

As scripture says, "From his heart shall flow streams of living water." Jn. 7:38

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Dear Friends

In the month of August, the Church celebrates Lay Apostolate Sunday. What exactly is this apostolate? Is it just about having a day of 'ministry fair' to showcase all the ministries and organizations in a parish? What is the difference between the lay apostolate and lay ministry?

According to the decree on the apostolate of the laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem* by the Second Vatican Council:

"The Church was founded for the purpose of spreading the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth for the glory of God the Father, to enable all to share in His saving redemption, and through them the whole world might enter into a relationship with Christ. All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through all her members." (A.A. 2)

Simply put, apostolate is the activity or work that members of the Body of Christ carry out to spread the kingdom of God. Lay people living in the world, are "called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardor of the spirit of Christ." (A.A. 2) That means our call is to bring the Good News to the world where faith and life meet. By virtue of our state of life, we, the lay people are in the world, embroiled in its concerns and

developments. No one else is in a better position to influence worldly affairs than we who are already deeply in it. Through the way our families face modern day challenges; through our decision making at work or in school, we carry out the work of this apostolate.

This is to be differentiated from lay ministry where its purpose is to serve a particular need of the parish. Lay ministries are needed for the smooth running of the church and are important; however, the fundamental call of a lay Christian disciple is to respond to the need of the world, being the 'leaven' of Christ's Gospel.

In order to carry out the work of this apostolate, we need to know how we can influence the world: not by imposing but proposing our Christian values in multi-religious, multi-cultural Singapore. As our nation celebrates its 44th birthday, it is also timely for us to reflect how we can be both good citizens and good Christian disciples. Read Arthur Goh's article on 'Faith and Reason' as he explores this further. The extract from a speech by Sean Murphy on bringing faith to the public sphere furthers the argument. Fr. Erbin's article on Catechesis as a craft and a review on Fr. Timothy Radcliffe's book "I Call You Friends" complete this issue. Enjoy!

Daphne

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Mission: Impossible?

by Sean Murphy

The Gospel of Jesus Christ compels us to bring our faith to bear on public affairs.

The Call To Holiness

The real Good News—the Gospel—is that all of us are called to become holy – to live in the presence of God, to put God at the centre of our lives. Some people think this means that we should behave and live like priests, monks and nuns. They're wrong.

Other people think that being an active Christian means being on parish council, or being a lector or extraordinary eucharistic minister, or singing in the choir – doing 'churchy' things. They're wrong.

It's not that there is anything wrong with these things; they are good things. From them we derive grace and strength. And we need that grace and strength for our mission. But we are laymen, and our primary mission is not in the sanctuary or the choir loft, but in the world outside.

The idea is that we are supposed to blend in like yeast in the dough. Yeast blends into the dough, but it remains yeast, and it changes the dough from inside. We are supposed to become part of the team, the class, the business or the town, but we are to remain Christian, and encourage our classmates, co-workers and friends to live according to the will of God.

Why live according to the will of God? Well, we can't kick God out of creation. We can't tell God that He has no business in the logging camp or the classroom. We can't hide from God in a courtroom, a bedroom – not even a closet. We can't say, "God, you keep out of this. This is between me and the boss." We can't say, "Get lost, God. This is between me and my wife, between me and my girlfriend." We can't say, "God, it's Friday night. I want to get a little drunk. Butt out. Come back on Sunday."

We have one conscience, and one conscience only, not one for religious duties and a different one for the party – whether it's a political party, or the



The idea is that we are supposed to blend in like yeast in the dough. Yeast blends into the dough, but it remains yeast, and it changes the dough from inside.

weekend party. We have one conscience, a Christian conscience, and that is to guide us in everything that we do. Everything. There is no such thing as "I'm personally opposed, but...". Pontius Pilate was personally opposed to crucifying Our Lord, but he didn't want to impose his morality on the mob.

Mission: Impossible?

Christians must take part in worldly affairs, live a vigorous Christian life, and change the world so that all things are ordered to the glory of God. But Christians who actually try to do this may be disciplined, fired, or threatened with other penalties. People say that we have no right letting our personal or private beliefs affect our behaviour in society. The assumption is that religious beliefs are highly emotional – as is any belief that is affecting your behaviour in society. You have no right letting your private beliefs affect your public behaviour. I have four responses.

First: Personal And Private Doesn't Mean Insignificant

Secularists like to stress that religious beliefs are 'personal' and 'private'. This is intended to belittle us. It's meant to make us feel like we're alone, isolated, even eccentric. Well, our beliefs are personal, in the sense that we personally accept them. They are private, in that what we believe is primarily our business, not someone else's.

But our beliefs are also shared with hundreds of millions of people, living and dead – not just a few hundred thousand who happen to be alive and occupy positions of power and influence.

We share our beliefs with some of the greatest minds and imaginations in history: St. Albert the Great for his extraordinary learning, Dante, Blaise Pascal, and J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *Lord of the Rings*. Not only great intellects, some of the most courageous souls through the ages have been religious believers: St. Joan of Arc, St. Thomas More, and St. Maximilian Kolbe. Most important, we share our beliefs with some of the holiest people who have walked the face of the earth: St. Francis of Assisi, Blessed Damien of Molokai, and Mother Teresa.

These were Catholics, but non-Catholics and non-Christians can make similar claims, including in their lists names like Sir Isaac Newton, the great scientist, the Muslim physician, Avicenna, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor hanged by the Nazis.

We are not alone in our personal convictions. We are not few in number. There are literally billions of religious believers. Don't let people bully you by making you feel like strangers in your own world.

Second: All Beliefs Influence Public Behaviour

To the people who say that we must not let our so-called 'private' beliefs affect our public behavior, we ask: what about the ancient Indian emperor Asoka? After ten years of bloody wars, he became a Buddhist, and decided that he should rule his people like a father, with "morality and social compassion." Among other things, he provided them with free hospitals and veterinary clinics, and built new roads and rest houses for travellers. In other words, Asoka let his private beliefs affect his public behaviour.

During World Youth Day celebrations, a quarter million young people filled the streets of Toronto. What they did in public – on the streets, in buses and subways, in the parks – was influenced by their religious convictions. And you know what? People loved it. They thought it was great. They wished that people behaved like that all the time.

Secularists also act on their beliefs. It is their personal belief, their private conviction, that people of faith should not be allowed to act upon beliefs and convictions. Well, we have every reason to demand the same freedom that secularists claim for themselves. All public behaviour – how we treat other people, how we treat animals, how we treat the environment – is determined by what we believe. All beliefs influence public behaviour.

Third: Everyone Is A Believer, Even Atheists

An atheist believes that God does not exist. He believes it, just as a Christian believes that God does exist. The Christian has a belief about God; the atheist has a belief about God. One is a religious belief; the other a non-religious belief, but both are beliefs. The atheist is as much a believer as a Christian when it comes to the existence of God.

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Moreover, belief is absolutely essential to society. Human society can exist without science, without technology. It exists wherever people live together, whether or not they are scientifically or technologically advanced. But society cannot exist without belief.

If people believe in human dignity, equality and justice, it will not be because these things are facts proved by scientific experiment. Some of the most important decisions we make in life are based on belief, not certainty. Will I move to another country? Will I be a carpenter or a teacher? What woman will I marry? Will this man be a good husband? How many children shall we have? Belief, not certainty, decides these things.

People who don't believe in God may freely defend and promote what they believe is good for man and society, and they may do so in public. These are all believers, even if they don't believe in God, or in a particular religion. Well, so are we. We are believers too, and we have the same freedom to act on our beliefs in public and to promote them as non-religious believers.

Fourth: Proposing Is Not Imposing.

"It isn't right to impose your beliefs on other people." You've heard that, and you know it's not entirely true. Society often imposes beliefs by law. We believe that it is wrong to murder, to break into houses, to assault people, to defraud them. If somebody doesn't believe that, and starts breaking into houses or killing people, we will impose our beliefs by throwing him into jail.

So to say, "It isn't right to impose your beliefs on other people" isn't entirely true. But that means it isn't entirely false. We may throw people into jail

for murder, but not for refusing to accept Christianity. We may fine people for speeding, but we don't fine them for not going to church on Sunday.

We are not talking now about imposing beliefs, but about proposing them. All citizens are free to make proposals about laws or social policies. All citizens are free to propose ideas about how people should live and work together. All citizens are free to plead, to argue, to lobby, to convince other people to accept their ideas about what is good for people and good for our country.

That is not imposing beliefs. That is good citizenship in a democratic society, and we need more of that, not less.

Conclusion

I hope these four points will give you more confidence to use your freedom as the Lord would have it used. But don't get the idea that things will be easy, after all, St. Thomas More said that the Lord we follow didn't go to heaven in a feather bed, and we should not expect better for ourselves. Mission: Impossible? Humanly speaking, yes. But, humanly speaking, so was the Resurrection. With God, all things are possible.

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Extracted from the second part of a talk given at the British Columbia Catholic Women's League Convention (May 29, 2009). Reprinted with permission of the author, Sean Murphy. The full address is available at the Catholic Civil Rights League web site. Sean Murphy is the administrator of the Protection of Conscience Project and a director for Western Canada of the Catholic Civil Rights League. Sean Murphy is on the advisory board of the Catholic Education Resource Center.

**In memory of Rev Fr. Thomas O' Neill, SJ
& Rev Fr. Albert Renckens, SS.CC**

SPI mourns the passing of two faithful servants of God.

by Arthur Goh

An excerpt from Minister mentor Lee Kuan Yew's 1987 National Day Rally speech was printed in a recent Straits Times article. It was a piece commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the white paper that eventually brought about the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act. In that excerpt Mr. Lee said:

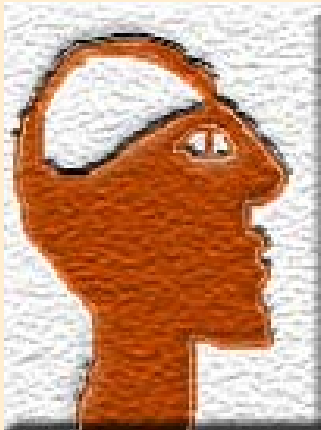
"Churchmen, lay preachers, priests, monks, Muslim theologians, all those who claim divine sanction or holy insights, take off your clerical robes before you take on anything economic or political."

While the Catholic Church agrees with Mr. Lee on this issue, we become concerned when religion and politics become dichotomized into opposing and incompatible spheres: one favoring faith and the other favoring reason as the way to arrive at truth.

This 'conflict thesis' proposing faith and reason at odds with each another, is a popular but groundless idea. It has its beginnings in the Modernist period when science was fast overtaking religion as the favoured path to knowledge. The first proposals of this idea can be found in the writings of John William Draper and Andrew Dickson White.

Draper, a professor of chemistry, wrote a *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* in 1874. Twenty two years later, White, President of Cornell University, published a *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*. As far as scholarly standards go, both writers did not fare well, basing their arguments on questionable sources and bad historical references. However, both had social and political motivations for presenting this thesis, and their work became popular. Draper, who harbored abhorrence to all things Catholic, used his book as an attempt to decry the domination of "Romanism". White, who was at the time custodian of the only secular

Faith & Reason



University in America, saw himself as a prophet for a new era of scientific enlightenment that was free from religious control. The claim made by both men – that faith and reason have *always* been opposed to each other – is not supported by modern historians. It ignores the fact that many prominent natural philosophers (the title 'scientist' was not coined until the 1830s) of the early and middle ages were ordained churchmen. It overlooks the great syntheses made by Church Fathers like St. Augustine and St. Clement of Alexandria who married Christian belief and Greek philosophy with considerable intellectual rigor.

Yet the misconception that faith runs against reason remains popular. The usual narratives are evoked in the faith/reason debate: Kepler's Heliocentrism, Darwin's Theory of Evolution and Natural Selection, the Scopes Monkey Trial, and of course, Galileo. We can easily track the revival of the idea of

separation between faith and reason to Christian fundamentalists emerging in the 19th century who admitted no reconciliation between the knowledge gained by science and the knowledge gained by naïve literal interpretations of scripture.

The Catholic tradition however, understands that the Bible teaches us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go.

Our belief is that God's revelation is mediated through the created world and requires our reasoned interpretation. The principle of God's Incarnation in Jesus Christ is based on this belief. If such is the case, how can the search for more insight into God's creation using the gift of God – reason – be against God?

St. Augustine taught that Truth is one: unity of Truth means that there is not one truth for theology, one for science, and another for politics. For Augustine there is only one eternal and unchanging Truth, which is God. All paths, religious or otherwise, that

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Catechesis as Craft

by Fr. Erbin Fernandez

Hello my fellow Catechists! In this article I want to explore how catechesis, when practiced as a multifaceted craft, can help our young people to participate in the Church's liturgy. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) states that:

Liturgical catechesis aims to initiate people into the mystery of Christ (It is "mystagogy") by proceeding from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the "sacraments" to the "mysteries." (CCC 1075)

Flowing from this orientation of the CCC, we need to ask ourselves whether we catechize with the objective of helping our young people encounter the 'mystery' through the visible signs found in reality.

For example if we are teaching children (from ages six to eleven) about signing themselves with the sign of the cross, do we merely go about teaching them the mechanics of how to do it and when? Or do we try to invest some meaning in them and help the children to explore for themselves the significance behind the sign?

What is the significance of beginning the signing by saying, "In the name of..."? Does it not imply that I begin the day or I begin a prayer, 'In the name of' – Another! Who is this mysterious Other in whose name I am sent forth in confidence? Do we not call Him 'Father'? This mystery continues to deepen as I touch the middle of my chest and realize the Good News that the Father has sent His Son, who is the centre of my life, the One I follow! And as I complete the signing by touching my shoulders from left to right, I become aware that I live and move in the power of the Holy Spirit – the animating principle in my life.

Such a catechesis of signs invested with deep meaning especially for children engages their natural capacity to be struck by wonder. The children begin to intimate and trust that this world is in good hands and that they are not alone. Such a profound, theological foundation broadens their reason from self-centered, pragmatic considerations to the discernment of a vocation, a call to witness to all that is beautiful, true and good!

As our nation prepares to celebrate its forty-fourth year of independence let us pray that our catechesis will form such Christian citizens that can offer others a reasonable witness for the hope that is in them!



BOOK REVIEW: I CALL YOU FRIENDS, FR. TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE



by *Wilson Henry*

The name Timothy Radcliffe is not merely known among Dominican circles but even beyond. Some of us have read his writings in journals and spirituality magazines. This gifted Dominican educated at Oxford and Paris shares some of his insights on life, travels, encounters and religious life in this compact edition.

Radcliffe writes simply and is able to penetrate some truths that we take for granted with searing clarity. On the title he writes “the discovery I made in the Order was the centrality of friendship, the friendship that is the life of God and which we are called to share with each other.” Despite Radcliffe writing as a religious, the friendship he suggests can also be our experience. After all in wider society we too are called to share the friendship of God with others through others.

I Call You Friends is compartmentalised into four segments and begins with the interviews Radcliffe gave French journalist Guillaume Goubert of *La Croix*.

Despite feeling uncomfortable with some of the probing questions, Radcliffe gives honest and heartfelt answers when he discusses the challenges of religious life, the challenges facing the modern church and the role of the laity in it. For the serious church-goer who sometimes wonders why Europe’s churches are empty and for those who have predicted that someday we too might encounter this decline in communal worship

will find Radcliffe’s understanding and even solution to the problem as very insightful and pragmatic such as a better understanding of the church as institution or even being more aware of Vatican II’s role and direction.

It is interesting to read how Radcliffe (who hails from what was once the most conservative religious order in the church) handles controversial questions such as ‘Are Christians the only ones who hold the truth about God and Humanity?’ or even the question on interreligious dialogue. Unlike typical politically correct answers we have come to expect from certain church figures, Radcliffe honestly sees interreligious dialogue as a moving spiritual process and even growth.

In the remaining three sections of the book which details Christian Commitment, Mission and Living The Gospel we encounter Radcliffe’s views on making sense of the complicated world we find ourselves in. Here we read Radcliffe on the crisis of authority and how we sometimes misunderstand the crisis. Radcliffe reexamines the arguments about the crisis and studies it against one of the most moving passages of scripture, *The Journey to Emmaus*. He writes that to be convincing about authority we need to be in a position of sharing and encountering the lives of the people around us. At Emmaus Jesus walks with the disciples as they flee. Radcliffe challenges us to consider this in our positions. We too, he writes, must encounter the communities around us, to experience their fears, be touched by their disappointments. It is precisely in their experience that we can go forward to proclaim. The crisis of authority is resolved not by submission but in proclamation.

In a Christian context of understanding the word Mission, Radcliffe challenges the stereotypes and archaic understanding of Mission. In the Third segment of the book he argues that Mission is never more important now than before. As Christians we are all on a Mission and it is gratifying to see how Radcliffe expands the arena of mission to the marketplace to everyday living.

In many ways this book probably collects all the central thoughts of this wonderful Dominican thinker and religious but it is more than just being a mere collection of essays, speeches and thoughts. The book really stimulates and forces any Christian to rethink why we are Christians or why we follow Christ. In short it is a great companion to our daily reading of the scripture. It provides us with real experiences and possibilities of following Christ and understanding why He calls us his friends.

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Singapore Pastoral Institute

The Pastoral Institute was established in 1978 to assist the Archbishop in providing faith formation for the Catholic Archdiocese in Singapore. Today, the Institute continues to carry out this responsibility in the catechetical, biblical, and pastoral aspects of Christian life. In addition, the Institute looks to the ministerial preparation of those who serve the Church in various capacities, and identifies emerging issues that have pastoral import on the life of the nation, of which Catholics are a part.

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lead us to this Truth are worthy of Christian attention. Pope John Paul II, writing closer to our time, builds on Augustine's teaching in the opening paragraph of his encyclical *Fides et ratio*:



"Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know God's self—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves." (n. 1)

John Paul, the thoroughbred philosopher, is convinced that the human desire and capacity for truth characterizes us as properly human. It is our faculty for both faith and reason that elevates us above all other living things. Both faith and reason are essential to human *being*.

While religion ought to take great care not to exert undue authority over the scientific or political quest for the common good, it should not remain silent to the secular misconception that faith rejects reason and therefore has nothing to contribute to the betterment of humanity.

Doing so would disconnect religion as a conscientizing force to the secular pursuit of knowledge, decrease its own esteem, and allow the false dualism of sacred versus secular to entrench itself more deeply in society's consciousness.

Faith Formation Survey

The Pastoral Institute will be conducting a survey on adult faith formation over the month of August in the following parishes: St. Anthony, OLPS, IHM, Holy Cross, and St. Stephen.

We hope that you will participate, if called on, and contribute to this important research project.