the European Common Market, providing welcome income for the hospital, and the present CEO (even the title Warden is no longer used) has more modest quarters.

On Friday Charles and I visited the Holocaust Museum outside Jerusalem – an emotional display

and a very sobering experience and testimony to the very depths of depravity to which mankind can sink.

Then on the Saturday we joined with the other visitors for presentations on the work being done by St John to combat eye diseases in this part of the world. Compared with the Israeli population where incidence rates are low, the Arab population are still beset with a multiplicity of eyes diseases: cataracts form the main part of the cases and there are also other causes associated with diabetes, trachoma, etc. including the entrenched prevalence of first cousins marrying which contributes to a large number of the complaints. St John has now extended its outreach programs with hospitals in the Gaza Strip and north of Jerusalem, as well as sending out mobile clinics to less accessible areas.

Next on the agenda was a Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving for 50 years service of the St John Eye Hospital at the Cathedral Church of St George the Martyr. It was an imposing Anglican ceremony with the male dignitaries stalwartly wearing their black cloaks with the large white Maltese Cross, showing their earlier links to the Knights. (Made of wool with some synthetic, I was told that the cloaks were extremely hot on an already very warm day!) The investitures and presentation of awards and cups were a demonstration of how much St John values long-time commitment from supporters and high standards of excellence in all its staff.

The reception area had been recently revamped to bring the hospital up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and was accordingly 'opened' with due ceremony. The secretary showed us the CEO's office where our father's photograph on the wall heads the gallery of office-holders who followed him. Then we moved to the last stage of the program – a cocktail party in the 'cloisters'. Around the walls were displayed a photographic record of the hospital's work and we were also presented with a photo album showing our father at work. Many people told me how much they have enjoyed reading *We Reach the Promised Land* and my father is also fondly remembered for wooden toys he had made during his spare-time hobby of woodworking. One former Warden told me that he had learned so much from my father, and his wife recalled the sewing circle my mother organised to keep the hospital linen in serviceable order. Marianne Bannayan (Nazar's wife) later wrote to me:



"The Boases have left a bright legacy in the Hospital of St. John, they are remembered with admiration and nostalgia for these were the 'good old days'. Your mother was the best hostess the Hospital has ever seen. She would always have a small party to introduce every newcomer from abroad to the local people and their mentality. This created a bonding, very necessary to achieve cooperation and a 'family' atmosphere. As for Dr. Boase, besides his brilliant medical knowledge, personally I still treasure a doll's crib he made for my children and which has survived intact down to my grandchildren and beyond."

One particularly happy bonus to my visit was being able to connect up with Charles. I was fifteen when he was born, just before sitting for my School Certificate exams. Our paths have moved in different directions and continents with only occasional encounters, mainly at family gatherings. This was his first return to Jerusalem since 1968 but he still knew his way around and I found his local knowledge very helpful. He was also most solicitous as to my welfare and kindly offered his arm to this ageing sister who found the many Old City steps without handrails somewhat alarming! Thank you, Charles.

Was it worth going? Well perhaps I could have done without the grilling by Israeli staff on entry - 'Why are you coming to Israel? Who did your

packing? Did anyone ask you to bring a gift? Are you carrying any firearms?' I could have done without a cheating taxi-driver and persistently annoying traders swarming like blowflies. But on the plus side, I was able to reconnect with my parents' lives, to bask in their reflected glory and to enjoy a sense of intense pride in the reputation for which they are still remembered. I feel privileged to belong to their special family. It is a very satisfying legacy!

PS: We have since received an email from David Paton who was a visiting American fellow at St John's in the early sixties. He went on to be one of the top American ophthalmologists - like his father before him:

Your parents were wonderfully kind to me and my wife and son, always. I learned a huge amount from your quiet, very skilful and always well-mannered father whose eye surgery was absolutely first class and rapidly done, without waste of a single movement. He was inordinately modest, had a fine sense of humour and in general was the perfect person to serve as the hospital's warden.

Alice Boase: *We Reach the Promised Land* available from [knowlden@optusnet.com.au](mailto:knowlden@optusnet.com.au)

## Watac Says: "Thank You Margaret Knowlden"

Depending on how long you have been part of WATAC and reading the Newsletter, the name of Margaret Knowlden will be very familiar to you because she has been an enthusiastic, and actively involved, WATAC-er since 1986.

Margaret is involved in the final production of the Newsletter and also often writes interesting articles to be included. It's really hard to believe that one person can contribute so much on our behalf, especially when you know just how committed she is to so many other groups. Her generosity is amazing.

She is also the organiser of a WATAC group which meets at her home regularly and over the years has always begun with a wonderful meal with her husband, Eric, acting as very supportive and attentive 'butler'. It is always a good experience.

The WATAC Inc working group has for years been enriched by Margaret's presence and minute-taking ability. Because Eric isn't well she has resigned from the WATAC Inc Committee this year and we all now miss her greatly - which is why we want to say "Thank you so very, very much Margaret for so much."

# Aung San Suu Kyi is Now Free!

*Her words were like raindrops at the  
beginning of monsoon season*

When I heard the speech of Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma for the first time during the pro-democracy uprising in 1988, like most of my fellow countrymen my heart was filled with joy and expectation for a better future. Her words were like raindrops at the beginning of the monsoon season, promising regeneration and an end to the soul-destroying hot season that was military rule in Burma, *writes Pascal Khoo Thwe.*

At the same time, we feared that she would be targeted by military leaders who have been ruling the country since 1962 when power was seized from a civilian government. As feared, the junta did everything it could to undermine her influence in the country and destroy her status as the national leader, including an assassination attempt in 2003, which led to her latest detention.

More than 20 years later, when she was released for the third time last Saturday, it is still exciting to hear her conciliatory words, even if from far-away Oslo where we are covering her release on radio and television. The generals hate her because she knows how to lead people whereas they only know how to give orders.

Despite all the injustices she has suffered over the years, Suu Kyi still talks about forgiveness, reconciliation and cooperation. Watching her address the crowd in Rangoon on Sunday was like witnessing someone who has returned from the grave. There are not many world leaders who have been imprisoned so many times and yet can excite the public every time they are released. Moreover, in a country where fear rules, the fearless voice of a mother figure is more powerful than the sound of thousands of flying bullets.

What the people of Burma urgently want now is the commencement of serious dialogue between the ruling junta and her party, the National League for Democracy, and its pro-democracy allies. The sooner it happens the better, as they would be able to establish a stable platform of trust where bigger problems could be solved. As Suu Kyi said in a recent

interview, the country could not be improved by one person or one party, but all parties with the support of the public.

For us Burmese 'political' exiles, it has been unsafe for years to return to our beloved country safely. Now that the military has 'won' the elections, we might have to wait another 20 years for our homecoming. But I hope and pray that it could be sooner than that.

The Tablet 20 November 2010

Pascal Khoo Thwe is author of *'From the Land of Green Ghosts: a Burmese odyssey'*. He also works for Oslo-based Democratic Voice of Burma.

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The following joy-filled letter was sent by a friend to a WATAC member the day Ang San Suu Kyi was allowed to be free. Though it was necessary to eliminate any identifying references we thought you would like to share the joy.

Myanmar

Nov 13<sup>th</sup> 2010

Dear Friends,

There are certain experiences in life which simply cannot be contained. Tonight's release of 'the lady' from house arrest is one of them. Being part of the crowd, standing outside her house with such an excited crowd of people and seeing her emerge from the darkness was an unforgettable experience. This was a night to celebrate the super abundant resilience and bravery of the human spirit. Tonight, 'the lady' emerged as the people's lighthouse, spreading a beacon of hope everywhere.

Today is a magnificent day and I am just so excited. It is now 8.30pm as I sit here having returned from 54 University Ave. I have just seen Aung San Suu Kyi as she appeared outside her house after she was released. She looked radiant, just so happy and thrilled with the crowds that came to welcome her. I am so delighted to have been one among that vast, ecstatic crowd who came to let her know that she was not forgotten and that her huge sacrifice for the Myanmar people is remembered and appreciated. Today is a great historic occasion and

I feel humbled to have been one drop in that ocean of love that surrounded her tonight.

There has been tension as well as expectation in the air these past few days but particularly during the past 48 hours. There were high expectations and hopes that she would be released yesterday. D, a Burmese student who lives with us went down to University Ave twice last night. The police were not particularly friendly and they had the area cordoned off and were limiting the number of people allowed in. D was one of the unlucky ones on both occasions and she came home bitterly disappointed.

I have been glued to BBC radio to catch any nugget of information in relation to her release. Our house is on a road parallel to Aung San Suu Kyi's house and is just a 20-25 minute walk from it. BBC is often very difficult to receive and sometimes it is just snatches of it that are clear. Throughout today, there were repeated reports which said large crowds were gathered outside her house on University Avenue and also at the NLD Headquarters in Shergondine Rd. I tuned in so many times today. At 4.30pm the bulletin was the same. Then came the 5.30pm bulleting and there was static but I could distinctly hear a more excited air. I could barely make out that there was some movement in University Ave, the crowd was hyper and then the news reader suddenly said that she was due to appear any minute. It was also announced that the police appeared to have taken away the road barricade.

I could sense my eyes filling with tears. I felt overcome by the announcement and there was a very strong sense within me that I simply had to go down to the house irrespective of the fact that I had previously decided not to go because it could create difficulties for the renewal of my visa. At that moment, what was uppermost was to be there to welcome this extremely brave, courageous woman from 20 years of captivity and house arrest. I rushed downstairs and called for S who was about to have her evening shower. I told her the news and asked her was she interested in going to University Ave. She immediately replied yes and within two minutes we were on our way half running down the road but also trying to convey the impression that we weren't going anywhere in particular!! At the end of our road we got a taxi and asked to go to Fuji

House, a Japanese Coffee House next door to the US Embassy and a 5-minute walk from 'The Lady's' house. There were police around but they kept a discreet distance from the people and were not in the slightest intimidating. In fact, they appeared friendly. In no time we were with a massive crowd standing in front of her house, and without realizing it, we were actually right in front of the podium specially erected for the occasion. It was impossible not to be caught up in the sheer delight of the occasion. There was excited talk and raw, unrestrained, explosive delirious excitement. I turned to a westerner and asked had 'the lady' already come out. In very broken English he replied that she appeared quickly, had just gone back into the house but would be coming out again. Within five minutes she appeared, poised and graceful, as we have come to know her through the media. There was no mistaking the sheer radiance she exuded. She beamed from right to left, raised her hands, waved to the crowd acknowledging not just their presence but also their love and their willingness to be seen and be counted on this occasion. She tried to address the crowd on a few occasions but her voice was drowned out by the welcome they gave her. Normally, her name is uttered in muted, hushed tones amid furtive nervous glances but here tonight it was shouted from the rooftops! Tonight, they did not want her words, or her reassurance. Tonight, they were there to welcome and reassure her.

After about 15 minutes of cheering and waving, she returned to her house. As she did, there was an announcement that tomorrow at 12.00 midday, she would address the people in front of the NLD Headquarters on Shwegondine Road. The crowd were ecstatic again and slowly they left University Avenue and quietly walked home while others crowded into trucks, taxis and buses. A few people thanked us for coming and for being there with them. All seemed content, and happy to know that 'the lady' was free at last.

I am so glad I was there. I know many of you would have loved to stand where I was standing tonight – I was there on your behalf and you stood there with me in spirit. I greeted her on behalf of you all!

With love

# Relationships create church, not loyalty to the institution

Jamie L Manson

*National Catholic Reporter* 26 August 2010

**T**hey disagree with the Roman Catholic Church's stances on women, ordination, contraception, and gays and lesbians, but still, they remain faithful to their individual Roman Catholic parishes.

It's an interesting phenomenon – and surely not new one. But as the institutional church becomes more and more reactionary in its teachings on these issues and the faithful in the U.S. become increasingly more liberal on these issues the connection that Catholics feel to their parish community becomes ever more intriguing.

In my last essay, *'New norms are much more than a PR disaster'*, I called into question whether Catholics are staying within the institution out of love of their parish or fear of leaving the Catholic Church. In a church that is so virulently anti-women what does a woman have to lose in leaving the institution?

I received a helpful response to this question from a friend with whom I used to serve on the board of the Women's Ordination Conference.

She wrote: 'What do I have to lose? Relationships. Twenty-six years of sharing joys of childbirth, carrying the sorrows of death of parents, and now the beginnings of the loss of spouses. Relationships that simply could not continue in any practical way with the hundreds of people that I developed over all of these years.'

My friend speaks profoundly to the eucharistic spirituality of community that – perhaps more than any other aspect of being Catholic – keeps Catholics going to church.

In his book *Sacramental Theology* Franciscan Fr. Kenan Osborne writes, 'Jesus, the Church tells us, is present in the gathering of the community, in the proclamation of the word, and in the banquet of bread and wine. Beyond this we must find the Lord not only in the table of the Eucharist, but in the table of the world around us. If we do not see Jesus in

this table of the world, we will really not find Jesus in the table of the Eucharist.'

As human beings, we are intrinsically relational and communal. Since it is only in relationship to others that we grow in our humanity, it makes sense that we undergo our greatest spiritual growth in community as well. In Tom Roberts' most recent article from his 'Emerging Church' series, Richard Rohr quotes Karl Rahner as saying, 'the mind's deepest need is not for answers, but for communion.' Though church-going Catholics may be not be finding helpful answers to their deepest ethical and theological questions from the institutional church, they seem to still find meaning from their parish community.

The Catholic theological tradition upholds the importance of finding the sacred – the living Jesus – within finite creation. One of the reasons I still keep calling myself Catholic is that the theological tradition has never espoused the Evangelical notion of Jesus as *'my own personal Lord and Savior'*, or the notion that there is a relationship between prosperity and faithfulness to the Gospel. Rather, Catholics encounter Jesus in the world – especially within the human community – and the more broken, marginalized, and desolate the human situation, the more powerful the presence of the crucified Christ.

Once while serving at a Catholic parish, I offered a talk to the eucharistic ministers on presence. I was struck by how much more powerfully the parishioners spoke about giving Communion to one another than about the priest's praying over the elements. In the course of our conversation it became clear that their deepest connection with God came in two experiences: in the moment of looking into the eyes of the communicant and in the meal that they would share with members of the congregation *after Mass*. (The parish was in New York City, so, true to the culture portrayed in *Sex and the City*,

most folks headed to brunch after the 11:30 a.m. liturgy!)

Though the Mass is the event that draws parishioners together, the sacrament is given its fullness of life through the presence that the people offer one another as they nurture each other through community. The holiness of the sacrament emerges out of the seeming ordinariness of their interaction with one another. They are finding Jesus, the sacrament of God, in the table of the world around them. In addition to being Eucharist for one another, they also walk together through the rites of passage – birth, sickness, sorrow, death – that are also marked by the church in its sacraments.

Do lay people realize that they have this much sacramental power?

What really gives a parish its sacred power is its human community. So whether or not parishioners like their priests or agree with the teachings of the institution, they'll stay for the sacraments that they receive through one another. And they'll stay for the sacrament that they are to the world outside of the community – especially for the sick, the lonely, and the poor.

But does this eucharistic spirituality extend to those who have chosen to find church outside of the walls of the institution? With the revelations about the ever-expanding scope of the sex abuse crisis and the harsh teachings on women's ordination, I know several people who simply cannot attend a Roman Catholic parish without believing that they are participating in an oppressive, harmful system. Sadly, not all of these people have been treated with kindness and compassion by fellow parishioners who remain in the parish. Feelings of disappointment, abandonment, and even betrayal seem to arise on both the sides of the 'leaver' and the 'left behind.'

Where is the spiritual presence to these individuals who are choosing to participate in the emerging Church outside of the institution? Where, furthermore, is the presence to those young people who never found a home within the Roman Catholic institution, but are no less thirsty for a community to be present to their rites of passage and spiritual longings?

Even if one is lucky enough to find a spiritual home within a Catholic parish, no Catholic should remain complacent as long as children of God are being turned away and spiritually harmed by the church in which they continually participate.

'The Church,' Osborne writes, 'as the mirror of Jesus, realizes its own spiritual depth, only when these same aspects of the Gospel are made actual in the ecclesial life generation of Christians after generation.' It is this experience of eucharistic life that must be shared not only among parishioners, but also with those who have been marginalized by the church and with those who are seeking the emerging church outside of the parish. And as importantly it must be shared with young people (whether or not they attend church) because they will benefit greatly from the uniquely Catholic belief in finding God in the ordinary and the profane. If Catholics are to maintain their own spiritual depth they must deepen and broaden the experience of eucharistic life for the generations to come.

If in our words and our work we are mirroring the teachings of the Gospel, then we are all still in church together – longing for communion, looking for the sacred, hungry for meaning. It is this ability to see the presence of Jesus not only in the eucharistic table, but also in the table of the world that makes us Catholic. And Catholic sacramental theology teaches us that, if we take seriously Jesus' teaching about the kin(g)dom of God, it is impossible to delineate where the church begins and where it ends – if it ends at all.

**Jamie Manson** received her Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School where she studied Catholic theology, personal commitments and sexual ethics with Mercy Sr. Margaret Farley. A writer based in New York, she is the former editor in chief of the Yale magazine *Reflections*. As a lay minister she has worked extensively with New York City's homeless and poor populations. She is a member of the national board of the Women's Ordination Conference.

# Looking to the Future in Broken Bay

## Bishop David Walker

How good it was to be present at the WATAC meeting on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2010 at Margaret Knowlden's home in St Ives when Bishop David Walker joined us for lunch followed by on-going enthusiastic discussion. Margaret organised this wonderful meeting and Bishop Walker's letter to his diocese of Broken Bay provided a great basis for the opening of our discussion. Do read his letter below and so think about the implications of his thinking regarding the future of the Church in our individual dioceses.

My message today is an important one. It will have significant influence on the pastoral care within the Diocese and on those who exercise it. To understand my message, it will be necessary to reflect back on where we have come from, and where we are now. When I came to the Diocese, I made a judgement that we were short of priests, and that the shortage would be more apparent as time went by. As it stands today, we have less than twenty, active, incardinated priests within the Diocese. Not all are Parish Priests, but those who are not may not want to be Parish Priests, or may not be able to take on that role for other reasons. Therefore we do not have enough incardinated priests to staff the twenty-six parishes in the Diocese. This situation will not improve in the near future.

We may have two ordinations over the next year, but that will not change the situation substantially. In that time our ageing clergy could be diminished through illness or retirement. The number of our incardinated priests will go down before they go up. This, of course, puts pressure on our incardinated priests, and I am grateful for the way they have ministered under these conditions.

I anticipate that it would take over twenty years before our incardinated priests could be responsible for most of the parishes in the Diocese. When you consider the dearth of vocations, the fact that the formation takes seven years, and that young priests would need experience to take leadership roles, that would be a very conservative estimate.

In an attempt to alleviate the shortage, I took the decision to introduce overseas priests into the Diocese. Over the past twelve years, some dioceses and many religious congregations from overseas have sent their priests to help us in the pastoral care of the faithful of the Broken Bay. I acknowledge our gratitude to them, and to the individual priests who have made personal sacrifices to minister here with us. In terms of numbers, one could not say we are now short of priests. Indeed we have more priests now than when I came to the Diocese.

However, this has not completely resolved our dilemma. We have enough priests to have two in every parish, but what we lack is enough priests to exercise the role of leadership in the parish: to be Parish Priests.

Our incardinated priests do not have the numbers; they are doing what they can. Our overseas priests often cannot do it because they do not have sufficient grasp of our language and our culture. Of course they may be able to do it in the future. However, most of them are here for a set term, and by the time they have sufficient experience it could be time for them to return to their homelands. What to do?

The Church offers us an option that can be taken up in this situation. It is to have the faithful share more in the pastoral care of the parish, to the extent of doing all the things that the Parish Priest might do, except, of course, those that require the sacrament of Orders. The Church surrounds such a member of the faithful with supports. There would be a priest to supervise and support the person, and there would be priests to exercise priestly ministry in the parish. However, the designated layperson would be the principal provider of pastoral care in the parish. In our Diocese, the supervising priest would not necessarily live in the parish. However, there would be priests appointed to the parish who would live in the presbytery and exercise their ministry in collaboration with the designated member of the faithful.

This may seem to be a revolutionary thing, but it is a practice that is widespread throughout the universal Church, especially in western countries. It is even present in our own Australian Church. I am mentioning it now because it could soon begin to unfold in our Diocese. More information will be forthcoming. I ask you to be open to these changes, because I believe they will enhance the pastoral care of the Diocese rather than taking away from it. I ask you to pray that the Spirit of the Lord will guide us in this endeavour. □

# The ticking bomb of lay involvement

Joan Chittister osb

*National Catholic Reporter*  
November 18, 2010

Ticking time bombs are among the world's most dangerous weapons. Most of them are too small to see at first glance. Most of them are easy to make. You can plant a number of them at one time. They can do a great deal of damage, however small. We discovered that to our peril when convoy after convoy in Iraq was ambushed and destroyed, not by a well-groomed, well-trained army with weapon systems as big as ours but by collections of nails in wired tin cans planted by children or detonated by lone insurgents. We spent years being frustrated in the fields of Cambodia, too, unable to see the landmines in front of us, unable to neutralize them before they exploded. No doubt about it: small things can create huge craters in a society.

Now we are dealing with another kind of time bomb. This one is in the church. Few noticed when this one was planted either. Few people saw the power in it. In the revised Code of Canon Law that followed Vatican II, someone planted what, at that time, read like a welcome invitation – an openness to participation by the laity in the organizational development of the church.

Little was made of the statement and little expected to come from it. Canon 212 gave laity “the right and the responsibility” to make known to their pastors their needs. It was a bell waiting to be rung. In fact the bell went off in my mail a couple of weeks ago. As I understand the situation, the local pastor of a parish in Santa Fe, NM, gave an enthusiastic homily on the importance to the church of a recent ordination in the diocese. Then he ended his remarks by reporting to the congregation his own advice to the newly-ordained. “I told him to remember that his duty was to serve God,” the pastor said, “not the people.”

That's when Canon 212 exploded in the head and heart of Robert and Lynn Lawton Jones. They went home and wrote a letter to the pastor in which they defined their own top 10 suggestions for newly-ordained priests. I thought it might be interesting for the rest of the church if I simply listed them here in bold with what I think might be a popular interpretation of the needs they are meant to address in normal type:

These long-time faithful parishioners suggest that a new priest:

1. Reread annually a summary of the second Vatican Council reforms. What they need apparently is someone who will implement the Council, not resist it.
2. Commit yourself to interfaith bridge-building. These Catholics who long ago struggled through the Catholic-Protestant divide have no desire to see us substitute another one for it in this new century. Living in a world that is more cosmopolitan than ethnic, they want the church to reach out to their neighbors who are now Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, and Muslim.
3. Be open to a changing position of the church on gays and women. The kind of openness that Jesus showed to women and to those outside the social norms of Judaism is a hallmark of the Christian life and must be modeled by the church if the church itself is to be authentic.
4. Learn more in the first four years of your priesthood than you did in the recent [seminary trainings]. The message is clear: the parish has as much to teach a new priest as the seminary ever did.
5. Prepare your homilies with one hand on the Bible and the other on (with) the daily newspaper. The church does not exist in a world of its own. The gospel must be good news to the church in every age.
6. Work with people rather than imposing a top-down strategy. The church may not be a democracy, but it was never meant to be a monarchy either. Listening to the needs of the laity can only give new energy to the church.
7. Respect the role of the laity in an evolving Church. The church does not belong to the clergy. It belongs to all of us together. The priest is meant to be a shepherd, a brother, a leader – not a potentate. The laity are meant to take their responsibility for the community, as well, and must be seen as equals in the ministry, not servants.
8. Build upon personal spirituality by a growing concern for social justice. To live the gospel we must do more than meditate on it; we must practice it.
9. Store your seminary notes in an inaccessible place. Remember that parish life is about more than theory, theology, and “the rules”. Like Jesus, be among us, listen to us, enable us all to go on together.
10. Remember that an unquestioning “company man” in all professions, even the priesthood, sacrifices creative energy. There are times when the needs of people transcend any particular rule. Let your Archbishop know what's really going on in the church – whether he wants to know about it or not – so we can all grow together. And, whatever you do, think carefully about who you are so you can understand who the people are. (Matt 23: 4-12)

*continued ...*

## Seminarians: attention.

The list is not only an impressive one but it is a realistic one. In fact, I realized as I read it that it describes a great number of the great priests among us who have held the church together this last 50 years – in a time of major transition – by both enabling its growth and revering its traditions in new and creative ways. It says clearly to the newly-ordained: “We don’t need to have you go back; we need to have you go on.”

It’s hard to know whether or not today’s seminarians are listening to those needs but, one thing is for sure, Canon 212 is working. Correction: ticking. It’s pretty clear that a lot of this kind of discussion goes on. The laity are no longer passive observers of church rules, church liturgy, or church administration. They see themselves as carriers of the faith as well as consumers of the faith. They know that baptism is every bit as important as

ordination. The number of lay people who, after Vatican II and at their own expense, got degrees in theology, liturgy, Scripture and canon law – and wrote letters like this one to their pastors – are clear evidence of their commitment to the church. They are not signs of arrogance. Or rebellion. Or infidelity. They are signs of deep-down, total and life-long commitment. From where I stand, it seems, in the light of material like this, that we may need some new conversations together. These ideas deserve to be shared and aired and discussed. After all, if the church ignores it, the laity, I’m sure, will not.

After all, Canon 212 is theirs and they, it appears, are taking it seriously. Tick, tick, tick...

Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister is a long-time contributor to NCR. Her Web column, “From Where I Stand”, is found on the NCR Web site:  
[NCRonline.org/blogs/from-where-i-stand](http://NCRonline.org/blogs/from-where-i-stand).

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## The Cycle Against the Traffik Journey

3<sup>rd</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2010

**I**n August, Carolyn Merry contacted WATAC through Carol Hogan, Victorian WATAC-er, to ask us to assist with accommodation along the route for the Cycle Against the Traffik Team (riders and support crew) on their tour, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September along the Princes Highway between Sydney and Melbourne.

This September tour was a huge success. Its aim was to raise awareness about slavery and human trafficking among people living in towns between Sydney and Melbourne along the Princes Highway (1,038km) and thousands of people got involved. At many of the towns along the route a cycle rider would give a presentation to a school and or religious community group addressing the issue of modern day slavery and human trafficking.

WATAC was invited to ‘get involved’ by offering accommodation and support to the team of riders

and their support staff. Because there is a very active WATAC group in the Milton-Ulladulla area we asked them to consider what was possible for them. Their response was very generous and positive, accommodation and meals were arranged enthusiastically. Another WATAC-er contacted a friend along the route who also offered help. The dates of their involvement were to be between 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> September. Four WATAC-ers put their heads together and planned meals, beds and welcoming activities. The Ulladulla Anglican Church organised a youth service on Sunday evening, 5<sup>th</sup> September .... All looked good!!!! Until Mother nature took charge!

No-one bargained on the weather changing so dramatically on the night of 4<sup>th</sup> September or for the disaster that was life on the morning of Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> September when the Milton-Ulladulla residents woke up to Fathers Day!

Do enjoy Kath Prendergast’s hour-by-hour record of the extraordinary events of the day when the ‘Cycle Against the Traffik’ team arrived in Ulladulla and how the WATAC welcoming programme turned up-side-down and inside-out in spite of their very best efforts: As Kath sums it up ‘a very unusual day’.

## FATHERS DAY 2010

**5am.** Startled. A steam train is outside my window. No, that's impossible in Ulladulla. Banging, crashing, my roof shudders with thuds of branches. No light, no street lights. The only thing to do is go back to bed, burrow under the covers and pretend it isn't happening.

**7.30am.** I am startled by the phone. Fran ringing to enquire after me and what about the bike riders? We are due to host four members of the Cycle Against the Traffic team. Will they cancel? No one could ride today!

**8.30am.** Ring Carolyn Merry, coordinator of the ride. They are fine, not sure what they are going to do. I try to convey what is happening locally, noise, wind-gale force, no power, no coffee.

**9am.** No let up, the wind swirling, no one out. No power, no radio, no news. Luckily I had an old phone hooked up as an extra, beside the silent computer.

**11am.** The wind eases, I walk outside to discover two fallen trees, each about 10 meters. One, across my backyard, the other resting on a back fence post and leaning right over my neighbour's roof. I join the 680 people in Ulladulla who ring the SES.

**12md.** Carolyn rings to let me know they have arrived at Ulladulla harbour. They drove in the support vehicle as riding was certainly an OH&S issue. On the way they helped move a tree that was cut up by a chain saw. I am embarrassed to let her know that, at that time no one is free to meet them. I had been asked to remain by the phone. Luckily there is one place open for coffee, then they were going to repack the trailer.

**3pm.** More phone conversations. Two of the host households are still without power. When this was conveyed to Carolyn she kindly offered to cook tea on their camping gear. All we could do was laugh, imagining us all around the BBQ acting as a wind-break.

**5pm.** We finally greet our visitors at the Anglican Church where the Cyclists are to speak to the gathering at a Youth Service. This a compelling picture of poverty and child exploitation. A very worthwhile presentation.

**7.30pm.** Up to McDonalds in Ulladulla, to put the fourth team member on the bus to travel overnight to Melbourne.

**8.30pm.** We travel in convoy to Fran's who was expecting us at 7pm., to find her concerned about her burnt offerings. She had cooked chicken in the dark, on a new BBQ. It was not her finest achievement. However seven of us sat down to a magnificent meal, conversation stopped dead as we indulged.

**9pm.** I learnt that there was widespread damage, power still out in many areas and of great concern was Shoalhaven water supply, with 6 of 8 pumps in the area out of action. Showering, washing, and dishwashing was to be kept to a minimum.

**10pm.** Jo, a visitor from England for the bike ride, took off for Kings Point, where a night without electricity was the state of play. Carolyn and Peter stayed with Fran. Ann and I drove through deserted streets - there were very few street lights, and large trees lay everywhere. An eerie drive home at the end of a very unusual day!

*Ann Troup, Helen Gaffey, Fran Topp with Kath Prendergast*

**T**he Cycle Against the Traffic Team summed up their experience in the following words:

"The Princes Hwy was strewn with fallen trees, roofs, fallen road signs, power lines and other debris. At one point we stopped to help other motorists clear a large fallen tree that was blocking the road...the people in Ulladulla (and apparently also Bateman's Bay) were without power and had emerged from their homes after the winds intermittently dropped late in the morning to assess the damage to their homes, fences, trees and town.

"We made a presentation at the Ulladulla Anglican Church which faces the harbour and which had sustained some minor storm damage itself. We were made very welcome and had a good response and feedback afterwards from those present.

"One thing that is also becoming more and more evident as we go along on this ride is the wonderful generosity of people we hadn't previously known who have welcomed us, hosted us, fed us and taken us under their wings. We were blown away (pardon the pun) again tonight by the warm hospitality and care of Ann, Kath, Helen and Fran, four amazing women who took in and fed three strangers whilst still dealing with storm damage, power outages and other reduced services with such good humour and grace."

Congratulations to the Milton-Ulladulla WATAC group -  
what an amazing moment *in the journey of life!*

# Group Reports

## South Brisbane

This year our South Brisbane Group started re-meeting again bi-monthly at various members' houses. We've covered a lot of topics, had some great discussion, some tears and lots of laughs.

For the last few years we have always held a shared Advent lunch at my home, and on Nov 27<sup>th</sup> we came together for a reflection and wonderful lunch. We used an illustration of a butterfly to consider the year passing and the year ahead as we began a new liturgical year. Thoughts and colours (some symbolic) were added to the butterfly and the myriad of reflections shared was wondrous and beautiful!

Here are some thoughts members of the Group recorded on the day...

- A fun and comfortable place to share my spirituality without the pressure of the 'Church Traditions' and expectations. A place of growth and friendship.
- An opportunity to share love, laughter, spirit and friendship amongst an amazing group of intelligent and beautiful women. I so look forward to 2011.
- WATAC is the only time I can sit down with friends and talk about my faith, beliefs and spirituality without being judged or ridiculed. A time and a place to look forward to!
- The community of Christian women celebrating the start of Advent with fellowship is the most blessed way to spend a Saturday.
- WATAC mean friendship and faith sharing. I have had the opportunity to host a meeting which was a humbling experience and so growing.
- I was having second thoughts about coming today-moving house, family pressures, tiredness etc etc. I'm so glad I came! The meeting and gathering together has given me new strength, a fresh aspect of life and an increased gratitude for the support of my WATAC sisters.

I look forward to more of the same in 2011 for our South Brisbane Group!!

PS Our meeting dates for next year are:

5<sup>th</sup> March, 2pm

14<sup>th</sup> May, 2pm

9<sup>th</sup> July, 2pm

10<sup>th</sup> September. 2pm

5<sup>th</sup> November, 2pm

3<sup>rd</sup> December. 11.30am Advent Lunch

*Therese Flynn-Clarke*

## Glebe

Our last meeting for the year ended with a shared Christmas meal, wine, and delightful chat covering the year's activities. It was good to have Bernice with us and to hear her personal stories of 'how it was'. We all came to the conclusion that, though the position of women in the Catholic Church remains far removed from what one would expect of an institution with Christ at the centre, there has been 'some' change for the better. At least women are no longer afraid to speak up, even if, like children in a past age, they are not listened to!! There is a long way to go, and we hang in with hope.

We briefly canvassed ideas for 2011 and decided that, as our 2010 experimental foray into a new format had proved so successful, we would 'stay with the strength' for the time being. That new format, where each member prepared and presented a topic of her choice for a particular meeting, proved to be lively and open-ended. It also had several unexpected outcomes. We found ourselves getting to know each other at a deeper level, as well as learning from each other and experiencing some laughter along the way.

Finally, the meeting thanked Margaret Cody for opening her lovely home to us on a regular basis throughout the year. It makes things so comfortable and enjoyable. Our first meeting for 2011 will be held there - 62 Boyce Street, Glebe - on 21<sup>st</sup> February at 7.30 p.m. This will be a general get-together after the long break when we aim to draw up another lively program for the new year. Visitors and new members are always welcome.

*Audrey Tate*

## Broken Bay

Thirteen members of WATAC Broken Bay Group met with Bishop David Walker on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November to discuss challenges facing the diocese, a very pleasant task for three hours after another of Margaret's delicious lunches. We last met with David when he was newly appointed and now he is eligible to retire in three years. He explained his intention to deal with the shortage of Parish Priests by appointing a layperson as the principal provider of pastoral care in a parish where an ordained priest would perform only sacramental duties. Suggestions were made and lively discussion focused on other ways to deal with this situation by widening the pool of people eligible for ordination through removing discrimination on the basis of gender or marital status. He is about to make his first appointment of a layperson – a woman!

Concerns were expressed about the increasing power of fundamentalism in the Church and the current and forthcoming imposition of old-fashioned ideas and practices challenging reforms we had all welcomed from Vatican II. The sacred cows of tradition and pseudo tradition are being used to privilege compliance over thinking and conformity over progressive ideas. David answered many questions quite honestly and openly as we canvassed ways to make the Church more inviting for all the young people we love as well as some of those present who have almost given up on it.

The proposed forum for laity in the diocese sounds promising as does the year long consultation on its future due to start next Pentecost. Besides his many plans for the Broken Bay Diocese, Bishop David Walker has hope. This hope and his warm and friendly manner enabled a productive and pleasant discussion.

We were also most impressed by the way he farewelled each of us separately – by name!

*Gael Walker*

## Wollongong

The end of another year! Having in our earlier meetings looked at various women disciples in the New Testament, we decided to complete the year by considering some contemporary women disciples. We looked at the work of Gemma Sisia, a young Australian woman who has built schools in Africa and educated hundreds of children. Jan then turned our attention to our own Judith Shand who has spent several years teaching English, first in China and then to seminarians in Vietnam. Judy

spoke very openly about the Christian teaching which influenced her and the things in the Church with which she has struggled. Finally, Judith herself introduced us to a remarkable man (see, we are not sexist!) Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, who was arrested by the Communists in Vietnam and kept prisoner for thirteen years. He said Mass under cover of darkness, using fragments of Hosts and wine sent from home for his 'stomach pains'. He befriended his guards who could not understand how he could go on loving them 'even when we cause you pain'. We read excerpts from *The Road of Hope*, a collection of prayers and meditations written by Archbishop Van Thuan while he was in prison and smuggled out to his friends.

On 27 November we had our final meeting for the year. We had delicious food washed down with champagne and watched a DVD of helpful hints for a fulfilled life in 2011. If we stick to our good resolutions we will be healthy and caring people. Here's hoping! We have decided to begin next year by reading and discussing Bishop Geoffrey Robinson's *Love's Urgent Longings* which is a follow-up to his previous book *Confronting Sex and Power in the Catholic Church*.

We wish all WATAC members a very happy Christmas and a fulfilling New Year.

*Mary Flanagan*

## Shepparton

Our September meeting was held on the same night that Shepparton's river burst its banks so it was cancelled. However, we recently met and discussed a couple of articles about Mary Mackillop and the process of being made a Saint. We opened our meeting by listening to and reflecting on the Loreena McKennitt song *Dante's Prayer*. There was some lively discussion around the issue of miracles and saints, and whether they devalue the work done by saints when they are living. This topic seemed to lead us into many and varied conversations

We are planning to use Albert Nolan's book *Hope in an age of despair* at our meetings in 2011.

*Jennifer Frisardi*

## Eastern Suburbs

The Group held ten meetings in 2010. Despite the struggle to keep up with the year's dizzying pace, we have grown through our reading of Michael Morwood and Albert Nolan and reflections suggested through them and through contemporary events. Topics for discussion are never lacking and we have been inspired by Bernice's input and energized by her knowledge and optimism. In planning for 2011 we look forward immensely to the WATAC midyear conference and feel that we are fortunate to be alive in this juncture in the history of our church – alive and kicking prejudice and insensitivity to Nolan's 'signs of the times'. One of our projects for next year will we hope be documenting the history of WATAC and the good things (and some of the disappointments) which have come its way. Peace and joy to all WATAC-ers.

*Carmel Maguire*

## Milton-Ulladulla

Seven of us met at Fran's on 18<sup>th</sup> Sept. With Anna Flynn and Judi Powe both overseas and our Sydney friends all busy we were a cosy group. Bernice generously made the trip by herself. It was a great day for a drive.

We began the day reading through a very pertinent article in the August Newsletter entitled 'The inner workings of a hierarchy with a sex offender mentality'. As we know the Vatican has managed to tie the sexual abuse of minors with the ordination of women. In their eyes it is a 'grave crime' because it is a violation of law. Law is held as above everything. The hierarchial church is very concerned about ensuring pronouncements are obeyed. The legal approach rules out emotions, therefore concern for the victims. A tragic disconnect in our church. On p16, five examples are given of disconcerting characteristics of persons in authority, in the church, that actually mimic the cognitive processes of offenders in the system. Sadly all dated within the last six months.

This article led into the main content of our day Chapters 11 and 12 of Bishop Geoffrey's book. Ch.11 addresses the harm done and the difficult path to healing. The question of Forgiveness is fleshed out. Lastly the question of the future of guilty offenders is explored.

Ch. 12 looks at church governance and the necessity of separating what is essential to the faith eg. That 'Jesus was a real person who lived on earth.' p237. He goes on to write 'The overriding principle must surely be that freedom should prevail, so the necessary statements should be strictly limited to those truths that are quite essential to the identity of the church.p238. He goes on to comment on original sin, the ordination of women, the assumption, birth control, papal infallibility, divorce. A refreshing chapter.

*Kath Prendergast*

## Leura

Saturday 27th November concludes our WATAC gatherings for 2010. On that occasion Sr Mary Maguire will lead the overall review of our monthly discussions on Michael Morwood's book *From Sand to Solid Ground* and Monica and Brian Bright will bless us all with a reflection on Advent. There will also be some conversation around next year's readings and the writing of dates in our diaries. Our format is to gather on the 4th Saturday of each month from January to November. We start at 10am with morning tea, the highlight being Mary's wonderful scones, and general catch up time together until 10.30am. Our discussion time is 10.30-11.30am and then we move into prayer and reflection until 12pm. Some of us then travel home, while others wander up to Leura Mall for lunch and further conversation.

Our first year together has been a wonderful experience of friendship, discernment and honest discussion about the church that we love, with all its beauty and its brokenness. Our Reflections have been a source of grace and sustenance and we are reminded each time how we are called to be eucharist to each other. On one occasion we prayed the words of Peter Maurin's 1953 reflection on Eucharist, the concluding verse being:

*For Eucharist is a simple as being on time,  
And as profound as sympathy.  
I give you my supper  
I give you my sustenance,  
I give you my life  
I give you me  
I give you Eucharist.*

*Carmel Vanny*

## GROUP INFORMATION

### Inverell

Our Thursday group continues apace - the good part is that everyone knows where the spare key is hidden so they can come and have the gathering even in my absence. (In winter when I am overseas, the group meets at the home of a Mercy Sister who is part of the group.)

Recently we have found ourselves drawn to thinking more about the connection between spirituality and the environment - a positive antidote to dwelling on the hotch-potch of the new translation. Would that the English-speaking bishops could follow the lead of the German bishops, but we're not holding our breath.

I received an email from a Marist brother friend. I quote: 'You were much in my mind here when the 'new translation' was introduced in the parish liturgy last Sunday. What a fussy, nit-picking exercise it has proved to be and a great opportunity missed to have the various churches adapt the liturgy to the needs of their people and their culture. B.... Rome and the Vatican minions! I know how you have challenged the introduction of this latest outcome of gradually-widening central control - another back-step from what Vatican II was working for.'

In the last two weeks we have been watching *The Awakening Universe*, based on the book by cultural historian Thomas Berry and cosmologist Brian Swimme. According to the blurb on the back of the video case, this film was developed under the auspices of the Pachamama Alliance, 'an initiative whose mission is to bring forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling and socially just presence on this planet'. Thinking in terms of light years and billions of years of creation does wonders for one's peace of mind after hearing some of the controversies over recent Vatican pronouncements!

*Rosemary Breen*

**BEENLEIGH (South Brisbane):** For more information contact Therese Flynn-Clarke Ph: 07 3804 0636 or email: dctfc@optusnet.com.au

**BROKEN BAY Group (Upper North Shore):** Group meets on a Sunday about every two months starting at 12.30 pm with lunch. Venue: 32 Awetea Road, St Ives Chase. For more information contact Margaret Knowlden Ph:02 9449 7275 or email: knowlden@optusnet.com.au

**EASTERN SUBURBS Group.** This group usually meets on a Sunday 2pm-4.30pm monthly. Meeting dates vary. Venue: 8 Dudley Street, Randwick. For more information contact Carmel Maguire Ph: 02 9398 1004 or email: c.maguire@unsw.edu.au

**ENGADINE Group** meets on the third Monday of the month in a member's home at 7.30pm. For more information contact Margaret Keyes Ph: 02 9520 4240 Email: keyes888@bigpond.com  
Engadine group members also meet every second Sunday of the month at 10am for Prayer and Reflection. For more information contact Alma Madden Ph: 02 9520 8684 or email Cathy Griffin: kggriffin2@bigpond.com

**INNER CITY Group** meets at Glebe on third Monday of each month at 7.30pm. Venue 62 Boyce Street, Glebe. For more information contact Margaret Cody Ph: 02 9692 9384 Mob: 0419 426 174 email: margaret@mountainretreats.org

**LEURA Group** meets 4th Saturday morning of the month. Venue Leura. For more information contact Carmel Vanny Ph: 02 4787 8706 or email: cvanny@tech2U.com.au

**LISMORE Group** meets 1st Tuesday of each month for coffee & spiritual nourishment at a local coffee shop in Lismore. For more information contact Mary Bruggy Ph: 02 6624 6530 or email: marytbruggy@optusnet.com.au

**MILTON/ULLADULLA Group** meets bi-monthly from February to November on a Saturday from 10 - 4. Venue varies each meeting. For further information contact Kath Prendergast Ph: 02 4454 5097 or email: kathpr@shoalhaven.net.au

**MOUNT CLAREMONT (W.A.)** For more information contact Margaret Finlay Ph: 08 9384 9114 or email: marg.fin@globaldial.com

**PARRAMATTA Group** meets on the last Monday of the month from Feb to November at the Convent Parramatta from 7.30 - 9.30. For more information contact Patricia Mayne - email: tricia.mayne@froggy.com.au

**PENSHURST Group** meets at 7.30pm on the fourth Monday of every month at Narwee. Venue 5/30-32 Grove Avenue, Narwee. For more information contact Bernice Moore Ph: 9534 8527 or email: bernice@watac.net or Maureen Hager Ph: 02 9580 5384 or email: maureen\_hager@optusnet.com.au

**SHEPPARTON (Vic)** For more information about this new group started in mid 2010 contact Jennifer Frisardi Ph: 03 58224064 or email: mannardi@optusnet.com.au.

**WAGGA WAGGA Group** meet on the second Monday of the month at 7.30pm. For more information contact Rosslyn Bennett Email: rosbennett@ozemail.com.au

**WOLLONGONG Group** meets on the 4th Saturday afternoon of every month from February to November at Horsley. For more information contact Mary Flanagan Ph: 02 42608061 or email: john\_flanagan@uow.edu.au

# Jesus – Better Known and Bible – Better Read

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**A Regional Conference with  
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**Beecroft Community Centre  
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**Saturday 19th March, 2011 (9 am – 4.30 pm)**  
Speakers

**Professor Sir Lloyd Geering**

**Rev. Dr. Greg Jenks**

Lloyd Geering has been a champion of progressive religious thought outside the traditional institutions and is a member of The Sea of Faith. He was tried for heresy (and exonerated!!) by the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand in the 1960's. **Greg Jenks**, on the other hand is interested in the application of progressive scholarship to the practice of local Christian faith communities. He is Academic Dean at St Francis Theological College, Brisbane, and teaches Biblical Studies in the CSU School of Theology.

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