



JANUARY 10 & 11, 2009 – BAPTISM OF THE LORD – YEAR B

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RELIGIOUS BELIEF IS TREATED AS A PRIVATE ECCENTRICITY

PARISHIONERS may recall the controversy surrounding Pope Benedict's Yuletide talk to the Roman Curia where, amongst other things, he said that protecting heterosexuality was as important as saving the rainforests. He said the Church should defend the traditional roles of "a man and woman, and to ask that this order of creation be respected". The situation was not helped by the Roman Curia's inability to provide an official English translation. All hell broke loose. Both Adele Horn and David Marr in the *Sydney Morning Herald* were scathing in their criticism, as you would expect, (for reasons stated below). Letters to the editor followed. The following article by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the Archbishop of Westminster, is an edited version of an essay in 'Faith In The Nation', published by the Institute for Public Policy Research. While he is talking about Britain, the Australian scene is, I believe, identical. He hits the nail on the head!



Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor

THE progressive secularisation of the cultural environment and the accompanying decline in religious practice means that religious belief of any kind tends now to be treated more as a private eccentricity than as the central and formative element in British society that it is. And although the tone of public discussion is sceptical or dismissive rather than anti-religious, atheism has become more vocal and aggressive.

This unfriendly climate for people of all religious faiths has led to the recognition that what we have in common as Christian believers is infinitely more important than what divides us, a consideration that now applies not only to the

Christian churches, but in different degrees to relations between all three monotheistic faiths, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It is significant that one of the most articulate and respected defenders of religious values in Britain today is the Chief Rabbi.

The privatisation of religious belief and the increasingly multiracial character of what was

previously a more or less homogeneous society has also had the effect of diminishing the social "oddness" of belonging to any particular denomination or faith. Over the past 40 years, social prejudice against Catholics has largely disappeared, and Catholics have been fully assimilated into the mainstream of British life. Intellectual and cultural acceptance is another matter; and there is a widely perceived conflict between religious belief (and the Catholic Church in particular) on the one hand and the prevailing notion of what it

means to be a "liberal" and tolerant society on the other.

Leaving aside the polemical views of Professor Richard Dawkins and his fellow atheists on the essential irrationality of all religious belief, there is a current dislike of absolutes in any area of human activity, including morality (though this does not apparently preclude an absolute ban on anything that can be interpreted as racial, sexual or gender discrimination). In part, this dislike stems from an entirely understandable revulsion for totalitarianism; and there is no denying that too absolutist an approach to ethical problems leads to intolerance. But as the ongoing debate about faith schools has demonstrated, the intolerance of liberal sceptics can be as repressive as the intolerance of religious believers.

What should be the limits of tolerance in a liberal society is a key question in the wider debate about "multiculturalism". Because of the Catholic experience of what it means to be a credal minority, British Catholics are likely to sympathise with those ethnic and religious groups who want to retain their cultural and religious distinctiveness in a British environment.

The issue of integration is made more pressing as a result of the migrations from eastern Europe, Africa and South America over the past few years. This has been most vividly demonstrated by the arrival in Britain of more than 500,000 Catholics from Poland.

For Catholics, the conflict with liberal opinion focuses at the present time on two issues on which the Catholic position is characterised as intolerant and (even worse) "reactionary": the absolute value of every human life; and the central importance of the family and the institution of marriage as fundamental pillars of a rightly ordered society.

Many other Christians, as well as Jews and Muslims, broadly share the Catholic Church's position on these issues, but I think it is fair to say that the Catholic Church bears the brunt of "liberal" hostility on both fronts. What does all this tell us about the relationship between Catholicism and British identity? Clearly, there are serious tensions – as there should be – between Christian belief and the assumptions and practices of a secular state; and Catholics are not alone in watching with dismay as the liberal society shows signs of degenerating into the libertine society.

While a questioning of authority is healthy in holding authority to account, this questioning can, at its most extreme, become rejection. Undermining the pillars of British society (Parliament, monarchy, Church) risks dismantling not only the institutions but also the values that have underpinned British identity.

One area of specific concern for the Catholic Church is marriage and family life. The British enthusiasm for debate and tolerance of alternative views has led to an acceptance of diversity and pluralism. This is welcome, but if an acceptance of diversity and pluralism becomes an end in itself there is a grave risk that long-accepted cultural norms, such as marriage and family, are undermined to the detriment of society as a whole. The vocal minority who argue that religion has no role in modern British society portray Catholic teaching on the family as prejudiced and intolerant to those pursuing alternatives.

Catholic teaching is clear that all unjust discrimination is wrong, but this teaching cannot accept the relativistic acceptance that all approaches are equivalent. British society champions tolerance and freedom, but that freedom is dependent on responsibility.

A simplistic belief that right or wrong is an individualistic construct denies our responsibilities to neighbour and wider society. The need for an open, tolerant and vibrant public square is more essential than ever as the competing rights of the individual, backed by a Human Rights Act, increasingly come into conflict with the rights of religious groups to act according to their conscience and beliefs. But, as citizens of the United Kingdom, we are fortunate to live in a country where the Christian ethos is still, despite the best efforts of secularists, pervasive. "The United Kingdom", said a House of Lords Select Committee in 2003, "is not a secular state ... the constitution of the United Kingdom is rooted in faith, specifically the Christian faith, exemplified by the established status of the Church of England".

At the same time – for all the distortions and inadequacies of the media – there is an equally pervasive tradition of genuine tolerance and freedom of debate; indeed the Glorious Revolution of 1688 was made in the name of rights in general and of religious freedom in particular. While Catholics and Jews were initially excluded, this did eventually lead to the Catholic Emancipation Act and the integration of Catholics back into the life of the nation.

The task of British Catholics – together with our fellow Christians and all believers of goodwill – is not to opt out of the debate or to fall back on anathemas, but to work by reasoned argument, and, above all, by the example of our own lives, to strengthen the many features of British society we believe to be good and to correct those we believe to be wrong.

Father John.

POST CHRISTMAS ACCESS TO ST BERNADETTE'S

Because workman will be working on the school site over the school holidays, there will be only one entrance to the church site from Brisbane Road. Our main weekend entrance will be closed for six weeks.

LITTLE ROCK SCRIPTURE STUDY GROUP will recommence on Wednesday, February 4 at 10.00am until 12 noon in the Marian Centre and will continue each Wednesday morning for 8 weeks! The topic is *Introduction to the Bible* and all are welcome!

LITURGY CORNER

The Christmas season ends and Ordinary Time begins with our celebration of the Baptism of Jesus in which Jesus is revealed to us as the Beloved Son of the Father. This event marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Today's gospel tells us that at the baptism, the heavens are torn apart and the barrier between heaven and earth, God and humanity, is removed. Christmas reminds us that Jesus manifested God, present among us in human form. This feast reminds us, the baptised, of our responsibility to carry on the ministry begun by him: finding the lost, healing the broken, feeding the hungry, setting prisoners free, bringing peace. Our lives need to proclaim God's truth so that those who are thirsty will come and drink at the waters of salvation.

Adapted The Summit

Today's Readings



First Reading Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7 God announces the coming of the Messiah and his work of reconciliation and redemption.

Second Reading Acts 10:34-38 Peter recalls that Jesus' baptism was the beginning of his ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Gospel Mark 1:7-11 Jesus shows his humility by being baptised, and his unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit is revealed.

Next week: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B
1 Samuel 3:3-10,19; 1 Corinthians 6:13-15,17-20; John 1:35-42

Feast Day this Week

St Anthony – Saturday, January 17

HOLY HOUR every Thursday from 8.00 to 9.00pm including Rosary, prayers, hymns & scripture reading. All welcome!

DURING THE MONTH OF JANUARY
NO SERVICES WILL BE HELD IN THE
RETIREMENT VILLAGES.

A GIFT BEYOND CHRISTMAS Thank you for your very generous donations for Loyola Senior High at Mt Druitt which go to help disadvantaged mature age students complete the HSC. A total of \$10,080.00 was given over the Christmas period and will be forwarded to the school once classes recommence at the end of January.

NEW ALTAR SERVERS: Boys and girls who will be attending school in Year 5 and above in 2009 are invited to join the many young members in the ministry of Altar Servers. If you wish to join or require further information please call Melvyn Myers on 8883 1166.

COOKING FOR THE NEEDY restarts in the Marian Centre on Tuesday 27 January.

CENTACARE CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES offers a free service to the Hills Community for individuals, couples and families needing Family Counselling, Financial Counselling and Gambling Counselling. The service is based at St Michael's Family Centre, 522 Windsor Road, Baulkham Hills. Phone 9630 7788.



events & news for Youth & Young Adults ...

LIFE Nights for high school teens in years 9-12 will return every second Sunday night after Summer Camp.

SUMMER CAMP 2009 – REGISTRATIONS CLOSE THIS WEEKEND! This is going to be a fantastic four days of beach, activities, friends and faith; a great way to spend the last few days of the holidays and start the new year! There are still a few places available on Summer Camp but you need to get your registration form in to the Parish Office ASAP. This is one fun-filled camp you don't want to miss out on!

Into LIFE for high school teens in years 6-8 will return on Monday nights after Summer Camp.

Life Teen produces fantastic **weekly podcasts** for free to help everyone get more out of our Sunday Mass. Listen to Mark 'Bible Geek' Hart give an insightful explanation and reflection on the upcoming mass readings. You can download these or listen to them online. Subscribe now from www.lifeteen.com or search for 'lifeteen.com' at the iTunes store. An excellent resource for lectors.

www.lifeteen.com is a great website for all teens and young adults. Get more out of our Catholic faith – the real answers and facts - along with the latest music and movie reviews and even just some random facts too!

www.lifeteenaustralia.com – for more info on what's on for youth and young adults at St Bernadette's or contact the Parish House on 9634 2622.

YOUTH LEADERS' BREAKFAST AND TRAINING DAY on Saturday 7 February with breakfast from 8.30 to 10.30am at Rooty Hill Parish Hall, 9 Adelaide Street, Rooty Hill. Training from 11.00am to 4.00pm. See the noticeboard for details.

CATECHIST NEWS

Catechist AGM will be held on Monday February 9 at 7.30pm in the Church Hall. All Catechists to collect their books on the night.

A Retreat will be held for all Catechists on Tuesday February 10 at Marymount, David Street, Castle Hill at 10.30am. All Catechists welcome.

Catechist Commissioning Mass to be held on Sunday 15 February at the 10.30am Mass followed by morning tea in the Marian Centre.

HELP EDUCATE CHILDREN IN PAKISTAN In Multan Pakistan, the De La Salle Brothers run St Vincent's school for children from extremely poor families. The school is unable to accommodate the 495 students who attend so some classes are held under a tree. The Brothers seek financial support for building projects and school materials. Donations can be made through the Lasallian Foundation. Contact Br Paul Smith on 9832 3100 or email info@lasallianfoundation.org. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

St Bernadette's Parish Community
Parish House, 367 Old Northern Road, Castle Hill, NSW 2154

Telephone 9634 2622 Fax 9899 3511 Email: admin@stbernadette.org.au
 Web page: http://www.stbernadette.org.au

Parish Staff

Fr John Boyle, Parish Priest
 Fr Eugene Szondi, Assistant Priest
 Fr Sunny Michael, ms, Assistant Priest
 Sr Judy McLeod, rsm, Pastoral Associate
 Mrs Alice Bradshaw, Sacramental Co-ordinator
 Mr Ian Pomeroy, Into LIFE Youth Minister
 Mrs Frances Gallagher, Office Manager
 Mrs Monica Rubic, Parish Secretary (Finance: Mon-Thu)
 Mr Michael Watson, Maintenance Co-ordinator

Mass Times for this Week

Sunday Sat 6pm
 Sun 7.30am, 9am, 10.30am & 6pm
 Parish LIFE TEEN Youth Mass

Weekdays Mon 6.45am
 Tue 6.45 am
 Wed 6.45am, 9.15am
 Thurs 6.45am, 9.15 am
 Fri 6.45am, 9.15 am
 Sat 8am

Mass on Public Holidays at 8am

Reconciliation Sat 8.30am-9am; 4.30pm-5.30pm

Baptisms and Marriages: By appointment only. Contact the Parish House. Please note the Church law: Parents are obliged to take care that infants are baptised in the first few weeks; as soon as possible after the birth or even before it, they are to go to the pastor to request the sacrament for their child and to be prepared properly for it. [Can. 867 §1]

St Bernadette's Parish School: Mr Paul Colyer, Principal 9634 2898

Please pray for Maria Vinci, Joan Dearson, Fe Alvarez, Rosenda Laluces and Josef Gilgenrainer who have died recently and for the anniversaries of Christopher Gangemi, Eileen Griffin, Connie Russo (Jan 14), Melchior and Lourdes Acosta and in remembrance of Linda, Leonard and Gregory Daniells, Yick Fui Chau, and Say Lin Lee.

Prayers for the Sick: Lisa Maruri

ROSTERS FOR NEXT WEEKEND – January 17 & 18

| ACOLYTES/ SERVERS | LECTORS | EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION |
|---|---|---|
| VIGIL Michael Lopez Christmas Roster | Vince Connelly Ray Scully Jessica Fearnside | Iciar Quintana, Cathy & Mark Richmond, Alf Jacobs, Carmel James, Stephen & Janice MacMahon, Don & Remie de Leon |
| 7.30AM Zeno Hong Christmas Roster | Anne Parker Colleen Baines Matthew Troy | Lina Josue, Albert & Gladys Tsang, Colleen & Eric Woodhead, Jo Wickens |
| 9.00AM Melvyn Myers Christmas Roster | David Green Von Lulan Mike Lulan | Karen Askey, Hubert & Christine Jenneke, John Leach, Cathy & Greg Piggott, Trevor & Joanne O'Shea, Lena Madry |
| 10.30AM Joe Josue Christmas Roster | Bill Gleeson Elizabeth Fogolin Michael Puckeridge | Anita Christy, Pauline Camilleri, Dorothy Finucane, Elizabeth Fogolin, Philip & Yolanda Golamco, Margaret Hawkes, Winnie & Henry Li |

6.00 PARISH LIFE TEEN YOUTH MASS MINISTRY ROSTER - January 18

| Adult Servers | Extraordinary Ministers of Communion | | Musos | |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Andrew Tomic James Madry | Ashley Adams Maria-Alicia Jul Martin Collins | Richard Tarlinton Robert Johnson Sean Finucane Veronica Sahabu | Bass Daniel Ang | Singers Alison Wong Annabel Irawan Monique O'Callaghan Cassie Knezevic Julia Calixto |
| Altar Preparation Josh Becker | Projectionist Josh Becker | Ushers Phillip Smith Paul Musgrave | Guitar Michael Smith | Horns/Strings/ Winds Matthew Ashton |
| Lectors Josh Chaney Mystique Nelis Nicci Heidegger | Gift Preparation Laura Wilson | Welcomers Ingrid & Jana Fizely Sean Finucane | | |
| Altar Servers Christmas Roster | | | | |

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| CHILDREN'S LITURGY No Children's Liturgy | CHURCH HOUSEKEEPING Maria Mochnik, Ronald & Adelina Tabila, Caroline Dharmadi | COUNTING (2nd Collection) Adrian Franks, David Tye, Cosimo Miccoli, Vincent Traynor |
| FLOWER ROSTER Wendy Smith | COUNTING (1st Collection) Sandra Watson Denise Hicks | BOOKSHOP Carmel Adams / Rose Huby / Bernadette Logue / Dora Saleh / Patricia Smith |