

Lay Catholic Spirituality in Australia: Adelaide and Perth, 1922 - 1962.

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy of The University of Western Australia

Department of History  
1992

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## ABSTRACT

Catholic men and women in Australia have expressed their relationship with God, the institution of Catholicism and wider society in a variety of ways. This thesis directs attention to the spirituality of ordinary Catholic Australians between 1922 and 1962, and argues that the Catholic approach to God was characterised on the one hand by a passive and highly emotive piety centred on personal holiness for the next world and, on the other hand, by an active apostolic spirit which called for an analytical understanding of this world in order that it might be transformed. These two strands of passive and active spirituality, which can be conveniently labelled 'feminine', or 'expressive', and 'masculine', or 'instrumental', aspects of Catholicism, are found pulling against each other as well as being woven together. One way or another the priorities and concerns of each or both threaded through the choices which ordinary people made about the way they expressed their faith. The two contrasting strands formed the basis of a complex web of relationship between ordinary Catholic people and their God which had profound implications for the history of Catholicism and wider society in Australia.

Part I of this thesis begins with a brief survey of the context of lay Catholics in Adelaide and Perth between 1922 and 1962. Chapter 1 considers the place of Catholics in wider society and of lay people within the church. Both the social location in which Catholicism was consistently assumed to be Irish, working-class and womanly in character, even while the social and economic diversity of the church was becoming apparent, and the church context which placed lay people last in the hierarchy of vocations were powerful influences on Catholic spirituality. Chapter 2 examines the particular view of the world which Catholic belief and

practice tended to engender, tracing a sense of difference from wider society and a security and threat in the certitude of the faith which made clear distinctions between right and wrong.

Part II examines the devotional life of Catholicism, and looks at three aspects of spirituality in this expressive mode. The figures of Christ, of his mother, Mary, and of the Carmelite nun, Thérèse all had many faces, and while the traditionally gentle and wonder-working element of this style of Catholicism remained evident throughout the years of this study, the prominent images of holiness also included models which directed Catholic attention to the secular world. Devotional Catholicism maintained a relatively constant form in the years of this study, but the content was also directed to the need for change in the modern world.

Concerns with the Catholic mission in the modern world and lay responsibility within the church underpin the argument of Part III. As a basis for the study of Catholic Action, Chapter 7 examines the ritual life of Catholicism and shows how the liturgy and public prayer of Catholicism, founded solidly on tradition, was also an important window on concerns for change. The Mystical Body of Christ, a feminine, relational model of church, which liturgical practice sought increasingly to reflect, offered Divine impetus for the recognition of the spiritual status of lay people and their work in the world. Chapter 8 gives full attention to the development of the concept of the lay apostolate, especially the masculine method of the Jocist groups and the spirituality of Gospel-based action.

Thus, while between 1922 and 1962 there was a significant movement of lay Catholics in Australia from forms of spirituality centred mainly around pious sodalities to Catholic organisations aimed at

encouraging Gospel-inspired action in the everyday world, the movement was not a simple substitution of masculine values for feminine traits. The new spirituality was not exclusive of the old, but rather a blend, or what Jung might term an 'integration', albeit often uncomfortable, of two strands of faith practice.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to recall the assistance and support of many people and institutions. I offer sincere thanks to Associate Professor Tom Stannage for his scholarly accompaniment over the course of this project, and his unfailing encouragement as supervisor and friend. I am also grateful to Associate Professor Patricia Crawford who commented on early drafts, and to other staff and colleagues in the History departments at the University of WA and Murdoch University who constitute a supportive and challenging academic community.

The Reid Library at the University of Western Australia, especially the staff of the inter-library loans desk, the Battye Library in Perth and the Mortlock Library in Adelaide, and the Mitchell Library in Sydney have all furnished invaluable assistance. I have drawn on the resources of the archives of the Catholic archdioceses of Perth and Adelaide and I thank Sr Mary Raphael and Sr Therese in Perth, and Sr Marie Therese Foale in Adelaide, for their welcome and kind assistance. I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity to work with material in their care. I also wish to pay tribute to the careful efficiency of Br Lavander at the Christian Brothers' archives, and to thank the religious communities in Adelaide and Perth who made material available. I am grateful to the staff of the Cushwa Center, the university archives, the history department and the Hesburgh Library at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, together with the staff of the Centre for Australian Studies at the University of London, for their interest in my work, and the opportunity to discuss my thesis in a wider forum. I am also indebted to the men and women who were interviewed for this project and to those who made available private papers and photographs. Their generosity is a profound trust, and has often made all the difference.

Travel funds which made this research possible were provided by the History Department at UWA, and assisted by the generosity of the WA and SA Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers and the Catholic Education Office of WA. I value very highly this support and evidence of their commitment to post-graduate education in religious history in an isolated place, and offer my thanks. This study was also supported by an Australian Postgraduate Research Award.

I am grateful to friends whose homes were also mine during the process of research - Marque, Jillian and Teresa, Kirsty and Paul together with their households and family, Michael, Margaret, Sandra, Sean and the community at Moreau in November 1990. I have enjoyed help in the final stages of production from Lucy Brennan-Jones, Anne Harris, Teresa Szunejko, Monika Szunejko and Kathy Troup. I also thank Kevin Crombie for access to computing technology, Barbara Shields for help in the printing process, and Paul Magarey for his timely foray into the *Southern Cross*. Throughout this project I have happily been able to share my interest and commitment with friends on campus and off - I thank them very much for their perception and companionship.

Finally, those members of my family and friends who remember my mother, Elizabeth Massam, will understand that it is almost beyond telling how much I owe to her.

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## Abbreviations

ACAA	Archdiocesan Catholic Archives Adelaide
ACAP	Archdiocesan Catholic Archives Perth
SAC	St Aloysius College
CBC	Christian Brothers' College
COGS	Catholic Guild for Social Studies
ANSCA	Australian National Secretariat for Catholic Action
JOC	Jeunesses Ouvrières Chrétiennes
YCW	Young Christian Workers
TCFA	Tertiary Catholic Federation of Australia
UCFA	University Catholic Federation of Australia
np	no page/ no pagination
nd	no publication details

## A Note on the Text

The primary sources for this thesis consistently capitalise nouns which refer to God, and to aspects of the institutional church, and use the masculine pronoun to refer to men and women. In general, to avoid disruption to the text, this idiom is not challenged. In the analysis of the sources the language is inclusive, and only proper nouns, and adjectives formed from them, have capitals, thus 'Pope Pius XI', but 'the pope's teaching', 'papal encyclical'.

## Introduction

Catholic men and women in Australia have expressed their relationship with God, the institution of Catholicism and wider society in a variety of ways. Beyond the story of bishops and buildings which constitutes so much of the written history of Australian Catholicism there is a rich vein of religious experience yet to be tapped for historical understanding. By becoming aware of the diversity and complexity of the spirituality of ordinary Australian Catholics - the systems of belief, the notions of holiness and sin, the images of God which shaped and were shaped by the lives of ordinary Catholic people - historians can add significantly to the depth of perception which they bring to the patterns of Australia's past.

Religion has frequently been ignored almost entirely in the general histories of Australia, on the assumption that faith in God has not been of much significance in white Australian life. Historians have frequently noted that the European settlement of Australia began in 1788 - after the Industrial Revolution and after the French Revolution - so that white Australians were the products of a desacralised culture, who fashioned a society in which religion was simply a trimming. And only C. Manning Clark among the writers of general histories has indicated serious uneasiness about the success of the Enlightenment.<sup>1</sup> However, the wider concerns of social history have brought religion to the attention of historians. It is increasingly recognised that, even in 'post-Christian' Australia, the study of religion, and more specifically of spirituality and devotion, can provide valuable insight into the lives of ordinary people.

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<sup>1</sup>C. M. H. Clark, 'Themes in *A History of Australia*', *Australia 1888*, No. 3, 1979, pp. 69 - 73; Peter Munz, 'Gest Dei Per Australianos', *ibid*, pp. 5 - 27.

By acknowledging spirituality as a valuable tool for the analysis of culture, historians are implicitly pointing to the mutability and diversity which characterise the relationship of individuals and groups with their God. As religious culture was expressed in other places and times with many shades of difference, so the oral and written records of Catholicism in the two Australian cities of Perth and Adelaide reveal that God was perceived to be at work in many different guises. Between 1922, when Pius XI, 'the Catholic Action pope', began his papacy, and 1962, when John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council, Catholic men and women in urban Australia reflected Catholic spirituality in a myriad of tones. Within such diversity of Catholic spiritualities this thesis identifies two distinct approaches to the Divine as one way of usefully encapsulating the dynamic of faith in twentieth century Australia. In very broad terms lay Catholic spirituality in the 40 years before the Second Vatican Council was characterised on the one hand by a passive and highly emotive piety centred on personal holiness for the next world and, on the other hand, by an active apostolic spirit which called for an analytical understanding of this world in order that it might be transformed. These two strands of passive and active spirituality are found pulling against each other as well as being woven together. One way or another the priorities and concerns of each or both threaded through the choices which ordinary people made about the way they expressed their faith. The two contrasting strands formed the basis of a complex web of relationship between ordinary Catholic people and their God which had profound implications for the history of Catholicism and wider society in Australia.

Spirituality has been an uncommon focus for the historical analysis of Australia. This thesis assumes that such an absence is not so much the result of a dearth of a sense of the sacred in Australia as a lack of historical perception. The religious commitment of displaced and alienated Europeans who settled

Australia has been compared unfavourably with the deep and vibrant spirituality of the Aboriginal peoples. Historians have tended to agree that 'white man got no dreaming', and while it is important to guard against simplistic interpretations of Aboriginal culture, the white perception of the Australian environment as cursed and desolate has been identified as a significant barrier to prevent the traditional Christian forms taking on profound meaning in white Australia.<sup>2</sup> Even Manning Clark, the historian who has viewed Australia most clearly in mythic and religious terms, does not pretend that God's love was evident to the white settlers of 'the land God created on the afternoon of the sixth day when he was very tired and possibly bored'.<sup>3</sup> In the epilogue to volume VI of *A History of Australia* Clark presents modern Australia as a country in which dreams have died, where 'neither the historians, the prophets, the poets nor the priests had drawn the maps'.<sup>4</sup> But Clark's work also holds out the hope that historians might build on the evidence of vision and commitment to a spiritual quest in Australia's past to create a history in which the simple explanations of 'greed', 'progress' and 'corruption' give way to a more complex and subtle rendering of the internal contradictions of the women and men of Australia.

If Australian history is not marked by any certainty that life had a positive spiritual content, the evidence for an Australian struggle to find meaning in the world and to make sense of life and death is not lacking. As Frank Fletcher has observed, even the crisis in Australian culture, the uneasy and apparently unending quest of Australians to find out more exactly 'who we are',

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<sup>2</sup>Hugh Jackson, 'White Man Got No Dreaming: Religious Feeling in Australian History', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 15, 1988-9, pp. 1 - 11; and in reply Tony Swain 'Dreaming, Whites and the Australian Landscape: Some Popular Misconceptions', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 15, 1988-9, pp. 345 - 350.

<sup>3</sup>Manning Clark, *The Quest for an Australian Identity*, James Duhig Memorial Lecture 1, 6 August 1979, St Lucia, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>C.Manning Clark, *A History of Australia, vol. VI The Old Dead Tree and the Young Green Tree, 1916 - 1935*, Melbourne, 1987, p. 499.

is a spiritual crisis and a quest for spiritual values.<sup>5</sup> Historians of religion in Australia have suggested that the conclusion that faith was not a powerful determinant of Australian life has been based on an eagerness to accept the absence of overt religiosity rather than on a subtle reading of various sources. In particular the profound, if for many regrettable, influence of the institutional churches on such obvious features of Australian society as deep sectarian divisions, separate education systems and a labour party beleaguered by anti-Communist power need explanation. At another level if this influence is deemed 'obvious' then there is a need to examine the definition of religion itself which is operating in Australian historical writing and to take it beyond narrow and institutional boundaries.<sup>6</sup> Cultural historians in Australia have begun to acknowledge the religious dimensions of Australian life, to deal with the separate culture of Catholicism in particular and to wrestle with its meaning for Australian social history.<sup>7</sup>

The study of religion, and more specifically of spirituality and devotion, has been valuable to the historians of other European societies, not as an end in itself but for the insight that analysis of faith offers into the lives of ordinary people. For example, against a tradition of confessional histories of bishops and buildings, James Obelkevich located enquiries into religion firmly within the historical mainstream.

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<sup>5</sup>Frank Fletcher MSC, 'A New Heart for Australia' in [Missionaries of the Sacred Heart ed], *A New Heart for a New World: an exploration of the desires of God's heart*, Homebush, NSW, 1986, pp. 9 - 21.

<sup>6</sup>These issues are raised by Alan D. Gilbert, 'Religion and the Bicentenary', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 15, 1988-9, pp. 12 - 19; Patrick O'Farrell, 'Spurious Divorce? Religion and Australian Culture', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 15, 1998-9, pp. 519 - 524; Patrick O'Farrell, 'Loss and Gain : The Balance of History', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 64, 1987, pp. 421 - 30.

<sup>7</sup>The key examples are John Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, London, 1988; and S. L. Goldberg and F. B. Smith (eds), *Australian Cultural History*, Cambridge, 1988, especially articles by Patrick O'Farrell, 'The Cultural Ambivalence of Australian Religion', pp. 7 - 14 and David Hilliard, 'Anglicanism', pp. 15 - 32.

In search of the social meaning of religion I have assumed, with Feurbach, that the secret of theology is anthropology, and, by extension, that the secret of religious history is social history. Yet religion at the same time casts its own unique light on society. Religion thus offers privileged access to values and assumptions that might otherwise have remained inarticulate or invisible. To attempt a social history of religion is not therefore to ascend to a realm beyond experience - but to return to...'common thoughts on common things'.<sup>8</sup>

Robert Orsi has made it very clear that *The Madonna of 115th Street*, his 'social history of a religious symbol', is written for the insight it can offer into the inner life of a community. By looking at the Italian people of Harlem during the annual festa in honour of 'their' Madonna, Orsi can discover how the community understood the world to work. He explains:

Each of the gestures and postures [of the special festa behaviour] as well as the kinds of prayers they said and the way they were said, had specific meanings, and these meanings were rooted deep in the inner life of the culture, demanding a close and prolonged analysis.<sup>9</sup>

The close study of particular styles of spirituality also reveals the complexity of religious belief and the multifarious meanings of Catholicism. Orsi argues that the people of Italian Harlem, while a long way from those who define orthodoxy for their Catholic faith, have 'in the sensuous, graphic and complicated piety...their own ways authentic and profound of being Catholic'.<sup>10</sup>

The work of historians such as John Bossy, Jon Butler, Caroline Walker Bynum, Joseph Chinnici, Natalie Zemon Davis, Jean Delumeau, Jay Dolan, Carlo

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<sup>8</sup> James Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society; South Lindsey 1825 - 1875*, Oxford, 1976, p. ix.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street : Faith and Community in Italian Harlem 1880 - 1950*, New Haven, 1985, p. xiii.

<sup>10</sup> Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, p. xiii.

Ginzburg, Robert Orsi, Barbara Corrado Pope, Ann Taves, and Keith Thomas has drawn fruitfully, in a variety of ways, on a distinction between popular and clerical religion, or between dominant and other forms of spirituality.<sup>11</sup> As Thomas Kselman has recently noted, this divide, inherited from social history and especially useful for studies which focussed on *mentalité*, has not been so pertinent to work which examines a system of beliefs, shared by priests and

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<sup>11</sup> John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570 - 1850*, London, 1975; 'The Social History of Confession in the Age of Reformation', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, vol 25, 1975, pp. 21 - 38; 'The Mass as a Social Institution', *Past and Present*, no. 100, 1983, pp. 29 - 61; Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America: a refugee people in new world society*, Cambridge, Mass., 1983; *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianising the American People*, Cambridge, Mass., 1990; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as mother: studies in the spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, Berkeley, 1982; *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: the religious significance of food to medieval women*, Berkeley, 1987; *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, New York, 1991; Joseph P. Chinnici, *Living Stones: The History and Structure of Catholic Spiritual Life in the United States*, New York, 1989; Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: eight essays*, Stanford, 1987; Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter Reformation*, trans. Jeremy Moiser, Philadelphia, 1977; *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture 13th - 18th Centuries*, trans. Eric Nicholson, New York, 1990; Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present*, New York, 1985; 'The Immigrants and their Gods: A New Perspective in American Religious History', *Church History*, vol. 57, 1988, pp. 61 - 72; *Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience 1830 - 1900*, Notre Dame, 1978; Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the cosmos of a sixteenth century miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi, London, 1980; *Nightbattles: witchcraft and agrarian cults in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi, Baltimore, 1983; Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem 1880 - 1950*, New Haven, 1985; ' "He Keeps Me Going": Women's Devotion to Saint Jude Thaddeus and the Dialectics of Gender in American Catholicism, 1929 - 1965', in Thomas Kselman (ed), *Meaning in History : Innovative Approaches to European and American Religion*, Notre Dame, 1991, pp. 137 - 169; Barbara Corrado Pope, 'A Heroine Without Heroics: The Little Flower of Jesus and Her Times', *Church History*, vol. 57, 1988, pp. 46 - 60; Immaculate and Powerful: The Marian Revival in the Nineteenth Century', chapter 8 in Clarissa Atkinson, Constance H. Buchanan, Margaret R. Miles (eds), *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality*, Boston, 1985, pp. 173 - 200; Ann Taves, *The Household of Faith: Roman Catholic Devotions in Mid- Nineteenth Century America*, Notre Dame, 1986; *Religion and Domestic Violence in early New England: the memoirs of Abigail Abbot Bailey*, Bloomington, 1989; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the decline of magic: studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth century England*, Hammondsworth, 1978. For reviews of Catholic historiography see Jon Butler, 'The Future of American Religious History: Prospectus, Agenda, Transatlantic Problematique', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, vol. 42, 1985, pp. 167 - 183; Jay P. Dolan, 'The New Religious History', *Reviews in American History*, September 1987, pp. 449 - 454; J. D. Bollen, A. E. Cahill, Bruce Mansfield, Patrick O'Farrell, 'Australian Religious History 1960 - 80', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 11, 1980, pp. 8 - 44; Patrick O'Farrell, 'The Writing of Australian Catholic History 1980 - 90', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 68, 1991, pp. 131 - 45.

people and expressed in symbols, prayers and actions.<sup>12</sup> The concept of 'popular religion' has been identified by some with the assumptions against which Natalie Davis warned when she cautioned that religious experiences 'of the people' were not necessarily superstitious, anti-clerical, or indeed distinguishable from those of the institution.<sup>13</sup> While historians of religion remain vitally interested in the faith of the people, Kselman suggests a growing concern with the interaction of believers and religious institutions, and the agency of individuals in spiritual choices.

Historians...are now more inclined to doubt the radical disjunction between clerical and lay religion assumed by many of those who have worked in this area. They are also more likely to take ideas and institutions seriously, and to retreat from 'mentalité', a concept which refers primarily to general attitudes and cultural orientation. Men and women as described in the traditional historiography were capable of formulating ideas and committing themselves to beliefs, a freedom denied to those who are constrained by mental structures that can only be analyzed over the *longue durée*. The concept of 'popular religion,' originally intended to valorize the religious experiences of ordinary people, can also be read as segregating and patronizing them.<sup>14</sup>

Kselman proposes the broad concept of 'belief' to allow for common ground between clergy and laity as conscious actors in the past, and notes that historians find evidence of belief not only in written texts, but also in ritual behaviour, images and architecture.<sup>15</sup> For the historian of twentieth-century Catholicism in Australia the notion that spirituality was in some ways a co-

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<sup>12</sup>Thomas Kselman, Introduction, *Belief in History: Innovative Approaches to European and American Religion*, Notre Dame, 1991, pp. 1 - 15.

<sup>13</sup>Natalie Davis, 'Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion', in Charles Trinkaus and Heiko Oberman (eds), *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, London, 1974, pp. 307 - 36.

<sup>14</sup>Kselman, Introduction, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

operative venture between clergy and laity sits very easily in the light of a highly organised institution whose importance in the religious schema is reinforced by oral evidence as well as by the traditional sources. This thesis is not so much a study of 'popular religion' as an examination of the signs and symbols of the institution and an exploration of the possibilities they articulated to the Catholic people. The analysis therefore works from a variety of primary evidence including institutional sources such as Catholic newspapers and prayer books, church buildings and furnishings, as well as the records of lay associations and oral history, in order to explore the religious culture in which twentieth-century Australian Catholics were participants.

Analysis of both the belief system of Australian Catholicism and the fervour with which Catholic people embraced or resisted the spiritual framework of institutional Catholicism have been absent from the writing on Australia's past. Historians have been concerned to document the activities of clerical decision-makers and to follow the physical expansion of the church structures, without considering the current of spirituality that ran, sometimes clear and sometimes muddied, beneath the edifice. If the religion of the institution has been neglected, the ways in which the laity read the symbols of institutional Catholicism have been even further from Australia's historical consciousness.

Some work has been done. In 1960 the first issue of the *Journal of Religious History* carried an article by editor Bruce Mansfield on 'Lucien Febvre and the Study of Religious History', which outlined the work of the Annales school in the study of *mentalité*.<sup>16</sup> However, in the years which followed, when roughly one third of the journal's articles dealt with Australian

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<sup>16</sup>Bruce Mansfield, 'Lucien Febvre and the Study of Religious History', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 1, 1960, pp. 102 - 11.

religion and perhaps one tenth with Australian Catholicism, there was no exploration of the ways in which ordinary people expressed their Catholicism, and little interest in the dialogue between religion and culture.<sup>17</sup>

In 1978 the *Australasian Catholic Record* placed the issue of spirituality on the historical agenda, although significantly the *Australasian Catholic Record* is not, and does not profess to be, a journal for academic historians but draws its readership mostly from professional theologians and Catholic priests and religious. However, the July issue of 1978 was devoted to 'Australian Spirituality' with contributions on the ways in which an Australian relationship with the Divine was shaped by the Sisters of Saint Joseph (founded in South Australia in 1867), the Benedictines, the clergy, French religious thought in the nineteenth century and by the laity. Lay spirituality was not examined very closely in this collection. But, while Patrick O'Farrell reiterated a view of the laity as passive in the pews, averring that ordinary people were merely consumers in this Australian world of Catholic piety and prayer,<sup>18</sup> he also noted that there was room for historical analysis of the laity in Catholic Australia's past. O'Farrell commented that further investigation of the nature of lay spirituality was warranted, and suggested that historians consider: 'Who prayed?', 'What for?', 'How much?', 'Why were some devotions more popular than others?', 'What does the devotion say about the spiritual needs of Australian Catholics?'.<sup>19</sup> Such questions echo the possibilities for research

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<sup>17</sup>There was an acknowledgment of popular religion in other cultures from the mid-1980s with articles such as Bob Scribner, 'Popular Piety and Modes of Visual Perception in Late Medieval and Reformation Germany', vol. 15, 1989, pp. 448 - 69; David Hilliard, 'Popular Religion in Australia in the 1950s - A Study of Adelaide and Brisbane', vol. 15, 1988, pp. 219 - 35; C. John Sommerville, 'The Destruction of Religious Culture in Pre-Industrial England', vol 15, 1988, pp. 76 - 93; David Hilliard, 'The Transformation of South Australian Anglicanism', vol 14, 1986, pp. 38 - 56.

<sup>18</sup>Patrick O'Farrell, 'Lay Spirituality and Historical Conditioning', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 55, 1978, p. 40.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

which had been mooted by O'Farrell in an earlier article, 'Piety and Prayer as Historical Problems'. He noted there, in tune with the interest of social, feminist and non-church historians elsewhere, that piety and prayer gave the historian access to a world beyond the clerical institution.

[The study of piety and prayer is important] not merely - though surely that would be enough - for its centrality in the study of religious affairs. Its value is much wider: such study gives access to mental and spiritual landscapes hard to approach otherwise. Via the estimate of such values and their vitality, insights may be gained into aspects of the nature and character of society, and of the operation of social and group pressures...Crucial aspects of human behaviour in the past are not readily comprehensible without some grasp of the realities of the world of piety and prayer.<sup>20</sup>

The change in title of O'Farrell's own study of Australian Catholicism, acknowledged to be the most comprehensive to date, in itself signifies the growing awareness of the laity. While the first edition, published in 1967, was called *The Catholic Church in Australia : A Short History*; the 1977 and 1985 editions were issued as *The Catholic Church and community*, a more specific title which differentiated the laity from the institutional structure.<sup>21</sup> In the preface to the 1985 edition O'Farrell explains re-publication on the grounds that the book raises all the 'themes and personalities' which other studies might profitably pursue even if a proper treatment of them is not possible within the book itself.<sup>22</sup> The issue of Catholic spirituality, particularly the spirituality of the Catholic laity, is one of the areas dealt with in passing remarks, leaving a

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<sup>20</sup>Patrick O'Farrell, 'Piety and Prayer as Historical Problems', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 55, 1978, p. 221.

<sup>21</sup>Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church in Australia: a short history, 1788 - 1967*, Melbourne, 1968; *The Catholic Church and community in Australia: a history*, West Melbourne, 1977; *The Catholic Church and community: An Australian history*, Kensington, NSW, 1985.

<sup>22</sup>O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and community*, p. vii.

great deal of room for exploring the interactions of religion and culture, spirituality and politics in the lives of the people.

There has been some study of particular elements present in the spiritual life of Australia's Catholics. In *The Emergence of an Australian Catholic Priesthood* Kevin Livingstone examined the spiritual heritage and likely styles in ministry of Australia's early priests.<sup>23</sup> Ruth Schumann's work on priests in South Australia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has added analysis of the pastoral work of the clergy and commented perspicaciously on the differences between the Austrian Jesuits and the mainstream of Irish priests.<sup>24</sup> The history of particular religious orders, a relatively popular field for Australian Catholic historiography, has also revealed something of the nature of the spirituality which particular orders sought to communicate to the laity.<sup>25</sup> Lay people themselves have been the focus for other studies. Sally Kennedy's work on five organisations for Catholic women which actively resisted the prevailing mythology of womanhood has indicated that lay Catholics were not always passive or absent. They sometimes negotiated a role in the church that went far beyond 'the little Irish Mother'.<sup>26</sup> Catholic women have also been the focus for Hilary Carey's commissioned study of the Catholic

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<sup>23</sup>Kevin Livingstone, *The Emergence of an Australian Catholic Priesthood 1835 - 1915*, Sydney, 1977.

<sup>24</sup>Ruth Schumann, 'The Catholic Priesthood of South Australia 1844 - 1915', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 16, 1990, pp. 51 - 73; ' "...in the hands of the Lord": The Society of Jesus in Colonial South Australia', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, vol. 14, 1986, pp. 35 - 50.

<sup>25</sup>For example Brother Alban Doyle, *The Story of the Marist Brothers in Australia 1872-1972*, Drummoyne, NSW, 1972; Ursula Bygott, *With Pen and Tongue: the Jesuits in Australia, 1865 - 1939*, Carlton, Vic., 1980; Michael A. Endicott OSA, *The Augustinians in Far North Queensland 1883 - 1941*, Brookvale, NSW, 1988; Marie Therese Foale RSJ, *The Josephite Story: the Sisters of St Joseph, their Foundation and Early History 1866 - 1893*, Sydney, 1989; Madeleine Sophie McGrath RSM, *These Women? Women Religious in the history of Australia - The Sisters of Mercy Parramatta*, Kensington, NSW, 1989.

<sup>26</sup>Sally Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism: Catholic Women's Struggles for Self-Expression*, Sydney, 1985.

Women's League in Sydney<sup>27</sup> and James Waldersee has examined the lay involvement with the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.<sup>28</sup> These works scratch the surface of the complex network of lay associations and societies within the church and avoid the more explicitly spiritual sodalities as well as the organisations for social action.<sup>29</sup> In a similar way, while Greg Dening has shown what a rich field the past of an elite school can be for historians interested in culture and the formation of values,<sup>30</sup> the analysis of spirituality and values in Catholic schools has only been hinted at by educationalists, and not historians.<sup>31</sup> Collections of reminiscences and autobiographies of Catholic lay people also add to the picture; as do the histories of some parishes which, as O'Farrell has noted, are more often than not written by lay people.<sup>32</sup>

Historians have not entirely neglected the ways in which ordinary Catholics practiced their faith in Australia. O'Farrell has raised the issue as promised in *The Catholic Church and Community*, and included descriptions of

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<sup>27</sup>Hilary Carey, *Truly Feminine, Truly Catholic: A History of the Catholic Women's League in the Archdiocese of Sydney 1913 -1987*, Kensington, NSW, 1987.

<sup>28</sup>James Waldersee, *A Grain of Mustard Seed, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and Australia 1837 - 1977*, Kensington, NSW, 1983.

<sup>29</sup>Bruce Duncan CSsR is among those who have called for a history of Catholicism in its involvement with wider society, 'Needed: A New History of Catholic Social Activism', *Compass Theology Review*, 1988, pp. 64 - 9. His PhD thesis examines this gap in Sydney. Bruce Duncan, *From Ghetto to Crusade: A Study of the Social and Political Thought of Catholic Opinion Makers in Sydney During the 1930s*, PhD thesis, Sydney University, 1987.

<sup>30</sup>Greg Dening, *Xavier: a centenary portrait*, Kew, Vic., 1978.

<sup>31</sup>For example Ronald Fogarty FMS, *Catholic Education in Australia 1806 - 1950*, Melbourne, 1959; Peter Tannock, *The organization and administration of Catholic Education in Australia*, St Lucia, 1975.

<sup>32</sup>O'Farrell, 'The Writing of Australian Catholic History 1980 - 90', p. 140. As examples of Catholic reminiscences and personal history see Vincent Buckley, *Cutting Green Hay: friendships, movements and cultural conflicts in Australia's great decades*, Melbourne, 1983; Kate and Dominica Nelson (eds), *Sweet Mothers, Sweet Maids: journeys from Catholic childhoods*, Ringwood, Vic., 1986; David Shinnick, *Journey into Justice*, Adelaide, 1982. As examples of parish histories see Joan Brewer, *A History of the Catholic Parish of St Peters, 1934 - 1984*, Adelaide, 1984; Helen McCormack, *By Horse and Buggy: The History of St Mary of the Angels Catholic Church Port Lincoln 1869 - 1986*, n.d.. Held ACAA.; Francis Byrne OSB, *Growing in Faith: Queen of Apostles' Parish Riverton*, Perth, 1989.

devotion to the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin in the general picture of an Irish Australian Church. However, O'Farrell's emphasis remains on the key decision-makers, usually members of the hierarchy, and discussion of the contentious issues - conscription, education, public and political stands - with a firm eastern states focus. Edmund Campion has offered more detail on the nature of piety and prayer. Following his initial, and, for some Catholic readers, offensive, discussion of 'Irish Religion in Australia' for the *Australasian Catholic Record* in 1978, Campion published *Rockchoppers: Growing Up Catholic in Australia* in 1982.<sup>33</sup> This avowedly personal account read as something of a retreat from the controversial project of analysing anyone else's faith, and, while a more comprehensive work appeared in 1987,<sup>34</sup> the broader questions of the meanings of this faith for Australian life have not been wholeheartedly resumed. However, the later work *Australian Catholics* deals extensively with popular piety and provides a valuable foundation for further analysis.

It is important to note that a great deal of the weight of historical analysis of Australian Catholicism has focussed on Sydney and Melbourne. A close study of the spirituality of Catholic people using records from Western Australia and South Australia not only approaches the past of Catholicism in Australia from the perspective of the people, but people whose perspective as residents of Perth and Adelaide has been especially absent from the Australian picture. Ruth Schumann has studied Catholic piety in colonial South Australia<sup>35</sup> but the topic has not been the focus of work on the twentieth-century church in South Australia nor at all in the West Australian context. Indeed the more

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<sup>33</sup>Edmund Campion, *Rockchoppers: Growing Up Catholic in Australia*, Ringwood, Vic., 1982.

<sup>34</sup>Edmund Campion, *Australian Catholics: The Contributions of Catholics to the Development of Australian Society*, Ringwood, Vic., 1987.

<sup>35</sup>Ruth Schumann, 'The Practice of Catholic Piety in Colonial South Australia', *Flinders Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 9, 1983, pp. 6 - 29.

traditional possibilities of Catholic religious history, such as biographies of bishops and other key people, chronologies of parishes and religious orders, have not yet been exhausted for these states. There are general histories for both states,<sup>36</sup> but the scope of these works means that the details of piety and popular devotions of the Catholic people, which lie somewhat under the surface of traditional records and sources, do not attract attention. Without a detailed analysis of the faith practice of the Catholic people and the light that such an analysis might cast on the prevailing images of God and patterns of belief, there is a considerable gap in our knowledge of the history of the Catholic community.

Inherent in the acknowledgement of the historical importance of spirituality is the understanding that there were various styles of spirituality which carried and created diverse meanings for Catholic culture and for the wider society. As Gabriel Brasso noted in his 1956 work on the Catholic liturgical tradition, a particular understanding of God and of how to live in relationship with God was the result of many influences.<sup>37</sup> Within an institutional framework which held some aspects of doctrine and morality to be essential elements of orthodox spirituality Brasso also pointed to the impact of culture and individual circumstances on the way faith was lived. Particular experiences contributed to different types of sanctity, constituting so many different kinds of spirituality.

The degree of culture...has a great influence on the means that will be chosen for the Christian life. So do the kind of

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<sup>36</sup>F. D. Bourke CM, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia 1829-1979*, Perth, 1979; Margaret M. Press RSJ, *From Our Broken Toil : South Australian Catholics 1836 - 1905*, Adelaide, 1986, and *Colour and Shadow: South Australian Catholics, 1906 - 1962*, Adelaide, 1991. Regional studies of Brisbane also show that the study of Australian religion can profit from a close focus, for example, David Hilliard, 'A Church on Every Hill: Religion in Brisbane in the 1950s', *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, vol. 14, 1991, pp. 242 - 62; John McGuire, *Prologue: A History of the Catholic Church as seen from Townsville 1863 - 1983*, Toowoomba, Qld, 1990.

<sup>37</sup>Gabriel M. Brasso OSB, *Liturgy and Spirituality*, trans. L. Doyle, Minnesota, 1956, 1971, pp. 3 - 9.

life, the person's own status or condition, [their] experiences, the preference for some one concrete means of sanctification, the circumstances of time and place, the particular vocation which inclines toward a certain proximate, immediate end (education of youth, practice of works of mercy...) and we might also add the environment, and, in a particular way, the formation received.<sup>38</sup>

More recent commentators have noted the change in Catholic expression of faith over time, and alternative traditions of spirituality which have bubbled beneath that of the dominant culture. In particular, feminist historians and theologians have argued that analysis of the Catholic past needs to take account of gender, not only by considering the religious experience of women, but also by acknowledging the often hidden presence of the archetypal feminine along side the masculine structures of institutional Catholicism.

The Jungian understanding that there is 'masculine' and 'feminine', or a 'left-brain' and 'right-brain' aspect, or 'instrumental' and 'expressive' tendencies, in all human experience has been adopted by theologians as a springboard for the discussion of Catholic spirituality. For example, in his survey of Catholicism, Richard Rohr summarises the understanding of the masculine and feminine archetypes as theologians have applied them to the analysis of spirituality in a series of three contrasting approaches.<sup>39</sup> He explains masculine consciousness as 'analytic', a style which classifies and

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<sup>38</sup>Brasso, *Liturgy and Spirituality*, p. 5.

<sup>39</sup>Richard Rohr and Joseph Martos, *Why Be Catholic? Understanding our Experience and Tradition*, Cincinnati, 1989, pp. 57 - 8. The concepts of masculine and feminine within the psyche are discussed in John A. Sanford, *The Invisible Partners: How the Male and Female in Each of Us Affects Our Relationships*, New York, 1980; James B. Nelson, *The Intimate Connection: Male Sexuality, Masculine Spirituality*, Philadelphia, 1988. For Jung's explanation of the anima/animus, masculine/feminine see for example, William McGuire and R. F. C. Hull, *C. G. Jung Speaking: Interviews and Encounters*, London, 1980; C. G. Jung, *Aspects of the Feminine - from the Collected Works of C. G. Jung volumes 6, 7, 9ii, 10, 17*, Bollingen Series XX, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Princeton, 1982.

distinguishes between aspects of reality in the manner of Greek philosophers or scholastic theologians. Feminine consciousness is 'synthetic'; aware of the whole rather than the parts it combines elements to form new entities in the creative tradition of artists and poets. While the masculine tendency is to look for 'order and ranking', the feminine anima looks for 'connections' in a network of relationships. Masculine consciousness does not shy away from achievement gained through conflict, by exerting 'power and control' over others in order to win. The value that the feminine places on relationship means that 'bonding and caring' takes priority over concerns of winning or losing. This understanding of Jungian contrasts, filtered through theologians of Catholicism, offers the historian a useful model for looking at the changes in Catholic spirituality in the forty years from 1922 to 1962.

Jungians argue that the two strands of consciousness are not necessarily dichotomous, but work together in the individual and collective psyche of human beings, institutions and groups to enable a range of responses to experience. However, when one aspect is ignored, or denied access to the conscious world the repressed part of psyche takes on a distorted form, or is perceived in a partial way and awareness becomes unbalanced. The fear of the feminine, which historians have identified in witch burning, or the drive to destroy the 'other' which was at the heart of the Holocaust have both been cited as examples of imbalance and the denial of the 'right-brain' in Western society.<sup>40</sup> In her work

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<sup>40</sup>Rosemary Haughton, 'Reclaiming the Feminine' in [Missionaries of the Sacred Heart ed], *A New Heart for a New World: an exploration of the desires of God's heart*, Homebush, NSW, 1986, pp. 168 - 9. Explanations of witch hunts in terms of gender are offered by Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healers*, Old Westbury, New York, 1973; Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, London, 1981, pp. 178 - 222; Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Hammondswoth, 1969. The possibilities of taking the analysis beyond gathering evidence of misogyny are discussed in J. A. Sharpe, 'Witchcraft and women in seventeenth century England: some Northern evidence', *Continuity and Change*, vol. 6, 1991, pp. 179 - 199.

on feminine spirituality Rosemary Haughton argues that the church in the West has also repressed its consciousness of the feminine, driving a wedge between dogma and devotion, intellect and emotion, men and women, and casting each side of the divide in extreme roles to the detriment of a fully integrated approach to God. This thesis will argue that twentieth-century Catholicism felt the effects of such a split.

It is worth noting however, that to label an aspect of culture, whether a style of dress or a style of spirituality, as 'masculine' or 'feminine' is to play a dangerous game. The terms are far from transparent; not only do they connote the biological categories of male and female, but the cultural understanding of what is characteristic of men and women. Feminist commentators on Jung have pointed out the danger that an emphasis on gender differences might merely reinforce stereotypical notions of differences between the sexes. There is a need to guard against identifying a particular set of characteristics as irrevocably 'feminine' or 'masculine' and limiting our understanding of gender by assuming one set of characteristics is less accessible to each sex.<sup>41</sup> Of great value, however, is the understanding that there are two strands of qualities in the human psyche, two modes of understanding experience, which complement each other and need to be integrated. Analysis of the dynamics of masculine and feminine spiritualities is therefore a different enterprise from examining the spiritualities of men and women in the church, although the two issues are related. The first question concerns the style of spirituality which prevailed, perhaps underpinned by distorted notions of what was appropriate to women or

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<sup>41</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Feminist Spirituality, Christian Identity and Catholic Vision', in Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (eds), *Womanspirit Rising : A Feminist Reader in Religion*, San Francisco, 1979, p. 142. Jung's androcentricism is a central problem for feminist scholars of his work, see Demaris Wehr, *Jung and Feminism: Liberating Archetypes*, Boston, 1987, especially chapter 5; also Ann Loades, *Searching for Lost Coins: explorations in christianity and feminism*, London, 1987; Patricia Wilson-Kastner, *Faith, Feminism and the Christ*, Philadelphia, 1983, especially chapter 1.

men; the second question concerns the ways in which men and women reacted to particular spiritual climates.

The argument for recognising distinct masculine and feminine spiritualities within the Catholic tradition often begins with a discussion of the nature of God. Scholars, especially scripture scholars, have taken their readers to the sources of Christian tradition to demonstrate that God is not exclusively masculine.<sup>42</sup> These predominantly theological works point out that while God is no more a woman than She is a man, God is also no more masculine than feminine, and that Christian sources use both female and male imagery for God. The integrated feminine and masculine qualities of God are found even in such patriarchal sources as the Book of Genesis where the androgynous Yahweh 'created man in the image of himself, ...male and female he created them'.<sup>43</sup> The Wisdom books of the Old Testament, the translation of the Wisdom tradition into the New Testament accounts of Jesus, and the parables of Jesus which use feminine imagery have been the focus of feminist exegesis. This scholarship aims to establish the presence of the feminine archetype in the Christian tradition, even if such images have been hidden in recent Catholic practice. Other scholars have shown that there have been alternative views of God

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<sup>42</sup>Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, Philadelphia, 1978; Rosemary Haughton, Eleanor McLaughlin, 'The Christian Past: Does it Hold a Future for Women?', in Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow (eds), *Womanspirit Rising*, New York, 1979, pp. 93 - 105; Joan Chamberlain Englesman, *The Feminine Dimension of the Divine*, Philadelphia, 1979; Leonardo Boff, *The Maternal Face of God: The Feminine and its Religious Expressions*, trans R. Barr and J. Dierckmeir, San Francisco, 1987; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Feminist Spirituality, Christian Identity and Catholic Vision', in *Womanspirit Rising*, pp.136 - 48, also *In Memory of Her, A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, New York, 1983. Patricia Wilson-Kastner gives an overview of various approaches of feminists to questions of God and gender in chapter 1 of *Faith, Feminism and the Christ*, Philadelphia, 1983.

<sup>43</sup>Genesis 1:27, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, London, 1990.

competing with the predominantly patriarchal interpretation of institutional Catholicism.<sup>44</sup>

In Jungian terms the search for a feminine God is not exclusively a Christian project, but informs work on spirituality in many traditions. The acknowledgement of a gendered creation becomes fundamental to analysis of all human experience, including religion. Pascaline Coff advances this view, arguing that the movement towards androgyny is one towards redemption.

The whole of creation has been interwoven with this complementarity of feminine and masculine elements to maintain the cosmic harmony. This sexual polarity not only exists on psychological levels, but the human duality expresses an antithesis at the very heart of things... Being the warp and woof of the whole of creation, these feminine and masculine qualities are obviously also two sides of human nature, two sides of the human brain. For each of us is androgynous, both female and male, and both elements, in harmonious balance, are essential. ...That the original human being was believed to be androgynous is found in many ancient traditions, such as the Persian, Greek and Talmudic myths. In India the androgen is usually conceived as Siva and his consort, Parvati, fused into one being. As a matter of fact, the androgen is the symbol of supreme identity in most religious systems.<sup>45</sup>

With Ann Ulanov, Coff argues that the integration of feminine and masculine is essential for a humanly healthy perception of the Divine and a positive religious system:

If the feminine is neglected, in its contrasexual form within the masculine, or is misunderstood as a second-

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<sup>44</sup>For example, Ann Loades, *Searching for Lost Coins: Explorations in Christianity and Feminism*, London, 1987; Leonard Swindler, *Biblical Affirmations of Women*, Philadelphia, 1979.

<sup>45</sup>Pascaline Coff OSB, 'Eve, Where Are You?', in Bina Gupta (ed), *Sexual Archetypes, East and West*, New York, 1987, pp. 17 - 20.

best category of human sexuality, then not only is the fullness of the human being damaged, but the relation of the human and the divine is damaged as well.<sup>46</sup>

Working from similar assumptions Leonardo Boff began his work on God as 'mother' in the Catholic tradition by tracing a general distinction in religions between the maternal and paternal orientations toward God. The maternal approach finds God related to the earth, the generation of life and the mystery of death. This chthonic or telluric orientation looks to the origin of things and therefore is primarily conscious of a state of original reconciliation. Paternal religious impulses on the other hand are identified as those related to the sky where there is God who is infinite and transcendent. In the uranic or celestial orientation there is concern for salvation, 'last things' and the birth of the Reign of God.<sup>47</sup> Expressive (or 'feminine') spirituality reflects an experience of God who is accessible to human beings, involved in the world and intimately connected with creation. This contrasts with the more instrumental (or 'masculine') understanding of God as transcendent, creating the world from beyond the realm of human beings.

The notion that the gender distinction is fundamental to a discussion of religion has been firmly established by scholars from psychological and theological perspectives. The issue for historians of Catholicism becomes that of tracing the presence and absence of both masculine and feminine styles of spirituality as they affected the lives of Catholic people; and of examining the impact of these spiritualities in cultural and political contexts as well as in the

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<sup>46</sup>Ann Ulanov, *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology*, Evanston, 1971, p. 292; cited Coff, 'Eve, Where Are You?', p. 20.

<sup>47</sup>Leonardo Boff, *The Maternal Face of God: The Feminine and its Religious Expressions*, p. 84; see also Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 110 - 69 and especially pp. 135 - 46 for a view of interpretations of God as feminine; also Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*, Philadelphia, 1982.

more strictly 'religious' sphere. The structure of this thesis, outlined below, falls into three sections which explore different facets of lay Catholic spirituality.

Part I of this thesis begins with a brief survey of the context of lay Catholics in Adelaide and Perth between 1922 and 1962, considering the place of Catholics in wider society and of lay people within the church. The assumption that authentic Catholicism was Irish, working-class and 'womanly' in character remained a powerful influence on Catholic spirituality, even while the social and economic diversity of the church was becoming apparent. The hierarchy of vocations within Catholicism placed the lay people significantly lower in the ranks of holiness than priests or consecrated religious, with the result that the spirituality of lay people was regarded as a second-best approach to God. The particular view of the world which Catholic belief and practice tended to engender is examined in chapter 2. The Catholic view of the world between 1922 and 1962 was founded on a sense of difference from wider society, and faith in the convictions of the institutions which offered both security and serious consequences if they were transgressed. The clear distinctions of masculine spirituality were challenged to a more feminine muddiness when Catholic contact with the world became a reality, as, for example, when an individual considered marriage with a non-Catholic, or when Catholic university students reflected on their increasing participation in the secular life. The sense of Catholic difference became not so much a matter of preserving the ghetto but of moving more triumphantly into wider society. Together with the dogmatic defensiveness there was a concern to develop an Incarnational style of faith which interacted with the world.

Part II examines the devotional life of Catholicism, and looks at three aspects of this expressive mode. Often identified with flossy and emotive

spirituality of the repressed feminine, 'Devotional Catholicism' has been recognised as a category of analysis within the historiography of religion,<sup>48</sup> and was an important way of expressing Catholic commitment in the 40 years leading up to the Second Vatican Council. Chapter 3 examines the characteristics of devotionism, and, in particular, focuses on changes in the image of Christ. After 1936 and the Spanish Civil War, the increasingly anti-communist tone of Catholicism worked against the traditional assumption that piety was women's work. The social and political concerns of twentieth-century Catholic Action brought religion closer to the traditional sphere of men. Chapter 3 explores in particular the images of the Sacred Heart and Christ the King as a response to this change in the orientation of religion. Chapter 4 considers the dynamics of Marian spirituality. Devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus, remained a central feature of Catholic spirituality throughout this period. The many meanings and images of Mary, and the political undertones of devotion to Our Lady of Fatima when Mary's intercession was regarded as crucial to the future of the world, offer a revealing example of Catholicism using a feminine shroud for previously 'unspiritual' activities. Chapters 5 and 6 shift the focus to the twentieth-century recruits to the company of heaven, with a study of popular sanctity as a window to the spiritual world of ordinary people and a close analysis of the cult of Thérèse of Lisieux. The role of this young woman as a model of holiness is considered in the light of the sub-texts of her autobiography and cult, where she presented Australian Catholics with a paradoxical spirituality of child-like trust and rugged individualism. Devotional Catholicism maintained a relatively constant form in the years of this study, but the content was not so unremittingly other-worldly as tradition would lead historians to expect. The figures of Christ, of his mother, Mary, and of the Carmelite nun, Thérèse, all

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<sup>48</sup>For example, Jay P. Dolan uses 'Catholicism, devotional' as a heading with 18 sub-headings in the index to *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present*, New York, 1985.

had many faces. The gentle and wonder-working element of the Divine remained evident, but the prominent images of holiness also included models which directed Catholic attention to the secular world.

Concerns with the Catholic mission in the modern world and lay responsibility within the church underpin the argument of Part III. The mode of spirituality examined here is more clearly 'instrumental' or 'masculine', but again the style cannot be characterised without qualification. While it has become relatively common to identify church structures and practices as 'patriarchal', only rarely have forms of spirituality been identified as 'masculine'. The term is an awkward one, because it carries connotations of patriarchy, and in the same way as 'feminine' can be confused with nineteenth century notions of abject femininity, so 'masculine' slides into being misunderstood as oppressive machismo. In part the absence of a masculine label on spiritual forms also stems from historical neglect of the twentieth century, the time when a counterpart to feminine devotions was likely to emerge. Indeed, as historians examine the development of Catholic Activism, and especially lay activism since the 1930s, a body of work is being developed on facets of the church's apostolate which were certainly different and potentially complementary to the spirituality of devotionism. Work by Debra Campbell, Alden Brown and Mary Irene Zotti points especially to a concern for evangelisation and social justice.<sup>49</sup> As a basis for the study of Catholic Action, Chapter 7 examines the ritual life of Catholicism and shows how the liturgy and public prayer of Catholicism, founded solidly on tradition, was also an

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<sup>49</sup>Debra Campbell, 'The Struggle to Serve: From Lay Apostolate to the Ministry Explosion', in Dolan et al, *Transforming Parish Ministry: The Changing Roles of Clergy, Laity and Women Religious*, New York, 1990, pp. 201 - 80; Mary Irene Zotti, *A Time of Awakening, The Young Christian Worker Story in the United States, 1938 - 1970*, Chicago, 1991; Alden V. Brown, *The Grail Movement and American Catholicism, 1940 - 1975*, Notre Dame Studies in American Catholicism, Notre Dame, 1989.

important window on concerns for change. The Mystical Body of Christ, a feminine, relational model of church, which liturgical practice sought increasingly to reflect, offered Divine impetus for the recognition of the spiritual status of lay people and their work in the world. The evidence suggests that the physical location of the liturgy, in churches designed and decorated in a self-consciously other-worldly style, and the structure of the church's public worship with significant appeal to the senses and emotion, were important vehicles for the feminine strand of devotion. The liturgy was also a significant focus for revision. The masculine spiritualities of action encouraged lay Catholics to develop an understanding of the institution's ritual, at the same time as the institution itself paid greater attention to role of lay men and women in worship. Chapter 8 gives full attention to the development of the concept of the lay apostolate, especially the masculine method of the Jocist groups and the spirituality of Gospel-based action. The term 'Catholic Action' was interpreted in a great variety of ways in Australia, and movements drawing on the devotional forms of the sodalities and the intellectual preoccupations of existing study circles all played their part, sometimes as foundation and sometimes as counter-point, in the gradual evolution of a distinctive spirituality of the lay apostolate.

Thus, while between 1922 and 1962 there was a significant movement of lay Catholics in Australia away from forms of spirituality centred mainly around pious sodalities to Catholic organisations aimed at encouraging Gospel-inspired action in the everyday world, the movement was not a simple substitution of masculine values for feminine traits. The new spirituality was not exclusive of the old, but rather a blend, or what Jung might term an 'integration', albeit often uncomfortable, of two strands of faith practice.

Acknowledging and analysing the interweaving of these strands of Catholic experience is essential if we are to come to a deeper understanding of the ways in which Australian Catholicism interacted with the wider society. I hope that my work will make a contribution to answering the important questions of social history about the values and beliefs that shaped and were shaped by the experiences of people in the past. It is my aim to demonstrate quite clearly that the Catholic past in Australia is not just about bishops and buildings, but relies for its heart on the complex lives of ordinary people, who continually made choices about the way they expressed their faith.

## PART I: LOCATING CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY

Chapter 1: Catholics in Context

The general trends in Australia's social environment were important factors in the shifts in Australian Catholic spirituality in the twentieth century. The style of Catholic participation in modern Australian society varied from outright condemnation of its Godlessness, through ambivalent observation and compliance, to a triumphant underlining of the Catholic contribution in the new land. Whatever their stance, as critics, consumers or conspirators, Australian Catholics interacted in some way with the wider social environment. As aspects of a distinct, but not dominant, culture within Australia, Catholic institutions and individuals were faced with the need to respond to changes in the wider milieu.

Adelaide and Perth were very different environments in 1962 from what they had been in 1922. The effects of the broader changes on Catholicism were considerable, and developments in spirituality occurred in the context of variations in the social status of Catholic income earners, the proportion of Catholics born overseas, and the community expectation of the roles of men and women in religious matters.

In the 40 years which encompassed the social and economic affects of two world wars, the Depression of the 1930s, and the period of post-war reconstruction, the ideology of 'development' was dominant in both WA and SA.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lenore Layman, 'Development Ideology in Western Australia 1933 - 1965', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 20, 1982, pp. 234 - 60; R. J. Holten, 'Twentieth Century South Australia: From a Patrician to a Plebian View', in Eric Richards (ed), *The Flinders History of South Australia - Social History*, Netley, South Australia, 1986, pp. 550 - 82.

Development was generally equated with industrialisation so that an overview of South Australia and Western Australia in the twentieth century identifies a society in the throes of a broadly-based shift from a predominantly agricultural and colonial world-view, to that of a more autonomous industrialising nation. The United States began to replace Great Britain on the world horizon of many Australians, particularly after the Second World War when the strong economy of the USA became the model for Australian consumer society. Private cars, fridges, washing machines and television all became hallmarks of success in national development. Economic and public political activities had a high priority in terms of community survival; and it was when these systems were collapsing or threatened, as during the 1930s Depression, the world wars and the 1950s Cold War, that the community was most open to the private sphere where religion and family-life were important.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, in times of crisis, the values of the private sphere came into their own as alternative sources of security.<sup>3</sup>

Immigration from Europe had been edging Australia towards more diversity in its Anglo-Celtic culture from the 1920s,<sup>4</sup> but it was the federal government's concerted efforts to increase the Australian population, and expand the manufacturing sector, in the period after World War II that brought a large

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<sup>2</sup>Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic change and Military Conflict from 1500 - 2000*, New York, 1987, pp. 357 - 59; A. W. Martin, 'The People', in A. Curthoys, A. W. Martin, Tim Rowse (eds), *Australians From 1939*, Sydney, 1987, pp. 59 - 76, Alan D. Gilbert, 'Cities and Suburbs', *ibid.*, pp. 77 - 98, and his 'Religion and Politics', *ibid.*, pp. 197 - 213.

<sup>3</sup> This division of public and private spheres and the implications for participation of women and men in religion is examined below drawing on Barbara Welter, 'The Feminization of American Religion 1800-1860', chapter 6 in *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Athens, Ohio, 1976, pp. 83 - 102.

<sup>4</sup>For example, the census figures for 1933 showed a dramatic increase in immigration from Italy, Poland and Yugoslavia between 1921 and 1933. *1933 Census*, part X table 4. Persons born in Italy increased from 8,135 in 1921 to 26,756 in 1933; in Poland from 1,780 to 3,239 and in Yugoslavia from 829 to 3,969. See also James Jupp (ed), *The Australian People: an encyclopedia of the nation, its people and their origins*, North Ryde, NSW, 1988.

and sudden increase in the number of immigrants to Australia.<sup>5</sup> Whether these arrivals can be said to constitute cultural diversity is doubtful in the light of deep community suspicion of non-British 'New Australians'. A general policy of assimilation, and an expectation that a common language was the key to a common nation, reserved a special place for British immigrants. A lingering racism, exemplified by the White Australia Policy, marked the experience of many non-English speaking 'New Australians'. While a large proportion of the new and marginalised non-British arrivals were Catholics,<sup>6</sup> the general position of Catholics within the social hierarchy improved at this time, especially in WA, and especially from the 1930s. The pace of change in an industrialising society, where major events of economic depression and war could not fail to make an impact, presented the Catholic church in Australia with complex questions.

To a significant extent the challenges facing Australian Catholicism in the twentieth century mirrored those of the church in other western countries. In their study of *Conflict and Change in the Catholic Church*, John Seidler and Katherine Meyer consider the effect of industrialisation on international Catholicism.<sup>7</sup> They conclude that the corollaries of industrialisation - civil democratic government, expanded access to education, and greater emphasis on personal fulfilment - were strongly resisted by the Catholic church in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As an organization at home in a feudal, patriarchal, agrarian society, the institution of Catholicism found the industrial

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<sup>5</sup>Martin notes that there were 310 000 assisted migrants to Australia between 1947 and 1951, of which number 120 000 were British. Another 165 000 people from Britain, the Netherlands, Italy Greece and Cypria paid their own passage. 'The People', p. 62.

<sup>6</sup>Gilbert records over 600 000 Catholics arriving from Europe in the period from 1945 to the early 1980s, with estimates that 40% were Italian, 15% Polish and 10% each Dutch, Yugoslav and Czechoslovakian, 'Religion and Politics', 'Religion and Politics', p. 199.

<sup>7</sup> John Seidler and Katherine Meyer, *Conflict and Change in the Catholic Church*, New Brunswick, 1989.

world ill-fitting. However, it would be going too far to say that industrialisation necessarily enfeebled Catholicism. As Mary Douglas has pointed out, most of the strength of the argument that the modern world is antithetical to traditional religion depends on an illusory view of the pre-modern world, an analysis of the modern world which is distorted by the unacknowledged secular bias of academic culture, and a neglect of the evidence of resilience and revival of traditional religion in twentieth century cultures as diverse as Poland, South America and the United States.<sup>8</sup> However, the anti-modernist dogma of Pius IX, whose pontificate ran from 1846 to 1878, certainly encapsulated a deep Catholic suspicion of the secular world which was reflected in Catholic spirituality in the 1920s and 30s. Similarly, the growing awareness within Catholicism of a need to come to terms with secular changes, and the diverse ways in which Catholics approached the modern world, are essential features of the study of Catholic spirituality in the 1940s, 50s and 60s.

A broad survey of the consequences of industrialisation gives some indication of the context of Australian Catholicism between 1922 and 1962. Changes in technology, social structures and ideology were all significant. As technology brought shorter working hours and more leisure, personal fulfilment became more important and the prevailing view of salvation was called into question. It became increasingly difficult for Catholics and others to hold the view that this world was merely a vale of tears and a proving ground for heaven; and the need for faith to speak to social issues became more apparent. Technology also brought the possibility that traditional divisions of labour

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<sup>8</sup>Mary Douglas, 'The Effects of Modernization on Religious Change', *Daedalus*, vol. 111, 1982, pp. 1 - 20. For study of religion in industrial setting see Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the late Victorian city*, London, 1974; *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain*, London, 1984; E. R. Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City*, London, 1957.

might change. The expectations of western communities in general, and of middle-class women in particular, were affected by access to paid work for women. The development of new forms of contraception brought changes in the role of women and to community attitudes to sexuality. Improved transport and communication brought Europe into contact with other complex cultures and began to break down some of the ethnocentrism of European Catholicism; and archeology and anthropology together with improvements in the technology of research required new understandings of the Bible and the Christian past.

Changes in the social structures of the industrialising west also had implications for the church. While Australia's precocious social legislation had prefigured many of the decisions of twentieth-century Europe, the increasing commonality of universal suffrage, civil governments and compulsory education reinforced the cultural influence of these practices in Australia. The growth of urban life in other countries also meant that the Australian experience was becoming more mainstream, and other countries also had to deal with a myth of agricultural life and a style of church living designed to be complementary to small agricultural communities, while the reality of urban industrial society was quite different.

One way of locating Catholics within this increasingly complex community is to consider the numerical data provided by official government census and internal church records for the years between 1922 and 1962. While statistics are of limited value in dealing with the subtleties of religious experience, the numerical evidence provides a framework for the analysis of spirituality. The following sections use census data as a framework for considering the context of Catholicism in Adelaide and Perth, and suggest some broad effects of class, ethnicity and gender on the spirituality of Catholic people in these cities.

*Catholic Population and Distribution: the numbers and the maps*

The statistical record is only a partial view of Catholicism at this time, but still a significant way of building up the broader picture and an important basis in which to locate more descriptive evidence. As Jean Delumeau has commented for the sixteenth-century counter-reformation:

One can maintain that...religious situations will always retain something beyond mere numbers and that belief and charity can never be translated into figures, and yet at the same time admit the inevitable presence of what is quantitative in religious history. Therefore it is a matter of measuring, not intimate spiritual states, but the effects and signs of belief and the attitudes it inspires.<sup>9</sup>

The flaws and failings in the collections of both the national and local statistics also speak in themselves of the availability of resources for an activity which was not directly linked with maintenance of the church, as well as providing an indication of the sense of stability within a local diocese, and the readiness of a particular community or individual to face an external appraisal of reality. The figures of the Australian government census collected in 1921, 1933, 1947, 1954 and 1961 all add, in contrast and comparison, to the statistics collected internally by the church and help to locate Catholicism within the wider social setting.

The records of the Catholic church in Australia provide some rich veins of numerical evidence. Statistics had been used by the first Catholics in Australia to justify the call to Rome and the authorities for more pastors, and later to add weight to a story of growth and development. By 1937 the

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<sup>9</sup> Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter Reformation*, trans. Jeremy Moiser, Philadelphia, 1977, p. 134.

*Australian Messenger of the Sacred Heart* could remark wryly that, for some, 'the taking of statistics [had become] not only a duty but a joy surpassing that of golf'.<sup>10</sup> The *Messenger* itself was among the many Australian Catholic institutions which also made time within their apostolate to calculate their 'progress' under various criteria.

One valuable and wide-ranging source of numerical information was the annual *Directory of the Catholic Church in Australasia*. Since its inception as a guide for the hierarchy in Australia and Rome in 1858, this publication had included long tables detailing the numbers of Catholics in various categories. By following the classifications set up for official use, the historian can discover what features were considered important enough to count - the laity, for instance, were not - and which external signs were taken to indicate the success of Catholicism. With the brief to cover Australia and New Zealand the *Directory* concentrated on large scale, visible developments which were understood to indicate expansion and achievement, such as newly established schools, churches and charitable institutions.

From the broad sweep of the *Directory* some bishops moved to ask more finely honed questions about the life of the church as it concerned the people. During Archbishop Beovich's administration in Adelaide a standard questionnaire was developed to streamline the process of episcopal visitation, during which the archbishop examined the workings of a particular parish.<sup>11</sup> These surveys provide important insights into the activities and priorities of particular parishes, and demonstrate the criteria parish priests used to identify an individual as 'a good Catholic'.

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<sup>10</sup>*Australian Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, 4 June 1937, Golden Jubilee Issue, p. 26.

<sup>11</sup>Episcopal Visitation Records Archdiocese of Adelaide, ACAA.

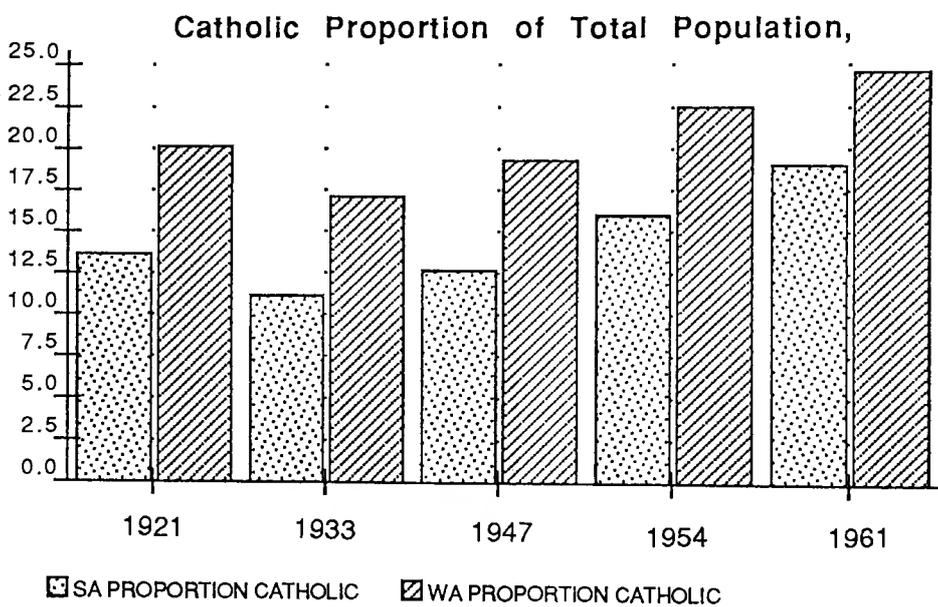
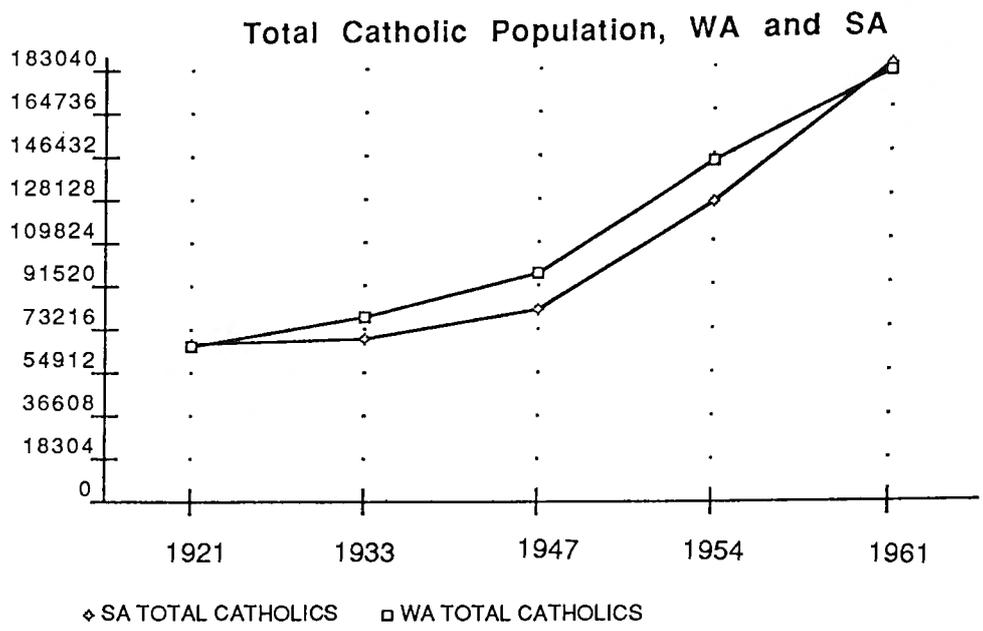


Figure 1. Number and proportion of Catholics in WA and SA, Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1921, 1933, 1947, 1954, 1961.

A common starting point for both the church and governmental collections of statistics about Catholics in Australia was 'How many Catholics are there?'. The figures collected by the Bureau of Statistics show a Catholic population increasing in number and proportion in both states. In South Australia, where the figures for religious adherence were most notable for the very strong representation of non-conformist churches, the proportion of Catholics was lower than in W.A. However, given the staunchly Anglican flavour of so much of the establishment in Perth, Catholics in Western Australia, while a larger percentage of the population, might well have been less well received than in the more diverse climate of South Australia. The experience of sectarianism was common to both states, and individuals were aware of the various firms which employed Catholics. In each state the Catholic community was large enough to sustain a sense of 'difference' based largely on practices which expressed their common faith. The graphs in figure 1 illustrate the variations in the raw figures for Catholic adherents in each state, and the proportion of the population which those figures represent.

It is interesting to note that after 1933, the number of respondents declaring themselves to be 'Catholic' rather than 'Roman Catholic' in the government census rose markedly in both states, though most significantly in South Australia. In general the resistance to the 'Roman' adjective was a protest against the notion that others might think of themselves as Catholic when not in communion with Rome; the feeling was that genuine Catholics had no use for the redundant descriptor. In the lead-up to the 1954 census the *Record* explicitly informed its readers in a boxed notice that 'it is the wish of His Grace the Archbishop that the faithful should describe themselves as Catholic not as

R.C.(sic).<sup>12</sup> Obviously some Catholics did designate themselves 'R.C.', a choice which clearly indicated that there was a variety of responses to the institution within the Catholic population.

The statistics collected by church administrators give some indications of the different standing within the institution of the people identified as Catholic in the government census. Historical analysis can draw fruitfully on the clear distinctions drawn within the church itself between clergy, professed religious and lay people. These groups were perceived by Catholics as distinct because of the diverse ways in which the people within the three categories related to the church or expressed their faith. In 1922, at the beginning of Pius XI's pontificate, only the classifications 'clergy' and 'professed religious' were thought of as having a particular and special calling within the church. One of the key features of the next forty years was the gradual recognition of a specifically lay vocation within Catholicism. While in 1962 it was still generally considered that lay Catholics remained last in the holiness race, there was a growing awareness amongst priests and people in Australia that women and men who remained active citizens of the world could play an important role in the church.

Significantly, even this internal data has to be manipulated before there is a clear figure for the number of Catholic lay people. The *Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia* published figures for the Catholic population of South Australia and Western Australia in several categories: priests (diocesan or 'secular' and regular<sup>13</sup>), members of men's and women's religious orders, students in Catholic schools and an overall total. The 'total' figures do not tally

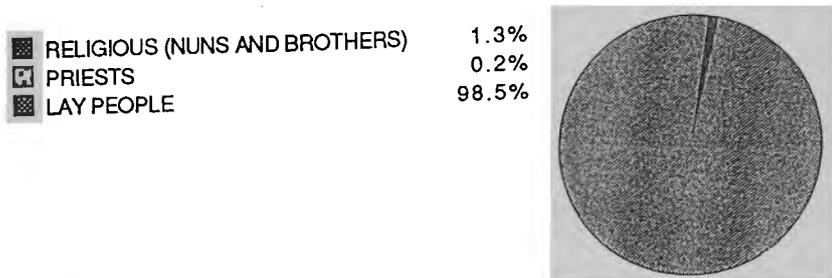
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<sup>12</sup>*Record*, 24 June 1954, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>The term 'regular clergy' referred to priests who were members of religious communities. 'Diocesan' or 'secular' clergy were ordained priests not bound by religious vows.

## PROPORTION OF LAY PEOPLE

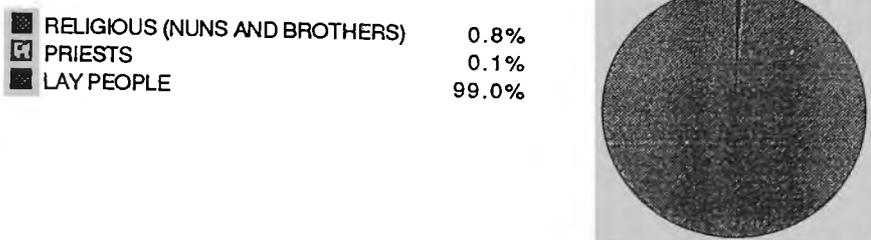
### WA 1922



### WA 1962



### SA 1922



### SA 1962



Figure 2. Proportion of lay people within the Catholic church in SA and WA, statistics drawn from *Directory of the Catholic Church in Australasia, 1922 - 1962*.

with the findings of the various Commonwealth census, but are consistently lower, though by varying amounts in different years and in the different states, and suddenly and conspicuously updated following a government census. While the method the church used to collect its numbers is not discussed in the publication, oral evidence suggests that figures were generated by the archbishops' secretaries sending off whatever was available.<sup>14</sup> The church figures are therefore likely to obscure Catholics who did not cross the path of the institution and to be most accurate for those categories of people closest to the institution. By adding these institutional figures together and subtracting them from the census total for the Catholic population, the historian gets a rough but compelling figure for the number of lay people within the church. The picture is an arresting one of several thousand undifferentiated laity contrasted with a visible and identifiable priesthood and consecrated religious class. A comparison over time and in the two states shows that lay people were at least 98.5% of the church population throughout the period (see figure 2).

The invisibility of the ordinary Catholic people was entrenched in the very terminology of the day, making the word 'laity' itself a vexed label for the student of the life of Catholic people. To call Catholics 'lay' is to point immediately to their non-ordained status, to define them as 'other' in the eyes of the ordained hierarchy of the church. While in strict canon law the formally professed nuns, and the non-ordained religious brothers and monks were technically members of the church's 'laity', in the common understanding of the church between 1922 and 1962, these men and women were differentiated from the greater body of ordinary Catholic people. The 'laity' then was synonymous with 'those without any special status in the church'. The term makes no distinction between the vastly different experience of single Catholics, young

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<sup>14</sup> Interview 'E', Sister of Mercy, Name in confidence, Perth WA, 1 March 1989. Notes held by author.

Catholics, or married men and women,<sup>15</sup> but is in itself a fundamental example of the blase manner in which institutional Catholicism could dismiss the everyday life of so many of its adherents. As a label which clouds over the diverse circumstances in which Catholics lived out their faith, the 'laity' is set to be anathematised by those interested in drawing out the richness and complexity of Catholic responses to different experiences of life. A sharper vocabulary than that available to Catholics before Vatican II is required to reflect those differences. However, the word 'laity' was a fundamental component of ecclesiastical vocabulary in the period under review, and underpins a distinction which operated powerfully in the self-understanding of Catholics of this time. While acknowledging a manifold reality, it remains legitimate for an historian to use 'laity' as a blanket term primarily because it reflects the distinction between the priests, religious and people which shaped so much of the experience of the church in the past.

Between 1922 and 1962 lay Catholics were perceived as 'not priests', 'not religious', even as less than fully fledged practitioners of their faith. The power of the church was seen to reside in the hierarchy and the work of the church was undertaken by the nuns in the schools and the priests in the parishes. As Patrick O'Farrell contends the 'laity' were perceived as 'recipients'.<sup>16</sup> Even after 1947 when Catholic Action groups were enabling lay men and women to take greater responsibility in the church, the catch-cry was that the laity were invited to 'participate in the apostolate of the hierarchy'.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>See also Teresa Pirolla, 'Laity - a block to the mission of the Church?', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 66, 1989, pp. 422 - 31.

<sup>16</sup>Patrick O'Farrell, 'Lay Spirituality and Historical Conditioning', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 55, 1978, pp. 36 - 42.

<sup>17</sup> The classical papal definition of Catholic Action first used in 1922. See below chapter 8.

The institutional assumption that the laity was a passive body of believers was clearly demonstrated in the questions asked of Adelaide's parish priests during Archbishop Beovich's administration. As part of the preparation for a formal visit from the bishop parish priests responded to a formal schedule of questions, and the answers to these surveys, available for the sample of parishes visited between 1941 and 1960, do not betray any notion of lay people taking responsibility for the church. The survey, both in its original form and in the revised version of the early 1960s, was heavily weighted towards details of church buildings and facilities; but even in this area, where oral and written parish histories reveal the laity to have been exceptionally significant, the 'Father' of the parish was the person in whom authority rested and in whose assessment the institution was interested.

The survey shows the institution approaching the laity as a benevolent provider of services to pliant clients. Of 115 questions in the first version of the questionnaire, 53 related to the laity at least indirectly: 34 of these enquired about the provision of instruction, opportunities for devotional activities and the administration of sacraments, 18 related to the number of Catholic children attending Catholic or state schools and the reception of the sacraments, and one asked for the amount paid to any lay teachers in the parish school. The balance remained very much the same in the second version, notwithstanding the development of Catholic Action movements, which emphasised the role of lay people as apostles for the church in the world. In what was admittedly an institutional survey, the workings of the corporate machine were paramount, and an obedient laity was simply assumed as part of that well-oiled mechanism. Given the elusive nature of 'spirituality', it was only to be expected that a survey of this kind would show a pre-occupation with things that could be counted, and avoid more qualitative discussions about the nature of the faith being practiced. However, nowhere in the survey was there

any acknowledgement that counting heads did not tell the whole story of a successful Catholic life.

In contrast, the survey returns themselves indicated that the laity did not simply comply. While the priests' responses certainly do show a respectable level of conformity to church requirements amongst the laity, they by no means demonstrate 100% cohesion. While the survey reflects the assumptions of the institutional church and therefore does not indicate whether or not there was lay activity outside the traditional expectations of the church, it does give instances of people falling short of the mark. For example, figures for attendance at Sunday mass rarely exceed 70%, with the number of communicants less again. Membership of the lay associations and sodalities is even more revealing, with estimates of membership hovering around 200 men and women in parishes ten times that size.<sup>18</sup> Such figures are especially significant in the light indications from the oral history of the period that most 'good Catholics' belonged to an appropriate group.<sup>19</sup>

The collection of figures for Catholics who were out of step with the church's regulations altogether is especially significant as evidence of an institutional awareness of diversity amongst the laity. Despite the likelihood that these Catholics would be even more hidden from mainstream reports than the laity in general, priests were able to supply details of the number of marriages of Catholics outside the church, the number of marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics and the figures for a separate category labelled 'clandestine marriage', which can be construed as referring to *de facto*

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<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, for example, returns for parishes of Glenelg, Croydon, Hectorville, Norwood.

<sup>19</sup>Interviews, Mrs Agnes Staude, Mrs Anne Skinner, Victoria Park WA, 7 November 1989. Notes held by author. Mrs Maureen Menagh, South Perth, WA, 17 March 1990, Mrs Patricia Fitzpatrick with author, Adelaide SA, 20 March 1990; Mr James Scollin, 14 March 1990, Adelaide SA. Tapes held by author.

relationships.<sup>20</sup> The priests' answers to these questions demonstrate a high level of detailed knowledge of their parishioners, of the kind which could only have been gleaned through involvement with the people concerned or those close to them. The more expansive replies to these questions indicate not only the priests' concern for the spiritual welfare of the one percent or so<sup>21</sup> of their parishioners who came to their attention in this way, but also the institutional preoccupation with the need to maintain the Catholic faith and family, and guard against the temptations of an unsuitable marriage. The figures for children of Catholic parents who were not baptised or who were attending government schools were also collected, and often linked to the number of irregular marriages. That statistics exist for these categories indicates that the church was aware of lay decision-making, at least in the negative, as individuals chose to distance themselves and their children from the institution.

As well as acknowledging diversity within the parish structure, the range of information collected by the government allows some consideration of diversity between parishes and in relation to the general population. In particular, in light of the common assumption that Catholic people were of the working class, it is interesting to examine the census data for what it will reveal about Catholics in relation to income over the years of this study.

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<sup>20</sup>I am grateful to David Hilliard for speculation on this point.

<sup>21</sup>For example Glenelg recorded 0.7% irregular marriages in 1952 and 1.3% in 1958; Croydon 0.5% in 1957 and 1.1% in 1960.

### *Assumptions about Class and Spirituality*

Between 1922 and 1962 it became increasingly difficult to characterise Catholics across Australia on the grounds of race or class, if such classification had ever been valid. While over these 40 years being poor and being Irish remained the experience of some Catholics, the church considered as a whole across Australia was becoming more and more diverse. For example, the 1933 census recorded that Catholic breadwinners, both male and female, were more likely to be unemployed than those of any other denomination,<sup>22</sup> and that about two thirds of Catholic male breadwinners had an annual income £40 or more below the Australian average.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, one fifth of the Catholic breadwinners were earning over £207 a year in the top two income categories. This proportion was less than that of the population as a whole, but only by three percent, making Catholic income more comparable with the total population than the popular view would suggest.<sup>24</sup> The 1947 figures show a breakdown in the Catholic correlation to the working class. Although Catholics were still under represented in business and higher education, they had moved solidly into the public service and the professions, and were no longer characteristically poor.<sup>25</sup>

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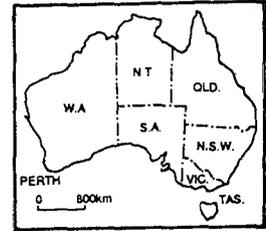
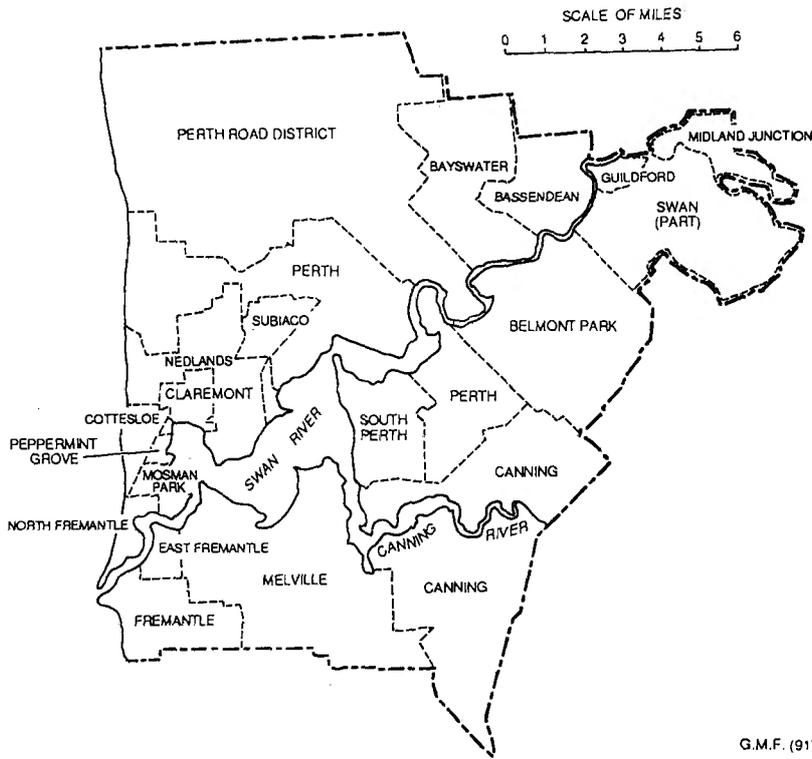
<sup>22</sup>*Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1933*, 'Statisticians Report' p. 153. Figures given part XVI (36): 21.84% for men, and 14.26% for women.

<sup>23</sup>*Census 1933*, part XXVIII (14). Percentages calculated from a total of 392,613 Roman Catholic male breadwinners were:

no income (57,396)	- 14.62%
less than £52 (99,160)	- 25.26%
£52 - £103 (62,175)	- 15.84%
£104 - £155 (43,351)	- 11.04%
£156 - £207 (42,886)	- 10.92%
£208 - £259 (34,310)	- 8.74%
£260 and above (41,957)	- 10.6866%

<sup>24</sup>H. R. Jackson, *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand 1860 - 1930*, Wellington, NZ, 1987, p. 43.

<sup>25</sup>Patrick O'Farrell comments on the Irish movement into the Australian public service and the middle classes via the separate education system in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *The Irish in Australia*, Kensington, NSW, 1987, pp.



G.M.F. (91)

	CENSUS AREA	CATHOLIC %	EMPLOYER %	NOT AT WORK %	CATHOLIC %	EMPLOYER %	NOT AT WORK	CATHOLIC %	EMPLOYER %	NOT AT WORK
		1921	1921	1921	1933	1933	% 1933	1947	1947	% 1947
1	CLAREMONT	12.520	2.649	1.977	10.890	2.950	4.860	13.460	2.390	.870
2	COTTESLOE	12.398	2.000	2.225	11.790	2.400	6.090	12.420	2.600	1.520
3	EAST FREMANTLE	18.245	2.000	3.210	15.080	1.850	7.170	16.710	2.680	1.720
4	FREMANTLE	22.594	1.559	5.510	21.070	1.500	15.760	23.550	1.770	2.640
5	GUILDFORD	13.592	1.865	1.865	14.020	2.300	5.830	15.420	2.610	1.030
6	MIDLAND JUNCTION	17.986	.931	1.721	16.190	1.340	8.040	16.460	1.770	.870
7	NORTH FREMANTLE	25.133	.987	3.582	18.240	1.120	10.870	18.430	1.180	3.050
8	PERTH	2.142	2.089	4.335	21.090	2.250	9.070	12.320	2.700	1.880
9	SUBIACO	14.567	1.971	2.571	13.530	1.880	7.330	12.320	2.090	1.290
10	BASSEDEAN	●	●	●	11.830	1.020	9.090	12.410	1.230	1.180
11	BAYSWATER	11.120	1.546	3.637	11.690	1.610	9.640	14.860	1.790	1.170
12	BELMONT PARK	21.704	2.357	2.411	15.670	2.800	8.410	17.450	1.960	5.770
13	CANNING	●	●	●	20.570	1.680	8.260	22.810	2.030	1.610
14	MELVILLE	12.584	1.525	3.220	13.980	1.750	7.860	15.030	2.120	1.330
15	MOSMAN PARK	●	●	●	●	●	●	12.640	1.830	1.370
16	NEDLANDS	●	●	●	13.430	2.460	3.760	13.940	3.380	1.250
17	PEPPERMINT GROVE	9.189	4.774	1.080	7.770	4.690	3.080	9.560	6.370	1.070
18	PERTH ROAD DIST.	10.048	2.448	2.050	16.920	3.310	5.820	20.000	3.070	1.170
19	SOUTH PERTH	15.405	3.070	2.635	12.240	2.220	5.780	14.440	2.710	1.100
20	SWAN	10.821	2.770	1.473	19.080	4.050	5.940	25.630	2.470	1.320

	CENSUS AREA	CATHOLIC %	EMPLOYER %	NOT AT WORK	CATHOLIC %	EMPLOYER %	NOT AT WORK
		1954	1954	1954	1961	1961	1961
1	CLAREMONT	26.158	2.700	.730	29.750	2.380	2.450
2	COTTESLOE	14.728	2.620	.420	16.330	2.750	1.080
3	EAST FREMANTLE	13.779	2.520	4.00	13.930	3.040	1.530
4	FREMANTLE	18.141	2.280	.420	24.500	2.260	1.690
5	GUILDFORD	28.387	1.410	.570	35.370	1.460	2.690
6	MIDLAND JUNCTION	15.042	2.200	.180	28.900	1.190	1.670
7	NORTH FREMANTLE	21.920	1.450	.210	16.630	3.300	.910
8	PERTH	21.240	1.480	.960	30.130	.970	2.030
9	SUBIACO	16.698	2.030	.390	20.010	2.220	1.160
10	BASSEDEAN	16.698	1.230	.370	19.270	1.780	1.320
11	BAYSWATER	19.661	1.410	.300	23.260	1.100	1.490
12	BELMONT PARK	22.110	1.690	.490	23.550	1.390	1.420
13	CANNING	24.730	1.630	.350	24.780	1.450	2.010
14	MELVILLE	16.390	2.100	.240	25.570	1.360	1.800
15	MOSMAN PARK	14.500	2.300	.450	18.230	2.150	1.020
16	NEDLANDS	15.960	3.620	.330	16.500	2.400	1.450
17	PEPPERMINT GROVE	9.740	6.600	.130	10.520	5.890	.720
18	PERTH ROAD DIST.	23.350	2.790	.420	25.630	2.150	1.270
19	SOUTH PERTH	16.960	2.670	.400	21.890	1.520	2.310
20	SWAN	5.890	1.180	.530	●	●	●

Spearman rank correlation co-efficient  
WA census districts

	% Catholics / Employers	% Catholics / Not at work
1921 - .406		.265
1933 - .191		.465 positive correlation
1947 - .257		.297
1954 - .202		.307
1961 - .695 negative correlation		.687 positive correlation

Value at which correlation becomes significant for  
sixteen cases (1921) level 0.05 0.01  
twenty cases 0.425 0.601  
S.Gregory 0.377 0.534

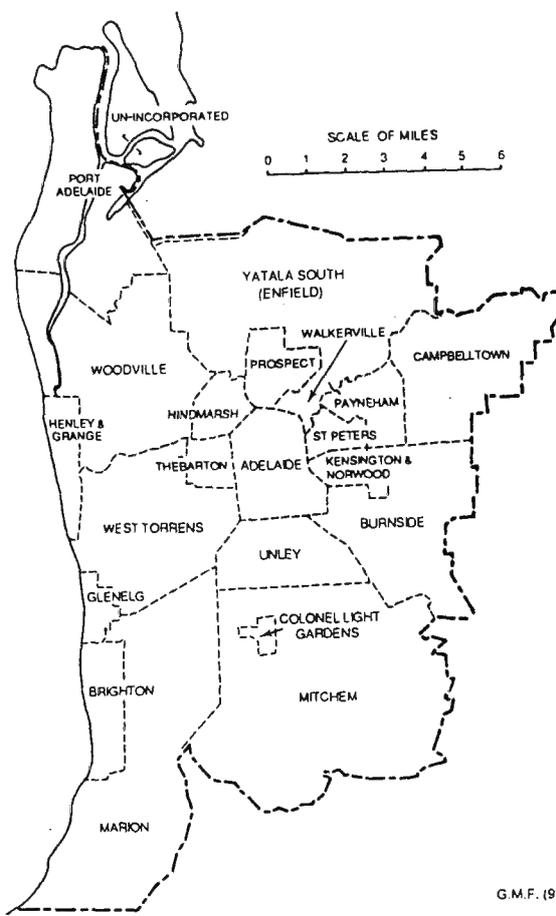
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However, while Australian census data does not easily yield comparative information on religion in metropolitan areas over time, the rough analysis of census collections which has been possible in this thesis provides a picture of Perth, and in particular, of Adelaide, which tends to support the tradition that Catholics were more generally of the underclass in Australian society (see figures 3 and 4). While extensive statistical analysis of the census data for particular regions is beyond the scope of this thesis, it has been possible to compare the percentage of the population in each census area that was 'Catholic' with the percentage in that area of 'employers' and those 'not at work', two groups which give a very rough indication of high social standing on the one hand and a difficult socio-economic position on the other. It is not possible to conclude from these calculations that it was the Catholics in a particular area who were earning salaries or who were not at work, but the broad and general picture does help to shade in the context of Catholic lay people.

The findings are relatively weak for WA, but where the data does offer significant correlations, in 1933 and 1961, these link a high percentage of Catholics in an area with a high percentage of those not at work and a low percentage of employers. These trends, and the pattern of insignificant results, certainly do not discount the possibility that Catholics in Perth were more likely than the rest of the population to be unemployed and outside the highest wage bracket, but it seems fairer to suggest a Catholic population spread across all strata of society.

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108, 159; see also S. Encel, *Equality and Authority: A Study of Class, Status and Power in Australia*, Melbourne, 1970, pp. 166 - 7, 408 - 10; Hans Mol, *Religion in Australia: a Sociological Investigation*, Melbourne, 1971, p. 81; John Lewis Warhurst, 'The Communist Bogey: Communism as an Election Issue in Australian Federal Politics 1949 to 1964', PhD thesis, Flinders University of South Australia, 1977, pp. 124 - 5.



G.M.F. (91)

		CATHOLIC %	EMPLOYER %	NOT AT WORK %	CATHOLIC %	EMPLOYER %	NOT AT WORK %	CATHOLIC %	EMPLOYER %	NOT AT WORK %
		1921	1921	1921	1933	1933	1933	1947	1947	1947
1	ADELAIDE	23.255	1.805	4.591	23.100	1.980	14.990	22.120	2.260	1.850
2	BRIGHTON	8.949	2.149	1.092	8.400	2.530	6.480	10.720	2.890	.770
3	BURNSIDE	11.189	2.303	1.608	10.110	2.690	4.780	10.610	3.240	.640
4	CAMPBELLTOWN	10.744	.603	1.044	12.200	3.980	5.820	13.640	3.400	.850
5	COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS	●	●	●	15.000	.700	10.810	14.780	1.480	.570
6	ENFIELD (YATALA SOUTH)	13.030	1.102	15.920	13.400	3.100	7.280	13.170	1.210	.730
7	GLENELG	14.548	3.452	1.476	9.350	2.430	6.670	16.600	3.150	.980
8	HENLEY AND GRANGE	6.807	3.441	1.431	15.000	1.120	13.660	12.460	2.090	.750
9	HINDMARSH	15.553	1.365	2.432	14.060	1.640	12.000	15.630	1.490	.830
10	KENSINGTON AND NORWOOD	14.093	1.686	2.486	9.420	2.200	10.300	15.740	1.930	.940
11	MARION	9.734	2.199	1.520	8.790	2.430	7.590	12.030	2.220	.730
12	MITCHAM	10.067	2.024	2.742	7.450	2.080	7.280	8.880	1.470	.920
13	PAYNEHAM	5.478	2.252	1.948	13.490	1.250	14.070	8.500	2.680	.800
14	PORT ADELAIDE	15.790	1.195	2.923	9.310	2.030	7.720	13.890	1.650	1.080
15	PROSPECT	9.068	1.171	1.843	10.480	1.920	9.750	10.550	2.200	.670
16	ST PETERS	10.839	2.126	2.342	18.090	1.240	11.760	12.070	2.060	.850
17	THEBARTON	16.890	1.375	2.366	10.470	2.220	7.900	19.170	1.640	.840
18	UNLEY	10.386	2.487	2.182	9.000	4.080	6.140	11.660	2.650	.800
19	WALKERVILLE	7.766	3.007	2.202	10.620	2.010	9.550	7.990	3.880	.580
20	WEST TORRENS	10.844	1.560	2.399	9.300	1.460	10.310	13.950	2.560	.790
21	WOODVILLE	9.348	1.438	1.910	11.103	1.507	9.294	11.050	1.760	.680

	CENSUS AREA	CATHOLIC %	EMPLOYER %	NOT AT WORK %	CATHOLIC %	EMPLOYER %	NOT AT WORK %
		1954	1954	1954	1961	1961	1961
1	ADELAIDE	28.480	2.150	1.200	29.700	2.380	3.700
2	BRIGHTON	13.770	1.170	.160	16.440	2.890	.710
3	BURNSIDE	10.548	3.230	.230	16.560	3.630	.840
4	CAMPBELLTOWN	23.646	2.210	.350	28.430	1.740	1.430
5	COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS	14.480	1.610	.440	16.560	1.440	1.280
6	ENFIELD	18.480	.990	.200	21.040	1.090	1.480
7	GLENELG	18.460	3.350	.440	21.230	2.940	1.200
8	HENLEY AND GRANGE	14.860	2.360	.490	18.000	2.480	1.160
9	HINDMARSH	20.560	1.420	.280	26.520	1.400	2.650
10	KENSINGTON	21.120	1.890	.380	29.800	2.090	2.110
11	MARION	15.320	1.420	.180	18.950	1.520	.760
12	MITCHAM	11.070	2.210	.260	12.770	2.450	.820
13	PAYNEHAM	13.590	2.510	.260	25.130	2.310	1.300
14	PORT ADELAIDE	19.000	1.370	.670	22.370	1.290	1.860
15	PROSPECT	13.800	2.420	.260	18.880	2.250	1.300
16	ST PETERS	17.550	2.190	.270	30.220	2.140	2.190
17	THEBARTON	23.720	1.640	.590	30.190	1.350	3.050
18	UNLEY	14.600	2.590	.310	18.850	2.150	1.530
19	WALKERVILLE	10.930	4.150	.510	9.130	4.000	1.160
20	WEST TORRENS	17.820	2.300	.320	21.920	2.130	1.270
21	WOODVILLE	17.940	1.480	.330	23.600	1.400	1.630

Spearman rank correlation co-efficient  
SA census districts

% Catholics	% Employers	% Catholics	% Not at work
1921 - .183		.611	positive correlation
1933 - .546	negative correlation	.656	positive correlation
1947 - .314	negative correlation	.51	positive correlation
1954 - .44	negative correlation	.552	positive correlation
1961 - .501	negative correlation	.82	positive correlation

Value at which correlation becomes significant  
for twenty cases = level 0.05 0.01  
0.377 0.534

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Figures drawn from Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1921, 1933, 1947, 1954, 1961 detailed tables, Grade of Occupation, Religion.

In Adelaide, by contrast, the data reflect the traditional assumptions quite firmly. There was a significant negative correlation between the percentage of Catholics in census areas and the percentage of employers in each collection, except 1921 when the trend was also negative but not significant. In that year, and at each collection, the correlation between the distribution of Catholics and those not at work was positive and strong. Both trends weakened slightly in the data for 1947 and 1954 but overall these two indicators of class point to a church in Adelaide which could sustain the impression that Catholicism was a faith for those with no great wealth or privilege.

The social standing of Catholics, and especially the way in which the world was viewed, had an impact on Catholic spirituality. In general, the heritage of practices designed for a laity with limited education and leisure remained important throughout this period. While much of the church's efforts in the twentieth century, in building and in education particularly, were concerned with breaking down the link between Catholicism and underdog, or working-class status, the style of spirituality promoted by the institution was slow to answer the needs of lay people, who were increasingly educated, professional or of the middle classes, and confronted by questions of how to integrate their faith and life. As Seidler and Meyer have noted, the twentieth century experiences of human oppression called for changes in the self-understanding of the churches. They suggest that the misery of World War II in the European church, and the civil rights action in the American church required a radical re-commitment to liberty and tolerance.<sup>26</sup> Australian Catholicism did not share directly in any such compelling experiences, but the values of freedom and having a fair go were part of the myth of what it was to be a good Australian. A growing number of lay Catholics were hoping to blend well

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<sup>26</sup>Seidler and Meyer, *Conflict and Change in the Catholic Church*, pp. 21 - 3.

with their neighbours and be seen to be loyal Australians. In this context there was significant tension for some between their status as aspirants to liberty, equality and tolerance and their adherence to an authoritarian, hierarchical and dogmatic church.

Gregory Haines has examined the development of Australian spirituality from the point of view of institutional concerns.<sup>27</sup> He noted that in the nineteenth century the emotive anti-intellectual spirituality, which will be discussed below in terms of its identification with the feminine, had flowed from official channels of a hierarchy concerned with control and evangelisation, much more than from any movement of Catholic women shaping their own faith practice. Australian clergy had promoted 'pious practices' amongst the laity from the beginning of the Australian mission in the nineteenth century as a way of ensuring at least some kind of religious observance.

The question was not one of refining the spiritual life, but of helping to develop a simple appreciation of supernatural realities. When there was a feeble awareness, but potential, in the life of prayer, when many were ignorant of the words of such prayers as the 'Our Father' and the 'Hail Mary' to have tried to develop a refined piety, might have meant the loss of what little religion there was.<sup>28</sup>

Haines argues that the continuing practice of treating the laity 'like a herd'<sup>29</sup> continued beyond the time that ignorance and scarce resources could justify it. He sees the promotion of sentimental devotions in the twentieth century as symptomatic of a bid for continued clerical control.<sup>30</sup> New devotions in the 'old'

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<sup>27</sup>Gregory Haines, 'Aspects of Australian Piety', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 55, 1978, pp. 231 - 43.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

style filtered through to receptive congregations in Australia from the end of the nineteenth century via priests trained overseas, prayer books published in London and Dublin,<sup>31</sup> and the local officially sanctioned Catholic press. The affective devotions became the property of the people under the sanction of the priests in the same uneasy way in which Catholic ownership of popular piety is often arranged.

The choice for simple piety, or 'feminine' devotions, was a choice for a spirituality which aimed to be distant from the world and uninvolved with its secular challenges. It reflected assumptions about a dependent and submissive laity which were not so appropriate in a church concerned to achieve some success in the world. The nature of the Catholic world view, and the patterns within devotional Catholicism are explored in later chapters of this thesis. It is interesting to note that the social mix of the Australian Catholic population was for much of the twentieth century presented with a spiritual programme derived from the needs of earlier congregations more uniform in their dependence on the institution.

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<sup>31</sup> Thus Barbara Corrado Pope notes that nineteenth century Catholic women also missed the middle, powerful phase of the development of affective spirituality 'Immaculate and Powerful: The Marian Revival in the Nineteenth Century', in Clarissa Atkinson, Constance H. Buchanan, Margaret M. Miles (eds), *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Reality*, Boston, 1985, p. 193. See below, pp. 55 - 7 and chapter 3.

### *Assumptions about Ethnicity and Spirituality*

The predominantly Irish nature of the Australian Catholic church has passed into folklore. While waves of immigration brought Italian, Yugoslav and Polish Catholics to Australia after World War II, the dominant traditions of Catholic spirituality were shaped by the local understanding of the heritage of Ireland. As Patrick O'Farrell has noted, the Irish were European Australia's 'only significant "ethnic" group until after 1947'.<sup>32</sup> In contrast to the Catholicism of the United States where German and Italian immigrants made early claims to influence Catholic culture, Irish Catholicism, in style 'austere, quiet, low-key with relatively undemonstrative liturgy',<sup>33</sup> had a virtual monopoly in Australia. Father Hartigan in his poems as 'John O'Brien', collected in *Around the Boree Log*, reflected the image of an Australian Catholic spirituality that drew its inspiration from Ireland and the Irish in Australia, and the ballads telling of Hanrahan, the 'trimmin's on the rosary' and the bishop at Tangmalangaloo remained in the common parlance of Catholics well into the twentieth century. While from the time of World War I Australian-born clergy were beginning to resent and resist the continual appointment of Irish-born bishops to Australia, the patterns of devotional spirituality, which Irish missionaries knew well from Cardinal Cullen's campaign for their revival in that country, were well-established and were reinforced by members of the teaching orders recruited in Ireland for the Australian mission until the 1960s.<sup>34</sup> As Edmund Campion has argued, Catholicism in Australia was committed to the Irish mould.

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<sup>32</sup>O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, p. 66.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>34</sup>K. T. Livingstone, *The Emergence of an Australian Catholic Priesthood 1835 - 1915*, Sydney, 1977; John Molony, *The Roman Mould of the Australian Catholic Church*, Melbourne, 1969.

St Patrick had said, 'If you would be Christian, be Roman.' The Irish settlers may have changed that to read 'If you would be Irish, be Catholic'. In time it almost came to read 'If you would be Catholic, be Irish'.<sup>35</sup>

The religious culture of Catholic immigrants from Europe was quite different from the dominant Irish traditions of Australia, and the institutional reaction to these differences was a policy of spiritual assimilation. Rejection of the American model where particular parishes and pastors were dedicated to the care of individual ethnic groups, reinforced the assumption that true Catholicism was the faith as practised by the staunchly Irish parishes. For example, writing in the *Australasian Catholic Record* in 1939 B.A.Santamaria, the young Melbourne lay man of Italian parents who was rising to prominence in Catholic Action circles, accepted the general assumption that the church had an 'Italian Problem'. The predominantly male immigrants who did not attend mass or contribute financially to the work of the parish were regarded as lost to the church.<sup>36</sup> Santamaria suggested to the clerical readership of this journal that there were socio-economic and cultural explanations for the Italians' neglect of the institutional church, but his proposed remedy, in the form of a specific mission to the Italian people in Australia, did not envisage any encouragement, or even necessarily acceptance, of differences in the external religious practices of the separate traditions within the church. Santamaria pointed to the central role of the *feste* in European Catholicism,<sup>37</sup> and hinted at the importance of family-centred celebration,<sup>38</sup> but gave no suggestion that these

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<sup>35</sup>Edmund Campion, 'Irish Religion in Australia', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 55, 1978, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup>B.A.Santamaria, 'The Italian Problem in Australia', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 16, 1939, pp. 291 - 305.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 297; Robert A. Orsi has found the family-centred religion of the *domus* to be crucial to Italian piety in East Harlem, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem*, New Haven, 1985, pp. 171 - 78, *passim*.

spiritual practices could be validly incorporated into the Australian church scene.

Irish Catholic culture was inaccessible to many immigrant Australians. Sociological studies by Frank Lewins and Adrian Pittarello have pointed to the alienation and neglect that Catholics from Europe and Asia experienced within the church as the price of maintaining the established patterns of spirituality.<sup>39</sup> The traditions of spirituality which became marginal to the church in Australia require careful and full documentation. Robert Orsi's work on devotion to the Madonna in East Harlem has shown the rich possibilities for historical exploration of religious and cultural symbols which are available when alternative traditions are acknowledged. Recently Richard Bosworth and Margot Melia have published material which begins to uncover the *feste* of Western Australia.<sup>40</sup> Irish spirituality was certainly not the only expression of Catholic faith in Adelaide and Perth and other traditions will repay sensitive investigation. However, while it is not possible within the limits of this work to begin such an exploration, it is important to look at the way in which the dominant spirituality responded to the influx of other traditions.

A primary concern was to show that newly arriving Catholics from Europe shared the essential faith of the existing Australian establishment. The national congress in honour of Mary 'Mother of God and Mother of Men', held in Adelaide in 1951 provided an occasion for Catholics who were newly arrived from non-Irish European countries to participate in a diocesan event which was

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<sup>39</sup>Frank Lewins, *The Myth of the Universal Church*, Canberra, 1978; Adrian Pittarello, 'Migrants and the Catholic Church in Australia', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 65, 1988, pp. 141 - 58.

<sup>40</sup> Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*; Richard Bosworth and Margot Melia, 'The Italian *Feste* of Western Australia and the Myth of the Universal Church', in R. Bosworth and M. Melia (eds), *Aspects of Ethnicity in Western Australia, Studies in Western Australian History*, vol. 12, 1991, pp. 71 - 84.

congenial to their own traditions of Marian devotion. The official commentary on the event offers a snap-shot of the church's assimilationist stance.

The emphasis during the congress on peace among nations directed the focus of South Australian Catholics to the countries of Europe which they most perceived as under the threat of Communist rule, and then on to people from those nations who were living within the Adelaide community. The editorial in the *Southern Cross* noted the 'apt coincidence' that the Congress began on United Nations Day, and detailed the various titles under which Mary was invoked by all nations. Referring to the day set aside for private devotions during the Congress, the paper commented on the representatives of many nations who had a common Catholic focus on Mary.

In the Cathedral last Saturday, Australians, Irish, English, Scottish, Ukrainians, Poles, Czechoslovakians, Italians, Hungarians, Lithuanians, Croatian, Maltese, Latvians, Slovaks, French, Dutch and others came in wave after wave of love and reverence to the feet of their Mother.

On the following day, these same peoples accompanied their Mother, with loving jubilation, through the streets of Adelaide to Elder Park, where they united their voices in praise of her and in adoration of her Son.

The great men of the world have tried hard to unite the nations. They have failed because they have relied too exclusively on worldly things such as statesmanship, speeches, press publicity, radio propaganda. This is the significance of what happened in the Cathedral and in the city last week-end: it demonstrated in a physical, almost tangible way that it is when the nations proclaim Mary

their Mother, her Son their King, that they become truly United Nations.<sup>41</sup>

The significance of the participation of the migrant groups went beyond a calm acceptance of difference. The oral history of the period records that this was the first occasion when the new diversity in the church was publicly acknowledged and acclaimed as underpinned by a common unity. For some Australian Catholics, to see a Catholic procession where Ukrainian icons and Italian banners followed hard on the heels of Irish kilts, was to realise profoundly and for the first time that 'these people were real Catholics too'.<sup>42</sup> The 'New Australians' were not singled out for a special address in the congress proceedings, but the national groups functioned separately from the general Catholic population both during the devotions at the cathedral's Fatima shrine on the Saturday of the congress, and during the final procession through Adelaide to close the celebrations. A 'special reporter' detailed these events for the *Southern Cross* and made much of the common Catholic characteristic of prayer to Mary, being offered in ways which were unfamiliar to many Catholics. The report uses the first person singular and appears to be giving a view of events from a personal perspective close to the mainstream of South Australian Catholicism. While the participation of non-AngloCeltic Catholics was obviously welcomed as evidence of the universal nature of the church and the Marian traditions within it, neither the *Southern Cross* nor the souvenir booklet of the congress included any account from within the experience of the other national groups. The perception of the migrant devotions as 'other' is therefore particularly significant. For example, rosary devotions began at 3pm on Saturday then:

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<sup>41</sup> Editorial, *Southern Cross*, cited *Mother of God and Mother of Men: Record of the Marian Congress Held in Adelaide South Australia October 24 - 28, 1951*, Adelaide, 1952, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> Interview A, Name in confidence, 12 March 1990. Tape held by author.



Figure 5. To be Catholic was to be assumed to belong in an Irish culture. The Irish contingent leads the closing procession of the 1951 Marian Congress down King William Street in Adelaide. *Mother of God and Mother of Men: Record of the Marian Congress held in Adelaide, South Australia, October 24 - 28, 1951.*



Figure 6. Devotion to Mary was common to the spirituality of European and Irish Catholics in Australia. The 1951 Marian congress featured the participation of Catholics in national groups. Croatian women are pictured during the final procession. *Mother of God and Mother of Men: Record of the Marian Congress held in Adelaide, South Australia, October 24 - 28, 1951.*

[a]t 4 o'clock, the Ukrainians, led by their zealous priest, Fr Kaczmar, carried out their gloriously impressive devotions before Our Lady's shrine. The Ukrainians, belonging to the Byzantine Rite, do not say the Rosary. They chanted a kind of office in honour of Our Lady, ...often with the most glorious harmonies. I could not understand what they were saying, but it seemed to me very often a word sounding like 'Mariya' kept occurring.

...I had to go, but returned once more a little after 6 o'clock in time to hear the end of the Rosary recited by the Polish group of New Australians under the leadership of Fr Keczmanski. After that, the Polish people sang their hymns, tender, plaintive music rising and falling in most urgent fashion.<sup>43</sup>

The following day there was some evidence of multi-cultural awareness in the preparations for the procession through the city. The loud speaker instructions to the crowd went

...sweeping down Wakefield Street and around the Square - in English first, then in Italian, German, and, I think, Polish.<sup>44</sup>

That such cultures had considerable novelty value, as well as engendering a certain respect for their Catholic, if 'foreign', strength, is evident in the eye witness description of the procession itself. Immediately after the school groups, who opened the cavalcade, had left King William Street

the New Australian groups poured in, led by the Irish...As they passed...the Rosary was temporarily halted to allow them to sing their own national hymns to Mary. Group after group swung past the Town Hall, and song after song swelled and softened as the singers approached and receded. ...[The contingents were] a credit to their various nations in the way they marched and the whole hearted way they

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<sup>43</sup> *Mother of God and Mother of Men*, p. 44.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

took part in the singing and the other devotions. ...The whole epic of these singing and marching children of Mary from many lands was profoundly touching. Here they were, exiles in a foreign land, most of them driven out by the enemies of God from their own beloved countries, having lost all, and yet, in being Mary's children, still having all. The tragedy of persecution and the magnificence of Faith both came home to me very strongly as I watched them pass and heard them sing.<sup>45</sup>

The church's underlying assimilationist assumption, that genuine Catholic culture was essentially uniform and Irish in origin, revealed itself in the slightly condescending praise of these 'others'. The Fatima agenda of anti-Communism came to the fore in the linking of the migrant presence with the persecution of other countries by the Godless. Marian devotion gave these communities entry to the common Catholic stream, but the impression from this 1951 event is that, in the same way as the Irish led the New Australians in procession, there would be no attempt to change the perception of existing harmony, the Irish tones would remain dominant in the chords of Catholic spirituality.

### *Assumptions about Gender and Spirituality*

Religion in Australia was often labelled 'women's work', and justifiably so. The numerical dominance of women in Australian Catholicism can be clearly seen from both church and government census figures. It is important to examine the implications for Catholic spirituality of this assumption that religion was a feminine concern. While Chapter 3 will examine the implications of gender for the ways in which religious symbols were understood in order to further develop the notion of masculine and feminine spiritualities

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

outlined in the introduction to this thesis, this section focuses on the consequences in spiritual style of the uneven participation of lay women and men in the church.

At the simplest level, Commonwealth census figures show that until 1954 there were more Catholic women than Catholic men across Australia. The statistics for WA and SA are not so straightforward: in the early years of the twentieth century the Catholic population in Western Australia and South Australia reflected a 'frontier mix' in the general population with a high proportion of men.<sup>46</sup> Even so, it was the women who were the backbone of the church. Parish missions targeted women in the hope they could persuade men to attend,<sup>47</sup> women in religious orders outnumbered men and priests by about three to one throughout the period,<sup>48</sup> and Catholic publications revered

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<sup>46</sup> Census figures for masculinity (number of males per 100 females)

	SA	WA	Australia
1933 Catholic	112.1	120.25	100.28
Roman Catholic	96.33	109.91	99.06
1947 Catholic			
Roman Catholic	96.15	103.86	97.30
1954 (Australian figures only available)			103.68
1961			103.55

<sup>47</sup> Interview, Fr Mark Nugent CP, Glen Osmond SA, 4 August 1989. Notes held by author. Jay P. Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience 1830-1900*, Notre Dame, 1978, has noted the same practice in the United States. For comparative studies of religious observance see, Barbara Hargrove, 'Gender, the Family and the Sacred', in Phillip E. Hammond (ed), *The Sacred in a Secular Age: Toward Revision in the Scientific Study of Religion*, Berkeley, 1985, pp. 204 - 14, especially p. 205; Peter Kaldor, *Going to Church in Australia: Who Goes Where? Who Doesn't Care?*, Sydney, 1987, pp. 108 - 17.

<sup>48</sup> Figures for SA and WA, *Directory of the Catholic Church in Australasia*.

	1922	1932	1942	1952	1962
Nuns	1002	1147	1750	1954	2249

Priests/

Brothers      276      337      460      747      797

From 1935 the figures for religious women in WA rise more sharply than in SA, probably reflecting the impact of concerted recruiting of candidates from Ireland by the new Archbishop Prendiville. By 1962 there were 1400 nuns in WA and 849 in SA. The impact of this disparity on the local churches, especially on the education systems where most sisters worked, is an interesting question, beyond the scope of this thesis.

women in the home as the mainstay of the family's values and guardians of the future generation of priests. Between 1922 and 1962 precise figures of the proportion of men and women attending their parishes were not collected, but the parish census consistently recorded more women than men in the lay sodalities, and parish activities reflected the social expectation that women would be willing to help with church work and the Catholic education of children. Only in the aspiring intellectual societies of the 1930s and 1940s were Catholic lay men in the majority, but membership figures of the related institution, the Central Catholic Library in Adelaide, show women borrowing more books than more than men.<sup>49</sup>

It is important to note that the high proportion of women adherents was not often acknowledged formally by the Catholic hierarchy, and official publications tended to emphasise the role of clergy in the church. Such an institutional attitude is reflected in the coverage given to women by the popular history of Catholicism published for the 1953 Eucharistic Congress in Sydney. Of 129 photographs in the booklet two are of lay women: Caroline Chisholm was pictured and Anne Mackillop, the sister of Mother Mary Mackillop of the Cross, was included in her family group.<sup>50</sup> In comparison, there were pictures of 57 priests, 42 lay men (including the Kelly gang), 28 non-Catholic men and one nun. Clearly the institutional church was a predominantly male environment, in which, for publicity purposes, women were invisible. While women were absent from the structure and decision-making practices of churches in twentieth century Australia, it was nevertheless these hidden women who bore the brunt of the responsibility for the spiritual welfare of families and

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<sup>49</sup>Adelaide Central Catholic Library Borrowers' Register 1958, 1959, 1960 lists readers names and titles. 'Mr' - 116, 'Miss' - 155, 'Mrs' - 106, 'Fr' - 6, 'Sr' - 6, 'Dr' - 2, untitled - 6, schools and religious communities - 4. Borrowing figures are not available for the Catholic Central Library in Perth.

<sup>50</sup>B.T. Doyle and J.A. Morley, *The Catholic Story*, Sydney, 1953.

communities. Why women were so strongly represented in the day to day practice of Australian Catholicism and indeed why women participated in so many churches at higher rates than men, is a question that invites serious discussion.

Following Ann Douglas's work on *The Feminization of American Culture*, Barbara Welter has observed that, along with other activities regarded as peripheral to survival, religion became more and more the sphere of women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>51</sup> In her close study of the feminization of religion in the industrialising society of nineteenth century America, Welter has noted that the general pattern of allocating work by gender according to whether or not a particular activity was needed for survival, was followed in the matter of religion.

In the period following the American Revolution political and economic activities were critically important, and therefore more 'masculine'...more competitive, more aggressive, more responsive to shows of force and strength. Religion, along with the family and popular taste, was not very important and so it became the property of the ladies.<sup>52</sup>

Barbara Corrado Pope has also noted a decline in male interest in religion during the nineteenth century restructuring of European society.

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<sup>51</sup> Ann Douglas *The Feminization of American Culture* New York, 1977; Barbara Welter, 'The Feminization of American Religion', chapter 6 in her *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Athens, Ohio, 1976, pp. 83 - 102. The time frame of Douglas's work and her use of evidence drawn almost exclusively from New England has been sharply criticised by David Schuyler, 'Inventing a Feminine Past', *New England Quarterly*, vol. 51, 1978, pp. 291 - 308, and others, see David S. Reynolds, 'The Feminization Controversy: Sexual Stereotypes and the Paradoxes of Piety in Nineteenth Century America', *New England Quarterly*, vol. 52, pp. 96 - 106. However, her contention that religion was firmly equated with womanly sentiment was not at issue.

<sup>52</sup>Welter, 'The Feminization of American Religion', chapter 6, *Dimity Convictions*, p. 84.

Male sociability, which had once found an outlet in the religious confraternities controlled by the laity was migrating to the intellectual gathering, the tavern and political activity. Women however were increasingly organized *into* the Church by means of Catholic education, sodalities and charitable pursuits.<sup>53</sup>

As industrialisation separated the domestic environment from the work environment in Catholic Europe, men from all but the lowest social strata gained greater access to public life, and the church and the home became more and more the sphere of women. Again the male virtues of the world, strength and rationality, were seen in contrast to the female virtues, humility and gentleness, which were found in the church.<sup>54</sup>

In general, this picture of western society is reflected in Western and South Australia in the twentieth century. As the general overview at the beginning of this chapter indicated, twentieth-century Australia was concerned with economic development and prosperity, and valued masculine qualities designed to enhance success in a competitive world. Religion was included in the private sphere of home and family which was the concern of women. Trends within Catholicism reinforced this split. The Catholic church in Australia shared the international anti-modernism and those interested in exploring the modern world intellectually were increasingly alienated and isolated from a church which seemed timid and reactionary. As Roe and Phillips have both shown for the churches in the nineteenth century, religion in Australia was more often a force for social conservatism than social change.<sup>55</sup> In her study of

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<sup>53</sup>Barbara Corrado Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics: The Little Flower of Jesus and her Times', *Church History*, vol. 57, 1988, p. 53.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 52 -3.

<sup>55</sup>Jill Roe, 'Challenge and Response: Religious Life in Melbourne 1876 - 86', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 5, 1968, pp. 149 - 61; Walter Phillips, 'The Churches and the Sunday Question in Sydney in the 1880s', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 6, 1971, pp. 41 - 61.

the churches' response to the changes of nineteenth century society in Melbourne, Roe identifies the Catholic church as particularly resistant to involvement with the modern world. In considering the effect of gender on spirituality it is also significant that the social position of Catholics was improving in both states, especially in WA, and especially from the 1930s, thus taking more and more Catholic men into public life, and further away from the sphere of women. As concern about the threat of Communism to the church increased, and was increasingly understood to be the responsibility of men to resist, the different tones of Catholic Action began to colour lay spirituality. South Australia and Western Australia shared the social structure of the industrialising West in the twentieth century, and reflected similar patterns of participation in religion.

Douglas and Welter argue that the preponderance of women in the churches led to greater power for women over religious ideology, and thus to a spirituality which privileged the passive, emphasised the gentleness of God, and valued the suffering in this world which would lead to happiness in the next.<sup>56</sup> The Australian Catholic experience was a variation on this theme. Devotions were more affective, but not because women were shaping their faith. Devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Mary the mother of God, to St Joseph and to St Thérèse, the Little Flower of Jesus, were significant throughout this period and all show the hallmarks of an affective emotive style of spirituality which was readily identified with the feminine. However, while lay acceptance of the devotions was crucial, the feminine style of piety was actively promoted by the institution. The lack of institutional support for women's groups such as the Grail when they were attempting to develop alternative spiritualities for

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<sup>56</sup>As discussion of Catholic historiography has shown above, devotional Catholicism has been identified as a category of analysis and examined in the work of Ann Taves, Jay Dolan, Robert Orsi.

women,<sup>57</sup> also points to clerical rather than feminine interest in maintaining 'affective' devotions. Images of God and of God's servants as gentle and forbearing were promoted by the clergy and taken up by receptive church go-ers, who were mostly women.

The separation of the laity from the world was in tune with the anti-modernist policies of institutional Catholicism from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. Some writers argue that through the promotion of emotive and affective devotions, which had been popular in the Middle Ages, the Roman hierarchy aimed to set up a counter-cultural habit of mind amongst Catholics which would detach them from the influence of secular institutions and encourage a medieval view of papal power. For example, Bill McSweeney has argued that the anti-modernist policies of the Catholic institution depended for their political bite on a system of devotions which ran directly against the rationalism of the age of revolutions. McSweeney considers that Catholic spirituality was centred on a mythical medieval golden age when the lot of the church was happier, as part of an orchestrated pattern of church resistance to the modern world.

Loyalty to the Church and Pope could not compete with the new attractions of the modern world in terms of the old Catholic sanctions which existed to foster it. Piety must be made attractive to the laity... Catholics were given a taste for sentiment and splendour to encourage their allegiance to the Church, and, it was hoped, to the political and social structure which the medieval church found most compatible.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Sally Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism: Catholic Women's Struggles for Self Expression*, Sydney, 1985, p. 195 - 7.

<sup>58</sup>Bill McSweeney, *Roman Catholicism: The Search for Relevance*, Oxford, 1980, p. 37.

McSweeney identifies the cults of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of Our Lady as particularly important to the nineteenth century push for detachment from the world. Both these devotions were important in twentieth century Australia and a close examination of the values that were inherent in these images of 'the good', and in the lives of popular saints, reveals significant aspects of the spiritual landscape in Perth and Adelaide.

A related issue of gender was the image of women in Catholic circles. In two studies of Catholic women's organisations in Sydney and Melbourne, Sally Kennedy and Hilary Carey show the tensions between the traditional images of Catholic women and the experience of their lives.<sup>59</sup> Their examination of original material relating to the Grail, an innovative women's organisation originally formed in Holland, the Catholic Women's League and other organisations shows considerably more self-definition and decision-making by women than the popular image of the subservient Catholic wife would suggest. Examining the presentation of Catholic womanhood in the Catholic periodical literature of 1860 to 1940 Kennedy concludes

that the prescription was so far from the realities of these women's lives and aspirations as to be irrelevant to them: that it was a myth and that the myth survived because it was a comfortable convenience for those who believed it, and a patent absurdity to those it was meant to portray.<sup>60</sup>

The prevailing mythology of womanhood, although not factual, remained powerful and Kennedy's examples of the images which set women on a pedestal, dangerously close to the edge of perdition's cliff, are mirrored in the Catholic publications of SA and WA. Both the *Record* and the *Southern Cross* included

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<sup>59</sup>Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*; Hilary Carey, *Truly Feminine, Truly Catholic: A History of the Catholic Women's League in the Archdiocese of Sydney 1913 -1987*, Kensington, NSW, 1987.

<sup>60</sup>Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*, p. x.

pages especially devoted to fashion, recipes and simple devotional reading for women. The *Southern Cross* carried warnings about 'The Problem of the Flapper' in 1923,<sup>61</sup> and, in 1925, reported that 'no woman is allowed an audience with the Pope if her dress is not entirely modest'.<sup>62</sup> That such suspicion of women continued is evident from a 1953 address by South Australian lay woman, Pam Hart, who, as President of the National Catholic Girls' Movement, felt the need to defend the moral standing of modern young women. She maintained that faced with hostility to the faith at work, and often at home as well, Catholic young women had

a wholesome regard for moral laws, even though in carrying them out they are not 100 per cent successful all the time...they want to be and try to be, and they try generously and any failures come more from mere human weakness and ignorance than from any deliberate defiance of the moral order.<sup>63</sup>

Catholic schools for girls, set up, Kennedy argues, at least in part because the clergy doubted the ability of mothers to educate their children in the faith, were significant in encouraging networks of Catholic women, which had the potential to modify the mythology. The magazine of the Loreto Old Scholars Association was revived in 1945 to draw former pupils together to make their Catholic presence felt in Australia.

Australia is in great need of womanly and courageous girls of good education who will show in their own lives the virtues of Our Blessed Lady, and who will lead, along the ways of peace, those who have not had the advantage of a Christian training. We wish most earnestly that Loreto girls should make their good influence felt wherever they

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<sup>61</sup> *Southern Cross*, 28 September 1923, p. 8.

<sup>62</sup> *Southern Cross*, 11 September 1925, p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> *Southern Cross*, 30 October 1953, p. 5.

may be; and we hope that this magazine may serve to deepen your Catholic spirit.<sup>64</sup>

Kennedy has noted that by 1914 the curriculum of Catholic schools for girls belied the mythology of submissive womanhood. There is evidence of an environment in which the stereotype could be resisted in an article published in the same 1945 issue of the *Loreto Magazine* by a 14 year old pupil who speculated on her future career. She considered the possibility of religious life, and then moved to more unconventional Catholic options.

I may be a Doctor, whose healing hands bring comfort to hundreds of families, saving the lives of my fellow-men. I may be in one of Australia's leading hospitals, or I may just be an ordinary country practitioner. I may be a surgeon clothed in white selecting with care my instruments, as I face a crisis in a patient's life.

Then again...a lawyer, barrister or solicitor who saves innocent men from being imprisoned...I should not make the people pay fees if they could not afford it. ...I can imagine myself appealing to a jury, holding the Court spellbound by the Wisdom of my words, and I can see the gratitude in the eyes of my client when the case is won.

Perhaps I shall be in an aeroplane - a ferry pilot....I think perhaps I may be a great inventor.<sup>65</sup>

The concluding sentences of her article referred the decision back to God. Such a reference placed the fourteen year old's musings in a faith context and pointed clearly to the potential significance of the interpretation of 'God's Will' in making career choices. The nature of her understanding of God would therefore be crucial. The article's conclusion did not show any unshaking faith

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<sup>64</sup>Editorial letter from Mother Mary J. Philomena, *Loreto Magazine* 1945.

<sup>65</sup>Gwen Flanagan, Mary's Mount Ballarat, *Loreto Magazine* 1945, p. 16.

that she would fulfil her alternative dreams, but maintained the possibility of following uncharted paths, if God so directed. She commented,

I think I shall not be any of these things. I shall be something I have never thought of before, and something that God alone knows now.<sup>66</sup>

For Australian Catholics, the church's understanding of the role of women in the redemption was a powerful factor in shaping a model of ideal womanhood. The images of Eve as temptress and of Mary as virgin and mother of God reverberated in Catholic publications throughout the period. Devotion to Mary is an important theme in Catholic spirituality to be examined in more detail below.<sup>67</sup> The issue here, however, is not so much that these images were at work in Catholicism but that women, much more than rank and file men, were presented with the need to take special responsibility for spiritual affairs. On the one hand, as Kennedy found for the early years of the twentieth century, by analogy with Eve, Catholic women were dangerously alluring. For example a 1960s pamphlet of the Australian Catholic Truth Society built on a literal understanding of the Genesis story to make Eve's beauty the cause of Adam's fall from grace.

[Adam] had not even heard the serpent's promise of god-like powers. Instead he faced the choice that men have made a hundred million times since then - the choice between his God and his woman. God was remote and the woman was intimately near. So, like a hundred million men since that fatal evening...he turned from his God and chose his woman. It was the idolatry that brings men to their knees before the women whose beauty blinds them.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Flanagan, *Loreto Magazine* 1945, p. 16.

<sup>67</sup>See below chapter 4.

<sup>68</sup>Daniel Lord SJ, *That Story of Adam and Eve*, Melbourne, 1960, p. 6.

On the other hand was the view that women shared Mary's capacity to bring redeeming influences to an ugly world. At the national Marian congress of 1951 Archbishop Guilford Young of Hobart gave a special address to women and eloquently captured the prevailing view that through their feminine qualities they were especially responsible for the spiritual well-being of the world.

You, my dear women, through the common womanhood you share with [Mary] have a vital and important part to play in transmitting to your homes, your communities and thus to the world, her inspiration and influence. I say 'through the womanhood you share with her'. Yes, it is to a woman that the Church has pointed to tell modern man what he is, his greatness under God and his glorious destiny.

...God grant that you too, dear mothers, wives and maidens may recognise the power that you exercise by just being good women. We love to call Our Lady Spiritual Vessel...She was like an alabaster vase through which the light of her soul radiated to give energy and warmth to those struggling towards virtue. Therein lies your unique power as mothers, wives and maidens. O how you can help your children, husbands and sweethearts...you have it within your power to raise them to heroic heights or drag them to the depths. Poor troubled tempted and despondent men need you to set before them this ideal to encourage them and uplift them in this time of decadence.<sup>69</sup>

Gender affected the spirituality of Catholic lay people both in the reality of a numerical imbalance of men and women in the churches and through the perception that religious concerns were generally an issue for women. The feminization of Catholic practice raises important issues for the historical analysis of the way in which individuals responded to the prevailing imagery of the church. The impact of particular spiritual styles on the ways in which

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<sup>69</sup> *Mother of God and Mother of Men*, pp. 33- 5.

individual men and women approached the Divine will be examined further in later chapters.

### *Lay People within the Church*

One way of refining the impression of lay life in the church is to examine it in relation to the priestly and religious roles. A consideration of what it was men and women were understood to be doing in leaving the lay life throws into relief the issues that confronted lay Catholics as they sought to live out a spirituality as married or single men and women in the world. Throughout the period the material produced by the various religious orders and the articles published in the magazines for the laity presented the call to the priesthood or religious life as a privileged invitation to serve God in a special way. While it was clear that not everyone was 'chosen', and that many Catholics would find heaven by marrying and bringing up children, a hierarchy of lifestyles, with the laity at the bottom, was implicit in the structures of the church. As the call to Catholic Action intensified the need to clarify the lay role in the church's mission, the traditional understanding that action was not so holy as contemplation warned Catholic men and women against aspiring too far towards Godliness in the lay apostolate, at the same time as it pointed to the necessity of re-negotiating the church's spiritual traditions.

### *Discerning a Vocation Away from the Laity*

Proper discernment of a possible religious vocation was an important aspect of lay life for both men and women. The possibility of ignoring a vocation to the non-lay life was presented as the temptation to selfishly refuse God's will, and open the way to unhappiness, and perhaps damnation. Although there was a clear understanding that some people were more suitable candidates than others, the literature insists that young people should approach the question in a matter-of-fact way, and not expect any dramatic or mystical call. The Loreto sisters told their prospective candidates that, properly understood, religious life was an option one took if it seemed the best thing to do; they should not expect any accompanying signs and wonders.

A vocation to the religious life is a call from God. He gave it when He set us the ideal - 'Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect' and He indicated the life of perfection following when He said 'If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor...and come follow me.' It is not, therefore, necessary to wait till a little voice says 'Come'. The call has been given, and it is renewed each time God puts good desires into a young person's heart. Anyone who is physically and normally fit to enter religion, is free to do so, and has a right intention, may rest assured that she has a vocation to be a religious...Needless to say, no step should be taken without prayer; but of all women most blessed is the girl whose steps lead her to religious life.<sup>70</sup>

The religious communities were aware that not every one who was attracted to their life would be a suitable recruit. For example, the 1938 Chronicle of the Highgate community of the Christian Brothers in Perth

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<sup>70</sup>Loreto vocation material. Loreto Convent Marryatville, SA.

commented frankly that 'the volunteers [from among the senior students] were not of the right stamp'.<sup>71</sup> The nature of 'the right stamp' was not closely defined, and the variety of personalities who filled the convents and monasteries points to the difficulty of being too precise. However, the oral history of the laity records the folk lore that religious were drawn from the ranks of mild-mannered Catholics who were early risers, but also notes that many young women who took an interest in their faith were expected on the grounds of that interest alone to enter a convent.<sup>72</sup>

### *Marriage as a Vocation*

The church in Australia was fully aware that the majority of the laity would choose to marry. They were not condemned for this; instead marriage was accepted as the state of life which most suited 'ordinary' individuals. The institution's general expectation was that married Catholics would raise their children in the practise of the faith by sending them to Catholic schools and support the activities of the parish to which they contributed financially. The 'good' Catholics would participate in the separate sodalities for men and women which encouraged the reception of the Sacraments, and in some cases also had a social service role. Later, committed lay people took leadership roles in parish-based Catholic Action groups. However, it was only gradually that lay activities were recognised as valuable in themselves and not second-best after life in religion.

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<sup>71</sup>Christian Brothers Chronicle, Highgate 1938, p. 5. Provincial Archives of the Christian Brothers, WA and SA.

<sup>72</sup>Interviews with author, Mrs Maureen Menagh, South Perth WA, 17 April 1990; Mrs Eileen Heinrich, Prospect SA, 20 March 1990; Miss Margaret Collopy, Perth WA, 28 March 1991. Tapes held by author.

The Council of Trent's opinion that those who could avoid sexual activity should do so, played an important part in Catholic thinking throughout this period in Australia.<sup>73</sup> The literature on marriage which priests made available to engaged couples left no doubt that the consecrated virginity of the religious life was a privileged gift, that the single life, also lived in celibacy, was the next best, while marriage was the common lot. Marriage was presented as a good and potentially sanctifying life, but the choice of unspectacular souls.

The Church recognises three normal states of life: marriage, which is good; single blessedness in the world, which is better; single blessedness in religion, which is best.

This does not mean however that the single life is better for everybody, nor that the religious life is the best for everybody. These states are only good, better and best, when regarded in themselves. If we look at them with regard to particular people, the order of good, better and best may be reversed. Indeed, for the vast majority of people marriage is by far the best thing. The single life in the world would maim them, and perhaps life in religion would ruin them. Everything depends on the individual's circumstances, his temperament, his health, his ability, his desires, above all his graces.

...Marriage will be the choice of most. It is the state for which they are by nature fitted, and *for them*(sic) the highest and most perfect life which they can live.<sup>74</sup>

The sturdy preference for rationality over emotion, which characterised the vocations material of the 1930s and 1940s, also permeated church views on

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<sup>73</sup>Catholic attitudes to sexuality would repay much closer study than has been possible in this thesis. Patrick O'Farrell has discussed marriage and sexuality in relation to the Irish in nineteenth century Australia, *The Irish in Australia*, pp. 149 - 54.

<sup>74</sup>Rev Thomas J. Gerrard, *Marriage and Parenthood: The Catholic Ideal*, New York, 1911, pp. 33 - 5. Interview, Mrs Colleen Barrett and Mr Frank Barrett with author, Goodwood SA, 22 March 1990. Tape held by author.

marriage. While lay Catholics of the time knew very well that the choice of a partner was not a simple matter, and church organisations acknowledged the reality of romance by emphasising the benefits of a primarily Catholic social circle, some Catholic publications took a more prosaic view. Catholics were urged not to be too fussy, not to hold their expectations too high, not to marry 'for love' outside the church, but to settle quickly and simply for the good of their soul with some eligible Catholic partner. The *Record's* 1940 fictional dialogue between Paul Trout and Phil Fontaine, two young men who debated the 'problems of youth' each week, demonstrated the view that marriage was a vocation to a general state of life, not a call to a particular relationship.

'There's a terrible lot of tripe talked about love and there being only one girl in the world a man can marry. We've got a whole lot of maudlin notions about sentimentality being the basis for marriage, whereas it actually rests on mutual respect and common sense considerations. And if this be so there are hundreds of girls a man might happily marry.'

...'Not so fast,' interrupted Trout, 'what about the vocation to marriage. Doesn't that imply there is a special person you should marry?'

'Of course it doesn't. It merely means that God indicates that His will for you is to enter the married state as distinct from entering religion or remaining celibate in the world. And this doesn't imply a direct revelation. God's will is manifest in quite ordinary ways....Just as a vocation to the religious life is sufficiently indicated by a constant desire for the life, average intelligence and good health, so, I imagine, the vocation to marriage is made plain by the desire of companionship, the benefits of responsibility and even the disturbing effects of concupiscence.'<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>*Record*, 18 January 1940, p. 7.

As Australian ideas of Catholic Action and the lay apostolate began to develop, recognition for marriage as a vocation, or at least a state of life which required particular spiritual preparation, began to increase.<sup>76</sup> However, the sense that real ministry was beyond the family persisted, and there is little evidence that the laity questioned the institutional dichotomy between marriage on the one hand and those who were 'free' to follow God's call on the other. Any readers of the *Record* who had doubts on the matter would have had them firmly dispatched in the same way as Dr Rumble accounted for the need for clerical celibacy in 1936.

[Q]You say that St Peter was the first Pope.

[R]Correct.

[Q]Scripture tells us that he was a married man.

[R]Correct. But it also tells us that he left his wife in order to give himself wholly to the work Christ wanted him to do...

[Q]Popes do not marry. How does this fit in with St Peter?

[R]St Peter happened to have a wife when Our Lord called Him. Being called, he left her. The Pope imitates St Peter by being without a wife. It would be absurd to suggest that he ought to marry a wife for the mere purpose of abandoning her in order to take up his ecclesiastical duties.<sup>77</sup>

Clearly for St Peter, as for Catholic men since, marriage had been an obstacle to the exercise of ministry in the church. The institution felt most at ease with a spirituality lived in a celibate life beyond the sway of women.

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<sup>76</sup>See below, Chapter 8.

<sup>77</sup>*Record*, 31 October 1936, p. 3.

*Vocation within the Laity*

The development of Catholic Action in Australia from the mid 1930s introduced the notion of a 'lay vocation' as a further element in the choice between the world and the cloister. In answering the papal call for the laity to 'participate in the apostolate of the hierarchy' Catholic Actionists saw the daily living out of Catholic values at work and in their local environment as an important service to the church and a means of saving souls. Committed young people, who had previously gravitated towards religious life, now found an alternative means of expressing their faith, and one which they considered a vocation in its own right.<sup>78</sup>

In 1939, in characteristically forthright prose, the Adelaide activist Margaret McGuire argued that the modern world, in the midst of a second world war, required a new dimension in lay piety. She explained that the formation offered to young women by the National Catholic Girls' Movement rested on the principle of involving lay people as the evangelists of other lay people in a secular environment. McGuire frankly acknowledged that this style of formation was significantly different to that of the existing sodalities.

It is the function of existing organisations, such as the Children of Mary, to ensure that Catholic girls partake regularly of the Bread of Life and that they continually renew their strength to carry on the battle of life, but - the present war has revealed this clearly - strength alone is not enough. It needs direction, training, discipline.

This is the reason the NCGM has come into being...it aims to draw every Catholic girl into its ranks. It will remove

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<sup>78</sup>Interviews with author, Mr Harry Child and Mrs Thelma Child, Bayswater WA, 31 July 1990; Mrs Eileen Heinrich, Prospect SA, 20 March 1990; Mr Robert Rabbitt, Roslyn Park SA, 19 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

the danger of isolation. Even though a girl finds herself the only Catholic in an office or workshop she knows that thousands of others are similarly placed and at her group meeting difficulties will be discussed and dealt with - preparing her to face hostile comment or derision with perfect confidence. MOREOVER (sic) one of the main aims of the NCGM is 'educational'. Not education in the didactic sense, eminently suitable for children, but the type of education which the developing adult mind requires. Through discussions, talks, demonstrations, the young girl will be provided with the right answer to her problems and difficulties at the right time. This answer will not be furnished so much by parents or teachers who are only too likely to be dismissed as 'old fashioned', but by girls of her own age and type - those whose ideas generally carry most weight.

This work of education is not done haphazardly, it is entrusted to trained leaders, young girls selected by the parish priest or other competent authorities who have undergone intensive 'formation' and preparation for their mission to lead others. These girls are members of the leaders' group, the backbone of every parish company and on them rests the responsibility of gathering together all the girls of the parish, of giving them a sense of the Faith, of fostering in others that apostolic spirit which will soon achieve a Catholic Australia.<sup>79</sup>

The process of formation for Catholic Action included discussion of scripture passages and current issues of concern in programmes which are discussed in Chapter 8. The concept of a lay vocation sanctioned and supported by the institutional church, and lived out in the particular environment of each Catholic, was exemplified in the 1955 prayer of the Young Catholic Students' Movement.

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<sup>79</sup>Margaret McGuire, Handbook for Catholic Action Groups, Adelaide, 1939.

Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, it is my desire not merely to enjoy the happiness of living for God, but also to diffuse it and give it to others.

I offer thee my life, and ask thee to make it fervent, upright and pure.

I offer thee my studies, and resolve to do my best in them.

I offer thee my apostolate amongst my companions, and pray for its more rapid expansion within the sphere of influence which Providence has given me.

Obtain for me, O Holy Virgin, obtain for all the Young Catholic Students, joyful generosity and complete devotion in the service of Catholic Action.

Make us good leaders who will strive to serve Christ, so that He may reign in our families, our parishes and throughout Australia.<sup>80</sup>

While individual Catholic Actionists could see their apostolate as a direct answer to God's call to live a Christian life, religious life remained the institutionally recognised structure for crucial church activities. Members of religious orders were involved in work, such as education and welfare, that was central to the church's self image. While the nuns and brothers were often personally anonymous, they could rest secure in the knowledge that their struggles were a significant part of the work for God's kingdom. The established tradition of religious life within the church also offered nuns, monks and priests security and stability of life as they carried out their work. In particular, the existence of a convent structure, which institutionalised women's presence in the church in particular ways, could have indirectly

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<sup>80</sup> *Young Catholic Students' Movement - Programme 1955*, Melbourne, 1955, inside front cover. Held Catholic Action collection, public domain, ACAP.

fostered the perception that other forms of involvement by women, or even the involvement of lay women in work usually done by nuns, were illegitimate.<sup>81</sup> Such events as the exodus of Perth leaders from the Catholic Girls Movement in the 1940s to join the Good Shepherd Sisters on the grounds that in this active order they could best continue their youth apostolate,<sup>82</sup> hint at the precarious nature of the lay movements as unrecognised vehicles of genuine discipleship. Church structures clearly indicated to these women that the laity was no place for people who were serious about God! Given the widespread understanding that it was a much more radical decision for a young Catholic to enter a convent, monastery or an order of priests, than to choose a single or married life in the laity, it is not surprising that studies of religious and priestly life focus on the view of those committed to it, rather than that of lay people who decided against it. The findings of this considerable body of research nevertheless have implications for a study of lay Catholicism.

### *Priests*

In contrast to the commonplace call to marriage, Catholics who pursued a religious vocation were thought of as especially blessed. The call of young men to the priesthood was particularly unambiguous as a privileged invitation to Godliness. The sacramental system of the church relied on priests having a special status as mediators between God and the body of the church. The extraordinary role priests played in channelling God's grace to his people encouraged a respect from the laity, based not necessarily on the qualities of the individual men, but on the divine nature of the duties they performed. Such a role was frequently acknowledged to surpass anything to which ordinary people

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<sup>81</sup>Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*, p. xv.

<sup>82</sup>Interviews, Miss Margaret Collopy, Perth WA, 28 March 1991; Mrs Maureen Menagh, South Perth WA, 17 April 1990. Tapes held by author.

might aspire. For example, the record of the 1943 Christmas function of the Catholic Young Men's Society in the Adelaide suburb of Alberton included the traditional toast, significant in itself, to the 'Hierarchy and Clergy'. Proposing the toast, Greg O'Loughlin revised Wordsworth's view of motherhood as 'the holiest thing on earth' in favour of the priesthood.

Had [Wordsworth] known the Catholic priesthood, the sublime dignity and lofty calling of Christ's anointed, he must have changed his words since of all God's creatures there can be none more sacred than the Priest whose body, hands and feet, whose lips, eyes, ears and very soul are Holy to the Lord.<sup>83</sup>

Parents and the Catholic decision-making population saw the education of young men for the priesthood as an investment in the future of the church. Lay associations which existed primarily to encourage their members to pray and participate in the sacraments maintained a commitment to the wider church through bursary funds for the education of a seminarian. When the 1930s Depression stretched the finances of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Perth to the very edges of efficiency, the bursary fund was continued. While there were warnings that the account needed to be conserved, a proposal to change the established method of collecting money through fixed monthly donations from members was rejected on the grounds that it

might jeopardise the scheme and thus deprive the Society of the privilege of educating a man for the Priesthood<sup>84</sup>.

Young men who began training for the priesthood carried the expectation that they would return the investment of the community, and prove worthy of the honour to which they aspired. Lay people who funded bursaries took an

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<sup>83</sup>*Catholic Young Men's Society Magazine*, number 1, 1944, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup>*Minutes of the Particular Council of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul*, Western Australia, meetings for 12 December 1930, 12 June 1931. The meeting of 8 November 1929 recorded that the cost of tuition was approx £60 each year.

interest in the progress of the candidates they supported. For example, the St Vincent de Paul Society in Perth received reports on 'their' student's progress, and noted the dates of ordination with happiness and satisfaction. In the case of one student who did leave, their *Minutes* show a realistic acceptance of the situation,<sup>85</sup> coupled with a disappointment and regret at having their fingers burned. The Society sought assurances that 'the student had not been guilty of conduct of a scandalous nature' and resolved to distribute their funds on advice from the archbishop and leave the duty of discerning priestly vocations to the hierarchy.<sup>86</sup>

A full examination of the training these young men received at the seminaries is beyond the scope of this thesis. Some consideration has already been given to the nature of priestly formation in Australia, and this work confirms the view that the priest's separate education, sometimes from as young as 12 in the case of the religious orders, emphasised his 'special' vocation.<sup>87</sup> Although ordinary Catholics were often well aware of the strengths, weaknesses and individual characteristics of the men involved, the Catholic priest had, by virtue of his calling, an elevated spiritual standing, and often considerable power and prestige.

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<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, 23 August 1934, 18 September 1934.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, 23 August 1934.

<sup>87</sup>Livingstone, *The Emergence of an Australian Catholic Priesthood 1835 - 1915*; John Hill, 'Changes in the Curriculum of Australian Seminaries', *Compass Theology Review*, vol. 22, 1988, pp. 70 - 80. Frances Lannon has noted that the education of young for the priesthood in seminaries separated from the world was the product of a spirituality that saw the common lot as dangerous. Physical separation of potential priest from their peers, was akin to distinctive religious dress as 'a powerful symbol and determinant of a separate clerical culture', *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain 1875 -1975*, Oxford, 1987, p. 94.

*The Religious Congregations of Men and Women*

Men and women who belonged to religious congregations also held a distinctive place in the Catholic communities in Adelaide and Perth. Leaving the world to find God had a long tradition within Christianity. Consecrated individuals, both women and men, were noted from the fourth century, as seeking to live a radical commitment to the Christian message. They embraced celibacy - both as a means of focussing their dedication and also as a signal of independence. They lived ascetically, with poverty as the avenue to greater appreciation of God's providence.<sup>88</sup> Over time, such individuals formed communities. Some were communities of priests and other men who were not ordained, other communities of men had no ordained members but, like the congregations of women, were pledged to a particular work lived out in poverty, chastity and obedience. Given that one of the main internal justifications for the existence of many different religious congregations was their call to various different emphases within the framework of Catholic spirituality, one would expect to find that their presence created a diversity of spiritual styles.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>Peter Brown, *The Body and Society, Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, New York, 1988; Jo Ann McNamara, *A New Song: Celibate Women in the First Three Christian Centuries*, New York, 1985; David Knowles, *Christian Monasticism*, New York, 1969; C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: forms of religious life in western Europe in the Middle Ages*, London, 1984. A study which draws heavily on the oral history of religious men and women in Australia for its analysis of change in religious life is Naomi Turner CSB, *Which seeds shall grow? Men and Women in Religious Life*, Melbourne, 1988.

<sup>89</sup>Livingstone, *The Emergence of an Australian Catholic Priesthood 1835 - 1915*, pp. 99 -100, argues for a spiritual homogeneity among Australian priests on the grounds that nearly all of them came from Ireland after training in a diocesan seminary. Schumann's work on colonial South Australia discusses the different spiritual flavour which the Austrian Jesuits introduced to that colony through European, rather than Irish, spiritual traditions, ' "...in the hands of the Lord": the Society of Jesus in Colonial South Australia', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, vol. 14, 1986, p. 46; and 'The Catholic Priesthood of South Australia, 1844 - 1915', *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 16, 1990, pp. 51 - 73. See also Frank Meecham, 'The Contribution of the Clergy to the Australian Church', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 55, 1978, pp. 43 - 55; Margaret Press RSJ, 'The Josephite Contribution', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 55, 1978, pp. 56 - 64.

Certainly the various orders of men and women were noted for different characteristics, drawing inspiration from the different personalities who founded them. However, between 1922 and 1962, the congregations themselves did not always show a clear understanding of their unique 'charism', but spoke of the work they did, the tasks they performed, rather than of their underlying orientation: the Dominican fathers were preachers, the Benedictines specialists in liturgical spirituality, the Loreto sisters were linked to intellectual traditions and the 'apostolate of refinement', the Daughters of Charity had a long history of welfare work. The common understanding of the 'laity' as a group less closely called to serve God, meant that little effort was expended on putting the laity in direct contact with the theology of a particular spiritual approach. Rather than offering access to a diverse spiritual landscape, the firm distinction was between the laity and the religious as groups, one mundane, the other aspiring to perfection through vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. While important work remains to be done on the various traditions of Australia's religious, and how far these subtle differences in spirituality were available to the laity, the central issue for this thesis is the exploration of the assumptions about the lay state which were implicit in the church structures for religious life.

Lay people were advised to accept the offered 'higher state' quickly and gratefully if they were called to religious life. Writing for the Catholic Truth Society in 1924 Father Patrick Gearon presented the neglect of a religious vocation as a choice for spiritual mediocrity.

Should you not value a vocation when Our Lord calls you to come close to Him, lifts you above your fellows, chooses you for a dignity, the very highest that can be given?

If earth laid all its treasures at your feet, the sea its pearls, the mountains their precious stones; if a

sparkling crown were placed upon your brow and a golden sceptre in your hand - all is as nothing when compared to the gift of a vocation...

Although you are free to accept Our Lord's invitation, you should not reject it; but many are neglecting it. It is a sad state of things. It is a refusal to go higher. Our Lord might not invite again. What a dreary life yours may be, gentle reader, how sad, how lonely, if Our Lord comes and you do not listen! How sad if the Master passes by, never to return!<sup>90</sup>

The paradoxical call to greater glory through a hidden life was a constant theme of the literature on vocations. Religious life was presented as counter-cultural, but the rejection of worldly values centred on reward in the next life, not on revolution in this world.

The rejection of power in the world was a particular issue for men who did not seek the spiritual power of ordination but chose to become a non-ordained member of a male religious order. This vocation was one of the most misunderstood within the church. A belief in the diversity of vocations and the equal access of all walks of life to the Divine was not firmly established in the general Catholic ethos of this time and it was often assumed that the brothers were men who were not capable of the academic studies needed for the priesthood, or who through some other defect were not making 'the full commitment'. However, favourable experiences of boys at school often argued against the teaching brothers being inferior to the priests. The emphasis within Australian Catholicism on the education of children in the faith also ensured that these men were acknowledged and valued by diocesan administrators.

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<sup>90</sup>Very Rev. Patrick Gearon O.C.C. *Why Not Be a Nun?*, Australian Catholic Truth Society Pamphlet, Melbourne, 1924, p. 14.

The February 1937 issue of *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart* carried an 'open letter to boys' on 'The Glorious Vocation of a Teaching Brother'. The letter, from a priest, began with a plea that those who felt called would not be persuaded into other careers, an acknowledgement perhaps that this was more likely to be an issue for these boys, than for those entering the seminary. The work of the brothers' schools was equated with the duties of parents and the 'glory' of the brothers' vocation was in the influence they had for good in the lives of students.

The greatest power in the formation of youth is wielded in the home - the influence of the parents on the child. Next in importance is the school - the influence of both teachers and companions. Herein lies the greatness of a Teaching Brother's vocation. The daily routine of class work may seem to offer few opportunities to the teacher beyond the mere subjects of the syllabus, but, in reality, the influence of the man is amazing. Only in eternity will the Religious teacher know the extent of the mighty power he has wielded.<sup>91</sup>

In a feminine and counter-cultural way the brother's gifts and talents were hidden. Just as parents, and mothers in particular, were encouraged to see a son in the priesthood as the crowning glory of their Catholicism, the influence a teaching brother could have over potential priests and other 'successful men' was advanced as an argument in favour of a choice of the brother's life. His success, like his 'brilliant gifts of mind and heart',<sup>92</sup> was considerable, and the life was presented as a positive and rewarding contribution to God's work. It is interesting that in contrast to the literature promoting religious vocations among women, nowhere is there a mention of children foregone for God, or of a

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<sup>91</sup>'An Open Letter to Boys: The Glorious Vocation of a Teaching Brother', *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, 1 February 1937, p. 60. For a close account of the work of the brothers at Christian Brothers' College, Wakefield Street, Adelaide, see Richard B. Healy CFC, *The Christian Brothers of Wakefield Street, 1878 - 1978*, Adelaide, 1978.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*

marriage-like relationship between these celibate men and the church. The bond between the boys and their teachers was presented as the result of a common vision, and there was a strong stress, as in the *Annals* article, on the fulfilling nature of the brothers' work. In an interesting comment on the differences perceived between men and women in their relationship to the world, Margaret Grey, also writing in *Annals* of 1937, contrasted the resistance of men to the lures of the world to the way in which women were succumbing to new freedoms and neglecting the convent. An increasing number of vocations to the male orders was seen to indicate the intrinsic appeal of religious life to those not fooled by the world.

...Consider the boy's case.

There is no new freedom for him. He has been pushed aside by his ambitious sister. He has turned from the world that is hard on the young man, while encouraging the young woman. He 'sees through it'. The glamour is only glamour to his clearer vision.<sup>93</sup>

Grey identified the impact of popular culture on the young women who were considering their futures in 1937. The media emphasis on 'attractiveness of face and figure' rather than of soul, as well as 'false ideas of life' presented through romantic films and modern novels, were blamed for a climate in which vocations did not flourish. *Annals* was concerned to point out the superficial nature of these changes to the place of women - not in order to lobby for more effective structural change - but so as to warn against young women being seduced into a less worthy life.

Women boast of their 'freedom'; all avenues in the business and professional world are now open to them. Can it be that this boasted freedom has turned young women away from the convent to follow some promising career in the world? If it be so, then this freedom is a

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<sup>93</sup> *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, 1 February 1937, p. 52.

failure, a snare, a delusion - as far as Catholic women are concerned. Girls grow up with the idea that they must do something to attract attention. Leaving school, a Catholic girl may carry away the dream of a little, bare white cell...But the vision fades, as the world about her paints a golden picture of 'a career' in the business, professional or artistic world. The world offers her dazzling gifts - fame; or at least notice, money, admiration. Others have succeeded. So will she.

The religious life offers only obscurity, work and prayer - no flattery, no fashion, no luxury, no publicity. The world pays in this life. God pays in the next.<sup>94</sup>

One result of the zealous recruiting of a church in need of personnel could well have been that some of the religious who were worked in Catholic schools and hospitals were ill-suited to the life. Particularly in the period of sudden expansion in Catholic schools after World War II classrooms were overcrowded as a matter of course, and teachers scantily trained. Certainly some lay people encountered religious who were clearly unhappy with their lives,<sup>95</sup> but the weight of the evidence throughout this period suggests that religious life was a positive, although mysterious, choice in the eyes of most Catholic laity, based, at least consciously, on issues of spirituality.<sup>96</sup> The sisters were seen primarily as women of religious commitment. The work they

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with author, Mrs Maureen Menagh, South Perth WA, 17 April 1990. Tape held by author.

<sup>96</sup> The reasons for the continued existence and appeal of female monasticism and for the later development (from the sixteenth century) of communities of unenclosed religious women include social, political and economic factors as well as spiritual issues. The view that convents were 'the haven for broken lives' led by unmarriageable women, was still current in Catholic and especially non-Catholic circles throughout the years considered here, see Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *The Woman of the Eighteenth Century*, trans Le Clerq and Roeder, New York, 1927, pp. 10 - 11, cited Janice G. Raymond, *A Passion for Friends: Toward a Philosophy of Female Affection*, Boston, 1986, p. 80. However, such a view was certainly not promoted by the church, or held by Catholics who saw themselves as committed to their faith.

undertook and the lifestyle they embraced was understood to be secondary to their spirituality, and a result of their vows to Jesus Christ as spouse. The vocations literature does outline the various kinds of service which candidates for the women's congregations could expect to be involved in, often emphasising the humble and hidden aspects of the work, rather than promoting the vocation as a 'career' worthy in itself.<sup>97</sup> Not surprisingly the literature does not deal at all with the political choices implicit in a decision to live a life in community, or the possibility of economic motives for entering - though sometimes the church demonstrated a practical awareness of monetary questions, counselling youngest daughters to remain in the world to care for their aging parents.<sup>98</sup>

In 1950 the *Saint Aloysius College Annual*, produced for the students and former pupils of this Sisters of Mercy school in Adelaide, carried an article in which a Sister of Mercy answered some of the criticisms levelled at religious life. It is significant, not only that the religious life was defended, but that the criticisms were acknowledged as coming from sensible people.

Not so many years ago, when I decided to become a nun, several of my friends raised their eyebrows in good - humoured tolerance. 'It's a disease,' they said, and added confidently, 'you'll get over it'. But when they saw me pack my trunk a few weeks later, their disapproval took a dramatic turn.

Had I lost my wits? Where was my common sense? When was I going to grow up? What was I running away from? And then the funeral dirges, too. Now I would be shut up forever. I'd never go anywhere. I'd never do anything. I'd never meet anyone. I might as well be buried alive!<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>The popular 1953 film *The Nun's Story* dealt with the issue of conflict between career and vocation.

<sup>98</sup>Suzanne Campbell-Jones, *In Habit: an anthropological study of working nuns*, London, 1979, p. 71.

<sup>99</sup>Sister M. Aquinas Healy, *Catholic World*, reprinted in *Saint Aloysius College Annual*, 1950, p. 20 - 2.

The argument against the convent was countered with the assertion that nuns did lead full lives, and that there was an underlying supernatural motivation in the choice of such a lifestyle. While not suggesting that convent life was full of high adventure, this passage affirmed the religious life as a possible alternative to marriage; not an alternative chosen for its own sake, but because of a call from God.

A few months ago, when a friend of mine came to see me, I poured into her ears my little tale of things seen and done. She admitted that she had been wrong about nuns going nowhere and doing nothing.

'But,' she protested, 'I still can't see why you had to enter the convent. Couldn't you live a good life in the world? Why give up home and family, husband and children, and so many natural enjoyments?'

The same question has often been asked without words, as any nun will tell you. It has been asked by eyes - by sympathetic eyes and puzzled eyes, by pitying eyes and patronising eyes and by sheerly unbelieving eyes. What a quaint anomaly is a nun in this atomic age!

If I were to give a simple answer to the question it would be just as plain as the reply any girl might make when asked why she married a certain young man: 'Why, because I love him,' she would say and that would be the end of it. The nun is a nun because she has fallen in love with the perfect Lover. She has chosen Him. Or, rather, He has chosen her. With eyes wide open I surrendered my heart and made my choice.<sup>100</sup>

The difficulty of how to explain that women in the world were called to love God as well, and as much as they were able, could only be dealt with in

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

terms of a hierarchy of devotion and explanations of the way in which the structures of religious life made the nun more accessible to God. The life of religious women was formally differentiated from that of single and married Catholic women by vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Sisters of Mercy explained that through poverty the nun was 'free of all encumbrances, free to belong to God',<sup>101</sup> and that obedience was the heroic submission of 'her will to God's representative for the love of God'<sup>102</sup>. In explaining the role of chastity in achieving perfection the sisters' final appeal was to the validity of their lived experience.

Finally there is the vow of chastity. By this vow a nun gives up one of the dearest treasures of a woman's heart - her own children and the love and companionship of marriage. This is the most difficult vow for some of my friends to understand. 'You don't live a normal life,' they say. 'It's an unnatural life.' This is the problem whose answer is clearest to the nun and most difficult to make clear to someone else.

Why? Because in this case experience is the only teacher. The nun gives up her own children, yes, but between her and her spiritual children there is a closer bond than any natural tie. Who can know the joy of bringing a human soul to God? The nun has found a pearl of greater price and has freely sold all that she has to possess it. There are feelings under heaven that one knows with no explanation or cannot know at all. Speak of sublimation or frustration to a nun and she will smile. She knows.<sup>103</sup>

It seems that a pledged communal life of celibacy made the nuns much more acceptable to the institutional church than unprofessed lay women, allowing them to escape the stigma of female sexuality while still participating

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

in the accepted women's role of care for children.<sup>104</sup> Although framed within an institutional structure not sympathetic to women, convents have been frequently identified as not only providing Catholic women with a socially acceptable alternative to marriage and family responsibilities, but also as opening the way for women to opportunities for personal development and responsibility. The Catholic theologian, Rosemary Haughton, has argued that convents functioned as a liberating structure for women because they freed women from sexual stereotypes.

Women who were nuns, who were celibate, were able to transcend the normal feminine position. It was very important especially in the early centuries for women to be able to do that, because what it did was to remove them from the patriarchal system in which they simply existed in relation to their fathers or their husbands or their sons, and had no existence apart from that. To choose to opt out of that system gave women a status as Christians that was different. because for a very long time married women simply had no status at all.<sup>105</sup>

In a study of nuns working in England in the 1960s Suzanne Campbell-Jones addressed the question of how some women chose to leave the laity and enter the convent. She found that these women, who had all made their decision in the framework of Catholicism before 1962, were likely to come from a background which positively reinforced the view of a vocation as a privilege,

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<sup>104</sup>On the ideal of the feminine and compulsory heterosexuality see Jill Matthews, *Good and Mad Women: The Historical Construction of Femininity in Twentieth-Century Australia*, Sydney, 1984, especially chapter 7.

<sup>105</sup>Rosemary Haughton, 'Reclaiming the Feminine', [Missionaries of the Sacred Heart eds], *A New Heart For A New World: an exploration of the desires of God's heart*, Homebush, NSW, 1986, p. 177. See also Raymond, *A Passion for Friends*, p. 81; Natalie [Zemon] Davis 'City Women and Religious Change' in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, Stanford, 1987, pp. 65 - 95; Ruth P. Liebowitz, 'Virgins in the Service of Christ: The Dispute over an active apostolate for women during the Counter-Reformation', in Rosemary Reuther and Eleanor McLaughlin (eds), *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, New York, 1979, pp. 255 - 78

and to be members of large families with traditional structures of authority.<sup>106</sup> The other options available to women were also likely to have been an important factor in the appeal, or otherwise of the religious life. Campbell-Jones points out that recruitment slowed down in the years after the Second World War, and suggests that this was a direct result of the changing position of women in society.

After the Second World War the attitude of young sisters and the congregations towards vocations changed. The breakdown of family life, the increase of smaller families, even among Catholics, greater opportunities for women outside marriage, all affected the degree of initial socialization and the numbers of recruits the religious congregations could expect.<sup>107</sup>

Historians who have considered nuns in earlier years have also argued for a link between the condition of women in wider society and the level of recruitment to the cloister.<sup>108</sup> Frances Lannon has noted class distinctions between those recruited to various religious orders. The work the order did was important in sorting the kinds of lay women who became members.

Those involved mainly in primary or technical schools and in social work usually recruited at a lower social level, and younger, than those running the top level Roman Catholic secondary schools and colleges. These latter usually admitted entrant at 18 rather than 13, after a secondary education that was inevitably, the preserve of those rich enough to pay fees.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup>Campbell-Jones, *In Habit*, p. 75. By contrast Andre Godin SJ has found that a boy's chances of becoming a priest were increased if he was the eldest child of a large family. Andre Godin SJ, *The Psychology of Religious Vocations : Problems of the Religious Life*, trans. LeRoy A. Wauk, Washington, 1983, p. 13.

<sup>107</sup>Campbell-Jones, *In Habit*, p. 77.

<sup>108</sup>See for example, Catriona Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, Dublin, 1987.

<sup>109</sup>Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy*, .p. 66.

Candidates from poorer classes were admitted as lay sisters whose position was akin to that of domestic staff. Indeed the practice began from the expectation that ladies would enter the convent accompanied by their maid, and continued on the defense that this was the only way to enable uneducated women to take up the privilege of a religious vocation. Such entrenched patterns of class dominance were not at home in the Australian self-perception, and Lannon notes that by the late 1950s even in Spain social patterns were changing in wider society, and convents were preserving a distinction that was becoming meaningless.<sup>110</sup>

The constant tension between the goal of ordered, inner directed lives of service and the demands of the wider church and society, where suspicion of women's ability to govern often held sway, is one of the features of the history of women's religious orders. There is some evidence that 'frontier societies' allowed women more flexibility of action because it was necessary for survival. The need to provide Catholic education in remote areas of South Australia thus outweighed the conventions against sisters living in small communities and mixing with the local people.<sup>111</sup> Mary Ewans traces a similar situation for nuns in nineteenth century America, arguing that the sisters were 'the most liberated women' of their time as self-supporting, educated decision-makers, transcending sexuality and the burdens of marriage and motherhood to enjoy friendships based on 'the deepest aspirations of the human spirit'<sup>112</sup> Significantly Ewans also traces a reaction against the liberating life of the sisters in the twentieth century with the end of frontier exemption and increased centralisation around Rome.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Marie Therese Foale RSJ, *The Josephite Story, The Sisters of St Joseph: their foundation and early history, 1866 - 1893*, Sydney, 1989.

<sup>112</sup> Mary Ewans OP, 'Removing the Veil: the Liberated American Nun', p. 257.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

The assumption remained that vocations to the religious orders were the life-blood of the church. When, in the 1937 article cited above, the *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart* expressed concern that changes in Australian society were reducing the number of candidates for the women's orders there was explicit reference to the frontier 'mission' flavour of the Australian church, and the work that religious women performed within it. The perceived decline in the number of vocations was attributed to changing social conditions, but rather than seeing these changes as calling forth different structures in the church, Grey saw a lessening of openness to God among Catholic young women, who had formerly answered His call.

Very gradually, but very surely, during the past few years, there has come a noticeable decline in religious vocations amongst our young girls. What can have happened? God wants certain souls to serve Him in the religious life. Our country has been favoured by God in this way in the past. Although a new land, a missionary land, the number of girls entering the religious life was remarkable. Why has this flow weakened? What has caused it?

We do not think that God has turned from us; that he no longer seeks His brides from among the daughters of our land.

No. We must sadly admit that the fault must lie with us - our young girls are refusing the high destiny offered them. This is a disquieting thought. It is more. It is appalling. What hope for our country if our young girls turn from the 'better path' which God offers to them? Who will instruct the young? Who will tend the sick, the aged, the orphan, the sinner? Who will raise hands of prayer for us? Our Sisterhoods are the strength of the Church - particularly in a land like ours. The notion that life as a nun, brother or priest was more worthy than life as a lay person was promoted strongly. For women, there

was a clear emphasis on embracing Christ as their spouse.<sup>114</sup>

The acknowledgement that many of the practices of convents were medieval in origin was linked to a determination to continue to witness to the values behind them in the modern world. None of the literature speaks of the possibility of changes to the religious life, or of an increased recognition of the role of the laity but instead aims to show the continuing relevance of the basic assumptions of convents. Grey reinforced the impression that the bulk of the church's work was often carried by these women, who were difficult to replace because of the higher status accorded to the religious life. In 1937 there was no doubt that the answer to who would perform the work the sisters had been doing, was clearly, more sisters.

The distinctions between lay life and the higher vocations of priest or vowed religious were powerful influences on lay Catholic spirituality. The expectation that lay people should, and probably would, follow the clerical lead in devotional life was tied to the conditions in Australia as a mission country and thus to the secular context of the church. The institutional assumptions about lay spirituality were heavily influenced by the heritage of nineteenth-century Australia when catechetics had been kept simple to suit the need of remote people informing themselves from books, or being visited on rare occasions by priests with vast parishes. The view that Catholics were mostly working-class and strongly committed to Ireland can be shown to cover an increasingly more diverse reality in the twentieth century, but the spirituality of Catholicism was slow to reflect the variety of experiences of lay life within the church. The cultural understanding that religion was a womanly concern, peripheral to the

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<sup>114</sup>For a report of a profession ceremony at the Convent of Mercy, Adelaide which makes this clear see, *St Aloysius College Annual*, 1946, pp. 18 - 9; see also picture spread of the novitiate and profession ceremonies 'Come Spouse of Christ', *St Aloysius College Annual*, 1959, appendix.

main business of society, was particularly evident in the period leading up to World War II, and shaped a devotional style that drew on stereotypical notions of the feminine to be examined in section II of this thesis. The increasing complexity of the Catholic response to the modern world, which is the subject of the next chapter, was closely linked to a shift in lay spirituality where women and men were called to actively promote their faith.

## Chapter 2: A Catholic View of the World

Committed Catholics faced a dilemma in their interaction with the world. On the one hand they were called to be separate from it, suspicious of the modern evils codified by Pius IX and concerned to jealously guard their faith and morals from 'corrupting' non-Catholic influences. On the other hand the very distinctiveness of Catholicism, the conviction of Catholics that the church and its teachings were the means of salvation and the channel of God's grace and mercy in this life, propelled them to proclaim the Catholic position and to seek to influence the structures of Australian society in accordance with that view. The notion that Catholic people were 'in the world, but not of it' existed beside the notion that Catholicism was an incarnational faith, requiring embodiment in the world.

Both conceptions of the world required Catholics to see themselves as 'other' than the mainstream, but the first view gave rise to a sense of difference that was defensive, while the other unapologetically sought converts. The two positions were intertwined in the life of the institution and its people throughout the period. However, the evidence suggests that in broad terms, the self-confidence of Catholics as Catholics was increasing over these forty years, and that as more Catholic people moved into comfortable income brackets the world came to be seen not so much as a trap to be avoided as an environment in need of good influence.

### *The Sense of Catholic Difference*

Catholics saw themselves as a separate group in Australian society. Public gatherings of Australian Catholics were almost invariably marked by the

singing of two hymns - 'Hail, Queen of Heaven', a tribute to the Blessed Virgin, and 'Faith of our Fathers', which triumphantly recalled the sufferings of previous generations who had persevered in the Catholic faith in spite of persecution. Both these rallying cries emphasised experiences and beliefs peculiar to Catholics which set them apart from their Protestant neighbours. In a pattern of mutual suspicion and guarded interaction the separate churches sought to preserve their identities, especially by providing sectarian activities for young people. Catholic and Protestant children went to separate schools, joined separate clubs to pursue sporting or cultural interests, tended to marry their co-religionists and, in turn, sent their children to separate schools. For many lay people the circle of their social interaction was defined by the parish and its church connections, and the chance individual from the other side of the religious divide who was encountered as a 'good bloke' or 'nice woman' was regarded as an exception to the rule of difference. The network of explicitly Catholic involvements served to foster and protect a distinctive view of the world. It is important to examine the sense of Catholic difference which lay at the heart of the Catholic world-view.

The traditions of sectarianism within Australian culture contributed to a defensive stance among Catholics. Michael Hogan has noted that sectarianism has been a powerful force in Australian society not simply as the basis for actual division between people on the grounds of religion, but also because belief in religious bias, whether that belief is well founded or not, has important social effects.<sup>1</sup> As Hogan's study shows, discrimination on grounds of religion was taken for granted by many Australians. The foundation of the Knights of the Southern Cross was understood by Catholics to be a necessary protection against non-Catholic, especially Masonic, prejudice in employment and it was almost a

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand: Religion in Australian History*, Ringwood, Vic., 1987, Introduction, also p. 199.

matter of course that for some jobs with some companies: 'No Catholics need apply'.

Melbourne and Sydney have been the focus for most comment on sectarianism in Australia, and the traditions of West Australia as a society built on consensus, and of South Australia as a 'paradise of dissent' have sometimes implied that the religious environments of Perth and especially Adelaide were more tolerant of Catholicism. Catholics in these cities did not perceive themselves as accepted by mainstream society, but were acutely aware of their minority status. The evidence of one West Australian woman reflected a typical sense among lay people that they were part of a hostile and pagan environment.

It was well known that you couldn't get a job at Baird's if you were a Catholic, but you could get a job at Aherns. We had that ghetto mentality. Catholics were discriminated against, we surely were.<sup>2</sup>

For South Australians the sense of being a small Catholic community was sometimes especially heightened, as when one delegate travelled with the National Catholic Girls Movement to a conference in Melbourne in the late 1940s and felt the contrast between Adelaide and the Victorian's assurance in their Catholicism.

Everything was so big. Melbourne was so much ahead of us...it was so Catholic...we were just a little country town.<sup>3</sup>

In 1930 a West Australian representative of the St Vincent de Paul Society concluded that while some aspects of the Society's work were conducted more enthusiastically in Perth, the overall sense of Catholic presence was stronger in

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<sup>2</sup>Interview, Mrs Maureen Menagh, South Perth-WA, 17 April 1990. Tape held by author.

<sup>3</sup>Interview, Mrs Eileen Heinrich, Prospect SA, 20 March 1990. Tape held by author.

'the East'. Significantly he too commented on St Francis's in Melbourne and used institutional criteria of access to sacramental devotions and the presence of a priest to assess the vigour of the church.

Brother Chipper considered that the Catholic atmosphere was more pronounced there [Melbourne] and that there was a finer spirit prevailing than in this State. The churches appeared to be more visited. In St Francis' Melbourne for instance, where Benediction was given daily at mid-day, one could scarcely find a seat. The doors of the church were never closed and a priest was always on the altar.<sup>4</sup>

The Catholic press in both cities echoed sentiments from Melbourne and Europe that Catholics were under siege. Two recurring themes were the disadvantaged position of Catholics in society, and the loyalty of Catholics to Australia, and even Britain, in spite of the doubts which their Irish associations raised in Protestant minds. In 1931 the *Record* quoted Archbishop Mannix on the inherent disability of Catholicism for success in public life.

Every Catholic man who has succeeded in State or Federal politics, or anywhere else, has succeeded not because he is a Catholic but in spite of it. A Catholic may have a claim to be Prime Minister of Australia, but I say without fear of contradiction that from the time he starts his public career his Catholicity is an obstacle to his progress.<sup>5</sup>

While the close Catholic network might well have made some parts of the political process and society inaccessible to non-Catholics as Hogan argues,<sup>6</sup> in general, Catholics felt themselves excluded from the arena where real social power was wielded. Efforts to demonstrate Catholic worth as citizens often

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<sup>4</sup> *Minutes of the Particular Council of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Perth, WA, 12 September 1930.*

<sup>5</sup> Archbishop Mannix, address to the Australian Catholic Truth Society, 24 November 1931, printed in *Record*, 12 December 1931, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, pp.171 - 176.

focussed on the question of loyalty to Australia and the crown. Commenting on the visit of the Duke of Gloucester to Australia in 1934 the magazine of St Ildephonsus College, the Marist school at New Norcia which aimed to educate Catholic boys to take leading places in society, countered the prevailing view that Catholics were disloyal by citing a link between religion and civic duty.

Catholics are frequently accused of disloyalty, but without reason, as their religion and loyalty are inseparable. In putting God and the things of God before all else they are simply obeying the Divine command 'Render unto God the things that are God's, and unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's'. As the Melbourne *Advocate* justly remarks: 'For us the injunction, "Fear God, Honour the King", has an authority no less that Divine'. Therefore in being loyal to God a Catholic must of necessity be loyal to the State, whose power emanates from God.<sup>7</sup>

When the young Queen Elizabeth was crowned in 1953 the *St Aloysius' College Annual* carried her picture and reports of the celebrations in close proximity to articles which honoured Mary, Queen of Heaven,<sup>8</sup> and during the royal visit in 1954 the Catholic press used banner headlines to welcome the monarch to Australia.<sup>9</sup> Warm as the reception was, it was nonetheless issued as a separate, distinct and specifically Catholic demonstration of allegiance to the queen. There were also rumours circulating in some Catholic classrooms that the European mystic, Padre Pio, had foreseen that 'the return of England to Catholicism under a second Elizabeth' would bring a welcome restoration of public Catholicism.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *St Ildephonsus College Magazine*, 1934, 'Foreword'.

<sup>8</sup> *St Aloysius' College Annual*, 1953, pp. 10 - 11.

<sup>9</sup> For example, *Record*, 25 March 1954, p. 1 carried a full page picture of Elizabeth II and the headline 'Catholics Greet their Queen', p. 3 was a full page letter of welcome under the title, 'Western Third of Nation Welcomes Her Majesty'.

<sup>10</sup> Interview, Sr Julianna Buswell, Mrs Philomena Monaghan and Mrs Mida Crombie, East Victoria Park WA, 1 July 1984. Tape held by author; interview E, A Sister of Mercy, Name in confidence, Perth WA, 26 October 1989. Notes held by author.

Hope in the eventual restoration of a Catholic social order was another facet of a world-view founded on the sense of Catholic difference, and an aspect that had important implications for the development of the lay apostolate. In Perth and Adelaide the commitment to a 'Catholic' culture was sometimes manifested as triumphant proclamations of Catholic success in the existing social structure. The long lists of examination results which the Catholic weeklies published each year were one example of the concern to show that Catholics could mix it with the rest, and often win. References to Catholic achievement in other fields - literature, science, politics, music - abound in Catholic publications from school annuals to hard cover books on what Catholics had accomplished.<sup>11</sup> The aim was to demonstrate that there was a uniquely Catholic approach to each field and successful proponents in that field who shared the world-view of the church. Thus, John Dryden was praised as 'England's Catholic Poet Laureate' for the spirituality in his works, a review which described Hilaire Belloc as 'the most versatile of all living English prose writers [who] has always taken the unpopular view of the problems of his age' was quoted approvingly as a sign of Catholic discernment, Paderewski was heralded as a 'Great Catholic, Great Pianist, Great Pole', and the success of former students of Catholic schools was loudly applauded, especially when the individuals themselves expressed their gratitude to the Catholic system, as did Roma Mitchell when it was announced that she was the first woman to be appointed a Queen's Counsel in Australia.<sup>12</sup>

In this vein, but with the broader purpose of showing that western culture and civilisation was heavily indebted to the church, the Adelaide Catholic

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<sup>11</sup>For example, *Tales of Catholic Artists*, translated from the French, London, n.d., but read by subscribers to the Presentation Convent Library in 1923; E. I. Watkin, *Catholic Art and Culture*, London, 1947; *Catholic Men in the Sciences*, n.d., held ACAP.

<sup>12</sup>*Record*, 12 September 1931, p. 2; *Record*, 28 March 1940, p.14; *Record*, 16 May 1940, p. 19; *St Aloysius College Annual*, 1962, p. 9.

Guild for Social Studies planned a series of lectures on 'The Catholic Heritage' in 1934. Local speakers covered the contribution of the church to philosophy, art, science, economics, and music. One session was devoted exclusively to the significance of the religious orders. In discussing the possibility that the lectures be broadcast Paul McGuire, the Guild's director, commented in terms which indicated both the general assumption that many people were ignorant of these facets of church history, especially 'outsiders'; and the hope that greater knowledge might lead to conversions.

It seems to me that the course would be useful, especially to those non-Catholics who might find it an intellectual approach to the Church. We have found in the Guild work, that a surprising number of outsiders are very interested in the social teachings of the Church, and I think this course would have a certain appeal to people of the kind.<sup>13</sup>

The Catholic world-view of the Guild valued success in the wider community not as an end in itself, but as an indication that Catholic difference was ascending. This self-confident appeal to the value of Catholic thought even when it ran counter to the prevailing social order was a hall-mark of the European movement for a 'Catholic Revival' led by writers and social critics committed to the ideal of a renewed Christendom. Alden Brown has commented on the impetus which Catholic literature gave to the 'consciously Catholic and apostolic spirit' of the Catholic Worker movement, the Grail and other lay groups in the American church between the wars,<sup>14</sup> and it is important to note the distinctive world-view which informed these works. The canon of the revival included writers who were promoted by the Guild in Adelaide and the Chesterton Club in Perth - G.K.Chesterton himself, Hilaire Belloc, Christopher

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<sup>13</sup>Catholic Guild for Social Studies, Box 137, ACAA.

<sup>14</sup>Alden Brown, *The Grail Movement and American Catholicism, 1940 - 1975*, Notre Dame, 1989, pp. 21, 172 - 175.

Dawson, Paul Claudel and Jacques Maritain. Brown notes the sub-text of social change implicit in their work.

All these authors sought in one way or another to reassert the great Catholic themes of sin, faith, redemption and the Church over against the failed liberalism and materialism which they believed responsible for having brought Western civilization to its knees.<sup>15</sup>

The impact of the 'Chesterbelloc' thinkers on Catholics in Adelaide and Perth will be considered in a later chapter,<sup>16</sup> but it is significant to note that these writers were informed by a vision of the church and the world where the Catholic identity was firmly established and proudly maintained at a distance from the mainstream of society. As well as seeking recognition in the world, Catholics hoped to preserve their separate status to function as critic of a civilisation they saw to be crumbling.

While, as in America, Australian commitment to the full programme of Catholic renaissance was relatively limited, from the 1920s there was an increasingly pervasive respect for the writers who were seen as landmarks of Catholic culture. The *Link* magazine, published by the former students of Our Lady of Mercy College in Perth, carried a typical example of Catholic culture as distinctive in 1938 when 'K.C.M.' wrote on 'Poets of Catholic England'. With pride, she claimed many published names as converts to Catholicism and pointed to the Catholic content of their poems. While a secular assessment would also value 'the giants of Katherine Tynan's and Alice Meynell's circle - Coventry Patmore, Francis Thompson, Lionel Johnson, Louise Imogen Guiney' and contemporaries Maurice Baring, Compton McKenzie, Alfred Noyes, Sheila Kay-

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<sup>15</sup>Alden Brown, *The Grail Movement and American Catholicism*, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup>See below chapter 8.

Smith,<sup>17</sup> for 'K.C.M' Catholicism was in itself a major criterion of literary worth. A writer's achievements as a Catholic apologist overrode other concerns of form or content, so it was G.K. Chesterton's status as 'the greatest spokesman of our philosophy and belief [who] made his submission to the Church comparatively recently' which was noted rather than any comment on his style. Highest praise went to life-long Catholic, Hilaire Belloc, whose own statement of the Catholic sense of difference, complete with the in-jokes of Latin verses, was quoted in full as an example of work which reflected the spirit of the church.

Heretics all, whoever you be,  
 In Tarbes or Nimes, or over the sea,  
 You never shall have good words from me,  
*Caritas no conturbat me.*

But Catholic men that live upon wine  
 Are deep in the water, and frank and fine;  
 Wherever I travel, I find it so,  
*Benedicamus Domino.*

On chiding women that are forlorn,  
 And men that sweat in nothing but scorn:  
 That is on all that ever were born,  
*Miserere Domino.*

To my poor self on my deathbed,  
 And all my dear companions dead,  
 Because of the love I bore them,  
*Dona eis requiem.*

Catholic activities, from cultural pursuits to tennis clubs, were thought to be superior because they embodied Catholic values. For example, pride in the achievement of Catholic authors in the mainstream was coupled with a concern

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<sup>17</sup>'K.C.M', 'Poets of Catholic England', *Link: the magazine of the Ex-Students Association Victoria Square College, Perth*, 1938, p. 4.

that there should be a body of literature which provided an alternative to the many modern published works which the institution viewed with suspicion.<sup>18</sup> In 1940, Trout and Fontaine, the fictional young men whose conversations on topical issues were printed each week in the *Record*, discussed modern reading. Fontaine was enjoying detective stories by the South Australian author Paul McGuire, the same man who as Catholic activist was a leading figure in the Catholic Guild of Social Studies. Fontaine recommended McGuire's stories as good Catholic entertainment.

[O]f all the light inconsequential reading that [society] offers today, stories of detection are about the only ones you can trust for interest and decency. I find it more diverting to read about a millionaire's corpse than about his mistress. Or again, his death is often more fascinating than his life.<sup>19</sup>

With further suspicion of 'romance', and the possibilities of sexual innuendo, he dismissed *Gone With the Wind* as 'pornography', and advocated instead a plan of reading to deepen his appreciation of the Catholic world-view. Speaking with the voice of the institution, Fontaine hoped that Catholicism would provide the framework in which to locate the answers to the questions that good books might prompt. In contrast to hapless 'moderns' without a clear philosophy, Fontaine urged Catholics to take advantage of the total system of belief the church offered.

That's where you and I and every Catholic has the pull over the moderns. We've got that universal outlook at least in embryo. But it needs development. I think about the most useful thing Catholic Action can do is to give its members a solid grip on the fundamental outlines of

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<sup>18</sup>Paul R. Messbarger has shown in *Fiction with a Parochial Purpose, Social uses of American Catholic Literature, 1884 - 1900*, Boston, 1971, that American Catholicism generated a significant number of novels which were very explicit in their commitment to the Catholic world-view, and important influences on the spirit of 'Americanism' within the church. While there was no Australian equivalent to this genre of 'Catholic novel', the church in twentieth-century Australia was similarly concerned that Catholics read books which supported the church.

<sup>19</sup>*Record*, 25 January 1940, p. 11.

Catholic philosophy. Until you've got the total concept you can't see the parts in intelligent perspective.<sup>20</sup>

The sense that Catholic taste in literature was, or should be, distinctive, motivated the foundation of Catholic libraries in both Adelaide and Perth.<sup>21</sup> Both began as offshoots of groups of lay people who were meeting to discuss the writings of Catholic authors and theorists of the Catholic revival, most notably G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and Christopher Dawson, and to explore the intellectual traditions of the church.<sup>22</sup> However, the shelves of the libraries were in themselves a vignette of the tension between the defensive and triumphal aspects of the Catholic world view. On the one hand the books were made available to shore up the Catholic defenses against attacks on the virtue of purity. The shelves were stocked with stories which would provide an alternative to the tempting, wayward romance. Novels of intensity and passion were not entirely absent: the borrowing records of the Adelaide library show that *Wuthering Heights* and *Kristin Lavansdatter* were both read by library members, but there was no hint of the more explicit modern authors.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, readers also availed themselves of books which provided a basis for self-education in the lives of the saints, the philosophy of Catholic Action, and the position of the church on issues of the day.

While happy to serve the needs of the Catholic community for good and entertaining books, the management of the libraries remained committed to providing works which would foster Catholic Action. In explaining the reasons

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> See below chapter 8. The Fisher and More Library (later the Catholic Central Library) was established by the Catholic Guild for Social Studies in 1935 in Adelaide and the Veritas Library in Perth was operating by 1937.

<sup>22</sup> Sister Maria Janine Walczak CR, 'A Short History of the Catholic Library Services in Adelaide', unpublished ms, Adelaide College of TAFE Library Technician Studies, November 1987.

<sup>23</sup> Catholic Central Library Borrowing Ledger 1958, 1959, 1960. Held by the Catholic Central Library, Adelaide

for the Catholic library in the *Southern Cross*, the writers of the 'Library Table' column made direct reference to the need to combat Communism and to work for personal salvation. This library was not to be a quiet place of indulgent theorising, but a cornerstone of activism.

In the war against materialistic atheism the violence of which is increasing every day, one of the Catholics' strongest weapons is the printed word, both for his own equipment and for propaganda to be used among the ranks of the enemy and the many sad neutrals of our time. There are two forms of conquest: direct action and peaceful penetration. The Catholic must use both methods. He must be militant in carrying Christian principles into the enemy's camp and he must by the example and practice of his own life spread abroad the knowledge of Catholic truth. For the proper performance of our work a well stocked Catholic library is indispensable.

....Our chief purpose is to save souls, and for this personal devotion may prove sufficient. But we are also obliged to extend our truth to our neighbours and this requires something more than personal devotion. It requires knowledge and the ability to convey knowledge. There can be no fully effective lay apostolate until we have the facilities for knowledge and the will to use them.<sup>24</sup>

Five months later Margaret McGuire, the library's overseer, wrote to Archbishop Killian that the library had approximately one hundred subscribers who had access to one thousand books and 25 periodicals<sup>25</sup> (including Killian's own cast off copies of the *Tablet*, *Advocate*, *Catholic Press*, *Studies*, and *Catholic Times* and back issues of the discontinued *America*). In lunchtime meetings the 'students or clerks and stenographers in the City', who were the bulk of members of the Catholic Guild of Social Studies, were reading the social

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<sup>24</sup>*Southern Cross*, 9 August 1935.

<sup>25</sup>Letter, Margaret McGuire to Archbishop Killian, 9 January 1937 cited Walczak, 'A Short History of the Catholic Library Services Adelaide', appendix.

encyclicals and Dawson's *Religion and the Modern State*, and copies of the dense English periodical the *Tablet* together with Catholic newspapers from Sydney and Melbourne.<sup>26</sup> This kind of reading was promoted by the Guild on the expectation that knowledge of theory and events beyond the immediate environment would support the members as they took action in the world. For example, in 1937 the Fisher and More Library promoted several books on Russia in direct response to material made available in Adelaide by pro-Communist groups. In her report to the Guild, Margaret McGuire demonstrated a frank acceptance of the need to enter the propaganda war vigorously with alternative facts to support an anti-atheistic position. To this end a pamphlet was produced and distributed widely through the Guild and parishes.

#### WORKERS!

Walter Citrine, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress of Great Britain and President of the International Federation of Trades Union to Russia. In his book "I Search for Truth in Russia" he deals with [Russia] from the viewpoint of an experienced Labour Leader.

#### READ THE FACTS FOR YOURSELVES

- \*'I Search for Truth in Russia' - W. Citrine
- \*'Human Life in Russia' - Ammende
- \*'Soviet Man - Now' - Isvolsky
- \*'Uncle Give us Bread' - Strom
- \*'Russia's Iron Age' - Chamberlain
- \*'The Russian Revolution' - Guerin

You can borrow these books and one thousand others from the Fisher and More Library for 1/2 d. a day.<sup>27</sup>

While Guild members were encouraged to read whole books to develop awareness of the Catholic position, the pamphlets of the Catholic Truth Society

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<sup>26</sup>Catholic Guild of Social Studies, Box 137, ACAA, 14 October 1935.

<sup>27</sup>9 January 1937, report of the Fisher and More Library, Catholic Guild of Social Studies, Box 137, ACAA.

aimed to encapsulate the church's position on a variety of topics in short essays which were mass produced and sold from the porches of parish churches.

Established in 1904 to promote 'the Catholic mixture of defense and aggression...to diffuse Catholic truth and correct Protestant error'<sup>28</sup>, the society weathered financial trouble in the mid-1920s and published steadily throughout the next forty years and beyond. In 1931 the *Record* noted there were 235,583 pamphlets in circulation, £2,594 4s 5d in the endowment fund and 3,158 names on the membership role.<sup>29</sup> The sales figures were reported at irregular intervals<sup>30</sup> so that the historical impression that these booklets were widely read can be confirmed. However, the titles of the popular tracts were less important to both the *Record* and the St Vincent de Paul Society which managed the sales for WA, and these were recorded only rarely. Perhaps in the same way it was not so much the details of argument which concerned readers of these Catholic pamphlets, but simply the fact that the arguments were 'Catholic'. The *Record* urged its readers to consult the rack of pamphlets at the back of the church for guidance and to distribute used copies to others who might benefit.

We call then upon the people of the West to pause at the Catholic Truth Society stand in our churches, and to go there when in doubt about any point of Catholic teaching. And then the little extra, circulate these pamphlets among your enquiring friends.<sup>31</sup>

The Australian Catholic Truth Society was modelled on the equivalent English and Irish organisations and often reprinted work from these sources. The news the *Record* carried in 1931 of the breakdown of the English sales was

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<sup>28</sup>Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and community: An Australian history*, Kensington, NSW, 1985, p. 280; see also Edmund Campion, *Australian Catholics: The Contribution of Catholics to the Development of Australian Society*, Ringwood, Vic., 1987, pp. 129 - 31.

<sup>29</sup>*Record*, 12 December 1931, p. 10.

<sup>30</sup>For example, *Record*, 15 February 1940, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup>*Record*, 12 December 1931, p. 10.

as much self-reflective as informative, and indicated that the church's social teachings were the fastest growing area of interest, while traditional devotional fare remained the most marketable items overall.

The most marked feature in the lists of late...is the growing insistence on social questions. Though this is one of the smallest sections sales in it have nearly trebled since 1925...The devotional series shows a demand for pamphlets on the Mass, chiefly liturgical and for seasonal meditation books but above all for simple books of devotion...<sup>32</sup>

A similar mix of devotion and social theory was evident in the pamphlets selected, and named, as especially worthy of promotion by the St Vincent de Paul sellers in 1938. With the basis of the *Holy Name Society*, dealing with the devotional association for men, firmly established on the list, members were also urged to promote *Property for the People*, *Catholics Ask for Social Justice*, and *Red Menace in Australia*.<sup>33</sup> While such pamphlets would not have needed promotion if sales were already flourishing, their cause was championed by lay men involved in monitoring Catholic reading and gives some flavour of the kind of material which these men considered suitable for their peers. That social theory was not a matter of mass public appeal was evidenced in Margaret McGuire's horrified memory that on her return to Australia in 1932 the 1931 social encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* was not merely not being read in South Australia, but had hardly been heard of.<sup>34</sup> Apart from a few brave and wily intellectuals, homespun social theory was more to the Australian taste, not rigorous review of the Roman documents.

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<sup>32</sup>*Record*, 16 May 1931, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup>*Minutes of the Particular Council of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Perth, WA*, 25 March 1938, 22 April 1938, 22 July 1938.

<sup>34</sup>Interview, Mrs Margaret McGuire, North Adelaide SA, 23 May 1988. Notes held by author; also interview with Judith Raftery, 10 April 1985, cited J. Raftery, 'Catholics and Social Issues in South Australia in the 1930s', unpublished paper, Flinders University of South Australia, p. 12.

It was with considerable pride then that Australian Catholics welcomed the Hollywood creations of homespun Irish pastors, self-sacrificing sisters and ennobling saints who peopled the films of the 1940s and 1950s. The *Record* recognised that film, and later television, were powerful determinants of popular values, and promoted the hierarchy's efforts 'to make films a worthy vehicle of amusement and recreation, and a valuable aid to education and instruction'<sup>35</sup>. There was deep suspicion and regret that cinema offered distorted moral principles to an ever increasing audience, but also a recognition that not all films were offensive to Catholic standards.

To the twentieth century was given the power to transform completely the dramatic world. Hitherto playwrights had a small circle in which to disport their productions. Their psychology could penetrate only the minds of those few who actually sat beneath the footlights....But the advent of the motion picture machine has sounded the complete revolt, It has created the universality of the screen. Men can theorise, and cast their philosophies far and wide, fashioning and dictating to the public sentiment, through the baneful influence of depraved minds. In fairness however, to the modern industry it must be admitted that not all motion pictures are based on gross sexual irregularities or offensive social theories...<sup>36</sup>

As in the case of books, films were reviewed in the *Southern Cross*, the *Record* and other periodicals, and classified according to the values they promoted. In May 1945 the magazine of the Catholic Young Men's Society in Adelaide carried reviews of both *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *Going My Way*. Reprinting the assessment of Hemingway's story from Sydney's *Catholic*

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<sup>35</sup>*Record*, editorial, 15 May 1937, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

*Weekly*, the magazine warned Catholics against the 'dangerous and vicious creation' as presenting a flawed morality.

The whole thing is loaded. A doctrine is preached. Surreptitiously a new mode of life is being presented and in some respects glorified.

...Film go-ers will lose nothing by spending the two hours and thirty five minutes which the screening of this film requires in some more wholesome manner. Emphatically the advice is for Catholics to avoid it completely. Let the bell keep tolling. Its message is not for the pure and clean of heart.<sup>37</sup>

By contrast, in the same issue on the same page, a review of *Going My Way*, welcomed the film as a vehicle promoting a beneficent view of the priesthood. Bing Crosby as Father O'Malley was ordained in the public mind as a worthy ambassador of the faith and the priesthood.

[*Going My Way*] conquered the hearts of thousands of Adelaide theatregoers. The screenplay abounds with Irish humour at its best...The emphasis is not on the religious to any great extent (that which is introduced is sincere and realistic) but for the great majority of non-Catholics the message of the film is that Catholic priests are normal human beings with a sense of humour as well as a sense of duty, and that vows of poverty, chastity and obedience are no bar to a full life of earthly happiness.<sup>38</sup>

A few months later *The Song of Bernadette*, the film version of the apparitions at Lourdes, received enthusiastic praise as a production likely to encourage Catholics in their faith.

No Catholic should miss this film, especially if never having read the life of Bernadette. It may have faults, but

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<sup>37</sup> *Catholic Young Man*, May 1945, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

taking it all round it's superb education and devotional entertainment.<sup>39</sup>

A film based on the life of St Thérèse of Lisieux was welcomed for similar reasons.<sup>40</sup> Catholics welcomed the integration into the public arena of such features of Catholic culture as enclosed convents, devotion to Mary and the saints. Films such as *The Little Flower* and *The Nun's Story* were almost documentaries of Catholic practice, and Australian parishioners were more than content that the romance and exoticism of their faith was depicted on celluloid.

In the 1950s Hollywood captivated Catholics no less than the wider society, and Catholic celebrities took on something of the aura of patron saints. In Australia the clearest example of this was in the 1953-4 Rosary Crusade when the American organisers called on long lists of film stars to help promote the Catholic rosary product.<sup>41</sup> The Catholic sense of difference was implicit in the use of these stars as role models. The argument followed along the lines that: 'these people are Catholic "like us", they have made a success of their lives and in the glamorous and morally dangerous world of the movies to boot. They are taking time to be identified as Catholics and are sharing their devotion to the rosary; therefore rosary devotion must be worthwhile'.

The appeal of glamour was an interesting feature of 1950s devotion to Mary, and serves as an example of the way in which Catholicism took on the values of the mainstream society to recast them in a slightly different form. Images of Mary were produced in the movie star mould, and qualities of stardom were seen to adhere to women who modelled themselves on her. In a subtle shift, which did not repudiate the womanly quest for attractiveness, Catholic prayer

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Record*, 6 September 1936, p. 20.

<sup>41</sup> Typewritten flier, Family Rosary Crusade, Marian File, ACAP.

and practice was presented as the ideal beauty aid, over and above more worldly models. For example in the first issues of the Family Rosary Crusade Supplement produced for the local Catholic papers, Antoinette Donnelly 'US Beauty Expert...reveals secret of glamour'. She asked:

What are a pair of eyes, shadowed and mascara lidded - perfect though they may be without the light of a good soul shining through them? What is a mouth without the warmth, the kindness, the integrity of character that moulds it?<sup>42</sup>

To illustrate her case she contrasts two women, almost explicitly echoing the traditional dichotomy of Eve/Mary, harlot/virgin, evil/good. She urges her readers to opt for the Marian alternative.

Out of a nationally known beauty salon stepped a woman in an expensive outfit...her face made up by an expert, all lost in the hard, brittle overall effect of a soulless, mechanised automation. Issuing from the Cathedral down the avenue a few doors was a woman of similar age whose face was almost startling in its sheer force of appeal. A breathtaking quality about it, as only a fine soul may mirror it in a face, with the aroma of prayers scented the aura about her. That, said I, is beauty, beauty free for the asking, free for the spending, free for the giving.

Yes, my sisters, countless millions are spent in the pursuit of beauty which may be had for a prayer, a good deed, a kindly thought, a little sacrifice for those less blessed, a moment of adoration for Our Maker offered daily and repeated as often as is humanly possible.<sup>43</sup>

The sense of Catholic difference from wider society culminated in the church's emphasis on separate schools to transmit a separate culture. Between

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<sup>42</sup>*Catholic Weekly* (Sydney), 1 October 1953, Family Rosary Crusade Supplement Week 1.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*

1922 and 1962 a major proportion of the Church's resources were devoted to maintaining and developing the network of primary and secondary schools which aimed to provide a total Catholic environment. The separate parish school, often next door to the parish church, was both cause and result of the deep sectarian divisions in Australian society. The campaign for state aid to church schools surfaced regularly as an issue for Catholics to consider at election time, but, more powerful than the periodic vitriol against double taxation, was the daily experience of many Catholic children who walked past the state school to their own separate classrooms, fighting with the 'Proddy dogs' on the way and retreating to taunts of 'Catholic frogs'.

Discussions of Catholic education made it clear that schools were a ground for teaching students how to live out and defend their faith in a hostile world. Addressing a conference of religious education teachers in 1925, Father J. T. McMahon, Perth's diocesan inspector of Catholic schools, made no bones about the enormous task assigned to teachers.

Catholic Schools are expected to work miracles. That is what they were built for, with labour and sacrifice unaccountable. Those who built them held the faith that Catholic schools would make good Catholics of many who would otherwise be lost to the Church.<sup>44</sup>

However, the schools taught Catholic doctrine not as an end in itself but as a means of fostering Catholicism in wider society. The expectation that graduates of Catholic schools would be sufficiently equipped with knowledge to 'prove adamant to the lures and snares of the after school years',<sup>45</sup> was always intertwined with the hope that the example of Catholics who could effectively answer arguments against the faith would be a force for the conversion of

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<sup>44</sup>J. T. McMahon 'Report of the Inspector of Diocesan Schools of the Archdiocese of Perth for 1924', p. 9, McMahon Papers, ACAP.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

others. The secular curriculum was therefore as important as the religious education syllabus.

As an education system explicitly designed to nurture the faith of young Catholics, and launch them into the world, Catholic schooling involved not only direct instruction in Catholic doctrine, but also an alternative curriculum in secular subjects which aimed to foster a distinctive view of the world among Catholic students. Celebrating the education system was an important way of celebrating Catholic identity. In 1936 the church decision-makers in Adelaide chose to mark the centenary of South Australia by convening a national congress on Catholic education, in the way in which eucharistic congresses had been held in the past. The underlying assumption that separate schools were the cornerstone of Catholic identity was made explicit in a talk on the place of secular subjects in the curriculum. Mother Evangelista, of the Ursuline Sisters in Sydney, emphasised the need for a distinctive approach to all the branches of learning.

...Christian education implies the whole field of instruction to be energised and vitalised by religion, and all brands of knowledge must expand in closest relation with divine truth. It embraces and includes every manifestation of God, whether in nature, in history or in life, since God is inseparable from any part of the universe which, for the sake of convenience we study in the so-called secular subjects of the curriculum. The Catholic school will not fulfil these requirements by adopting the curriculum of a de-Christianised school, and superimposing thereon a brief period of religious instruction each day. The religious atmosphere must not only surround, but must also be breathed in by, the child. It is not enough to have religious pictures on the walls, the recitation of prayers and teachers in religious garb. All these, although good and necessary, are only

manifestations of the Christian spirit. They do not enter vitally into teaching and into the thought of the child.

...Building up personal love for Christ is the goal of all our teaching, direct in the religion class, indirect in all others.<sup>46</sup>

A day at a Catholic school began with prayer and slid without discernible break into the secular curriculum. The formula varied only a little from school to school. Students stood behind their desks to greet their teacher, often with the formula 'Good morning S'ter/Sir, and God Bless you' and were so greeted in return. Still standing and led by the teacher or a delegated student, the class blessed themselves and recited together various prayers of the church: the Morning Offering, in which each 'thought, word and deed' of the day was acknowledged as a potential prayer, the Hail Mary or the Memorare, which expressed devotion to the Blessed Virgin, the Our Father, though without its Protestant coda, and perhaps a prayer to the saint of the day. The invocation JMJ, or AMDG or the Benedictine, IOGD, was inscribed in the corner of the blackboard and often copied onto the top of each student's page.<sup>47</sup> The students even picked up the theme in their doodling and decorated the pages of their textbooks with AMDG in fancy lettering. While hardly a sign of devotion such a practice does indicate that these students made the external signs of Catholicism part of their culture.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>M. M. Evangelist, Ursuline Order, Sydney 'The Use of Secular Subjects as a Medium of Religious Formation' in *Australian Catholic Education Congress, Adelaide Australia November 8th - 15th, 1936*, Melbourne, 1937, p. 471.

<sup>47</sup>JMJ - Jesus, Mary and Joseph; AMDG - 'Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam' (To the greater glory of God roughly translated into 'All My Duty Done for God') and IOGD - 'In omnibus glorificetur Deus' (In all things may God be glorified).

<sup>48</sup>One example is the copy of *Australasian Catholic Schools Fifth Reader*, n.d. but by internal evidence c. 1904, p. 83. Held ACAP.

Catholic teachers were advised to bring the contribution of Catholic institutions and people to the forefront of the syllabus whenever possible, and alternative textbooks were produced for this purpose. A Catholic child reading the stories in the Christian Brothers reading books learnt of heroes who endured all kinds of hardship for their faith, who scorned the world in favour of the sacraments, respected priests and authorities attuned to the church, and expressed their faith in practical and pious ways. S. G. Firth has noted that the different readers used in state and Catholic schools in NSW before 1914 reflected different experiences of Australian society.

The achievements of Catholic reader's heroes were mostly those of piety, fidelity and noble suffering under persecution, unlike those of public school heroes which were more material and secular. [Catholics] drew on a tradition of defeat or being conquered, rather than conquering.<sup>49</sup>

While public schools could claim to make good citizens, Catholic schools had to be content with making good Catholics.<sup>50</sup>

The extent to which the syllabus was shaped by the priorities of Catholicism is exemplified by the role of Mary, the Blessed Virgin in many subjects. In articles in *Our Studies*, the journal produced for teachers in Christian Brothers schools, Brothers were urged to raise awareness of Mary using such strategies as dramatizations of incidents of her life, history and geography of Marian shrines, projects on references to Mary in English literature, as well as Bible History, and for secondary students 'Our Lady in the Gospels'.<sup>51</sup> Mother Evangelista suggested to the Catholic Education Congress that

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<sup>49</sup>S. G. Firth, 'Social Values in NSW Primary School 1880 - 1914: An Analysis of School Texts', in R. J. W. Selleck (ed), *Melbourne Studies in Education 1970*, Melbourne, 1970, p. 155.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>51</sup>Br Frederic (Darlinghurst), 'The Teaching of Devotion to Our Lady', *Our Studies*, October 1941, p. 36.

sewing classes be asked to work in the spirit of 'Our Lady weaving Our Lord's seamless garment, or embroidering the vestments in the Temple'.<sup>52</sup> In 1954, a year set aside in international Catholicism for special devotion to Mary, suggestions went so far as to speculate:

It may be playing on the imagination a little too much, but could we have a mental [arithmetic] ...such as this:

Our Lady appeared at Fatima in 1917. How many years ago is that?

By saying the Rosary each night for seven nights, how many Hail Marys would I say?

If it takes twelve minutes to say the Rosary, what fraction of the hour have I offered to God?<sup>53</sup>

The possibility of drawing such a long bow on relevance raises a smile with teachers and students from the era, but points convincingly to Church efforts to ensure not only that Mary was at the forefront of Catholic thought, but that Catholic culture dominated the syllabus. The unashamed ease with which the curriculum was adjusted with remarks like: 'Those lessons on trade routes can be made into trips to Lourdes etc', 'Even if Portugal is not in your syllabus...', 'As regards history we once again may not have it within the scope of our syllabus...'<sup>54</sup>, point to an all embracing hegemonic effort. The possibilities of seeking the Catholic application to a particular subject were also canvassed: economics could include the social teachings of the church on the relationship between capital and labour, geography could raise awareness of Catholic mission countries, nature study could help students to reverence the Creator.

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<sup>52</sup>M. Evangelista, 'The Use of Secular Subjects as a Medium for Religious Formation', p. 479.

<sup>53</sup>Br Pambo, 'Brother Pambo and the Marian Year', *Our Studies*, May 1954, p. 8.

<sup>54</sup>Br Frederic, 'Marian Devotion', p. 36.

The teaching of history was of central importance to a church whose authority rested on the interpretation of tradition as much as on scripture. In a typical statement of the theory of the time Mother Evangelista warned the Catholic Education Congress of the dangers of a secular or Protestant view of the past and called for a curriculum which gave a central place to Catholicism.

Today [history] is often no more than the miscoloured picture of the convulsions of mankind from which all thought of God is divorced. If it is to be taught with proper perspective it must show Christ as the central figure of all time, and Christianity as the most important and most comprehensive fact in modern history ...Others, not Catholic, look upon the story of Europe without comprehending its phenomena, for the Church alone can give the key to many of the controversies and ideals of past ages.<sup>55</sup>

The attention paid to the church in the syllabus was in part a triumphant bid to include the Catholic story in the dominant historiographical tradition. In dealing with Florence Nightingale teachers were urged to mention the Sisters of Charity who had trained her; pioneer priests and prelates were suggested as worthy of recognition along with Australia's explorers; and teachers were encouraged to remember Catholic convicts as 'heroes who bore the lash rather than foreswear the faith'.<sup>56</sup> While warned against books which 'reek with the Protestant tradition' and 'bigoted historians [who] have magnified...evils out of all proportion' teachers were encouraged to deal with the fact of scandals in the church by telling the truth and reminding students that:

The Church is a divine institution ...and the sins and frailties even of her rulers have brought with them no deviation from true doctrine.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>M. Evangelista, 'The Use of Secular Subjects as a Medium of Religious Formation', p. 473.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 474.

The sense of triumph in a Catholicism that overcame adversity took the Catholic world-view beyond defensiveness. The security of being part of a divinely-guided institution gave Catholics a firm foundation from which to engage a world perceived to be in need of faith. This view grew in importance throughout the period, but was perceived as 'novel' and contrary to common assumptions about the role of religion in society. The complexity of the Catholic attitude to the world, and the tensions which existed for Catholics between seeking change in the world and avoiding it, are epitomised in the advice of the *Fifth Reader* on 'Religion in Business'. Children were encouraged to see their faith as a powerful and ever-present determinant of their behaviour in the world, at the same time as it was pointed out that the traditions of Catholicism and the demands of the world pulled in different directions.

What! religion in business? Yes, certainly, it will no more harm it that sugar will spoil a sauce. But then it must be something more than a mere superficial religion....Religion to be worth anything, should be our inseparable companion. It should become part of ourselves, so that in our intercourse with our fellow men it can be seen as clearly as the sun at noonday. It should accompany us to the banking-house and to the counting-room; it should be with us in the store and the workshop, and be at our side in the market.

Were the principles of religion generally adopted and lived up to among men, the present models of doing business would be greatly changed for the better...

Business forges chains that bind us to the things of life; religion weans the heart from the world and carries it to God. Let us not snap the bond that unites them, nor hide our faith or principles under a bushel, our action must

agree with our professions and attest their influence by the candour and uprightness that pervade them.<sup>58</sup>

The issue of how to influence the wider Australian culture without being overcome by it was a vexed question for many in the church. It was those Catholics who had enjoyed some success in the world's terms who could most confidently move to embrace modern society. For example, in January 1955 the University Catholic Federation of Australia held a conference on 'The Incarnation and the University'. At this national meeting of university students and graduates whose careers testified to the efficacy of separate Catholic schooling, Vincent Buckley, then a young Masters graduate, articulated the Federation's view that faith ought to be integrated with life. Buckley acknowledged that a rejection of the world was a tempting and clear-cut response but urged intellectual Catholics to live a more complex paradox of faith incarnate in everyday life.

[B]ecause it [the desire to avoid complexity] *is* endemic, we must ask here, in its crudest form, the question which unnecessarily torments so many consciences: 'Do we have to make a choice between Christ and the World?'

It is the purpose of this conference, and of this talk in particular, to return to that question a ringing NO! (sic). Men will readily, and with a righteous indignation which savours of a spiritual purience, try to get us to adopt the opposite answer. They will cry out to us '*Choose now! Either...Or!*' when the proper answer is '*Both*'...For the real problem is how to commit oneself to both Christ and the world. Christ himself had shown us that unless we choose both we shall have neither, for we shall always be incapable of loving either fully and without confusion.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Australasian Catholic Schools Fifth Reader*, pp. 133 - 34.

<sup>59</sup> Vincent Buckley, 'The World Awaiting Redemption', in *The Incarnation and the University : Proceedings of the 13th Annual Conference of the University Catholic Federation of Australia*, Melbourne, 1955, p. 22.

Buckley contrasted the Christian approach to the material world with that of the Communist approach. He anticipated the argument that the world was evil and presented a more positive view of the world as an appropriate forum for Christian action, dangerous only when 'it is seen as the object of self-gratifying human desire and not as a patter of signs signifying God's presence in the world'.<sup>60</sup> He held that it was perfectly legitimate for Catholics to love the material world provided they did what the Communists did not do, that is acknowledge its spiritual dimension.

[T]he great heresy from which Christianity shrinks is not the love of the material, but a lack of spiritual realism with regard to it. And this, if I may say so, is precisely the heresy which Communism preaches and exemplifies.<sup>61</sup>

In setting up a dichotomy between Catholic and Communist Buckley was very much in tune with the church of the time. The fear of Communism was a potent force in the mind-set of many mid-twentieth century Australians, and the evidence abounds that atheistic materialism was perceived as a threat to the church from the period of the Spanish Civil War. John Warhurst has demonstrated that the Catholic anti-Communist feeling combined with changes in social status and specific electioneering served to re-align Australian party politics with influence moving away from the Australian Labor Party over the period 1949 - 1964.<sup>62</sup> The party political dimension of Catholic anti-Communism as well as the impassioned controversy over the status of the Catholic Social Studies Movement within the church are beyond the scope of this

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> John Warhurst, 'The Communist Bogey: Communism as an Election Issue in Australian Federal Politics 1949 - 1964', PhD thesis, Flinders University of South Australia, 1977.

thesis, but the impact of the perceived Communist threat on the sense of mission of many Catholics, especially lay men, is significant to a student of twentieth century spirituality. The development of a specifically anti-Communist thrust in some aspects of the lay apostolate and in the devotional life of the church is dealt with below.<sup>63</sup> At this point suffice to say that Perth's *Catholic Action Bulletin* captured the flavour of the time in which these controversies raged in remarks addressed to lay leaders on the portentous nature of the conflict.

The struggle between good and evil is ever present in human history. It is evident today in the conflict between Bolshevism, Atheistic Communism and Christian civilisation. In this encyclical [*Divini Redemptoris*] the Pope wishes to explain the principles of Atheistic Communism as they are evidenced in Bolshevism, and to outline its method of action as well as to contrast with its false principles, the clear teaching of the Church. By the teaching of the Church alone can the world be saved from this Satanic scourge and a better world-order established.<sup>64</sup>

In the Catholic view it was a time of absolute distinctions.

### *The Catholic Sense of Certitude*

The assumption behind the teaching and preaching of twentieth-century Catholicism was that religious certitude was possible. The question and answer structure of the penny catechism, the most renowned teaching device of the day, was built around the assumption that lay people needed to know plain facts in order to engage in didactic argument. The deficiencies of argument by simple assertion were clear throughout the period, but teachers and students continued

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<sup>63</sup>See especially chapters 4 and 8.

<sup>64</sup>*Catholic Action Bulletin*, Issued by the Perth Secretariat of Catholic Action, 17 August 1940, np.

to value the uncomplicated approach to certainty in the faith that rote learning of the catechism could offer. The reservations about the catechism centred around its limitations for keeping children interested, not in its basic approach. McMahon pointed out the problems in 1925, and his assessment of the catechism as 'a very poor learning device' was echoed by oral sources from the period.<sup>65</sup> The suggestion that children be encouraged to look up the answer for themselves did not alter the assumption that Catholicism would provide a right answer to each religious question.

There are books in which older children can be encouraged to delve in search of Catholic truth...The central idea...is to make each child responsible for his education....seek this ideal by training the child how to look things up. It is most necessary equipment for our modern youth to go forth good Christians and when they cannot answer the challenges to their Faith, they will at least be trained to know where to find the answer. In general we ought to be less keen to impart information than to give our pupils power. We want them to turn out boys and girls who can put what they know to use, and who when they do not know things have a shrewd idea of how they can find out.<sup>66</sup>

From 1954 to 1970 a committee of Australian bishops, chaired by Archbishop Beovich, met intermittently to consider the need to revise the 1937 catechism. Beovich's notes show a concern with re-arranging the existing text so as to enhance and clarify the meaning rather than revising the style. The quality of the paper was to be improved and the style of illustrations made as 'attractive' as possible, but the format remained appropriate to the didactic model of church. Thus Beovich proposed a re-arrangement following the structure of

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<sup>65</sup>McMahon, 'Report', p. 6; Interview with C, Name in confidence, 26 March 1990; Mrs Stephanie Roche and Mr Neville Roche, Adelaide SA, 15 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

<sup>66</sup>McMahon, 'Report', p. 6.

French, German, Swiss and Dutch catechisms with three main sections, to cover a well defined corpus of Catholic doctrine.

- I. I am the Truth (Dogmatic instruction)  
Incarnation, God, Trinity, Creation, Fall, Death,  
Resurrection etc
- II. I am the Life  
Church, Grace, Virtues, Mass, Sacraments
- III. I am the Way  
Law, Counsels.<sup>67</sup>

Oral evidence supports the view that such changes as did occur in religious education in Catholic schools before 1962 were a variation on the established theme of making available clear doctrine within a defined world-view. Some new books and teaching methods were introduced to supplement the catechism as more resources became available, but the fundamental pattern was not disturbed.<sup>68</sup>

The study of the catechism was replaced in higher grades by apologetics, a subject which also functioned as a training ground for good argument against attacks on the Catholic position. As Jay Dolan has pointed out the 'point, counter-point method' of apologetics reflected a Catholicism which by its 'very definition ... included the rejection of Protestantism as an erroneous and thus inferior religion'.<sup>69</sup> The blend of defensiveness and unabashed assumption of righteousness are intriguing and typical features of the Catholic world-view at this time. For example at the 1958 conference of the University Catholic

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<sup>67</sup> 'Re New Catechism, 1954 - 1970 approx' notes re proposed revision of General Catechism April 1955', ACAA.

<sup>68</sup> Interviews with Mr Trevor Nichols, Goodwood SA, 12 March 1990; Mrs Mary Ellen Dempsey, Walkerville SA, 21 March 1990; Interview A, Name in confidence, 12 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

<sup>69</sup> Jay P. Dolan, 'Catholic Attitudes toward Protestants', in Robert N. Bellah and Frederick E. Greenspahn (eds), *Uncivil Religion: Interreligious hostility in America*, New York, 1987, pp. 77, 82.

Federation of Australia, Mr J. Toohey from WA spoke on the need for a network to support Catholic graduates in the workforce.

We live our lives in a non-Catholic world where the forces at work undermining rather than destroying our faith are pretty strong. What is needed as much as anything else to keep our faith strong, to make us apostolic material, is a constant and consistent contact with Catholic influences. This is not in any sense a retreat or running away from things. On the contrary it is the continual replenishment of our strength in order that we might carry on the fight.<sup>70</sup>

There was a similar lack of ambiguity about matters of faith in the question and answer newspaper columns which flourished from the late 1930s. The prototype for these was the Sydney-based Radio Replies broadcast on 2SM by Father Leslie Rumble, a member of the congregation of priests, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, who had joined the order from his home state of WA. A convert to Catholicism, Rumble's own experience of explaining his position to his Protestant family and friends provided a model for his programme. Both O'Farrell and Campion have commented on the significance of Leslie Rumble in the spiritual climate of Australian Catholicism in Sydney and Melbourne.<sup>71</sup> The style of apologetics he exemplified was also influential in Perth and Adelaide, and the script of Radio Replies was printed in the *Record* and the *Southern Cross* from 1936. In the tradition of 'Dear Abby', and as a forerunner to talk-back radio, these programmes, and the resulting columns in the Catholic weeklies, dealt with all kinds of queries on which readers assumed there would be a Catholic position. Lay people, non-Catholic and Catholic, received an authoritative response on matters as wide ranging as vegetarianism

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<sup>70</sup>J. Toohey, 'The Graduate Apostolate', ms copy of address to 1958 UCFA conference, UCFA/TCFA papers, Mitchell Library of New South Wales.

<sup>71</sup>Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, pp. 373 - 4; Edmund Campion, *Australian Catholics : The Contribution of Catholics to the Development of Australian Society*, Ringwood, Vic., 1987, pp. 134 - 6.

and mixed marriage. The style in which these queries were answered was nuanced according to the priest responsible, but the general method was constant: the reply was interspersed in the edited text of the questioning letter, answering point by point in the combative manner of apologetics and determined to show where the questioner was in error. For example, the *Record* promoted Father Rumble as an expert apologist, characterised by 'fearlessness, fairness and logic', whose fame had spread because of the 'piquant and provocative' matter he supplied in answer to each question. His brevity and precision were especially praised, clearly indicating that this was an exercise in dogmatic blacks and whites, not subtle theological greys.<sup>72</sup>

Rumble's treatment of an enquiry from 'Protestant, Temora' about the nature of the soul provided the *Record's* readers with a typically definite and straightforward statement of Catholic doctrine in self-assured tones.

[Q]Perhaps the Catholic Church teaches that the soul only goes to heaven, hell or that imaginary place called purgatory.

[R]The existence of purgatory is reality, not imagination. And there is no perhaps about Catholic doctrine in this matter. After death, each man's soul will go to heaven, or to hell, or to purgatory.

[Q]Could you please tell me from the Bible what the soul is?

[R]Yes. We are told it is the principle of life; that it is made in the image and likeness of God, Who is a Spirit endowed with intelligence and will...<sup>73</sup>

Rumble moved carefully through the letter, correcting as he went. Even when the church's view was open to speculation, Rumble's style kept conjecture to a minimum.

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<sup>72</sup>*Record* , 15 August 1936, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup>*Record* , 12 September 1936, p. 4.

[Q]When Jesus raised him, did the soul of Lazarus come from heaven, hell or purgatory?

[R]No. His soul came from a Limbo of oblivion and forgetfulness, most probably.<sup>74</sup>

The security of the Catholic position was clear when Rumble ascribed his interlocutor's difficulties to ignorance. The letter's indications that Rumble was entirely justified in his judgement could well have enhanced rather than moderated his readers' sense of occupying the high moral ground.

[Q]The Catholic Church appears to be following Satan when it says 'ye shall not surely die'.

[R]...Your idea that the Catholic Church follows Satan is due to your lack of ordinary education, your greater lack of understanding where the teaching of the Bible is concerned, and your still greater lack of knowledge of Catholic doctrines. However, I hope I have helped to remedy all these defects and next Sunday night I will try to continue helping you when treating the balance of the letter.<sup>75</sup>

The local priests who took up the column followed Fr Rumble's method and allowed no hint of error to pass. Their comments demonstrated to their readers the solidity of Catholic dogma at this time. For example, Fr E. Sullivan taking his turn in the *Record* in 1945 quashed any idea that truth might be relative, even without an explicit statement of that position from his correspondent.

[Q]Personally I have nothing much against the Catholic Church or any other religion, as the majority are taught their religion from childhood.

[R]The fact that a man is taught his religion from his childhood does not prove that religion to be true. What you mean, of course, is that any form of religion is as good as any other; we on the other hand, while not wishing to judge individuals and not failing to see the

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

good that is in other religions hold that there is but one True Church.<sup>76</sup>

Published columns of questions and answers signaled the institution's acknowledgement that there were legitimate queries which lay people had every right to clarify, and complicated issues with which adult Catholics wished to wrestle in the light of their faith. Catholics appreciated the firm logic of the question and answer style, and commented that the careful treatment of each difficulty, which left no thread of uncertainty hanging, was intellectually very satisfying. One Catholic teacher noted that reading Rumble was satisfying in the same way that the clear process of the arguments of scholastic theology was satisfying.<sup>77</sup> In its concern with classification and clear distinctions, the emphasis on apologetics formed part of the masculine tradition of the church. Many aspects of Catholic culture were obscure or quaint even to those brought up in Catholic families, but the strong cultural understanding that certainty in these matters should exist and that a priest could provide it, meant that the world view could be made available through question and answer columns. The authoritative, didactic tone of the replies emphasised the assumption that lay people were not expected to dialogue with the voice of the institution on matters of faith or morals, though some did write back when they wished to clarify or dispute a point further. It is significant that the slightly condescending tone of many of the answers was, for some lay Catholics, the first and most powerful instance in which Catholicism became relevant to life beyond Sunday mass.<sup>78</sup>

A clear and definite line between right and wrong was a feature of the Catholic world view in twentieth century Australia. It was a logical consequence

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<sup>76</sup>*Record*, 16 May 1945, p. 3.

<sup>77</sup>Interviews E, A Sister of Mercy, Name in confidence with author, Perth WA, 20 March 1991. Notes held by author.

<sup>78</sup>Interview A, Name in confidence, 12 March 1990. Tape held by author.

that in a world where perfection was impossible, Catholics would also develop an acute sense of sin.

### *Sin and Salvation*

The reality of sin, and its consequence of hell for the damned soul, was a powerful factor in the Catholic view of the world. Ultimately, the church existed as an institution in order to ensure salvation for the souls of its members, and salvation was threatened by the evil seen to be at work in the world and in the lives of individuals who sinned. The sense of an eternal destiny gave Catholics a perspective on life in which daily actions had significance beyond themselves as adding or detracting to the sum total of a life to be weighed in balance on Judgement Day. In an environment where salvation was reserved to those in the church, the concern to avoid evil and protect the life of grace within the soul from the debilitating influence of the world was held in tension with the positive command to do good in order to earn heaven. Concerns about the next life framed all Catholic choices, so that even action directed to doing good rather than avoiding evil was to be valued in the end not for any effects on the community or the quality of relationships between people but for how effectively such activity contributed to an individuals' relationship with God and their personal salvation.

The divine economy of the church was concerned not only with sin, but also with forgiveness. J. G. Arapura has contrasted Western religion, dominated by 'anxiety', with Eastern religion, dominated by 'tranquillity'. Both the consciousness and fear of sin and the institutional provisions of sacramental confession and indulgences to counteract sin's effects clearly placed twentieth century Catholicism among the belief systems characterised by 'anxiety'. Such a spirituality was deeply influenced by the sense that a fallen world was

struggling towards redemption.<sup>79</sup> The church mirrored this movement so that the faith life of ordinary Catholics was permeated not only by an awareness of evil at work in the world, but also by the battle between evil and good. The doctrine of the resurrection indicated that good had to prevail, but the individual struggle for each soul remained a powerful contest.

In observing Catholicism's attempts to mediate the perceived struggle between good and evil Richard Rohr has noted of the medieval church that if the institution was masculine in its analysis of right and wrong, the church's practice of enforcing that morality was feminine in its concern to preserve relationship and include as many people as possible in the family of the church.

Although the lines of authority in the Middle Ages were masculine and patriarchal, the relationship of the Church towards its children was feminine and maternal. Except when heretics and critics challenged the authority of the hierarchy and were severely punished, the Church was tolerant and forgiving toward sinners. People could do almost anything and get away with it, provided they confessed their sins and promised not to commit them again. And when they did commit them again, they could always go to confession again, and the Church through the priest would forgive them again. This is what we meant by saying...that the Catholic attitude to morality is archetypally feminine.<sup>80</sup>

The dynamic of a church anxious about the reality of sin and moving to overcome it was clearly expressed in the programme of the parish mission.

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<sup>79</sup>J. G. Arapura, *Religion as Anxiety and Tranquility: An Essay in Phenomenology of the Spirit*, The Hague, 1972, pp. 76 - 7; see also Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture 13th - 18th Centuries*, trans. Eric Nicholson, New York, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>80</sup>Richard Rohr and Joseph Martos, *Why Be Catholic? Understanding Our Experience and Tradition*, Cincinnati, 1989, p. 59.

The parish mission, a week of intense evangelisation usually conducted by priests from a religious order especially devoted to the task, was taken as one of the signs of vibrant Catholicism in the local community. In Australia, as elsewhere, the mission was a key method of putting Catholic spirituality in order, and the attitudes to life that came through this peak experience were therefore crucial. Through a programme of daily instructions and sermons, often one in the morning and one in the evening, home visiting and traditional devotions the visiting priests aimed to revive and revitalise the faith practice of the parish.<sup>81</sup> The reality of sin and evil was a constant theme. The notes of mission sermons given by members of the Passionist order in South Australia show the well-remembered pattern in which the priests alternatively terrified the congregation with the threat of damnation and then reassured the people that the church could offer salvation.<sup>82</sup> Each missionary priest had a repertoire of sermons on several themes including salvation, sin and grace, and amongst them abounded stories of unexpected death leaving the sinner no time to repent. As a central device in motivating Catholics to a good life parishioners were invited to 'Cast your mind forward to the occasion of your own death', and to note that 'In most cases we die as we live.'<sup>83</sup> Catholics were invited to personal conversion to be demonstrated by reception of the sacraments. The need for repentance and a life of personal holiness within the church was proclaimed amid 'liturgical extravaganzas' and 'nightly fireworks... from the pulpit'.<sup>84</sup> As Jay Dolan has noted of the similarly emotive revival-style missions of nineteenth-century

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<sup>81</sup>Jay P. Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience 1830 - 1900*, Notre Dame, 1978; H. R. Jackson, *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand 1860 - 1930*, Wellington, 1987, pp. 72 - 4; M. Vernard, 'Popular Religion in the eighteenth century', in William Callahan and David Higgs (eds), *Church and Society in Catholic Europe of the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1979, pp. 138 - 54.

<sup>82</sup>For example, interviews, Mrs Maureen Menagh, South Perth WA, 17 April 1990; Mrs Una Mulhall and Mr Frank Mulhall, Goodwood SA, 16 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

<sup>83</sup>Sermons notes, Passionist Monastery, Glen Osmond, South Australia.

<sup>84</sup>Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism*, p. 178.

America 'as entertainment the revival rivaled the theatre; as a religious experience there was nothing else like it.'<sup>85</sup>

The mission was presented as an opportunity for change and conversion, and the rhetoric of the preaching orders was designed especially to stir intense feeling. Notes for a sermon on 'Judgement' give an impression of the way in which the congregation was asked to reflect on their reality.

O Christian soul in the state of mortal sin, it is to you tonight that I am appealing. O Xtn (sic) soul, who has become accustomed to sin, dead to God's grace, I appeal to you tonight to look into your life. Look at what could be your glory - a life in which the gifts of God shine forth in witness to the world of the power of God, and see how wretched and miserable you are in reality.<sup>86</sup>

Parishioners were invited to meditate on Christ's passion, and to consider the weight that their own sins added to the pain of crucifixion. The prayer leaflet left behind by the missionaries invited Catholics into the drama of Calvary by reminding them of their guilt and codifying the effects of their particular sins in the system of Divine justice. The meditation focussed on personal morality and the need to forgive others.

1. Reflect that Jesus, on the night before He died, agonised and sweat blood at the sight of your sins, and the torments that He was about to endure for them.
2. Reflect that for sins of impurity the sacred body of Jesus was cruelly scourged. How many lashes did you give? ...Think.
3. Reflect, that the sacred head of Jesus was pierced with thorns to atone for bad thoughts. How many thorns have you driven in. ...Think.
4. Reflect again, on His being mocked and spat upon and a robber preferred to Him. Have you ever done this, by

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<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup>Sermon notes, Passionist Monastery.

despising the blessings of religion and by choosing sin in preference to your loving Jesus?...Think.

5. Reflect that He carried the heavy Cross for love of you..

6. He received gall to drink to atone for drunkenness. Oh, think on this!

7. On the cross He forgives His enemies and prays for them. Imitate Him in this. If you forgive not, neither will you be forgiven. 'Forgive and you will be forgiven.'<sup>87</sup>

Awareness of sin was to lead not to despair but to strenuous efforts to live a reformed life. Catholics were encouraged to an awareness that God was anxious to guide their lives. In a typical conclusion to the mission programme the sermon on God's ultimate judgement reminded the congregation that salvation was possible for those who let God work in their lives through the church.

These final chapters [of your story] - they are the important ones of your life. You can make the grade. You've followed the leadings of the Spirit's grace by coming here tonight. Please don't feel that you cannot come to Our Lord in the full and total commitment He wants of you. He will even help you to write these chapters. Indeed, He will be the principle author. All He asks of you is sincerity and goodwill. Sincerity to make a good confession and the goodwill to tell Him that you will try to return His love.

In this way, the Judgement passed on your soul will not be one of condemnation, cut off from all that is worthwhile, but the glory of being received into the People of God.<sup>88</sup>

The church's key antidote to the evil of the world was the sacrament of confession. Often envisaged in the Catholic mind as a process of cleansing the

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<sup>87</sup>In Remembrance of the Mission Preached by the Passionist Fathers', 1933, held with Sermon Notes, Passionist Monastery.

<sup>88</sup>Sermon notes, Passionist Monastery.

soul of the taints of life in order to receive communion,<sup>89</sup> the sacrament of confession was an essential part of the guarantee of God's forgiveness which the church offered to Catholics. Fr McMahon's 'Religion by Post' lessons for country children who had no access to Catholic schools explained the role of the sacrament using maternal imagery.

Don't we all know how very unhappy we are when we have been naughty and mother has refused to bid us good-night? Then, think how terribly unhappy we should be if this were to happen always, if she would never overlook or forgive our naughtiness! But the love of our mother always makes her forgive us when she sees that we are sorry. Now, how much more does Our Lord love us - how much more does this great love make Him forgive us when we show ourselves sorry for having displeased Him by sin.<sup>90</sup>

The identification of the sacrament of penance with the maternal care of the church, very much in tune with Rohr's notion that this aspect of the church was marked by a feminine concern for relationship, continued in the discussion of confession for adults. In the report of the 1951 Marian Congress in Adelaide, a special correspondent recounted the two hour queues for the sacrament under the heading 'A Mother and Her Children', which played upon the two traditions of Mary as mother and church as mother. In the context of an event focussed on the response of Catholics to the evil in the world,<sup>91</sup> confessionals, the small box-like structures which provided the privacy within the church building for auricular confession, were described as 'first-aid posts' dispensing feminine care in the face of battle.

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<sup>89</sup>For example interviews, Mr Trevor Nichols, Goodwood SA, 12 March 1990; Mr James Scollin, Adelaide SA, 14 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

<sup>90</sup>'Religion-by-Post', WA Bushies Scheme, May Grade 2, McMahon Papers, ACAP.

<sup>91</sup>See below chapter 5.

### First Aid Posts

The confessionals continued to open both of their arms to receive sinful men in their embrace of forgiveness, and then to open again and send them forth shriven and courageous once more to battle for their Master.<sup>92</sup>

It is important to note that the sacrament was presented as primarily concerned with the relationship between God and individuals, and only indirectly with the interaction of the community as a whole. John Bossy's work on confession in the Reformation era has pointed out that this emphasis on the individual contrasted with the strong social dimension of both the sacrament and the understanding of sin which had been prevalent until the twelfth century, and persisted in practice beyond the fifteenth century.<sup>93</sup> Jean Delumeau has identified the consciousness of sin and the Catholic practice of confession, particularly the introduction of obligatory annual confession in 1215, as key features of the 'culture of guilt' which evolved in western Europe between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>94</sup> He has drawn special attention to the contribution of Thomas Aquinas and other Scholastic philosophers to the development of the church's thought on the nature of sin. The twentieth century church, committed to Thomism against Modernist trends in theology, drew heavily on the Scholastics' distinctions between sins of omission and commission, between venial and mortal offences.<sup>95</sup> The confession manuals which Delumeau cited as handbooks produced 'in an intensive program of orienting people's minds towards guilt'<sup>96</sup> had their successors in the twentieth-century prayer books

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<sup>92</sup>*Mother of God and Mother of Men*, p. 43.

<sup>93</sup>John Bossy, 'The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 25, 1975, pp. 21 - 38. See also Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*, Guildford, 1977.

<sup>94</sup>Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*, p. 197.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 192 - 3.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid*, p. 198.

where special sections were devoted to preparation for confession and the examination of conscience.

The standard texts of preparation for sacramental confession presented Catholics with two images of God - the merciful redeemer whose love had been offended, and the mighty judge who in justice decided the fate of the soul. The prayers shifted between the two images leaving the choice of emphasis very much to the mental state of the individual penitent. The prayer before penance used in the *Loreto Manual* drew on typical forms.

And since I have so grievously insulted Thee, O most tender and loving God, by my manifold sins and negligences, I am ready now to make perfect satisfaction to Thy divine Justice to the utmost of my ability.<sup>97</sup>

While the preference for one view over the other is difficult to discern from the available evidence, it is worth noting that the extraordinary popularity of St Thérèse of Lisieux was attributed in part to her emphasis on divine love, over divine justice. That her view was in sympathy enough with the times to be applauded, and novel enough to enhance her reputation for spiritual insight, gives an indication that the general religious outlook in the twentieth century was in itself a blend of responses to both mercy and justice.

At the base of both conceptions of God was the notion of fallen humanity in need of forgiveness. In the method of preparing for confession in which Catholic children were drilled at school, individuals were encouraged to examine their consciences in the Thomist style and consider their behaviour with regard to God, their neighbour and themselves.<sup>98</sup> Implicit in the catalogue of questions to

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<sup>97</sup>*Loreto Manual, Compiled for use of Pupils educated by Religious of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Dublin, 1924, p. 72.

<sup>98</sup>'Examination of Conscience' in: *Loreto Manual*, p. 62; *Key of Heaven: A Manual of Prayer for the use of the faithful*, London, c.1924, pp. 171 - 4; *Manual of the Holy Name Society*, 16ed., Camberwell, Victoria, c. 1945, pp. 183 - 5.

encourage Catholics to recall their failings was the assumption that sin was an individual matter and a personal concern, not an issue of social structures which required reform. The questions on faults committed set up the understanding that holiness was to be attained by avoiding these evils. The notion of actively doing good, seeking a transformation of the world in the manner that Catholic Action would require, did not enter the standard literature on confession. Catholics were asked whether they had prayed negligently, disobeyed their superiors, spread rumours, yielded to sensuality or put off devotion to 'unseasonable times', thus reinforcing a general expectation that a 'good' lay Catholic was obedient, compliant and devoted to the habits of the institution.<sup>99</sup> The confessional practice in itself underlined the authority of the priest and the church's sacramental system. While the social universe of Catholic sin in twentieth century Australia was chiefly considered a private matter, the church community was important in definitions of holiness, and the promise of salvation was inextricably intertwined with belonging to the church.

For Catholics, membership of the church in this world was the determining factor of one's destiny in the next. The depth of belief in original sin and the necessity of Catholic baptism to ensure salvation were exemplified in a series of questions and answers published in the *Basilian*, the newsletter of the South Australian society for Catholic nurses, in 1951. Governed by a concern to save as many souls as possible Catholic nurses were advised that still-born children should be conditionally baptised, that the immature foetus of premature deliveries and miscarriages was to be baptised by immersion in tepid water, and that if 'the child has no chance of being born alive, death within the uterus is inevitable and the child has reached...the fifth month of gestation' inter-uterine baptism should be attempted. Nurses were reminded that if the

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

mother were still living only a doctor should attempt the procedure using a syringe of cold boiled water to rupture the membrane surrounding the foetus so that the water could come into contact with the foetus itself, thus validly administering the sacrament.<sup>100</sup> The *Basilian's* account of church rules on the way the dead child would be treated highlighted the gulf which Catholics perceived between members of the church and those outside it. If both mother and child died they were to be buried together in a Catholic service. If a baptised child died a Catholic burial would follow. If an unbaptised child died it was to be buried in unconsecrated ground without religious rites. It was noted that burning was not forbidden although it was 'against the mind of the church' and that in such a case non-Catholic parents could make their own decision.<sup>101</sup> If a delivered child were not baptised, however much its fate might be regretted, it could not be looked upon as a child of God.

Fear for the souls of children was at the base of Catholic teaching on 'mixed marriage'. In the concern to ensure that members of the church did not marry outside it several characteristics of the Catholic world view were combined. In the 'Ne Temere' decree of 1908, on the judicial form of marriage, Australian Catholics were encouraged to see their faith as separate and superior to other brands of religion, and were confronted with serious consequences if the regulations protecting that faith were flouted. The decree, which was reaffirmed in 1938 and reinforced each year in a pastoral reminder from the pulpit on Marriage Sunday, was the focus of accusations that the church was 'completely unreasonable and high-handed'.<sup>102</sup> While official sources such as the *Record* acknowledged that non-Catholics held these views, it was expected

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<sup>100</sup>*Basilian*, March 1951, pp. 1 - 2.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>102</sup>*Record*, 11 January 1940, p. 12.

that Catholics would ride out the sectarian storm and marry within the church if they were really serious about their faith.

Marriage to a non-Catholic partner was a reality for about one fifth of Australia's Catholics,<sup>103</sup> and the Australian bishops constantly warned that the number of Catholics who chose marriages outside the institutional ideal was growing dangerously high.<sup>104</sup> The church gave grudging sanction to mixed marriages in circumstances where the Catholic partner applied for special dispensation from the local bishop and the non-Catholic partner underwent instruction and promised that the children would be brought up as Catholics. The perception that women were the primary educators of their children made the church particularly reluctant to approve marriages where the bride was not a Catholic; and the system of approval depended significantly on the degree to which the non-Catholic would accept the church's strictures on their second-class status. That mixed marriages were contracted at all pointed both to a pastoral flexibility on the part of some priests and a willingness among lay Catholics to move themselves to the fringes of the institution. While the evidence does not permit generalisations about the nature of these marriages, the institutional discouragement of which all practising Catholics were aware was framed in terms of the unique spirituality of Catholicism. In their pastoral letter of 1940 the West Australian bishops stated simply that lack of common faith caused unhappiness and lessened spiritual well-being.

[Partners in a mixed marriage] in the very moment of union...stand at an unspeakable distance from each other

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<sup>103</sup>See Hans Mol, *Religion in Australia: a sociological investigation*, Melbourne, 1971, chapter 34, 'Mixed Marriage', especially pp. 233 - 237. Percentages of Catholic spouses married to Catholics in Australia for census collections where the data were available are 1921: 74.21%; 1933: 78.11%; 1961: 78.79%, Mol, *Religion in Australia*, table 34.2, p. 233, ie mixed marriages 1921: 25.79%; 1933: 21.88%; 1961: 21.20%.

<sup>104</sup>For example, *Record*, 11 January 1940, p. 12 editorial on 'Mixed Marriages' detailed the bishops concerns about Catholics continuing to marry non-Catholics in the thirty years since the 'Ne Temere' decree.

in all that concerns the soul - its faith, its hopes and aspirations. [It is] rare that the Catholic does not suffer deterioration of soul and that indifference does not creep in.<sup>105</sup>

Some Catholics made conscious decisions to seek a partner only among other Catholics. The Catholic Women's League in South Australia provided a letter to the *Southern Cross* in which a lay woman explained her happiness that she had avoided a mixed marriage on the grounds that marriages based on common faith were more solid than those contracted on the grounds of affection alone.

I did not marry until I was 28 years old, and was beginning to give up all hope of doing so. ...It happened that I met a non-Catholic who seemed to be just the right sort of husband for me; but being a staunch Catholic I was dubious as to the outcome....[The young man converted and] I am happy that it was I who brought this fine soul into the Church.

After all, when one goes hunting for a male one must be able to distinguish between the genuine and the veneered. Scratch the surface and if all is well underneath proceed as a well-trained Catholic should.

When a Catholic marries a non-Catholic they have nothing in common except their mutual affection and when this diminishes God help the Catholic! These are average cases: there are plenty of exceptions. There are exceptions to all rules, but with the question of marriage exceptions do not rule.<sup>106</sup>

In one graphic phrase a character in the short story 'Molly's Choice' written for the devotional *Crusader* magazine in 1945 summed up the institutional horror

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<sup>105</sup>Joint Pastoral of the Westralian Hierarchy on Mixed Marriages', cited *Record*, 11 January 1940, p. 12.

<sup>106</sup>Correspondent to the *Los Angeles Tidings*, reprinted in the *Southern Cross*, 24 February 1933, p. 9.

at the compromise of mixed marriage. Molly could not consider marrying a non-Catholic man because she 'wouldn't dare go past Our Lord [in the tabernacle] to be married in the sacristy'.<sup>107</sup> Some Catholics at their marriage began a life-long campaign of prayer for the conversion of their partner, others worked to overcome the notion that their children were from less than perfectly Catholic homes. The stigma ran very deep: even after Launcelot Goody was consecrated a bishop he was sometimes referred to as 'the one with the Protestant mother'.<sup>108</sup>

Catholics before the Second Vatican Council viewed the world from a vantage point that was self-consciously different from the surrounding society. Whether that difference was maintained with a sense of triumph or persecution, there were clearly defined answers to questions which established right and wrong, made salvation possible for all within the church, and rendered the boundaries of Catholicism firm and certain. Catholics did not expect to have to integrate their faith into the wider society, the assumption was that an effective faith would transform the world to conform to the Catholic vision. Such a view of the world was supported by the devotional network of a heavenly Catholic family, to be examined in the following chapters; while the final section of this thesis deals with the specific apostolic direction which underpinned the Catholic world view as the concept of common membership of the Mystical Body of Christ began to pervade the liturgy and lay activity of the church.

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<sup>107</sup>Sally Verdier, 'Molly's Choice', *Crusader*, 1 February 1945, p. 97.

<sup>108</sup>Interviews E, A Sister of Mercy, Name in confidence, Perth WA, 26 October 1989. Notes held by author.

## PART II: AN EXPRESSIVE SPIRITUALITY: DEVOTIONAL CATHOLICISM

### Chapter 3: Devotional Spirituality and Images of Christ

Devotional Catholicism stands out in the ebb and flow of styles of spirituality as a distinctive way of approaching God. The current of devotionalism, in which individuals found God by drawing on their capacities for emotion and affective experience, was significant in lay encounters with the institutional church throughout the period 1922 - 1962. The passive approach of devotionalism sat comfortably within lay sodalities which encouraged personal and other-worldly prayer as the focus of spirituality. Significantly too it meshed neatly with such active groups as the Society of St Vincent de Paul and the Legion of Mary in so far as the extensive community work of those associations in Australia was grounded in an acceptance of the prevailing social structures, and an understanding that charitable works were most valuable not for the change they effected in society, but for the benefit they offered to the souls of the members and of those they helped.<sup>1</sup> The style of action within devotional Catholicism was thus quite different from that of Jocism. However, it is also important to note that the developing lay apostolate worked within a devotional framework placing new emphasis on images of God which complemented the spirituality of Catholic Action. Traditional forms of devotion, such as processions, special hymns and prayers and the promotion of particular

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<sup>1</sup>A detailed analysis of the 'active sodalities' is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, as records become available and oral evidence is gathered these groups offer a valuable opportunity for historians to consider the subtle interplay of various strands of spirituality as well as various models of charitable work. Initial work on the Society of St Vincent de Paul in Australia has focussed on details of foundation and the understandings of charity, welfare and social justice. See S. F. Egan, *The Society of St Vincent de Paul in Australia, 1854 - 1954*, Sydney, 1981; Katharine Massam, 'The Catholic Church in Western Australia at the Time of the Great Depression', BA (Hons) thesis, Department of History, University of Western Australia, 1984, pp. 41 - 54.

images, were maintained throughout the period; but there was a shift in the content of these forms. Christ the King, and Christ as Head of the Mystical Body, gradually gained public prominence over the Sacred Heart as the devotional emphasis began to incorporate an understanding that Catholicism was also to be active in re-ordering the world.

Within the framework set up in the introduction to this thesis where contrasting styles of spirituality are broadly labelled masculine and feminine, early twentieth century devotionalism valued relational, sympathetic and synthesizing qualities in the 'household of faith'<sup>2</sup> which are identified as feminine. Devotionalism also came to be associated with the pious activities of women, in a movement of 'feminization' of church life discussed above in chapter one. The development of Catholic Action, with an emphasis on radical change and decisive action in the world, was a style of spirituality more clearly 'masculine' and one which drew men into church concerns. Devotional Catholicism was not replaced by Catholic Action but one overlaid the other, so that devotional traits became an important signal that masculine spirituality was legitimate, while the concern to ensure salvation of the modern world gave an edge of secular relevance to the feminine devotions. In examining the link of feminine and masculine styles of spirituality with the Catholic practice of men and women it is useful to look more closely at the impact of gender and religion on individual lives.

It is an historical commonplace that the the cultural construction of what it means to be masculine and feminine has had a powerful effect on the lives of individual men and women in the past. The authors of the 1986 collection of

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<sup>2</sup>Ann Taves's title itself emphasises the devotional view of heaven as a network of family ties, see Ann Taves, *The Household of Faith: Roman Catholic Devotions in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, Notre Dame, 1986.

essays, *Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols*,<sup>3</sup> argue that religion is a part of human experience as profoundly influenced by the differences created by gender as any other aspect of life. They insist:

there is no such thing as generic *homo religiosus*. No scholar studying religion, no participant in ritual is ever neuter. Religious experience is the experience of men and women and in no known society is this experience the same.<sup>4</sup>

Bynum and other writers show that within a sample of adherents as diverse as medieval mystics, Hindi poets and twentieth century psychoanalysts, men and women consistently create and interpret the meaning of religious symbols in different ways. Women use symbols to emphasise the continuity of religion with the rest of their lives, while for men, symbols often reverse the cultural construction of their everyday experiences.

[M]en and women of a single tradition - when working with the same symbols and myths, writing in the same genre and living in the same religious or professional circumstances - display certain consistent male/female differences in using symbols. Women's symbols and myths tend to build from social and biological experiences; men's symbols and myths tend to invert them. Women's mode of using symbols seems given to the meeting of opposition whether through paradox or through synthesis; men's mode seems characterised by emphasis on opposition, contradiction, inversion and conversion. Women's myths and rituals tend to explore a state of being; men's tend to build elaborate and discrete stages between self and other.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, Stevan Harrell and Paula Richman, (eds), *Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols*, Boston, 1986.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

The understanding that there are gendered responses to religious symbols is important for an understanding of twentieth-century Catholicism, both in looking at the way individual men and women negotiated the meaning of God and in considering the images of God which the institution presented to the people.

The phenomenological theories on which Bynum draws stress that a symbol does not speak with only one voice, to mean only one thing for all the individual men and women who use it.<sup>6</sup> Rather, symbols point to many possible meanings through their interaction with individuals in a society. To give a very simple example, 'water' might connote 'precious resource' to drought-stricken Australians and just as validly speak of 'dank and imminent decay' to Venetian town planners. 'Water' might evoke a sense of purity and freedom, or of a life-giving force, or of the uncontrollable elements of nature, depending on its context and the experiences of 'water' which were available to the people framing its meanings.

Symbols are ascribed different meanings according to the different experiences of individuals and groups. For example, Bynum's work on medieval Catholicism shows that devotion to Christ's humanity in such aspects as the infant Jesus, the Sacred Heart, and the wounds of Christ, was at the core of the spirituality of medieval mystics, women and men. The women focussed on their similarity with Christ, identifying with his suffering humanity. In contrast the masculine pattern was one of reversal where men must become 'other': womanly, weak and poor, in order to become like Christ.

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<sup>6</sup> Bynum's analysis of the ways in which religious experiences diversely affected the lives of men and women draws in particular on the work of Clifford Geertz, Paul Ricoeur and Victor Turner on the nature of religious symbols. See also her chapter, 'Women's Stories, Women's Symbols: A Critique of Victor Turner's Theory of Liminality' in Robert L. Moore and Frank E. Reynolds, (eds), *Anthropology and the Study of Religion*, Chicago, 1984, pp. 105 - 125.

In the case of institutional Catholicism where some symbols are set up as 'given', it is interesting to consider the voice with which the symbol was supposed to speak, and what human experiences were most suited to interpreting it. Oral evidence and documentary sources show that from the 1920s to the 1960s the images of God which were prominent in popular piety were symbols which spoke most effectively to the experiences of women in very traditional roles. The dominance of these highly emotive, affective devotions in popular Catholicism might help to account for the level of unease which men, and women who resisted the feminine stereotype, felt about the church.

The claim that Catholic devotional life was centred around women's experiences sounds extraordinary in view of the patriarchal structure of the church. However, according to the analysis of the feminist theologian Rosemary Haughton, such a preoccupation was simply the flip-side of the dominant masculine style of the institution, and ultimately just as much a distortion of Catholic tradition and just as constraining for men and women of the church. Haughton argues that the denial of the 'right brain' or feminine aspect of God's activity facilitated a dangerous split between theology and religious practice. An institution overly committed to a transcendent God could not effectively integrate the emotional life, with the result, Haughton implies, that many of the most popular devotions over-compensated for the absence of the feminine elsewhere and encouraged an unbalanced view of God.<sup>7</sup> The devotional strand of Catholicism was a safeguard for expressive dimension of spirituality; the danger was that this safeguard for one aspect would limit the possibilities of lay spirituality by masking the effective expression of alternative ways of approaching God. Haughton has identified devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

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<sup>7</sup>Rosemary Haughton, 'The Catholic Thing' in [Missionaries of the Sacred Heart eds], *A New Heart for a New World: an exploration of the desires of God's heart*, Homebush, 1986, p. 216.

as a particular example of the efforts, at times fairly desperate efforts, to keep Catholic spirituality 'in touch with the emotional side of life, validating the compassion which drives people to action.'<sup>8</sup> One avenue of approach to the operation of devotionalism in Catholic spiritual life is a consideration of the concepts of holiness underpinning the way in which Christ, the incarnate God, was presented to the laity.

The examination of the characteristics of popular religious role models is a method of enquiry well-defended by scholars interested in the popular experience of religious faith in particular societies. In the process of selecting patrons, either from an approved church canon, or from more popularly inspired cults, Catholics were making decisions about who or what was holy, who found God's special favour and how that applied to their own lives. As Weinstein and Bell explain, social scientists are interested in holy individuals for the window they provide on the society that honoured them.

We study saints in order to understand piety;...We see piety neither as an abstraction nor as an autonomous category of human experience....We study sainthood not only for what it reveals about religious feelings and ideas, but also for what it can tell us about...society.<sup>9</sup>

Hagiography has thus become a multi-disciplinary tool employed by social anthropologists, religious sociologists and historians whose interests range from urban America to medieval mysticism and beyond. As Pierre Deloof's work on nearly one thousand years of canonisation records has shown, notions of

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000 - 1700*, Chicago, 1982, p. 6; see also Stephen Wilson, Introduction, *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, Cambridge, 1983, p. 5; Michael Goodich, Introduction: Hagiography as a Historical Source, *Vita Perfecta: The Ideal of Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century*, Stuttgart, 1982, pp. 1 - 20; Donald Attwater, Introduction, *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, Hammondsworth, 1965; D. H. Farmer, Introduction, *the Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, Oxford, 1978, pp. vii - xx.

'What is holy?' as well as 'Who should be canonised?' have indeed changed over time.<sup>10</sup> The following sections examine the figures who exemplified holiness for Catholic people in Adelaide and Perth between 1922 and 1962. The two contrasting images of Jesus, as the Sacred Heart and as Christ the King, the many dimensions of devotion to his mother, Mary, and the popular saints, especially St Thérèse, all show something of the way in which the piety of the Catholic people and the priorities of the institutional church met to generate particular patterns of belief. The figure of Christ and the changes of nuance which surrounded this image is an important starting place in building a picture of the ways in which devotional Catholicism shaped and was shaped by the experiences of Catholics in twentieth century Australia.

*The Figure of Christ: the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

The gentle Jesus of the Sacred Heart remained popular as a focus for devotion throughout the forty years leading to the Second Vatican Council. Although twentieth century teaching on the Sacred Heart was concerned to trace the spirit of a special devotion to the humanity of Christ back through the Middle Ages to the prophets of the Old Testament, the devotion was essentially modern. The cult which proclaimed the importance of Christ's physical heart as the source of God's redemptive love for the world drew its impetus from the visions of Margaret Mary Alacoque, a young Visitation nun at Paray-le-Monial in Paris. In 1675 Margaret Mary reported to her confessor that Christ had appeared to her, bared his wounded heart, bleeding with love for the world which ignored and rejected him, and asked her to encourage devotion to his Sacred Heart.

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<sup>10</sup>Pierre Delooz, 'Towards a sociological study of canonised sainthood in the Catholic Church', in Stephen Wilson (ed) *Saints and their Cults*, pp. 191 - 2. The development of formal procedures for canonisation is traced more slowly in Eric Waldram Kemp, *Canonisation and Authority in the Western Church*, Westport, Connecticut, 1979 (first published 1948).

Explaining the significant impact of the devotion on modern Catholicism, Perth's *Record* commented in 1940 that the church had needed to be reminded of the Sacred Heart so as to rekindle the 'tenderness and warmth of devotion to the Sacred Humanity of Christ' that had been lost in the Reformation. In Catholic understanding Margaret Mary was the agent of the Holy Spirit seeking to rebalance the faith life of the people in the church.

The seventeenth century drew to a close...Beleaguered by heresy [of Jansenism] on one side and rationalism on the other, the Church had need of the Holy Spirit within her.

And God did not forsake her now but raised up a humble, holy soul, Margaret Mary Alacoque, a Visitation nun of the Convent of Paray-le-Monial. Favoured with frequent and astounding revelations, she accepted the call to spread everywhere the already existing devotion to the Sacred Heart. The sheer immensity of her work has served to eclipse her own character and personality. Her mission was nothing less to awaken and revive the realisation of Christ's personal love.<sup>11</sup>

Although the visions occurred in 1675, the chronology of the cult shows that it was in the second half of the nineteenth century that popular devotion reached a pitch to attract institutional attention. In 1856 Pius IX transformed the previously local feast into a day to be observed in the liturgy everywhere; in 1920 Margaret Mary was canonised, and in 1929 her Jesuit confessor, Claude de la Columbière was beatified. Promoted in particular by the Society of Jesus the image of the bleeding heart of Jesus surrounded by thorns became a central aspect of nineteenth-century Catholic revivalism.<sup>12</sup> Priests promoted the devotion by preaching emotively and directly on the physical sufferings Jesus had endured to redeem the world, and invited reparation for the many

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<sup>11</sup> *Record*, 13 June 1940, p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> Jay P. Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience 1830 - 1900*, Notre Dame, 1978, pp. 176 - 7.

ways the world had offended God's love. It was a strongly ultramontane devotion sanctioned by Rome with indulgences and closely associated with the sacraments of the institutional church. The link between the suffering of Calvary and the sacrament of the Eucharist as a memorial of Christ's passion meant that devotion to the Sacred Heart was often closely associated with reverence for Christ truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, and the Christ who forgave sins through the sacrament of Confession. In nineteenth century Australia the Sacred Heart formed part of a network of devotion which made the precepts of Catholicism accessible and memorable to people isolated from sophisticated theology. The *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, founded in Australia by Jesuit Father John Ryan in 1880,<sup>13</sup> enjoyed a large and widespread readership, and making the *Messenger* available to country Catholics became synonymous with advocating Catholicism.

In the twentieth century the Sacred Heart was well established as an aspect of Catholic culture.<sup>14</sup> Much of the popular energy of the cult centred on the promises Margaret Mary had reported of special favours to be conferred on those who honoured the Sacred Heart. The benefits to the devout centred around the grace to live their particular calling well. In particular the 'Twelfth Promise' that anyone who received communion on the first Friday of nine consecutive months would not die without repenting their sins, and so would not be damned, was widely regarded as an excellent insurance policy. While official publications downplayed the mechanical aspect of the novena and oral history recalls the promise with some confusion and disclaimers against superstition, 'making the First Fridays' was a common practice, supported by school routines

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<sup>13</sup>Frank Meecham, 'The Contribution of the Clergy to the Australian Church', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 55, 1978, p. 51; Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community: An Australian History*, Kensington, NSW, 1985, p. 213.

<sup>14</sup>See for example Edmund Campion, *Australian Catholics: The Contribution of Catholics to the Development of Australian Society*, Ringwood, Vic., 1987, pp. 142 - 145; Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, p. 355.

in which confession was made available on Thursdays in anticipation of mass on first Fridays, promoted from the pulpit and carried out in the expectation that the names of the faithful would be 'inscribed in the Book of Life, never to be effaced'.<sup>15</sup>

Devotion to the Sacred Heart was associated in particular with the Sodality of the Sacred Heart, the parish structure which married Catholic women were generally expected to join. In keeping with the characteristics Carolyn Bynum has identified as typical of feminine spirituality, the *Manual of the Sacred Heart* sodality placed strong emphasis on a literal understanding of Christ's human and divine heart.

In this devotion we honour first of all our Lord's living Heart of Flesh...we select the Sacred Heart for special worship because It so keenly felt and so perfectly expressed [our Lord's] infinite love.  
...We observe [His Heart] exhausting and consuming Itself to testify His infinite love for us, and moved to affection and sympathy, we adore His Human Heart which is thus on fire, and, in adoring it, we adore above all the boundless love of our Divine Saviour which animates His Sacred Heart. <sup>16</sup>

Popular hymns also made the emotive and affective basis for the devotion clear. With an unfamiliar semi-tone interval at the end of the first verse, which some parish congregations rendered with a wailing lilt, the hymn commonly sung when the sodality attended Sunday mass together encouraged an ardent regard for God's love.

To Jesus' Heart, all burning  
With fervent love for men,

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<sup>15</sup>*Record*, 30 May 1930, p. 12. Also interviews, Mr Frank Barrett and Mrs Colleen Barrett, Goodwood SA, 22 March 1990; Mrs Mary Ellen Dempsey, Walkerville, SA, 21 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

<sup>16</sup> *The Australian Manual of the Sacred Heart Association*, compiled by a Vincentian Father, Sydney, 1959 (first published 1932) pp. 12 - 13.

My heart with fondest yearning  
 Shall raise its joyful strain.<sup>17</sup>

Within a framework designed to encourage emotion, hymns to the Sacred Heart were didactic and quite explicit about the qualities, stereotypically feminine qualities, which were appropriate to someone who imitated Christ. Such phrases did not sit comfortably with the stoic reserve and impassive behaviour Australian society expected of men.

Sweet Heart of Jesus, we implore  
 O make us love thee more and more.

Sweet Heart of Jesus, make us pure and gentle,  
 And teach us how to do Thy blessed will,  
 To follow close the print of Thy dear footsteps  
 And when we fall, sweet Heart, O love us still.<sup>18</sup>

In 1899 Pope Leo XIII had consecrated the world to the Sacred Heart as a defense against the evils of modern life, and, as Frances Lannon and Bill McSweeney point out, the devotion carried strong connotations of anti-socialism and anti-modernism.<sup>19</sup> A similar view of the Sacred Heart as the ultimate safeguard against the collapse of civilisation informed the prayer for peace which the *Record* published as a separate card in 1940. The horrors of a modern war fought by men were contrasted with the feminine values of an earlier, better time more in tune with the characteristics of the Sacred Heart. In light of the work of Welter and Douglas it is significant that these feminine values were invoked in extreme crisis, when the masculine world was seen to be collapsing.

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<sup>17</sup> *Manual of the Sacred Heart*, p. 114.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>19</sup> Pope Leo XIII, cited *Manual of the Sacred Heart*, p. 1; Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain 1875 - 1975*, Oxford, 1987, pp. 29 - 31; Bill McSweeney, *Roman Catholicism, The Search for Relevance*, Oxford, 1980, pp. 48 ff.

Passion of Christ Strengthen Us

Dismayed by the horrors of a war which is bringing ruin to peoples and nations we turn O Jesus to Thy most loving heart as to our last hope. O God of Mercy with tears we invoke Thee to end this fearful scourge: O King of Peace we humbly implore the peace for which we long. From Thy Sacred Heart Thou didst shed forth over the world Divine Charity, so that discord might end and love alone might reign among men. During Thy life on earth Thy heart beat with tender compassion for the sorrows of men: In this hour made terrible with burning hate, with bloodshed and with slaughter, once more may Thy Divine Heart be moved to pity. Pity the countless mothers in anguish for the fate of their sons; pity the numberless families now bereaved of their fathers; pity Europe over which broods such havoc and disaster. Do Thou inspire rulers and peoples with counsels of meekness, do Thou heal the discords which tear nations asunder; Thou who didst shed Thy Precious Blood that they might live as brothers bring men together that they might live once more in loving harmony. And as once before to the cry of the Apostle Peter: Save us Lord, we perish, Thou didst answer with words of mercy and didst still the raging waves, so now deign to hear our trustful prayer and give back to the world peace and tranquillity.<sup>20</sup>

If an Australian were a 'good' Catholic during the forty years before Vatican II, they were exposed to a network of practices which emphasised the virtues of long-suffering love, purity, patience, humility and otherworldly gentleness, as exemplified by the Sacred Heart. The feminine basis of the devotion was explicitly acknowledged by the hierarchy in 1956 when an encyclical from Pius XII urged men to embrace the flowery devotion in spite of its womanly feel.

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<sup>20</sup>*Record* , prayer card enclosed in issue of 1 June 1940.

...[T]here are those who far from considering this devotion a powerful help for correctly forming and restoring Christian morals both in the private life of individuals and in the family circle, consider it rather as a form of piety springing from emotions and not from reasoned convictions and more suited, therefore, for women, because they see in it something unbecoming educated men.....

Venerable brothers, who does not see that such opinions are completely contrary to the teachings which Our predecessors publicly proclaimed from this chair of truth when they approved the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus?

'This devotion' [Leo XIII] said, 'which We recommend to all, will be profitable for all.'<sup>21</sup>

Official encouragement notwithstanding, the devotion remained a concern of women more than men and the visual representations of the Sacred Heart reinforced its feminine associations. There was a picture of the Sacred Heart in most Catholic homes at this time, sometimes one in every room,<sup>22</sup> and it is revealing to consider what picture of God these images presented to the Catholic people.

It is increasingly recognised that religious art not only reflects and shapes spirituality but provides an insight into the culture which created it. Variations from physical reality on the grounds of spiritual validity have a long history in Catholic art. Even gender has been mutable. As Mary Jo Weaver has noted, during the early Middle Ages when it was thought that women could best earn their salvation by becoming like men, the Virgin Mary was represented

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<sup>21</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Haurietus Aquas*, Melbourne, 1957, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Interview, Mrs Agnes Staude and Mrs Anne Skinner with author, Victoria Park, WA, 11 April 1989. Notes held by author.

with a beard, and in a similar way in the twelfth century when the soul was thought of as feminine and Jesus as mother, there were paintings of a Christ with breasts.<sup>23</sup> Jean Delumeau has directed the attention of historians to religious art. With Gabriel LeBras, Delumeau has pointed out that church art, like all art, speaks the language of the artist's society, and, as much as any social product, reflects a social view of its subject.

[The] conceptualisations of the beyond are translated into artistic images. Since 'every artist lives in the milieu which produces, supports and judges him' (G.LeBras) while authority can consciously impose rules on him, society unconsciously imposes its language. There is therefore such a thing as the sociology of sacred art, because every artistic venture has a social character.<sup>24</sup>

Images of the Sacred Heart, like most of the images of the Divine to which Catholics were exposed in the first half of the twentieth century, were usually imported or directly modelled on the St Sulpician art of devotionism, named for the district of St Sulpice in Paris where the style first became popular. The 'anemic Hollywood Jesus'<sup>25</sup> was androgynously gentle and well-suited to a devotion based around reparation for suffering. Such art played on the feminine stereotype of the devotions, and as the art historians Frank and Dorothy Getlein have remarked, these images 'have done much to give the honourable word "pious" the added meaning of "sissy" which it now bears'.<sup>26</sup> As the Getleins point out, the spotlight and fog effect in lighting and the colouring of the images

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<sup>23</sup>Mary Jo Weaver, *New Catholic Women: A Contemporary Challenge to Traditional Religious Authority*, San Francisco, 1985, p. 199.

<sup>24</sup>Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of The Counter Reformation*, trans. Jeremy Moiser, Philadelphia 1977, p. 131; see also Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup>Frank Getlein and Dorothy Getlein, *Christianity in Modern Art*, Milwaukee, 1961, p. 20.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

were used not so much to represent the scriptural or doctrinal events or people as to manipulate an emotional response of joy or sadness from the viewer.

One representation of the Sacred Heart which was familiar to Catholics in Perth included contemporary figures in the heavenly scene to model the appropriate reaction for the viewer. The painting behind the altar in the Sacred Heart chapel in St Mary's Cathedral depicted Jesus in the iconographical style of the Sacred Heart, surrounded by a radiant aura, reaching out towards the congregation. In the foreground of the picture, between the congregation and the central image, a semi-circular group of women and children was shown kneeling and standing in reverent attitudes, the women presenting their children to Jesus. Most of the figures have their backs to the viewer and reach out towards the otherworldly Sacred Heart, some tentatively, some ardently, as an extension of the congregation. The children, and especially a small, fair-haired girl in blue dress, white socks and blue shoes in the foreground of the picture, are dressed in fashionable clothes of the late 1920s and are looking towards the Sacred Heart with calm and rapt attention, unruffled in their Sunday best. The painting clearly suggested that the Sacred Heart was an image which appealed to women and children, and quiet, well-dressed Anglo-Celtic children at that. It bears the legend 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me for of such is the kingdom of heaven'; but while this text has been the invitation for other artists to present Christ in the midst of a hurley-burley of teaching, the images of this picture more clearly indicated that giving honour to the gentle Jesus was an enterprise not quite of this world.

The St Sulpician style of art was an important component of the affective, sentimental and emotive strand of faith practice. As well as being part of the Catholic home, cards carrying images of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin and the saints were used as gifts between Catholic friends, from parents to children to

mark special occasions and as prizes and encouragement awards in Catholic schools. With a personal message written on the back, holy cards marked places in prayer books and Bibles or were displayed in bedrooms as part of a personal iconography of holiness. The 'Catholic domestication of heaven'<sup>27</sup> reinforced the separation of religion from public concerns by focussing on the sentimental and individual response of the viewer. The reality of a modern world of business, industry and challenging domesticity was edited out of these holy pictures. The style of Catholicism inherent in such art was one that was personal and private.

Displaying and honouring the image of the Sacred Heart in the home was not simply a private matter, but reflected that view of wider society in which Catholics saw the world as 'other'. Dedicating a home to Jesus under the title of the Sacred Heart was recommended to Australian Catholics not only because the promises to Margaret Mary included blessings for homes where images of his heart were honoured, but also because modern Australian life was thought to be dangerous to the life of the family. The Sacred Heart Sodality's manual included the procedure by which a priest and parents lead the family in making a formal dedication to the Sacred Heart, so that home life might triumph over the competing claims of the Australian outdoor climate, and the temptations of young people to too much 'freedom from restraint...especially in their relations with one another'.<sup>28</sup> Devotion was not an entirely private affair, but even the public demonstrations of commitment to the Sacred Heart were pervaded by defensiveness. For example, in its 1923 report of the annual procession at the Adelaide parish of Norwood, the *Southern Cross* linked honour to the Sacred Heart with the affirmation of belief in the real presence of Christ in the eucharist, a belief that called on the Catholic community to make reparation for

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<sup>27</sup>Barbara Corrado Pope, 'A Heroine Without Heroics: The Little Flower of Jesus and Her Times', *Church History*, vol. 57, 1988, p. 54.

<sup>28</sup> *Manual of the Sacred Heart*, p. 89.

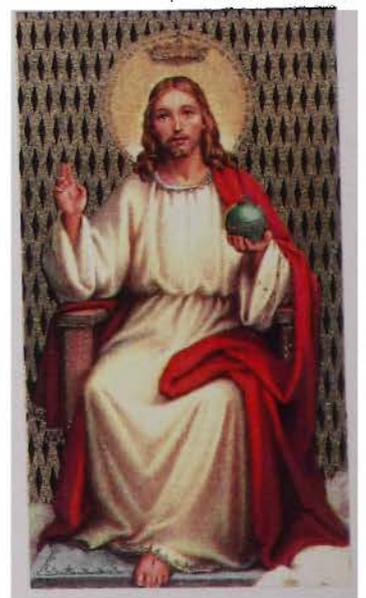
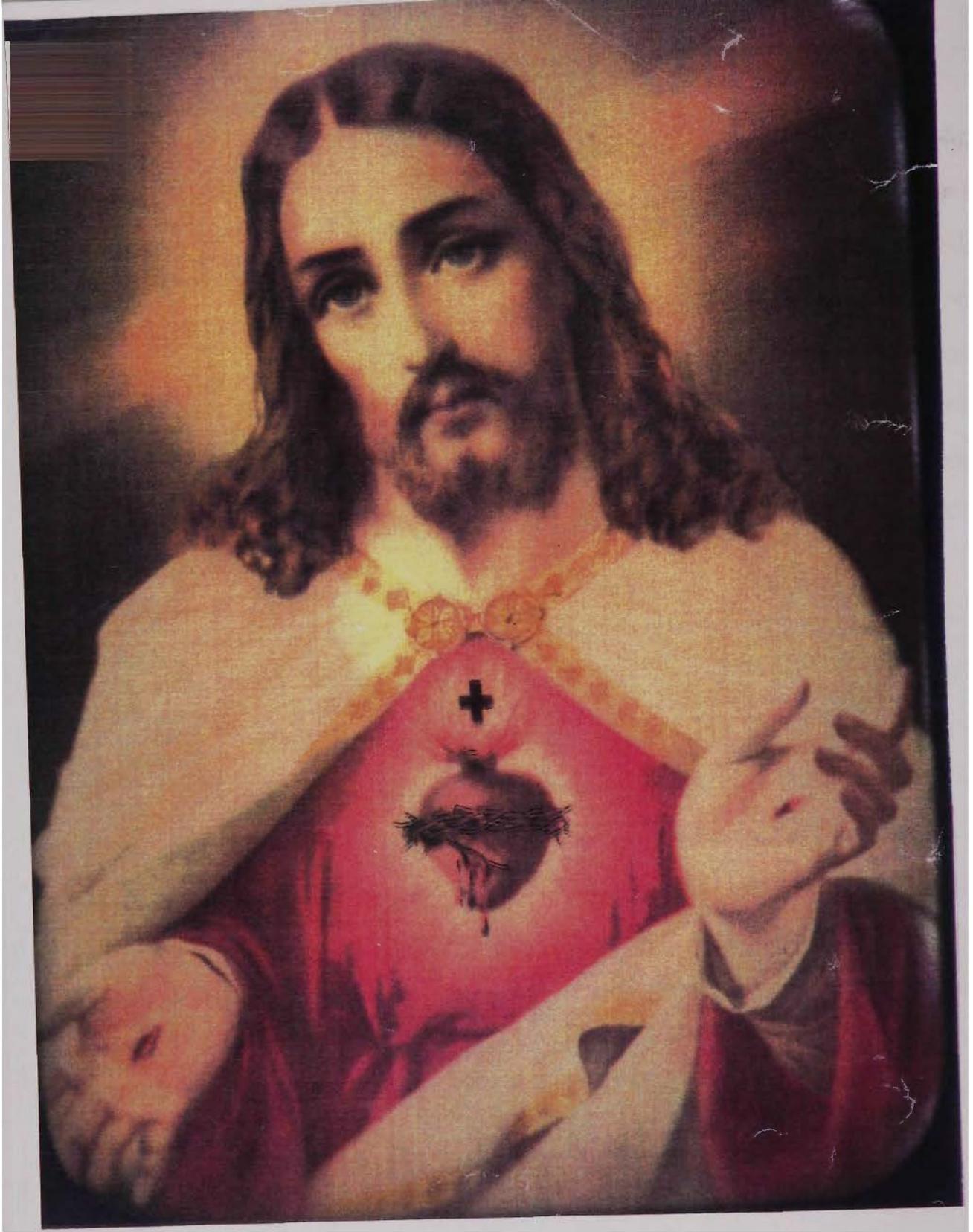


Figure 7. a) Standard image of the Sacred Heart. b) Images of Christ the King were less common, but followed a similar devotional style. Courtesy of the author.

past sacrilege. The occasion was not so much one of confident celebration but of dignified and stubborn restatement of Catholic values by a community which saw that its deepest beliefs had been spurned by the wider community.<sup>29</sup> In contrast to this concern to preserve Catholic home life under the Sacred Heart as a bastion against outside influences, the figure of Christ the King urged Catholics to take their faith on to the streets.

### *The Figure of Christ: Christ the King*

The image of the King was a metaphor for Christ which focused on divine strength and authority, in marked contrast to the passive suffering of the Sacred Heart. The Christ who would rule the world in justice brought a new dimension to the devotional strand of Catholic piety. The feast had been introduced into the formal calendar of the church in 1925 in order, as Adelaide's *Southern Cross* saw it, to affirm 'the rights that Christ has over men, the need that men have of His leadership'.<sup>30</sup> Contrast between the secular reality and the Godly ideal focussed Catholic attention on the need to acknowledge Christ as King, and devotion to Christ as an agent of change came into its own in Australia in the years of reconstruction following World War II. In an editorial to mark the 1948 celebrations of the feast of Christ the King, the *Record* drew its readers' attention to diversity of the images of Christ, and the shift in emphasis for this feast from gentle Jesus to a majestic God.

From the metaphors used of Himself by Christ Our Lord, and from the richly varied forms under which the faith of Christians has delighted to think of God-made-man, it is most common to dwell on those which most vividly express His humanity or the more tender attributes of His Divinity. Thus it is true and pleasant to meditate on Our Lord as the Good Shepherd, endlessly seeking for the one

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<sup>29</sup>*Southern Cross*, 8 June 1923, p. 13.

<sup>30</sup>*Southern Cross*, 26 October 1945, p. 6.

sheep that is astray; or as the Father of the prodigal son whose grief and anger is swallowed up in the joy of his boy's homecoming, or as the Vigneron who gives the same wage even to those labourers who did not start work until the 11th hour; or most of all as the Victim of Calvary, whose Sacrifice blots out the sins of all humanity. But there is as real and as stern a note in those conceptions of Christ where He compares Himself to a King who casts out the guest without the wedding garments, the Lord Who punishes the unforgiving servant; the God of awful majesty Who comes at the end of time to judge the living and the dead in great power and panoply.<sup>31</sup>

While traditional elements of piety remained part of the devotional framework, the new solemnity was the vehicle for a Catholicism ready to embrace the world. It is interesting for the analysis of popular piety to trace the way in which the new emphasis was merged comfortably with established Catholic practice. For example, to celebrate the twentyfifth anniversary of the feast in 1950 the *Southern Cross* reproduced the hymn which had become most popularly associated with Christ the King. 'Hail Redeemer, King Divine' was sung to a sprightly, rythmically animated tune and celebrated the majesty of Christ.

1.Hail, Redeemer, King Divine,  
 Priest and Lamb, the Throne is Thine,  
 King Whose reign shall never cease,  
 Prince of everlasting Peace.

CHORUS: Angels, Saints and Nations sing:  
 Praised be Jesus Christ, our King!  
 Lord of Life, earth, sky and sea,  
 King of Love on Calvary.

2.King Whose Name Creation thrills

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<sup>31</sup> *Record*, 28 October 1948, p. 7.

Rule our minds, our hearts, our wills,  
 'Til in Peace each nation rings  
 With Thy Praises, King of Kings.<sup>32</sup>

The hymn evoked the same images of redemption through the suffering of Christ's passion which were part and parcel of Catholic dogma. However, in the context of the new devotion these images were associated with triumph not anguish. Even the fourth and seventh verses which were in the emotive devotional tradition and explicitly linked Christ the King to the Sacred Heart led into the chorus with an affirmation of victory.

4. Crimson streams, O King of Grace,  
 Drenched Thy thorn-crowned Head and Face,  
 Bleeding Hands and Feet and Side,  
 Bore Thy Wounds, now glorified....

7. Sing with joy in every Home  
 'Sacred Heart Thy Kingdom Come!  
 To the King of Ages then -  
 Honour, Glory, Love - Amen.<sup>33</sup>

Catholics were notorious for singing only the first two or three verses of a hymn and how much these words were in common usage is debatable. However, it is interesting to note that these more sentimental verses were omitted altogether when the *Living Parish Hymnal* was published in Sydney in 1961,<sup>34</sup> perhaps an indication that church practice had moved more definitely to a perception of the dominant strand of the image as one of triumph.

It is also possible to detect a movement towards the triumphal in the immediate post-World War II popularisation of this figure of Christ. For

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<sup>32</sup> *Southern Cross*, 27 October 1950, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Rev. Anthony Newman (ed), *The Living Parish Hymn Book*, Sydney 1961, pp. 96 - 7.

example, just after the end of the war, at the 1945 procession in honour of the Blessed Sacrament at Glen Osmond, a crowd estimated at 15,000 of Adelaide's Catholics heard Fr Matthew CP preach on the 'Prince of Peace'. In the devotional context of a procession of reparation Catholics were urged to honour Christ in the Blessed Sacrament so as to increase his influence over the world. The phrase 'Christ the King' did not figure in the sermon, and the tone was of the war-weary rather than triumphant, but Christ was presented as a powerful alternative to the ways of the world.

Six years of cruel war have passed: six years in which peace was sought by the sword. Yet there is no peace. ...The toil and sweat, the blood and tears, the broken hearts and ruined homes seem to be in vain. And why? Why is the world in a ferment of unrest? Why does hatred and war take the place of charity and peace? Because so many will not heed the invitation and warning of the Prince of Peace ...He speaks to us from the Sacred Host as surely as He spoke to His disciples: 'Fear not little flock. Have confidence. I have overcome the world.'

The task is great...But greater still is the power of the Prince of Peace. And if men will only turn to Him, then He will lead the world from darkness to the true light, from unrest and war to contentment and peace.<sup>35</sup>

A few weeks later, as Adelaide prepared to celebrate the feast of Christ the King, the *Southern Cross* dealt with the question of the power of Christ in an ungodly world in its editorial. The confident and assured tone, which contrasted with the sermon of the Blessed Sacrament procession, is an indication of the different nuances which surrounded this feast as Catholics reconsidered their role in the world.

What should the feast of Christ the King mean to Catholics? It should be a powerful reminder to them that

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<sup>35</sup> *Southern Cross*, 19 October 1945, p. 5.

no matter how intransigent or negligent or contemptuous men may be, the fact still remains that Christ is their Ruler as He will be their Judge. It should be a reminder that Christ is Lord of all men whether as individuals or as families or as States, that no individual, family or State has the right to do anything or adopt any policy opposed to Christ's law.<sup>36</sup>

In the public processions and open air liturgy to honour the reign of Christ over the secular world, the themes of Catholic Action came together with concerns for invigorated worship and the maintenance of a sacramental system to sanctify the world.

Commitment to Christ as king was presented as a powerful source of inspiration in the efforts of Catholics to make changes in the temporal order. The phrase 'Long Live Christ the King!', or in Latin 'Viva Christo Rei!', became known as 'the dominant thought of our modern martyrs, and the cry that was on their lips when they died.'<sup>37</sup> The same cry was reported by the *Catholic Worker* as the victory cheer of the team of activist Catholic debaters at Melbourne University when the Spanish Civil War was under discussion, and it became a slogan of Catholic Action. The *Record* offered a model by which to bring about the reality of the reign of Christ in which the stress on personal piety mingled with Jocist approaches. The overall aim was to make Catholic consciousness a mass movement.

But that the Kingship of Christ may not remain exclusive to any class or ineffective as regards the mass of mankind, it is the business of Catholic Action to restore the reign of Christ in all hearts. To do this there must first be personal holiness and knowledge in the modern apostles. No man can give what he does not possess. Unless Christ reigns in the hearts of His own, how can He rule in the

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<sup>36</sup> *Southern Cross*, 26 October 1945, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> *Record*, 28 October 1946, p. 8.

world at large? Next there is for each Catholic the penetration of his immediate environment. Society will only be permeated by the impact of Christian personalities in their respective spheres of labour. So the work will be done not so much by artificial and external organisation but by the striking spectacle of the Christian life lived. Gradually a great number of small cells will come into being penetrated by the spirit of Christ the King. When that number is identical to the population of the whole nation, then and then only will the work be consummated. <sup>38</sup>

The *Record* met suspicions of too lofty aspirations to temporal power with the assertion that belief in the kingship of Christ was essential to Christianity, and certainly not a devotional ploy.

The Kingship of Christ is not a pious fancy promulgated by the Church to stimulate devotion. It is eternal reality. By virtue of His divine nature, of His creation and preservation of all that is, of His redemptive death and final judgement of mankind, Christ indeed exercises a supreme and apostolic dominion over all men. Although the feast of the Kingship of Christ was only formulated officially in our generation, the acceptance of all that it implies of Christ's sovereignty over mankind, and of their utter and complete dependence on Him, is implicit and fundamental in the Christian faith and all natural religion. In its application to the lives of individuals, the acknowledgement of Christ's Kingship demands total obedience to His Will, manifested by observance of the commandments. 'Christ is King, therefore sin is treason.' According as this consonance with the Will of God is more or less wholehearted, so men will be more or less holy 'And this is the Will of God, your sanctification.'<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup>*Record*, 28 October 1948, p. 7

Christ the King was a particularly masculine image of God, and was used to encourage men to take Christian action in the world. While the devotional tradition of Catholicism also ignored the Bible's feminine images for God,<sup>40</sup> the characteristics of God which it privileged were regarded as more typical of women than men, and conferred a status of holiness on the stereotypical feminine virtues of passivity and withdrawal from the world. The *Record* developed a picture of Christianity modelled on Christ the King which was quite different, emphasising the public sphere and masculine models of leadership. It is significant that while the metaphors changed, the gender stereotyping remained powerful, so that the regal Christ was as unattainable for some as the devotional Christ was unreal for others. The real experience of women and men who did not fit the passive stereotype was edited out of the divinity in one case, and notions of successful social dominance became paramount in the other. Activity in the temporal world, including spiritual work, was regarded as masculine in character. While the language of the *Record* conventionally used 'men' to refer also to women, the passage indicated that Christ reigned over the most powerful in public life, and thus relatively clearly referred mostly to men rather than women.

As Lord and Master of all, Christ the King does not plead with men, but makes total demands on the human heart, mind and will with regal imperiousness and as an absolute right against which there is no appeal. And not only does this condition of fealty apply to men as individual persons, but to the collectivity of men in their corporate life. Christ is also King of Kings, of Presidents, and Prime Ministers. Hence the social life of nations must eventually acknowledge also His overlordship. The

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<sup>40</sup>For example, a woman in labour, Is. 42 : 14, a mother or midwife, Is. 46 : 6, Is. 66: 12 - 13; the female figure Wisdom, Pr. 1 : 20 - 33, 3 : 13 - 18, 4 : 3 - 13, 8 : 1 - 36, 9 : 1 - 6. See also, Ann Loades, 'God and God-ess, Language about Divine Reality' chapter 5 in her *Searching for Lost Coins: explorations in christianity and feminism*, London, 1987, pp. 78 - 100; Gail Ramshaw, 'The Gender of God', in Ann Loades, (ed), *Feminist Theology: a reader*, London, 1990, pp. 168 - 180.

diplomacy of nations, their relations with one another, and their domestic laws must reflect harmony with the Divine plan for human life.

It might appear that Christ's sovereignty in this respect can be ignored with impunity. But God is not mocked indefinitely and the sorry pass of our civilisation is witness to the tragic effects of rebellion and treason against the Divine King. The nations must return to Christ, even as the Kings did at His birth. In this complete submission lies the key to peace of the world. For if peace is the tranquillity of order, no harmony will be found outside the Divine Order. If the world is to know peace, it will be the Peace of Christ in the reign of Christ.<sup>41</sup>

It is interesting to consider the broad notion of a gender division in the appeal of the images of Christ the King and the Sacred Heart. Caroline Bynum has suggested a general pattern of differences between the ways men and women respond to religious symbols, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Her study of medieval mystics shows that men used images of contrast, opposition and reversal of ordinary reality to express their idea of God, while women's symbols for God stressed not so much inversion as synthesis and paradox.<sup>42</sup> While a central tenet of Bynum's work is that the same symbol can be used in different ways, clearly some symbols lend themselves more easily to interpretation as masculine reversal or feminine continuity. Bynum refers to devotion to the Sacred Heart as it was practised in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to illustrate the fleshly, feminine piety of continuity with human experience. In the twentieth century the devotion remained one which invited Catholics into the suffering of Christ following the pattern of identifying with the human condition which Bynum has suggested appealed especially to women.

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<sup>41</sup>*Record*, 18 October 1948, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup>Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, pp. 286 - 289.

The later image of Christ the King more closely conforms to the characteristics of masculine spirituality. However much Christ the King was to be the model for Catholic influence in society, individuals were not so much called to identify with the characteristics of this image as to a liminal reversal of the possibilities of power. The continuity and change within the image were evident in the various interpretations of 'Glorious Morning', a play on the theme of Christ the King performed by the Adelaide's Catholic drama group, the Therry Society, in 1945. In the lead-up to the production the *Southern Cross* pointed out that the play's concern with totalitarian worldly power was appropriate to the feast.

The dates of production - October 25 and 26 - are adjacent to the feast of Christ the King. This is appropriate, for 'Glorious Morning' depicts life in a totalitarian state, and shows clearly that Christ still reigns despite all efforts of mere men to deify themselves in a supreme council.<sup>43</sup>

The review of 'Glorious Morning' dealt more directly in the language of feminine reversal and pointed to the paradox at the base of the Catholic understanding of power.

The theme is the oldest known to man and the most recent - the revolt of the creature against the Creator, and the choosing by God of the weak things of the world to confound the strong; the defeat and death that are victory and life.<sup>44</sup>

Catholics were to submit to Divine authority by struggling to assert themselves in the world in order to win it for Christ. Christ the King was 'not of this world' and required a radical transformation of the prevailing society to conform more clearly to the Divine plan. This was one reversal. A second reversal was

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<sup>43</sup>*Southern Cross*, 19 October 1945, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup>*Southern Cross*, 2 November 1945, p. 9.

implicit in that in seeking power for the Redeemer King, Catholics were not called to abandon the image of success defined in secular terms, but rather to work to change the terms in which secular success could be achieved, so as to become 'other' than what the materialistic world expected.

The figure of Christ in twentieth century Catholicism suggests something of a conjunction between the masculine and feminine, or at least competing interpretations of Jesus which stressed alternatively his compassion and his strength. The model of God which was presented to Catholics through the devotional strand of spirituality was a delicate mix of sentiment and encouragement to action, to which Catholic people could legitimately respond in a variety of ways. In negotiating their approach Catholics did not come upon Christ as a solitary figure, but as part of a network of divine personalities whose characters carried different nuances over time. Thus, devotional spirituality was also founded on a response in faith to equally multi-faceted images of Jesus's mother, Mary, and of the saints. The next chapter considers some of the dynamics of devotion to the feminine figure of the woman, Mary, Mother of God in the twentieth century.

## Chapter 4 : Devotion to Mary

### *Catholic Tradition of Marian Devotion: Maximalist and Minimalist Approaches*

Over the centuries since the birth of Jesus, tradition had added to the story of the young woman who appears in the gospels as the mother of Jesus. It should be noted that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, appears a mere four or five times in the gospels, and then only in cameo. In general this was not an issue for Catholics. The apparitions which seemed to multiply and gain acceptance in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave credence to the view that Mary's direct involvement in human history had not ceased with her disappearance from the New Testament. The general Catholic understanding of tradition as an important guide to God's revelation served to validate a number of apocryphal stories. For example, in 1936 the *Record* reprinted a story from the *Dublin Review* about an 'Etheopic manuscript' which recorded that the Virgin gave a thirsty dog a drink. The *Record* asked for other stories from readers about Our Lady's interaction with dogs, not because this was a significant area of doctrine and not with clear ideas about the historical accuracy of the stories, but with the aim that such stories might encourage dog lovers to have a sense of modelling themselves on the Virgin in a particular way.<sup>1</sup> Certainly Catholics in Adelaide and Perth were the heirs of a complex tradition of Marian devotion which had seen a variety of expression over the centuries.

Far from being static, the tradition of Marian devotion took on additional nuances in Perth and Adelaide, as in many Catholic communities, in the years between 1922 and 1962. The theologian René Laurentin has used the concept of a continuum to explain different styles of Marian devotion.<sup>2</sup> At one extreme

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<sup>1</sup> *Record*, 19 September 1936, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> R. Laurentin, *The Place of Mary in the Church*, London, 1965, Chapters II and III;

there is the view that, salvation being so much more the work of God than of human agency, it is not appropriate to honour a created human being. This position, which holds the veneration of Mary to be a distraction, Laurentin has labelled Marian 'minimalism'. At the other extreme, that of Marian maximalism, the human role in salvation is emphasised so that the need to gain access to God is paramount if salvation is to be earned. God and his divine son are seen as remote from human affairs, and Mary is the mediator between the world and Jesus Christ. In this view the favour God has shown Mary gives her limitless power to help those in need, and makes her the legitimate recipient of great devotion. In the Catholic communities in Adelaide and Perth between 1922 and 1962, as throughout the Catholic world at this time, the most prominent style of devotion was clearly towards the maximalist 'Mary in salvation' end of the continuum. Mary was a powerful intercessor between Catholics and her son, a religious figure in her own right, especially honoured in the 1950 definition of the Assumption, in special celebrations to commemorate her apparitions and in established devotional habits, such as the prayer of the rosary. This is not to say that the image of Mary translated simply into one immutable meaning, constant for all Catholics over the forty year period.

Like the figure of Christ, Mary simultaneously and paradoxically took on many personas.<sup>3</sup> She was Virgin and Mother, Handmaid and Queen, the model of

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R. P. McBrien, *Catholicism*, 2 vols., Minneapolis, 1980, pp. 889 - 93.

<sup>3</sup>Marina Warner has catalogued some of the wide variations in the artistic representations of Mary in the centuries since her cult began in *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*, London, 1985. Mary's image has changed according to the social and political status of her devotees, and variations in the accepted characteristics of female holiness, as well as changes in artistic style. On a smaller and more local scale it is possible to observe subtle changes in the images of Mary used as the frontpiece of the annual magazine of St Aloysius College in Adelaide. There does not appear to have been any development of a particular image over time, but from year to year different aspects were emphasised. In 1951 she was 'Mother', in 1953 the 'Immaculate Conception', in 1958 she had Chinese features in the 'Madonna and Infant' by Lu Hung Nien, in 1960 she bows before the power of the spirit in Richard King's 'Annunciation', and in 1962 she accepts the veneration of the three kings on behalf of her infant son.

religious communities, the safeguard of marriages. Also in these years Catholics made the traditional call for Mary's protection of the world against evil, and as the fear of Communism grew in Australia during the Cold War years, devotion to Our Lady Queen of Peace took on a clear political tone, working in concert with the growing belief among lay Catholics that action in the world could be a legitimate expression of spirituality.

The Catholic community in Perth was justly proud of the Lady Chapel in St Mary's Cathedral which opened in May 1930. The structure and art work of the chapel offers insight into the style of Marian devotion of the time. The chapel was narrow and tall, channelling the gaze of the dwarfed and hopefully uplifted visitor up towards the altar, the ceiling and the copy of Murillo's 'Immaculate Conception'. This painting is clearly of an other-worldly Mary. The original had been produced in the devotional environment of seventeenth-century Spain, and the controversial dogma of the Immaculate Conception had been defined by Rome in 1854 amidst an upsurge in Marian apparitions and revival of other-worldly devotions. In light of the links made between this revival and the development of papal monarchism it is perhaps significant that the local Catholic weekly, the *Record*, made much of the fact that this picture was donated by Pius XI. The *Record* also offered an interpretation of the painting to its readers, commenting approvingly that 'Innocence and sweetness... characterise the ideal of this Virgin'.<sup>4</sup>

Such images remained typical, indicating that Catholics in Perth, as in Adelaide and elsewhere in the Catholic world, were comfortably maximalist in their approach to Mary. While some groups, such as the Catholic Guild for Social Studies in Adelaide, practised a more minimalist approach to Our Lady,

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<sup>4</sup>*Record*, 10 May 1930, p. 19.

and some individuals found her influence cloying, these were hidden and appear to be exceptions. To be a Catholic at this time in these cities was to understand that religious identity was linked to reverence for the Mother of God. Some Catholics were less enthusiastic about Mary than others, but it was commonly accepted by Catholics from all sectors of the church, and all locations along the Marian continuum, that an awareness of Mary was part of the Catholic world view.

### *Mary as Intercessor*

The long Catholic experience of traditional Marian devotion centred on Mary's role in personal, rather than social, salvation and was informed by a deep belief in the power of the Virgin's intercessory prayers. For example in noting that students would be attending a 1952 procession in honour of Mary even though it was close to exams, the *Southern Cross* observed in homely fashion that their faith was not misplaced.

You can bet your bottom dollar that when the exams come along you won't lose by having been to Our Lady's procession ...I'd rather have that procession up my sleeve on exam day than the two or three hours swotting that might have been filled in.<sup>5</sup>

The oral record of this period reflects the impression among Catholics of this period that 'Mary was part of everyone's lives',<sup>6</sup> and while the somewhat ambivalent position of men in relation to this 'affective, feminine' devotion will be examined below, it was certainly the case that almost every Catholic occasion involved the singing of a Marian hymn, and usually 'Hail Queen of Heaven'.

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<sup>5</sup>*Southern Cross*, 5 October 1951, p. 10

<sup>6</sup>Interview, Mrs Agnes Staude, interview with author together with Mrs Anne Skinner, Victoria Park WA, 11 April 1989. Notes held by author.



**Figure 8.** The Lady Chapel in St Mary's Cathedral, Perth . *Guide to St Mary's Cathedral, Perth Western Australia*, np.

Bearing in mind the didactic purpose behind congregational hymns, it is not surprising that this favourite Catholic rallying cry encapsulated many of the key aspects of Mary's persona. The dominant image is of a heavenly sponsor for those struggling with life. Mary was the distant Star of the traditionally feminine Sea, providing light for Catholics caught in the ebb and flow of life. The use of the title 'Queen of Heaven' echoed the maximalist lobby within the church which throughout this period was urging the definition, as an article of faith, of her power as intercessor. Written by John Lingard in the nineteenth century, the first verse reads:

Hail Queen of heav'n, the ocean star,  
 Guide of the wanderer here below;  
 Thrown on life's surge, we claim thy care -  
 Save us from peril and from woe.  
 Mother of Christ, star of the sea  
 Pray for the wanderer, pray for me.<sup>7</sup>

Mary's role as intercessor was also referred to explicitly in a manner which casts her in the role of merciful advocate before a Son likely to forget the redemption. From this reference to her motherhood, the hymn moves immediately to acclaim Mary's virginity and repeat the Goddess-like title 'Star of the Sea'.

O gentle, chaste, and spotless Maid,  
 We sinners make our prayers through thee;  
 Remind thy Son that He has paid  
 The price of our iniquity.  
 Virgin most pure, star of the sea  
 Pray for the sinner, pray for me.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Rev. Anthony Newman, (ed), *The Living Parish Hymn Book*, Sydney 1961, no. 104.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

*Marian Devotion with a Local Flavour*

While links in Australian Marian culture between virginity, motherhood and Mary's quasi-divine power as an advocate for humanity were authorised by Rome and taken up by Catholics around the world, the importance of Mary to the faith life of Australian Catholics was sometimes demonstrated by attempts to localise and personalize aspects of the broader tradition. For example, in 1940 the children's page of the *Record* was dedicated to 'Our Lady of the Bush', an unequivocally Australian title evoked by a picture of the Virgin and Child surrounded by eucalypts.<sup>9</sup> The creative writing of students published in Catholic school magazines often mirrored devotional themes. In some of this writing students moved beyond clichéd phrases and instead reflected on personal experience offering insights into a spirituality informed by Australian experience. For example, in the 1947 issue of the national magazine for past and present students of the Loreto sisters, 'PAM' from the school at Osbourne, close to Western Australia's Cottesloe beach, recorded her experience of Good Friday 1947. In imagery far less sweet and gentle than that of writers like Lingard, she uses a sunset and moonrise to convey a sense of Mary as a merciful heavenly intercessor after the crucifixion. 'PAM' called her sonnet 'Mother of Compassion'. The title is not among those given to Mary in the Litany of Loreto or any other common form of Marian devotion. The choice of such a title - well within orthodox Catholic belief, but not at all usual - indicates something of this young writer's ability to move within the Catholic tradition in order to find a faith response to her environment.

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<sup>9</sup>*Record*, 11 January 1940, p. 3.

### Mother of Compassion

The sun went down in blood and as it sank  
 Into the deep blue waters of the West  
 The sky around moved by some strange unrest  
 In fiery tumult strove; while rank on rank  
 Charged, clashed, dissolved or fled, amid the clank  
 Of ghostly weapons. Fell powers had done their best  
 In spite of rage to speed the Parting Guest!  
 And earth beheld, nor from the horror shrank.  
 The moon, aloof, her face so wistful, pale,  
 Looked down beyond the margin of the day -  
 His light her life - and pity told its tale:  
 Earth's guilty face her sorrow did betray,  
 A crimson flush suffused her features grey  
 Till gathering darkness spread a kindly veil. <sup>10</sup>

While a great deal of the Marian devotion in Australia was in the maximalist vein, in particular the special celebrations which are examined below and which emphasised Mary's role in salvation, there was one strand of devotion also current in Australia which began, at least, from the 'minimalist' position that Mary was a creature, like other women. Mary's aptness as a model for Catholic women was a constant theme in devotional writing, but, paradoxically, the qualities which women were urged to imitate often quickly removed Mary from the ordinary, and emphasised the great grace of her life. Thus, while the Blessed Virgin was a precedent for womanly achievement, the possibility of actually imitating her was remote: any woman who strove to follow Mary was automatically doomed to failure because no one could hope to be both Virgin and Mother, even if they managed a sinless life.

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<sup>10</sup>'PAM', 'Mother of Compassion', *Loreto Magazine*, 1947, p. 61.

The tightrope walk between humanity and divinity, model and intercessor, is evidenced in an article, probably written by a lay woman, for the *Link*, a publication to keep former scholars of Our Lady of Mercy College in Perth in touch with each other. Amidst photographs of new babies and news of travels and some careers, in 1937 'J.B.S.' wrote of Mary's humanity and other worldly heroism. In the context of an all-female old scholars network, the 'us' in her writing is more likely to refer exclusively to women, than to humanity in total. Her article is headed 'Mater Dei, The Greatest Heroine of all Time':

Strange, isn't it, that any of us should ever forget, for even a moment, that Mary was our gift to the Infant Christ? The angels gave their hymn of heavenly praise, heaven its guiding star....but it was left to us to give the one perfect gift to Christ - His radiant, gloriously beautiful Mother.

Sterling character calls forth the greatest admiration of man. That is why Mary's character is an ideal of world heroism. Because she kept it a character so splendid so powerful, and withal so perfectly sweet and pure that it transported the God of heaven to our lowly earth - a character of such loveliness that it was privileged to counsel the King of Kings...And she was the gift we gave to Jesus, the only worthy thing we had to offer.<sup>11</sup>

In the time-honoured fashion of Catholic theologians J.B.S. extrapolated from assumptions about the historical characters of Jesus and Mary. Her view was of an ideal relationship, and while this is typical of opinions of the time, it contrasts with some other possible interpretations of St Mark's Gospel, especially on Mary's understanding of Jesus's mission. For the *Link*, she was the perfect exemplar of Christianity. It is important to note the tough stoicism which is assigned to Mary, as well as more gentle virtues:

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<sup>11</sup>'J.B.S.', 'Mater Dei, The Greatest Heroine of all Time', *Link: the magazine of the Ex-Students Association of Our Lady of Mercy College, Victoria Square, Perth, 1937*.

Could we but walk side by side with her, reviewing the events of her life, the flight into Egypt, the finding in the Temple, and the wedding feast at Cana would be especially significant. But her tremendous courage in accepting anything God chose to send would appal us. The beauty and the grace of her personal bearing would delight us, and we would see that, as she moved calmly through the great drama of human redemption, she realised each episode was but an event of providence leading up to the climax of Calvary. Throughout the three years of Our Lord's public life, Mary remained the quiet figure in the background, the one to whom He might go with the knowledge of complete and perfect understanding when the infidelity of those He trusted, the smallness of those He loved, and the open sneering contempt of enemies He came to save, bore down upon Him crushingly. ...it was in Mary and in her alone that He knew He might confide without fear that she might think He was losing courage. She would understand; she would return His love; and He would go from her presence strengthened as God and Man.<sup>12</sup>

The article ended with an affirmation of the place of Mary in the lives of all Catholics, referring to St John's account of the crucifixion, and reflecting on the events in a highly charged, emotive tone:

It required a heroic loyalty to stand beneath His cross quietly when all her heart cried out to take His place there, to suffer anything rather than see the God who was her child die, and know that she herself must go on living.

Reading her heart and realising as only He could realise, the pain she endured for Him in the cause of our redemption, He knew her to be the greatest heroine of all time, and because He appreciated our lovely gift, He gave her back to us in the moment of His death.

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<sup>12</sup>*ibid.*

'Son, behold thy Mother.' The words were spoken with His dying breath, and the one who had been dearest to Him all through life became ours to cherish eternally. If He had needed her and loved her, then surely we do; if He had idealised her as the Queen of Heaven and Earth and the constant companion of His very existence then surely we must idealise her and love her.

And so Christ the perfect Hero, entrusted to us, who need her with a deep and urgent need, Mary our Heroine.<sup>13</sup>

Mary was clearly no ordinary woman. Catholic theology was adamant that Mary was not divine, but a creature of God, venerated as a model of perfect creation, not worshipped as the Creator was worshipped. Catholic catechisms and the Catholic press stressed this point, but the intellectual awareness did not always translate easily into experience. Mary's image of gentleness, love and understanding could well have been more accessible to Catholics than the Father figure of God, so that in effect Mary was experienced as God.

### *The Feminine Face of God*

Carl Jung's work on the collective unconscious reinforced the view that Mary functioned as a goddess figure within Catholicism. Jung saw Mary as the incarnation of the *anima*, the eternal feminine element of the human unconscious. He argued that the basic human need to acknowledge the feminine was demonstrated not only in the dreams of individuals, but also in cultural patterns such as the mother-goddesses of Egypt and other 'pagan nations' and in the worship of woman in Gnosticism. According to Jung, official Christianity accommodated this psychic need by incorporating certain aspects of its pagan

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

heritage, and thereby intensifying devotion to Mary.<sup>14</sup> Thus Jung noted that when Catholics prayed the Litany of Loreto, as they did regularly at Benediction and in other devotions in Perth and Adelaide, they invoked Mary under a variety of titles which attribute to her the qualities of a goddess. She was Seat of Wisdom, Cause of our Gladness, Vessel of Honour, Mystical Rose, Tower of Ivory, Gate of Heaven, amongst other designations. In recent years scholars interested in establishing that the Christian God has a feminine as well as masculine nature have argued that early sources describe both the Christ and the Spirit of God in these feminine terms.<sup>15</sup> The argument therefore works both ways - titles attributed to Mary ring with the tones of Divinity, and titles of Divinity have arguably been applied to Mary. The end result was that Mary carried a great deal of Catholicism's need to identify the feminine face of God.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has argued that the development of Marian devotion was directly related to the patriarchal understanding of God as masculine.

The more the Christian understanding of God was patriarchalized, the more God became the majestic ruler and stern judge, the more people turned to the figure and cult of Mary. The more Jesus Christ became divinized, the more it became necessary to have a mediator between the majestic transcendent God or his Son and the Christian community. One could almost say that through the dynamics of this development, of the gradual patriarchalization of the God image, Mary became the 'other face'...of God....The Catholic tradition gives us thus

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<sup>14</sup>C. G. Jung, *Aspects of the Feminine - from the Collected Works of C. G. Jung volumes 6, 7, 9ii, 10, 17*, Bollingen Series XX, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Princeton, 1982, p. 19.

<sup>15</sup>For example, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, London, 1983; Ann Loades, *Searching For Lost Coins: explorations in christianity and feminism*, London, 1987.

the *opportunity* to experience the divine reality in the figure of a woman.<sup>16</sup>

Maria Kassel sees 'Mary's presence in the masculine Church as a link with its origin in the primeval feminine'.<sup>17</sup> The symbol of Mary was the special preserve of the common Catholic folk rather than the church authorities:

When the masculine consciousness threatened to drift off into cold, arid and one-sided rationality, the cult of the 'great mother' provided the rich imagery of the unconscious as a counter weight and provided a warm focus for attraction for the emotions of the faithful.<sup>18</sup>

However, Kassel argues that the way in which Catholicism has dealt with the archetype has not been unmitigated good news for the faithful. While the archetype held rich psychic potential, the 'process of turning an archetype into a historical individual'<sup>19</sup> involved splitting the good characteristics of the great mother away from the evil aspects, and equating the good with Mary of Nazareth. The threatening characteristics were equated with Eve, and through Eve with all of female humanity. This gave rise to an imbalance where women were excluded from decision-making and collectively equated with Evil. Jung himself traced some dire consequences in the projection of the anima on to Mary: by elevating the perfect woman to become a powerful religious symbol ordinary women were discredited. If Mary had a monopoly on all that was good in the *anima* then the collective unconscious compensated by attributing to ordinary women all that was evil.

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<sup>16</sup>Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Feminist Spirituality, Christian Spirituality and Catholic Vision', in Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, (eds), *Womanspirit Rising : A Feminist Reader in Religion*, San Francisco, 1979, pp. 138-9.

<sup>17</sup>Maria Kassel, 'Mary and the Human Psyche considered in the Light of Depth Psychology', *Concilium*, vol. 168, 1983, pp. 74 - 82.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.* Jung's androcentricism is a central problem for feminist scholars of his work, see Demaris Wehr, *Jung and Feminism: Liberating Archetypes*, Boston, 1987, especially chapter 5; also Ann Loades, *Searching for Lost Coins*; Patricia Wilson-Kastner, *Faith, Feminism and the Christ*, Philadelphia, 1983, especially chapter 1.

Since the psychic relation to woman was expressed in the collective worship of Mary, the image of woman lost a value to which human beings had a natural right. This value could find its expression only through individual choice, and sank into the unconscious when the individual form of the expression was replaced by a collective one [with the result that] the devaluation of the real woman was compensated by demoniac traits. She no longer appeared as an object of love, but as a persecutor or witch.<sup>20</sup>

The church statement which did most in Jung's own view to confirm his interpretation of Marian devotion, as the activity of the repressed feminine within the collective unconsciousness of Catholicism, was Pius XII's definition of the Assumption. In 1950 Pius XII decreed:

the corporeal Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven [was a truth] resting on the Sacred Scriptures, thoroughly implanted in the minds of the faithful, approved by liturgical practice from ancient days, supremely consonant with other revealed truths, splendidly explained and set forth by the learning and wisdom of the theologians. This being so, We consider that the moment appointed by counsel of God's Providence has come, the moment in which We should solemnly define this great privilege of the same Virgin Mary.<sup>21</sup>

Jung welcomed the Assumption, although he noted that Mary was still representative of only one side of the archetype, and was now defined as being separate from 'matter' instead of integrally related to it, as 'mother' should be. However, these qualifications aside, Jung saw the definition as the conscious re-unification of the feminine shadow with the masculine Godhead, constituting a

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<sup>20</sup>Jung, *Aspects of the Feminine from the Collected Works*, p. 20; see also Joan Chamberlain Englesman, *The Feminine Dimension of the Divine*, Philadelphia, 1979, p. 132.

<sup>21</sup>Cited *Catholic Weekly* (Sydney), 9 November 1950, p. 1.

psychological advance which would allow the birth of a new humanity. In *Answer to Job*, the 1952 work in which he wrestles with the nature of God, Jung places the definition of the Assumption in the context of increasing Marian devotion and considers it a timely response to the needs of the collective unconscious.

[A]nyone who has followed with attention the visions of Mary which have been increasing in number over the last few decades, and has taken their psychological significance into account, might have known what was brewing. The fact, especially, that it was largely children who had the visions might give pause for thought, for in such cases the collective unconscious is always at work. Incidentally, the Pope himself is rumoured to have had several visions of the Mother of God on the occasion of the declaration. One could have known for a long time that there was a deep longing in the masses for an intercessor and mediatrix who would at last take her place alongside the Holy Trinity and be received as the 'Queen of Heaven and Bride at the Heavenly Court'.<sup>22</sup>

*Body and Bone into Heaven: The Definition of the Assumption in Adelaide and Perth*

In the definition of the Assumption a widely accepted Catholic belief became official church policy. The Jungian view offers one explanation for the action of the institution. Others note it as an example of 'ecclesiastical *machismo*' in reaction against the science and rationality of Modernism,<sup>23</sup> regrettable for its lack of ecumenical sensitivity. In the Catholic press of 1950 in the remote outposts of Adelaide and Perth the proclamation of the dogma was

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<sup>22</sup>*Answer to Job*, in *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol 11, *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, London, 1969 (first published 1958), pp. 461 - 2.

<sup>23</sup>Peter Hebblethwaite, 'The Mariology of Three Popes', *The Way Supplement*, no. 51, 1984, p. 58.

generally welcomed as an example of Papal infallibility at work, a validation of the church's Marian tradition, and as a timely response to the troubles of the post-war world.

The issue of the definition of the Assumption had first been mooted in the Catholic press in Adelaide in January 1950 as speculation on whether or not the pope would act in the auspicious Holy Year 1950. The second guessing of the Vatican on the strength of conflicting reports from Rome shows Adelaide as a church community very isolated from its decision-making centre, but loyally committed to the central authority. While the *Southern Cross* made no secret of its ignorance of Rome's plans, it was simply assumed that readers would give their allegiance to the ultimate decision.<sup>24</sup> The ultramontane spirit was further demonstrated nine months later when the announcement that the Assumption was to be made an article of faith was lifted directly from the Vatican newspaper *Osservatore Romano*:

After two world wars in one generation, in the face of a persecution of God and the Church perhaps unequalled in history, with men turning their backs on heaven towards materialism, forgetting their sonship of the common Father and their membership in the same family...what better remedy is there than raising men from the material swamp to the majestic position which is the image of God, showing them heaven where awaits the true mother who has preceded them body and bone, taken there by the angels.<sup>25</sup>

The definition was a public event and reported by the secular press. In the *West Australian* of 30 October 1950 there was a two page story of the approval of the announcement by the bishops and cardinals assembled in Rome,

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<sup>24</sup>*Southern Cross*, 20 January 1950.

<sup>25</sup>*Southern Cross*, 22 September 1950, p. 7.

and on the centre of page 1, on 1 November 1950, a description of the ceremony. The *West*'s reports conveyed the exotic details of the formal process of definition in a manner designed to capitalise on the sense of the mysterious.

The 6,000 word Latin Bull was inscribed in indelible ink on the finest parchment, each sheet made from the skin of one lamb and illuminated in scarlet, blue or gold.<sup>26</sup>

There is a sense of an ancient institution performing uncommon rites.

The actual method by which the notion of the Assumption became an article of faith was fascinating the Catholic press in a similar way, and much was made of the fact that this was a rare event in church history. Comparisons were made with the definition of the Immaculate Conception, the last event of this kind. Looking back, the *Southern Cross* saw that definition as an opportune response to an industrialising world.

A hundred years or so ago when the Church was threatened by an impious materialism the Holy Spirit inspired the definition of the Immaculate Conception, a doctrine which sets Our Lady as the Morning Star heralding the dawn over a darkened world.<sup>27</sup>

The new dogma was seen as a logical counterpart to the 1854 definition, and timely because it argued for the heavenly destiny of the human body in a world which was preoccupied with science and Godless rationalism.

Today one hears audacious theories put forth concerning the source of the human family, the state of our first parents and their sin. The dogma of the Assumption, by calling attention to the celestial glory of Our Lady's body, emphasised her role as the new Eve, antithesis of the first Eve and thus implicitly confirms the doctrine of original

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<sup>26</sup>*West Australian*, 1 November 1950, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup>*Southern Cross*, 27 October 1950, p. 7.

justice and the gifts of immortality possessed...until they sinned.

...Today when a perverted attitude to the human body, which may be called 'biologism' suggests merely material limits to its destiny, the Holy Spirit inspires the definition of a doctrine that exalts the human body and points to the positions God desires it to hold in His Divine Plan for mankind.<sup>28</sup>

The day of the definition itself was the occasion of celebrations in both Adelaide and Perth. Special evening devotions were held in Perth parishes, and in Adelaide there was a torchlight procession at the Glen Osmond monastery. The *Southern Cross* drew comparisons with the procession held through the streets of Ephesus in 431 after Mary's role as mother of God had been affirmed. At Glen Osmond, fifteen thousand people, or approximately 29% of the total Catholic population,<sup>29</sup> moved through the grounds carrying candles, singing hymns and saying the rosary, before the Archbishop gave Benediction. Popular devotions were within the institutional framework, and the natural environment was transformed with ecclesia. The *Southern Cross* reported:

It was a beautiful and unforgettable experience to see the procession moving, with lighted candles illuminating the earnest young faces of the marchers beneath the great trees in the monastery grounds; and to hear the murmurous rhythm of the Rosary and the thunderous praise of the hymns rising up to the Mother of God.

After the procession Pontifical Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given by His Grace the Archbishop. The

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<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>Census data for 1947 gives the total Catholic population of Adelaide as 51,064. As this figure included the very old, the very young and the ill it is fair to assume that the report refers to an even greater proportion of the able-bodied population.

celebrations concluded with a heartfelt singing by the huge throng of 'Hail Queen of Heaven!'<sup>30</sup>

While Catholics in Adelaide and Perth generally welcomed the definition as a reminder to the world of the reality of the supernatural, there were other voices which regretted the creation of another apparent barrier to Christian unity. The *West Australian* reported the concerns of the Anglican Dean of Perth, Rev. G.T. Berwick, that the doctrine was an ill-founded incitement to division.<sup>31</sup> In reply Father Harry Brennan in an Open Letter published in the *Record* refuted his concerns on the grounds that long Catholic tradition and the infallibility of the pope pointed to the truth of the dogma. In a conclusion which must have seemed circular to the Protestant mind he said:

You can't agree amongst yourselves. We all agree because the Pope defines. Don't say we are injuring understanding and reunion when we consecrate universal belief.<sup>32</sup>

In Adelaide Archbishop Beovich acknowledged the Protestant concern that the Assumption was something new and spoke at length in his sermon at the diocesan celebrations on the evidence which demonstrated a long standing pre-Reformation belief in the Assumption in England. In what an historian can applaud as astute use of physical evidence, he described a fourteenth century carving of Mary in a ceiling boss of York's minster, and stained glass windows in Kings College Cambridge which both commemorated the Assumption. Beovich concluded:

Whatever changes have taken place in those who have left the unity of the Church, it is undoubtedly true that no change has taken place in the belief of the Church itself.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>*Southern Cross*, 10 November 1950, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup>*West Australian*, 6 November 1950, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup>*Record*, 9 November 1950, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup>*Southern Cross*, 10 November 1950, p. 1.

The papal definition of the Assumption was not a private matter for Catholics, but it reflected the growing hope among Catholics that the world would acknowledge Mary. The controversy provoked by the definition and the public witness it was intended to provide to God's power over the world located Marian devotion within the social arena. From the 1940s and especially during the Cold War Catholics increasingly linked their concerns for a materialistic world threatened by Communism to devotion to Mary. By the late 1950s when Catholic school children reached the final pages in their textbook of church history they read of the contemporary world in terms of a conflict between darkness and light.

It is evident that in the West and in the East the forces of Communism are strong, but equally evident is the might of the spiritual arms which the Church has brought to the conflict over the past few years. This age has been called the 'Age of Mary' and it would seem that in the hand of Christ's Mother God has placed the destiny of the Church and of the world.<sup>34</sup>

Brother David Purton's history of the Catholic church, used in secondary classes around Australia, stripped the events of the day back to a fundamental conflict between good and evil, and pointed to Mary, the mother of God, as the ally on whom Catholics called to quell the evils of communism. He concluded that,

childlike devotion to Mary and trust in her have been...powerful influences in building up the spiritual resources of the Church in this crucial period, the Age of Communism whose end is destruction - the Age of Mary whose end is hope and salvation for all.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Rev. D. G. Purton, *The Story of the Church for Intermediate Classes*, new and revised edition, Sydney, 1957, p. 150.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

*Anti-Communism as a Strand of Marian Devotion*

In particular anti-Communist devotion focussed on the 1917 apparitions at Fatima in Portugal where Mary had been identified as Our Lady of the Rosary Queen of Peace. A preoccupation with communism had been a growing feature of Catholicism since the Spanish Civil War of 1936, when Franco was painted as defending Catholicism against the persecutions of atheistic materialism. It is significant that, in the hope of taking action in the world against 'atheistic materialism', the institutional church linked its efforts very closely to the traditional devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Equally significant were the nuances of this kind of Marian devotion as it took on a political tone and became an important signal to Catholics that action in the world could be a legitimate expression of spirituality. In the developing Catholic Action groups, which aimed to encourage an apostolic spirit among Catholic lay people, devotion to Our Lady of Fatima was encouraged, along with joining a trade union and upholding Catholic moral values, as one way of living out a Christian commitment in the world.<sup>36</sup> The Melbourne *Catholic Worker*, the newspaper of Catholic social revolution, urged Catholics to pray the rosary to assist the cause of world peace.<sup>37</sup> The expectation that the laity would engage with the world, at least enough to do battle with it, contrasted with the spirituality of earlier years of the twentieth century when Catholic devotion much more clearly promoted non-involvement with the world. That devotion to Mary also carried an implication

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<sup>36</sup>For example, *Minutes of the National Catholic Girls Movement, Leederville Branch, WA*, 12 June 1946, 24 July 1946; *Minutes of the National Catholic Girls Movement, Diocesan Council, Perth*, 11 September 1950. The development of Catholic Action in Australia is discussed in Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and community: An Australian history*, Kensington, NSW, 1985, chapter 6, especially pp. 384 - 403.

<sup>37</sup>'War and Peace, Christian and Communist', *Catholic Worker*, September 1951, p. 4; 'How many Divisions has the Pope?', *ibid.*, November 1951, p. 1.

for the social order is an example of the intertwining of feminine and masculine styles of spirituality.

The cult of Our Lady, Queen of Peace centred around a series of apparitions to three peasant children at Fatima in Portugal. The children reported that a beautiful lady asked them to encourage others to say the rosary, praying for peace, to be prepared to suffer for the conversion of sinners and to devote themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in reparation for sin. On 13 October 1917 during the last vision, a crowd of 50,000 people gathered to see the miracle Mary had promised as a sign of her presence. Many testified that on the dismal, wet day, the sun appeared, then began to tremble and rotate, fell towards the earth and danced across the heads of the crowd.

The nature of apparitions and questions of their psychic possibility or spiritual validity are beyond the realm of the historian; but history is properly concerned to know about the kinds of visions believers claimed to see, and the impact these claims made on the lives of other Catholics. In 1930, after a canonical enquiry of seven years, the local bishop authorised the cult of Our Lady of Fatima. Lucia, the only surviving visionary, by this time 23 years old, was asked to write down what she remembered. Lucia's writings expanded on the original visions. In four documents (1936, 1937, 1941 and 1942) she recorded her belief that,

If [Mary's] requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, ...[Russia] will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church...various nations will be annihilated. In the end,...[Mary's] Immaculate Heart will triumph.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Fr L. Kondor, (ed), *Fatima in Lucia's Own Words*, Fatima, 1976, p. 104, cited Nicholas Perry and Loreto Echeverria, *Under the Heel of Mary*, London, 1988, p. 191.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* points out that these details have not been scrutinised by officials to the same degree as the original vision, but the content of the later revelations was nevertheless a powerful influence on the imagination of many Cold War Catholics, shaping the world view of the church around the external threat of atheistic materialism.<sup>39</sup>

The message of Fatima was understood by Australian Catholics of the 1940s to be a message of the need for change and conversion which coincided with increasing concern about peace and the modern world.<sup>40</sup> In the midst of the Second World War, devotional magazines for the Catholic laity such as the *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart* reminded their readers of the prophecies concerning Russia and the consecration of the world to Mary's Immaculate Heart.<sup>41</sup> Another publication, *Our Studies*, an instructional magazine for teachers in Christian Brothers' schools which often stripped issues back to what was perceived to be fundamental, identified immorality, communism and the war as the most pressing of modern problems and pointed to Fatima as the divine remedy for them all. The devotion to the Immaculate Heart, linked to the virtue of purity, was seen as a remedy for vice; and Catholics were reminded that, 'Our Lady said peace would not come unless men stopped sinning', and advised, 'the best way to help bring the war to an end and establish a lasting peace must be to

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<sup>39</sup> H. M. Gillett 'Fatima' in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, p. 856.

<sup>40</sup> Fatima also fulfilled many of the criteria for appeal as a Catholic apparition. Barbara Corrado Pope has noted that much of the appeal of the 1858 apparitions at Lourdes rested on the 'multidimensionality of its message'. By contrast the visions at the rival sites of La Salette and Pontmain were 'more closely tied to a specific time, place and mood than was Lourdes'. See 'Immaculate and Powerful: the Marian Revival in the Nineteenth Century' in Clarissa W. Atkinson, Constance H. Buchanan and Margaret R. Miles, (eds) *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Reality*, Boston, 1985, pp. 179, 189. In 1950 *Our Studies* identified the message of Fatima as 'an echo of that of Lourdes - now more insistent, more appealing, yes, more reproachful'. See also Michael P. Carroll, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary: Psychological Origins*, Princeton, 1986, for an examination of the nature of apparitions from a Freudian perspective.

<sup>41</sup> For example, *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, 1 May 1943, p. 89.

do exactly as she bids us'.<sup>42</sup> Fatima was very closely linked to the anti-communist cause.

Although the name Communism does not seem to have been directly mentioned by Our Lady at Fatima, yet it can hardly be due to chance alone that she chose for her apparitions the sixth months ending in October 1917, the very month in which the Communist attack was launched. If Communism is very strong today and is a menace to all the world, may not its strength be due in some measure to our failure to make full use of the great weapon recommended to us by Our Lady in this special series of apparitions at the very time when Communism as we know it was being born?

Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima is in a very special way concerned about the overthrow of Communism, and her help should be enlisted in every attempt to crush the Red menace. And since the Red movement is such a mighty menace to all civilization, the necessity of the devotion of Fatima for all Catholics is obvious.<sup>43</sup>

A few years later in 1947 Catholics were asked by means of a little brochure circulated through parishes to join 'The Reparation Society's five year Plan for Prayer and Penance'. The image of Our Lady of Fatima appeared on the front, and under the five year plan participants promised daily rosary, acts of self-sacrifice, and special monthly confession and communion for the intention of the conversion of Russia and world peace.

The urgent need for devotion was coupled with a sense of immediacy in the relevance of the Fatima message. In contrast to the isolation often complained of in other spheres, with regard to Fatima, Australia was seen as

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<sup>42</sup> 'Fatima', *Our Studies*, May 1944, p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

very much a part of the Catholic network which needed to respond to the Marian message. The *St Aloysius College Annual* asked its readers in 1952:

What if Our Lady had appeared in Australia in May 1917, instead of Portugal? ...We feel a sense of awe and enthusiasm at the bare thought of such a possibility; but fundamentally the difference between 'the Old Gum Tree' in South Australia and the Wild Rose bush at Fatima as Our Lady's proclamation chair is very slight. For it is relatively unimportant from where she chose to broadcast her universal message to 'pray the Rosary' - her pleas for 'prayer and penance'.<sup>44</sup>

*Our Studies* identified immorality, communism and the war as the most pressing of modern problems and pointed to Fatima as the divine remedy for them all.

Many attempts are being made by thinkers to arrive at a solution of the world problems, and arrive at a solution of the post-war reconstruction. Such attempts commonly ignore the supernatural, and as many as do so are predestined to failure. ...It has often happened in the past that at a time of great crisis in the history of the race God has deigned to intervene for man's good, and in some special way to show His interest in our welfare. ...We have only to glance at the story of Fatima to see how it is intended to help us in the present crisis.<sup>45</sup>

Such an anti-communist push was accommodated quite easily within the existing Marian tradition. For example, Father Frederic Faber had written his popular hymn, 'O Purest of Creatures', in nineteenth-century England. By the time Australian Catholics were singing its second and third verses in the context of international tensions and publicity about persecutions of the church in the eastern bloc, there was little doubt that Catholicism was 'tempest-tossed' and

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<sup>44</sup>*St Aloysius College Annual*, 1952, pp. 20 -21.

<sup>45</sup>'Fatima', *Our Studies*, May 1944, p. 7.

almost no hesitation in providing a geography for the 'empire of sin'. The ease with which this hymn can be re-interpreted as a Cold War rallying cry is an indication of how simple the transition in Marian devotion could be from the general and personal to the specific and political.

Deep night hath come down on this rough spoken world,  
 And the banners of darkness are boldly unfurled;  
 And the tempest-tossed Church - all her eyes are on thee  
 They look to thy shining sweet star of the sea.

He gazed on thy soul; it was spotless and fair;  
 For the empire of sin - it had never been there;  
 None ever had owned thee, dear Mother but He,  
 And He blessed thy clear shining sweet star of the sea.<sup>46</sup>

*National Marian Congress 1951: Men and Mary in Public*

As devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, which Catholics would have expected to follow a feminine and affective pattern, became increasingly overlaid with the masculine imperatives to change the world, it is interesting to observe differences between what was expected of men and women. Mary was presented as a guide and model for all Catholics, but even official sources betrayed some surprise when men took up the devotion enthusiastically. For example, the official record of the national Marian Congress hosted by the diocese of Adelaide in 1951 recorded the participation of men as an incongruous note. The congress was held to celebrate the centenary of white settlement in South Australia and the definition of the Assumption. Over the five days of the congress the message of Fatima was interwoven into the liturgical ceremonies and into the series of addresses which bishops from among the eighteen visiting members of the hierarchy delivered to priests, women, children, men, and brothers and nuns in turn.

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<sup>46</sup> Newman, (ed), *The Living Parish Hymn Book*, no. 106.

The contrast between the address directed to lay men and the other speeches was marked. While the Fatima theme of modern worldly difficulties being overcome by loving appeal to Mary was implicit in all the sermons, Bishop Simmonds, in speaking to the 7 000 lay men present in Centennial Hall in Wayville, focussed on the need for Catholic action in the world. He mentioned Mary only once, referring to the Assumption as 'a forceful reminder of the dignity of the human body' and therefore an antidote to despair among workers. The call to devotion stressed the imminent collapse of society and urged those present to respond to the crisis like Renaissance men of Catholic culture, not as doubting modern individualists.

Man, who for centuries had staked his salvation on a stark individualism divorced from His creator, is now terribly conscious of his impotence to balance life's account and is clutching blindly at security, which he hopes to find either in the collective strength of Socialism or in the inhuman tyranny of Communism.<sup>47</sup>

Simmonds used the powerful metaphor of the church as the Mystical Body of Christ to encourage men to take action in the world. He added to the masculine tone of this favourite analogy of Catholic Action by highlighting, not a Marian feast, but that of Christ the King. While women had been urged to model themselves on Mary's loyalty and love, 'being' rather than 'doing', men were called, in Christocentric terms, to bring Catholic spirituality to bear on the world.

Realise that your Catholic faith was not given to you as a mere personal gift, to be locked up in the seclusion of your own bosoms. It was Aristotle who first taught us that 'Goodness is diffuse in itself' - and your Catholic faith will not have the quality of goodness except it be a light that shines before men to illuminate them in their

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<sup>47</sup> *Mother of God and Mother of Men*, p. 41.

present darkness. Rally round your Archbishop in all the works of his sacred apostolate, so that the Church in this Archdiocese may become what Christ wishes it to be - a living and vital member in his Mystical Body.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout the congress the presence of men was remarked upon in a manner which implied that their participation was somewhat unusual, and the official record was at pains to show that these were not effeminate devotees but masculine men. For example, when the 7,000 gathered at Wayville it was to pay 'Manly Tribute to Mary' and when they recited the rosary it was with one voice 'of deep and rumbling thunder'.<sup>49</sup> The first hand report of the closing procession of the congress interpreted the participation of men as 'manly' again, a touching deference of chivalrous sons to their heavenly mother.

What a magnificent sight! Thousands of men, honouring Mary, loving their Mother, who is also the Mother of God! They will be loyal to Christ if they value the Mother whom He so valued. Indeed it made me proud to be a Catholic to see those manly men, glad to acknowledge their Mother in public as any good son should.<sup>50</sup>

The devotional parade of Catholics through the city of Adelaide was the culmination of the Marian congress. As a concluding event it was designed to demonstrate Catholic unity and strength of commitment, and to encourage Catholics to remember the spirit of the gathering in their daily lives. Reports in the Catholic press and school magazines urged Catholics to continue the practice of praying the rosary as a way of bringing about social change. A prize winning essay from a student at St Aloysius College noted that the congress had taught Catholics the means to obtain peace,<sup>51</sup> and the congress report itself

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>51</sup> Nemira Surnaite, 'Why a Marian Congress?', *St Aloysius College Annual*, 1951, p. 16.

recorded the public recitation of the rosary as an occasion when 'plain, materialistic, money-grubbing, drink-consuming, sensual Adelaide' was transformed into a 'Catholic city'. The city was to be washed clean of modern grime with ancient prayers.

[A]s Mary's marchers moved down King William Street, the Rosary rolled with them, and rebounded from the T & G and was re-echoed from the Bank of New South Wales, and ran around the corners, into Grenfell, Rundle and Hindley Streets; and when the Rosary temporarily halted, the songs of praise which rose up fairly inundated and enveloped the city of Adelaide. They swept around and through the business buildings so often associated with avarice and human passions like a keen breeze - a refreshing and cleansing tide. The rolling Rosary and rising hymns were washing Adelaide like a baptism.<sup>52</sup>

#### *The Family Rosary Crusade in Adelaide and Perth*

The rosary and the Fatima message of peace were the focus of public demonstrations of Catholicity again at the end of 1953. A close study of the Rosary Crusade conducted in Australia by Father Patrick Peyton as part of a world-wide campaign for peace is an example of the way in which Marian devotion combined with Cold War consciousness and modern marketing techniques. Father Peyton was an Irish-American priest, a member of the American religious order, the Congregation of the Holy Cross. He had pledged himself to increase devotion to Mary in thanksgiving for his recovery from illness.<sup>53</sup> His efforts became an international campaign 'to obtain peace for the nations of the world and the love and protection of God and Mary [for families

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<sup>52</sup> *Mother of God and Mother of Men*, p. 78.

<sup>53</sup> The Rosary Crusade is located in an environment of increasing Marian devotion in Edmund Campion, *Australian Catholics: The Contribution of Catholics to the Development of Australian Society*, Ringwood, Vic., 1987, p. 194; Background to the crusade is in C. G. Long, *Father Patrick Peyton CSC: The Rosary Priest*, New York, 1991.

and individuals].<sup>54</sup> To this end Peyton urged Catholics to say the rosary every day as a family group. The daily rosary had long been encouraged as a traditional part of Catholic practice, but Father Peyton's visit to Australia was the occasion of a well-conducted advertising campaign and a slick administrative operation, which aimed to 'sell' the rosary to the Catholic public in a renewed way. Each mainland Australian archdiocese was visited in turn with a well-tuned package to encourage devotion. After an extensive promotional programme had swung into operation utilising the pulpit, schools, the media and personal canvassing, the Crusade culminated with public rallies of comparable fervour in each campaign city.

As the Marian Congress and the public celebrations in honour of Christ the King and other events had shown, parade demonstrations of Catholic unity were an important part of 1950s piety.<sup>55</sup> In an environment where Fatima's Lady of the Rosary was invoked as the best means to combat those who would launch World War III,<sup>56</sup> the marching ranks of Catholics organised according to parishes and sodalities had clear overtones of a militancy no less combative because it was spiritualised. The language of the event is full of military metaphor: 'crusade' itself opened the way for comparisons with medieval 'holy wars', and the handbooks and correspondence of the organisers are replete with 'victories' to be 'won' in 'battle' and 'campaign' with the 'weapon' of the rosary by 'enlisting' supporters. Not surprisingly Nicholas Perry and Loreto Echeverria see the Rosary Crusade as a case in point of the link between a conservative strand of papal monarchism and a brand of Marian devotion which functioned as an element of the ideological battles of the Cold War.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Family Rosary Crusade prayer card, Marian file, ACAP.

<sup>55</sup> David Hilliard 'God in the Suburbs: The Religious Culture of Australian Cities in the 1950s', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 97, 1991, pp. 399 - 419.

<sup>56</sup> *Southern Cross*, 31 October 1947, p. 1. The headline quoted Mgr Fulton Sheen 'Only God Can Stop World War III, and He Will Through Our Lady'.

<sup>57</sup> Perry and Echeverria, *Under the Heel of Mary*, p. 251.

Peyton's *Handbook for Crusade Leaders*, written for the lay men who were to work door-to-door in the parishes, unashamedly constructed the campaign as a marketing exercise. In a style which echoed Dale Carnegie, Peyton wrote of the need for lay men to promote the rosary as a product they could personally endorse.

This handbook tells you about the organisations of which you are a part; it informs you of your duties as its leaders. It shows you how to co-ordinate the activities of Parish Crusade Organisations, so that the greatest possible success will be obtained with minimum effort. It presents you with a technique which, if followed strictly, cannot fail of its purpose.

You are engaged however, in a Crusade of the spirit. Mechanical perfection alone will not suffice. Each of you must be personally convinced that every Catholic home needs the daily Family Rosary. Only then will your enthusiasm be transmitted to other families.

You are to be spiritual salesmen of the Family Rosary. A Salesman must know his product thoroughly, and plan in advance various methods of effective approach. You must know this perfect family prayer, the Family Rosary, study the best method of approach and be ready to meet all possible objections. The sermons in your church, the articles in the Catholic press, and this handsome book will be your principle sources of information. You will convince others in the measure which you, yourself, are informed and convinced.

Remember, your product is the Family Rosary. You must know what it is, where it comes from, what it can do, and why it is necessary to-day.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Rev Patrick Peyton C.S.C., *Family Rosary Crusade Handbook for Crusade Leaders*, ACAP.

In November 1953 in Adelaide, and December in Perth, the Crusade was conducted in tried and tested ways. Two other Holy Cross priests, Father Murphy and Father Wood, travelled ahead of Father Peyton to organise finance and campaign literature, while teams of priests and laymen within the local dioceses took on organising the parish efforts. In Adelaide Fathers Gleeson and Roberts were specifically appointed to a co-ordinating role. The Crusade base was firmly within the parish structure of institutional Catholicism.

The Crusade opened with a pastoral letter from the Archbishop commending the family rosary. Congregations at all masses in all parishes on a designated Sunday heard the letter read from the pulpit. In both dioceses, the bishops spoke of the need for world peace. The unspecified danger and imminent threat of social collapse was to be remedied by the rosary. Special prayers were recited after each mass throughout the diocese for the duration of the Crusade, and at parish level, efforts were directed towards the specific task of recruiting support. Handwritten notes of the Perth organisers concur with a circular to Adelaide priests in outlining procedures which centred on the parish priests and a team of Catholic men. In each parish men were selected to be 'Our Lady's salesmen, going from home to home...to receive the family rosary pledges of the faithful'.<sup>59</sup>

The kit provided by the American team to help organise the crusade included three separate handbooks of instruction which were applied in the local scene. The similarities and differences of these books for priests, lay men leading the parish effort, and teachers, reveal not only assumptions about the

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<sup>59</sup>Pastoral letter Archbishop Beovich, 1 November 1953, ACAA.

role of the laity in the church, but also significant aspects of the way Marian devotion would relate to lay lives.

At first glance, Peyton's message appeared to be apolitical - an opting out of social dilemmas using the anti-modernist other-worldly strategy. He wrote simply of the need for family life to be enriched by prayer, with the rosary as the perfect example of this prayer. However, apart from the fact that such a strategy, in favour of a response to social problems based only on personal prayer, denies the possibility of a collective challenge to the existing social order, the family rosary movement sheltered a clear political objective. Family stability was the key to the conversion of Russia and therefore to world peace.

The opening paragraphs of the *Crusade Handbook*, written for priests, made this link explicit.

No one denies that there has been a noticeable decline in true family life. Home life today is not what it was even a quarter of a century ago. The modern way of life tends to separate individual members of families, and make the home merely a place for eating and sleeping. There is great need to strengthen family ties. Prayer, family prayer, can do this. There is no more powerful and efficacious form of daily family prayer than the Family Rosary. Homes in which the Rosary is recited daily will have the special protection of God and Our Lady. And if enough homes take up the practice of the Daily Family Rosary, we will have the lasting peace promised at Fatima.<sup>60</sup>

These paragraphs were very similar to the 'Foreword' of the *Handbook for Crusade Leaders* but the tone to the priests is more didactic and the final

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<sup>60</sup> Peyton, *Handbook for Priests*, p. 1.

connection to Fatima more overt. It is interesting that in speaking to priests Peyton takes much more for granted than in speaking to lay men. The contrast is delicate, but significant. Addressing the lay men who are to do the Crusade's leg work, Peyton built his case more gently and apparently saw the need to persuade:

This Handbook has been prepared to help and guide you as a worker in the Family Rosary Crusade. Thousands of parishes are having Crusades identical with yours. Men of different nations are offering to help Our Lady of the Rosary restore the Family Rosary in homes everywhere. Every thinking man realises what a different world this would be if all families were praying together every day.

There has been a very serious weakening of family life. Home life to-day is not what it was even a quarter of a century ago. Unfortunately the modern way of life tends to separate individual members of families, and to make the home merely a place for eating and sleeping. Obviously then there is great need to strengthen family ties. Family Prayer can do this, and there is no more powerful and efficacious form of daily Family Prayer than the Family Rosary. Homes in which the Rosary is recited every day receive the special protection of God and Mary. If enough homes take up the practice of the daily Family Rosary we shall have a much better world, and the peace we are all seeking.<sup>61</sup>

The three handbooks also differed in other revealing ways. The core of each booklet was dedicated to outlining the part each group would play in the success of the Crusade: teachers were given ideas for 6 classroom projects and 3 lesson plans, crusade leaders read detailed agenda for the five organisational meetings to be held at parish level and techniques for visiting families, and

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<sup>61</sup>Peyton, Foreword, *Handbook for Crusade Leaders*.

priests received an overview of the Crusade together with six sermons, printed in full, which were recommended for use during the five weeks of the Crusade.

There was also information common to all the booklets, presented in formats which varied slightly. The Family Rosary Crusade Prayer for the success of the project was in all three - at the beginning and prominent in the book for teachers and priests, but, in keeping with its organisational bias, at the end and in uniform type, in the Crusade Leaders' book. The prayer was also lengthened in this last case, with an extra petitions for help in 'winning' families to sign the pledge card. Papal approval of the Rosary was cited in all booklets - a paragraph each from the three previous popes and the reigning Pius XII in the crusade leaders' books, a longer excerpt from Pius XII's encyclical *Ingruentium Malorum* (13 September 1951) in the teachers' handbook, while the priests' handbook contained both the short paragraphs (working backwards from Pius XII instead of forward from Pius IX as the crusade leaders' guide did) and the extract from the encyclical.

The historian can draw some obvious conclusions from these differences and similarities. The work of the crusade was divided and allotted to three groups of people who were seen to have particular characteristics: the lay men were most in touch with the people and would most appropriately make contact with ordinary Catholics at home, teachers would be able to instruct the children and encourage them to lobby their parents to say the rosary, and priests would have the oversight of the whole event and from the pulpit supply the reasons for the Crusade efforts. In each case the general body of the 'laity' was to be worked on by a group with specialised knowledge, supplied, perhaps for the first time to some of the lay people involved, through the handbooks. The thought of lay people discussing the merits or otherwise of saying the rosary, or reflecting on Marian devotion using any of the skills in social analysis which the Catholic

# THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER ...STAYS TOGETHER



**ROSARY DAY—EVERY DAY**  
In Every Family Circle

Figure 9. The Family Rosary Crusade poster, reproduced at approximately one quarter size. Courtesy of the Archdiocesan Catholic Archives Perth.

Action groups might be developing, does not seem to have crossed the organisers' minds.

Each parish was provided with promotional material to support the crusade effort by echoing its concerns.<sup>62</sup> The central graphic of the campaign was reproduced on large posters and on the handbooks. It showed a family group of mother, father, three sons and a daughter kneeling to pray the rosary. A lounge chair and standard lamp in the background together with the father's business suit, locate the family in the middle class. They share Anglo-Saxon features, are neat and attractive, and while they kneel in a close circular group, the father has his back turned so that the gaze of the viewer follows that of the two youngest children to the mother. These two boys, who, unlike their older brother and sister, don't have rosary beads of their own, are focussed not so much on their mother's face, as on her rosary beads. She is not aware of their attention and the older boy and girl, who are still pre-adolescent, are praying quietly with their eyes closed. The group does not have a visual focus, but forms the centre of the poster as a unit. Above the family the Crusade slogan is emblazoned: 'The Family that Prays Together ...Stays Together', and below, the exhortation 'Rosary Day - Every Day. In Every Family Circle'.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Each parish was provided with five posters, prayer cards for the foot of the parish altar, separate handbooks for priest, crusade leaders and teachers, pledge cards to be offered to each family, souvenir folders for each family which joined the Crusade, together with a 'small number' of heroic gift cards which were to be made available to the sick in each parish, giving them the opportunity to offer their prayers and sufferings for the success of the Crusade. They were called 'heroic gifts' because the sufferings of illness were often thought to be usefully offered in recompense for time in purgatory after death.

<sup>63</sup>Family Rosary Crusade File, ACAP.

*The Rosary as a Prayer of the Laity*

The Rosary had long been thought of as a prayer for the laity. In both South Australia and Western Australia the Catholic church had initially consisted exclusively of lay people who, if they gathered at all, gathered to say the rosary, falling back on a form of prayer which was both intrinsically identified with Catholicism and essentially independent of the priesthood.<sup>64</sup> Medieval European art showed the rosary most often in the hands of nuns and lay people, not monks and friars (at least until the Rosary was established as an approved devotion by papal decree),<sup>65</sup> as the repetition of short prayers was seen as a substitute for saying the more complicated prayers of the clergy. Congregations in at least six parishes in South Australia were still acting out this belief in the 1940s, and in some cases through to the 1960s, as they recited the Rosary together while their priest said Mass.<sup>66</sup> It is also significant that the figure who has passed into Australian folklore as the exemplar of lay

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<sup>64</sup>Campion, *Australian Catholics*, pp. 193 - 4; F. D. Bourke CM, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia*, Perth, 1979, chapter 1. It seems likely that the gatherings for prayer of Adelaide's first Catholic settlers detailed in Margaret M. Press RSJ, *From Our Broken Toil: South Australian Catholics 1836 - 1905*, Adelaide, 1986, included recitation of the rosary.

<sup>65</sup>Eithne Wilkins, *The Rose-Garden Game: The symbolic background to the European Prayer Beads*, London, 1969, p. 176; Fr Vincent McEvoy OP, *Riches of the Rosary*, Melbourne, 1915, p. 8.

<sup>66</sup>Episcopal Visitation records for Adelaide parishes included the question: 'What special Devotions are held in the Church during a) Lent; b) May; c) October?'. In response some parishes mentioned the Rosary 'during' mass, and others 'at' mass. It is not clear whether 'at' means 'not during' but before or after. Visitation was not according to a regular timetable, and so some parishes are more represented than others amongst the returns. The cases of Rosary devotion during or at mass were: Clearview 1959 'during', Hamley Bridge 1957 'during', 1960 'at', Kapunda 1941 'at', 1945 'during', 1949 'at', Kingswood 1960 'at', Mount Baker 1960 'during', Semaphore 1941 'during', 1945 'during', 1948 'during', 1958 'during', Strathalbyn 1942 'during', 1946 'during', Tranmere 1958 'at', Victor Harbour 1952 'at'.

Catholic piety is John O'Brien's little Irish mother, exercising spiritual dominion in her family as they ply the beads together.<sup>67</sup>

The prayer form of the Rosary evolved from the twelfth century in the Western church, and came to consist of fifteen repetitions of the same group of prayers - one 'Our Father', ten 'Hail Marys' and a 'Glory Be' - known collectively as a 'decade'. Each of the fifteen repetitions of this sequence was devoted to a particular episode in the lives of Jesus and Mary. Of these fifteen episodes, five were 'joyful', five 'sorrowful', and five 'glorious'. In 1941, on the impetus of the apparitions at Fatima, a further invocation for the forgiveness of sin was recommended at the end of each decade, after the 'Glory Be'. The prayers were usually counted on Rosary beads, which could be blessed so that particular indulgences were available,<sup>68</sup> though counting on the fingers was also quite acceptable and part of the iconography for younger children.<sup>69</sup> Rosary beads were sold at Pellegrini's and other Catholic outlets, for prices which ranged in the 1950s rosary boom period from 3/-, to 15/6 for a set made from Irish horn, to between 7/9 and 27/6 for Mother of Pearl beads.<sup>70</sup>

Eithne Wilkins has considered the mechanics of exactly what Catholics were doing in reciting the Rosary. Strictly speaking the beads were to be used as a 'prayer-clock' for meditating on each of the fifteen mysteries. Catholic sources often explained it as a prayer based on the whole salvation story. For example, in the year of the crusade the *Southern Cross* described the rosary as meditation based on scripture.

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<sup>67</sup>The poem 'The Trimmings on the Rosary' was among the favourites for class recitation in Catholic schools, see 'John O'Brien', *Around the Boree Log and Other Verses*, Sydney, 1969 (first published 1921), pp. 14 - 20.

<sup>68</sup>McEvoy, *Riches of the Rosary*, pp. 10 - 13.

<sup>69</sup>Posters for Fr Peyton's Rosary Crusade discussed below show the two littlest members of the family counting the prayers on their fingers.

<sup>70</sup>*Southern Cross*, 6 November 1953, p. 2.

[T]he whole idea of the rosary is the prayerful recollection of the truth contained in the Gospels for it is simply a series of meditations on different aspects of the Gospels, each for the time it takes to say the one Our Father and the ten Hail Marys of each decade...<sup>71</sup>

In practice, 'since very few people can think discursively about one thing while steadily saying something else',<sup>72</sup> the repetition of the prayers was an end in itself, with a few seconds recollection at the beginning of each decade to set the mental scene.<sup>73</sup> Wilkins sees this as a good technique for achieving some degree of mental detachment, related to Eastern principles of prayer, as used in yoga:

In whatever manner the rosary is performed...it is, if only because it requires control of breathing so that rhythm of recitation can be maintained, an elementary form of yoga. Although mastery of its technique is not consciously thought of, in the West, ...[its primary object, with yoga] is the attainment, through detachment, of spiritual illumination.<sup>74</sup>

Psychoanalytic theory can take this line of thinking further. Michael P. Carroll has examined the rosary in the light of Freudian theory and attributes its popularity to the devotion's ability to satisfy unconscious anal-erotic desires. Carroll argues that it is only when the prayer form settled into a pattern with four strongly anal-erotic characteristics that the institutional sanction of the church carried the rosary on to wide popularity. The features he identifies as significant are: 'the fingering of small hard beads...excessive repetition of a single prayer, the Hail Mary, ...an emphasis upon orderliness and

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<sup>71</sup>*Southern Cross*, 6 November 1953, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup>Wilkins, *The Rose-Garden Game*, p. 76.

<sup>73</sup>Interviews with Mr James Scollin, Adelaide SA, 14 March 1990; Mr Arnold Drury, Seton SA, 29 March 1990; Interview B, Name in confidence, 14 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

<sup>74</sup>Wilkins, *The Rose-Garden Game*, p. 210.

[a strong association] with a prototypical mother figure, the Virgin Mary.<sup>75</sup> Carroll argues that sanction without psychological satisfaction, and vice versa, would have made for a less widespread form of devotion. While the details of Carroll's argument aroused controversy in 1987 and would certainly have horrified Catholics of the era before the Second Vatican Council, his broad conclusion is at one with Wilfrid Kirsh's claims for 'the psychic validity of the rosary's pattern'.<sup>76</sup>

Oral evidence attests that the soothing effect of telling the beads at the end of the day in the rosary's combination of mental, verbal and physical prayer was something to which Catholics aspired more often than they achieved.<sup>77</sup> While Catholics did think of the rosary as a devotion suited to people who were exhausted after their working day, Catholics who were parents remember giggling children and grumbling teenagers taking their toll on piety;<sup>78</sup> others remember the rosary as an example of rigid and later resented discipline.<sup>79</sup> It is significant however, that of those interviewed for this thesis, in all of the homes where family prayer was attempted, the rosary was by far the usual form of prayer. It featured in each case and was the main form in all but one case (where spontaneous petitions served instead). Mothers of families were

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<sup>75</sup>Michael P. Carroll and Donald Capps, 'Interview: Praying the Rosary', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 27, 1988, p. 432. The interview reviews objections to the original article, Michael P. Carroll, 'Praying the Rosary: The Anal Erotic Origins of a Popular Catholic Devotion', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 26, 1987, pp. 486 - 98.

<sup>76</sup>*Handbook des Rosenkranzes*, Vienna, 1950, cited Wilkins, *The Rose-Garden Game*, p. 91.

<sup>77</sup> Interviews, Mr Frank Barrett and Mrs Colleen Barrett, Goodwood SA, 22 March 1990; Mrs Patricia Fitzpatrick, Adelaide SA, 20 March 1990; Mrs Eileen Heinrich, Prospect SA, 20 March 1990; Interview A, Name in confidence, 12 March 1990. Tapes held by author. See also Patrick O'Farrell, 'Piety and Prayer and Historical Problems', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 55, 1978, pp. 229 - 230.

<sup>78</sup> Interviews, Mr Frank Barrett and Mrs Colleen Barrett, Goodwood SA, 22 March 1990; Mrs Una Mulhall and Mr Frank Mulhall, Goodwood SA, 16 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

<sup>79</sup> Interview, Mrs Eileen Heinrich, Prospect SA, 20 March 1990. Tape held by author.

often the instigators of the family rosary practice. As well as serving as another example of religious practice being linked to women's responsibility for the family, Wilkins has suggested that contemplative aspects of praying the rosary aloud using beads made for a particularly feminine devotion. She draws a comparison to the mythically magic-laden female occupations of spinning and weaving, or the more modern equivalent of knitting.<sup>80</sup> On saying the rosary aloud, she comments:

Probably few people would want to renounce the co-ordination that is set up by the knitting movement of the fingers, the voice issuing from between the moving lips, re-entering the ears, a closed circuit.

Among the elements in common with knitting are the engagement of the hands in a steady mechanical movement, the tranquillising effect of this, and the resulting freedom of the mind...<sup>81</sup>

The 'best' way of saying the rosary was one of the topics which was discussed in catechetical works for both children and adults in Australia during the period. The Christian Brothers' in-service magazine implied that the recitation of the prayers for the five decades took 12 minutes,<sup>82</sup> while the organisers of the 1953 crusade estimated 10 minutes.<sup>83</sup> Both of these would mean Catholics set a fairly rollicking pace with this prayer. The tension between meditation and recitation is attested to by the frequent separation of the stories of the mysteries from the practical instruction on how to say the rosary. For example, in Peyton's *Handbook for Teachers* designed to encourage classroom discussion of the rosary, charts headed 'How to Recite the Family Rosary' gave a mechanical map of the prayers which belonged to the different

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<sup>80</sup>Wilkins, *The Rose-Garden Game*, pp. 78, 97.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>82</sup>Br Pambo, 'Brother Pambo and the Marian Year', *Our Studies*, May 1954, p. 8.

<sup>83</sup>Peyton, *Handbook for Crusade Leaders*, p. 9.

beads, without any indication that the prayers were to be linked to the movement of the three sets of mysteries described elsewhere in the same book.<sup>84</sup> In the written text, the meditative dimension was acknowledged as ideally inseparable from the recitation of the rosary:

The Family Rosary is like a living thing. It has a body and a soul. Its body - the vocal prayers - is made up of the Sign of the Cross and four of the greatest prayers of the Church. Its soul - the most important part - is made up of the meditations of the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries.<sup>85</sup>

Children were urged to persuade their family to say the Rosary, not only so that:  
 you can see your mother and father, your brothers and sisters praying with you.. [and] know then that God will certainly bless your family<sup>86</sup>

but also because vocal prayer in a group made meditation easier. Teachers were encouraged to tell children that the family should pray together.

It is easy [to pray in a group] because, when you say the Family Rosary, you only say half of the I BELIEVE IN GOD, half of the HAIL MARY, and the GLORY BE TO THE FATHER. The other members of the family say the other half of each prayer, while you listen and think of some happening in the lives of Our Lord and Our Lady.<sup>87</sup>

Ways and means of fostering meditative habits in adult Catholics occupied other writers on the rosary. The repetition of the prayers was never admitted as an end in itself whatever the practical experience of the ordinary people might have been. The constant exhortation from commentators to 'think about' the mysteries suggests that the people needed to be reminded of the 'proper'

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<sup>84</sup>Peyton, *Handbook for Teachers*, back page and pp. 11 - 13.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*

practice. The oral history of the crusade reveals a clear collective memory of the visit of Father Peyton as a diocesan event, but not one which had any memorable impact on the prayer practices of many families. Rather than being the occasion of a dramatic change in devotion, the crusade reinforced established practice or strengthened resolves to continue the struggle to achieve the Catholic ideal. None of the sample recall the crusade as a negative experience.<sup>88</sup>

The comment that the Crusade 'might have been' one of the occasions of 'fits and starts of rosary saying',<sup>89</sup> is borne out by statistics collected by crusade organisers from 39 Adelaide parishes.<sup>90</sup> Statistics were not reported consistently. On a state-wide basis the figures would show an enlistment rate of about 42%. This does not allow for some parishes which did not supply their figures, but which probably did contain participants. In the parishes for which figures are available, the enlistment rate seems to have been about 93%. Of those who refused at least some were likely to pray the rosary informally. Father Brendan O'Sullivan of Glenelg commented in a note appended to the figures for his relatively affluent parish that not wanting to be obliged to pray was the main reason for not enlisting.

Most of those who refused were careless Catholics. However, there were a number of good Catholics who refused, mostly on the grounds that they did not want to be regimented into saying their prayers. I believe many of them would be saying the Rosary in any case.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>In this it is interesting to contrast the crusade to the memories of parish missions where the message of imminent hell fire terrified many and revolted some. The intense call to Marian devotion was of a different ilk to this call to repentance. The urgency of drawing closer to Mary was couched more in terms of making a child-like approach to a loving mother who was concerned to save the world from itself, rather than the mission message of striving to battle a sin that would lead to personal and eternal damnation.

<sup>89</sup>Interview, Mrs Stephanie Roche and Mr Neville Roche, Adelaide SA, 15 March 1990. Tape held by author.

<sup>90</sup>The collection was recommended by the Crusade handbook, but comparable data for Perth is not extant.

<sup>91</sup>Family Rosary Crusade, Box 148, ACAA.

The effort expended to get Catholics to enrol in the Crusade formally was considerable. As well as noting the resistance of some parishioners, Father O'Sullivan also records that some of the families were visited three times before the signatures were recorded. Whether this was because some members of the family were out on the first occasions, or had to be persuaded to the cause, he does not indicate. His emphasis is on the perseverance of the parish organisation. The American Crusade organisers also made good use of the local media. During the Crusade weeks the *Perth Record* published 5 or 6 pages of Marian material which had been supplied by Father Woods; and notes in the Perth archives also record that the McDowarie radio network had been approached about broadcasting all or part of 15 half hour radio programmes free of charge. The programmes were referred to in the priests' handbook as a way for 'every family [to] hear Fr Peyton's personal plea'.<sup>92</sup>

As Father Peyton travelled Australia in 1953, tensions which eventually led to the split of the Australian Labor Party were steadily growing. His call to pray for peace came to Catholics who were fresh from the referendum on the Communist Party Dissolution Bill and had heard Menzies declare in support of that Bill:

We are not at peace today, except in a technical sense. The Soviet Union...has made perfect the technique of 'the cold war'. It has accompanied it by the organization of peace demonstrations... designed, not to promote true peace, but to prevent or impair defense preparations in the democracies.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Peyton, *Priests Handbook*, p. 4.

<sup>93</sup>*Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 207, 27 April 1950, p. 1995.

Within Catholic circles, some were questioning the activities of the Catholic Social Studies Movement in Australian party politics, while still others were deeply committed to the Movement as the vehicle for their God-given mission to protect their families and church from Communism.<sup>94</sup> It is interesting that the Fatima devotion, which reflected the Movement concerns so strongly, does not seem to have been very central to its prayer life; oral sources point instead to the development of a Gospel-based prayer.<sup>95</sup>

The figure of Mary was a central tenet of the Catholic approach to God in the years before the Second Vatican Council. Like so much in the lives of ordinary Catholic Australians, Mary did not translate simply into one immutable meaning, constant for all Catholics over the forty year period. She was simultaneously and paradoxically Virgin and Mother, Handmaid and Queen, a model for contemplatives retiring from the world and the safeguard of the family against Communism. On the one hand she was a powerful feminine presence, exulted above the angels and saints in her proximity to the Godhead, on the other her perfection and extraordinary graces downgraded ordinary women. In Adelaide and Perth her figure brought Catholics from diverse cultures together under common banners, and separated them out from their Protestant neighbours. She was a model for women of obedience and acceptance of God's will, and a figure of political promise calling men to act in ways which were counter to those of the world. Throughout this period the diversity and complexity of the rich traditions surrounding the life of Mary of Nazareth, Mother of God, Our Lady Queen of Peace, was a significant aspect of the way in which many lay people expressed their Catholicism.

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<sup>94</sup>Robert Murray, *The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties*, Melbourne, 1972, p. 129.

<sup>95</sup>See below chapter 8.

As the Catholic view of Christ increasingly emphasised an ultimate kingship of the world, so there was an acclamation of the masculine values of power and authority in the interpretation of the quasi-divine woman, Mary. The long history of Marian devotion as a hallmark of Catholicism provided a legitimating veil of tradition for the triumphal nuances of twentieth century devotions. The common assumption of the devotional strand in Catholicism remained powerful and it was thus accepted that the real destiny of the church could be fulfilled only in the next life. However, the definition of the Assumption, the counter-cultural call of the apparitions at Fatima, and the commitment to Mary under many titles as a miraculous intercessor, underscored a confident Catholicism where earthly suffering, and womanly weakness, would be reversed as part of a divinely-guided plan for victory.

The figures of Christ and Mary loomed large on the spiritual horizon of Catholicism, but if they were ever in danger of becoming remote in their triumph, the family of saints guaranteed access to the spiritual realm for ordinary Catholics. The trends in popular piety gave prominence to some saints, and their particular style of spirituality, over others. The popularity of particular saints is therefore an important guide to Catholic notions of what it was to live a good life. Trends in the popularity of particular saints can highlight changes in the idea of what it was to be holy. A study of sanctity is also a study of the many ways in which a symbol can be interpreted, and of the relationship between the people who adopted that symbol as a model and the institution that validated it.

## Chapter 5: Saints in Society: a web with many seams

The Catholic tradition of honouring individuals who had been especially holy during their lives was a bridge which allowed traffic between the spirituality of the people and the life of the institution. The Catholic canon of saints contained a multitude of individuals who had been confirmed by the authority of the church as having attained heaven. From their ranks Catholic people selected particular patrons whose style of sanctity they wanted to emulate, or whose particular skills seemed to be appropriate to the situation at hand. An examination of the ways in which the two strands of approval, the institutional and the popular, came together in twentieth century Australia, and a close look at the virtues of the favourite saints, offers important insight into the spiritual landscape of Catholic people.

### *Saints of the People and the Institution*

The success of a bid for someone to be recognised as a saint depended on the intersection of popular affirmation and institutional authority. The complex process by which an individual's life was proclaimed 'holy', involved evidence being gathered, testimony being given by people who had known the saint and a total of four miracles being attested to as proof that the proposed saint was really in heaven and able to obtain favours from God. The canonisation process thus allowed for some dialogue between the institution and its constituents. Hagiography can therefore provide an important window to the relationship between the piety of the people and the priorities of the institution, both in the process of an individual becoming a saint and in sustaining the popularity of a cult.

In some ways the process of becoming accepted as a saint appeared to be weighted in favour of the people. Individual Catholics could express their devotion to a particular cult figure without having to become involved with the structures of the institution at all. Some cults such as that of the Virgin of La Salette, and of St Joan of Arc, were at various times the focus for groups opposed to the mainstream teaching of the hierarchy, or a vehicle for Catholics with a particular political view.<sup>1</sup> While most Catholic people in Perth and Adelaide expressed their devotion using prayers of a recommended formula, with the aid of standard holy cards or statues, often as part of an organised parish group, there was no necessity for this.

A saint could be invoked at home as often as in a church, and a picture or statue could be used to create a shrine in a bedroom without any ecclesiastical approval. As Stephen Wilson points out, this private, autonomous devotion was not simply para-liturgical, but provided channels of the sacred quite distinct from the institution's sacramental system.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to the Eastern Orthodox church where domestic devotions followed the public liturgy, in the West private and public devotion did not necessarily coalesce and individuals or families could be devout adherents of a cult without going to mass or confession.<sup>3</sup> Robert Orsi has described the homes of Italian immigrants in Harlem filled with statues and pictures of the Blessed Virgin and other favourite saints.<sup>4</sup> For these people the home, the *domus*, was as much a focus for spirituality as the parish church, and the images of the sacred figures in the rooms fostered a self-sufficient domestic church, quite separate from the parish where the saints

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<sup>1</sup>Stephen Wilson, Introduction, Stephen Wilson, (ed), *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, Cambridge, 1983, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen Wilson, 'Cults of saints in the churches of central Paris', in Wilson, (ed), *Saints and their Cults*, pp. 256-7.

<sup>3</sup>Wilson, Introduction, *Saints and their Cults*, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem 1880 -1950*, New Haven, 1985, p. 105.

were from a different tradition. The separate *feste* of Italian immigrants to Perth, and the oral tradition that St Anthony, who was the focus of devotion in two of the earliest festivals, was 'for the Italians',<sup>5</sup> indicated a degree of distance from the culture of the institution. The maintenance of the *feste* tradition to honour special patrons, even in the small way witnessed in Perth, demonstrated both a certain autonomy of the people and the strength and importance of the devotions.

There were other signs that a vigorous cult could be maintained from below. The rifts between priest and people which sometimes arose over the location of a saint's statue in a church,<sup>6</sup> or simply the freedom of expression which the women of the Altar Society had when cleaning the church to choose to decorate the shrine of a particular saint or not. The common practices of leaving flowers and burning candles in front of images, or leaving notes of thanks for favours granted, point to the 'pagan', and, Wilson therefore suggests, 'popular' rather than 'hierarchical' origins of devotion to saints.<sup>7</sup> Jean Delumeau and Robert Hesse both identify the medieval cults of saints and the related collection of relics as part of a 'folklorized Christianity' where non-Christian beliefs in polytheism and animism were incorporated uncritically into a Christian framework, by Catholics whose religion was much more cultural than doctrinal.<sup>8</sup> While the Council of Trent did its best to rid Catholicism of the worst excesses of devotion to a magic god, Australian Catholics

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<sup>5</sup>Interview, Mr Ron Johnson, Highgate WA, 28 June 1989. Notes held by author. Richard Bosworth and Margot Melia, 'The Italian *Feste* of Western Australia and the Myth of the Universal Church', in R.Bosworth and M.Melia (eds), *Aspects of Ethnicity in Western Australia, Studies in Western Australian History*, vol. 12, 1991, pp. 71 - 84.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*, p. 39; Bosworth and Melia, 'The Italian *Feste* of Western Australia', pp. 78 - 9.

<sup>7</sup>Wilson, Introduction, *Saints and their Cults*, pp. 39 - 40

<sup>8</sup>Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter Reformation*, trans. Jeremy Moiser, Philadelphia, 1977, p. 161 - 3, cited Bob Scribner, 'Religion, Society and Culture: Reorienting the Reformation', *History Workshop*, vol. 14, 1982, p. 11; Robert Hesse, 'St Besse: a study of an Alpine cult', trans. Stephen Wilson in Wilson (ed), *Saints and their Cults*, pp. 55 - 100.

three centuries later were still being accused of superstition and idolatry. Devotional practices such as wearing medals, honouring images and adopting saints for particular causes only added fuel to the fire, especially when the theological subtleties (or even theories of psychological benefit) were beyond the apologetical skills of the ordinary Catholic, or when explanations were not even sought. In Catholic circles the devotion to saints was a key part of religious culture, and its vitality depended significantly on the enthusiasm of the people.

Lack of popular support could sabotage the progress of an institutional candidate for sanctity. Pierre Deloos cites the example of Claude de la Colombière, whose cause was sponsored by his own order, the Society of Jesus, along with that of Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque, on the grounds that they had fostered devotion to the Sacred Heart throughout the church. Margaret Mary was canonised in 1920, and John Eudes, another figure associated with the devotion was recognised as a saint in 1925, but only three miracles have been credited to Father Colombière. Other candidates with less orthodox qualifications have been swept to the altar, but: 'It is as if Claude de la Colombière was not popular enough to awaken the faith required to effect a miracle.'<sup>9</sup>

In other ways the fate of a cult rested with the institutional church. The authority of the hierarchy reassured the people that their devotion was orthodox and the sanction of the official church considerably abetted the growth of the cult. While a standard pattern by which devotions became established was for piety to focus on a local figure, or report of a vision, and to weather down Vatican caution over time,<sup>10</sup> in Australia there were no unapproved cults which

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<sup>9</sup>Pierre Deloos, 'Towards a sociological study of canonised sainthood in the Catholic Church', in Wilson, (ed), *Saints and their Cults*, p. 201.

<sup>10</sup>The apparitions of the Blessed Virgin provide a clear example, Barbara Corrado Pope, 'Immaculate and Powerful: The Marian Revival in the Nineteenth Century', in

survived long enough to become a significant influence in Catholic life and thinking. This could have been at least partly because of distance from the centre of such unauthorized cults as have been documented in Europe, but the absence of local cults also apparently supports the historical conclusion that Australian Catholic people were passive consumers who made no contribution to their own spiritual journey.<sup>11</sup> However, such a judgement seems too hasty.

While the saints and devotional practices which were popular in Perth and Adelaide all seem to have had their origin in official sources, it is also true that different practices and personalities 'caught on' with varying degrees of intensity, indicating that at least a portion of the people were exercising some autonomy in spiritual matters. The variety of personalities in the canon of saints can in itself be taken as an encouragement of individuality within a prescribed framework. Australian Catholicism was quite comfortable with the idea that not all saints were the same, but captured different aspects of humanity in relationship with God. While the notion that societal forces might influence a canonisation was certainly not current, it was common practice for individuals to choose a particular heavenly sponsor or offer some kind of devout acknowledgement to the patron who had been chosen by their parents. The Perth curriculum for religious education reflected the view that the canon had many dimensions at the same time as it was consistently Catholic:

The saints form the tapestry upon which the shuttlecock of time incessantly works, fashioning the pattern and colouring the design that depicts the story of the Church at any age. ...The saints are the friends and copies of Christ - one representing His charity, another His meekness, this one His public life, this one

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C. W. Atkinson, C. H. Buchanan and M. R. Miles, (eds), *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality*, Boston. 1985, pp.173 - 200; Michael P. Carroll, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary: Psychological Origins*, Princeton, 1986.

<sup>11</sup>Patrick O'Farrell 'Lay Spirituality and Historical Conditioning', *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 55, 1978, pp. 36 - 42.

His hidden life - dear to us, personal to us, living to us just exactly because of their relation to the ever present Jesus.<sup>12</sup>

Teachers were urged to use the saints as 'rich mines of aspiration [to holiness] and knowledge' for the moral education of their pupils<sup>13</sup> and the oral history of this period shows that saints featured significantly in the religious education and world view of many Catholics.<sup>14</sup> The theoretical understanding that the acknowledgement of saints was a Christocentric devotion to Jesus's reflected attributes translated in practice into a faith schema much like that described by Ann Taves for the nineteenth century in North America. She identifies the Catholic view of the cosmic world as a 'household of faith'<sup>15</sup> where God the Father and his son Jesus related to the family of the church through the mediation of Jesus's mother, Mary, and a myriad of spiritual brothers and sisters. The attributes of God which these personalities had been acclaimed by the church for reflecting give an insight into the Catholic understanding of God's own nature.

The industry of recommending certain categories of lay people to the patronage of particular saints was one way in which saints were promoted as role models. In general patronage was assigned on the grounds that the selected saint had had similar work or lifestyle or problems as the Catholic people who were to seek his or her prayers. In this way the occupational guilds which were formed in Adelaide in the 1930s as a forerunner of Catholic Action were assigned to the care of appropriate saints: St Luke for doctors, St Albert the

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<sup>12</sup>Fr J. T. McMahon, *Notes on Religious Education*, McMahon Papers, ACAP.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>Interviews, Mrs Maureen Menagh, South Perth WA, 17 April 1990; Mr James Nolan, Adelaide SA, 27 March 1990; Sr Julianna Buswell, Mrs Philomena Monaghan and Mrs Mida Crombie with author, East Victoria Park WA, 1 July 1984. Tapes held by author.

<sup>15</sup>Ann Taves, *The Household of Faith: Roman Catholic Devotions in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, Notre Dame, 1986, pp. 47, 106.

Great for pharmacists and engineers, St Basil for nurses and St Thomas Aquinas for teachers.<sup>16</sup> In some cases the link was clear and the saint's life could well have provided inspiration, in other instances however, the connection was much more tenuous. St Apollonia, for example, was the patron saint of dentists, presumably because her martyrdom had involved the extraction of her teeth; and in similar fashion St Catherine of Alexandria, who had been tortured on a wheel, was to be looked to by wheelwrights. Modern occupations from which representatives had not been canonised, were the occasion of some creativity about possible links with the activity of holy figures in the past. Typical of the way in which this worked was assigning workers in telecommunications to the patronage of the angel Gabriel, God's messenger to the Blessed Virgin, placing funeral directors under the care of St Dysmus, the penitent thief crucified with Christ.

In order to promote devotion to saints in a particular role, formula prayers were published in Catholic papers and recommended to the laity. One example serves to illustrate the way in which the parallels between the life experience of the saint and latter day Catholics were described or speculated upon and used as a springboard to devotion. In a move which is perhaps also a comment on the presumed universality of the inherited British public service as on the cross-cultural significance of Catholicism, a 1950 *Record* carried a lengthy prayer to Saint Matthew from the *Ceylon Catholic Messenger*. Reprinted under the heading 'Professional Prayers: The Clerk's Prayer', its assumptions about the saint's intimate involvement in the day to day details of the clerks' work illustrate the way in which a role model could be constructed.

Dear St Matthew, praying as one who is only a clerk to one who was a Jewish banker and financier, I venerate and

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<sup>16</sup>Catholic Guild for Social Studies, Box 137, ACAA.

honour thee as the greatest miracle of grace; for none but God Almighty could have effected such a transfer from finance to holiness, from a company director's chair to a throne in heaven. May I remind thee that thy debt to God will never be paid unless thou do to others as was done to thee? Mellow the hearts of our financial lords and open their eyes, blinded by gold, to the far greater attraction of spiritual values. Make them just and human at least to their clerks.

As for us thou knowest our difficulties: long hours and short rations, early bondage and late marriages. If the lot of thy own clerks was probably none too good, improve ours, since material security and comfort ease and release the spirit and make it amenable to thy sanctifying influence. For we need it. Raise our minds above figures and cheques into the serene atmosphere of qualities; and from the numerically correct and accurate, attune them to the good, the true and the beautiful. This spiritual expansion will be a miracle worthy of thee, helping the clerks of Mammon to be at the same time the faithful servant of God.<sup>17</sup>

The way in which the popular imagination worked on such prayers, or whether any in particular became widespread, is difficult to trace. Certainly the oral evidence indicates that most people prayed according to a rehearsed formula, and with a certain element of cajoling, as illustrated by invocation of St Matthew. In the case of medieval European piety, commentators have concluded that the strong institutional presence in most cults meant that the view of the ordinary people differed in the end from that of the institution only in subtle questions of emphasis.<sup>18</sup> In twentieth century Australia, the growth of a Catholic education system had ensured that the gap in understanding of sanctity

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<sup>17</sup>*Record*, 26 October 1950, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup>Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, p. 11. See also Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, London, 1981; Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event*, London, 1982.

between priests and people was likely to be even less marked. The case of St Thérèse of Lisieux, examined below, shows that a popular cult in Adelaide and Perth was not so much one in which the priests were missing, but one in which the priests and people met and sustained a mutual enthusiasm.

The variety of individuals within the communion of saints and the shifts in popularity of different personalities over time gave lay people a range of possible models within the institution. Weinstein and Bell point out that the church had long been aware of the unifying strength within the diversity of the canon.

However uncertain, even suspicious, the hierarchy may have been about the proliferation of popular cults, saints welded the loyalties of their devotees to the traditional Church, helping Catholicism to survive as a living religion. Made up of many peoples and traditions, Catholicism never was, nor ever could be an unchanging and undifferentiated body of doctrine and practice. Believers would continue to find many ways to express their diverse impulses within the overarching unity of the single faith; if they could not they would break away or be cast out. In fostering saints cults the Church tacitly recognised that Catholicism was no seamless web, but a web with many seams.<sup>19</sup>

Within this web different personalities came to the fore at different times in response to varying notions of holiness and wider social pressures. In broad terms these changes occurred as different qualities were especially valued by the institutional church. Thus Weinstein and Bell argue that the saints of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were vigorous, powerful characters who had been well-suited to the era of the crusades and increasing temporal power for the church; in the thirteenth through to the fifteenth centuries when the church's

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

SAINTS CANONISED 1922 - 1962

Date	Name	Died	Years	M/F	Status	Nation
					(* priest ** bishop)	
<b>Pius XI</b>						
1925	Thérèse of Lisieux	1897	24	F	Carmelite	France
1925	Peter Canisius	1597	76	M	Jesuit*	Italy
1925	Mary Magdalene Sophie Barat	1865	86	F	foundress	France
1925	Mary Magdalene Postel	1846	90	F	foundress	France
1925	John Eudes	1680	79	M	founder*	France
1925	John Baptist Vianney	1859	73	M	priest*	France
1930	Lucy Filipini	1732	60	F	foundress	Italy
1930	Catherina Tomàs	1574	41	F	Augustinian	Spain
1930	Jesuit North American martyrs					
	Isaac Jogues	1646..41		M	Jesuit*	France
	Noel Chabanel	1649..36		M	Jesuit*	France
	Anthony Daniel	1648..47		M	Jesuit*	France
	Charles Garnier	1649..43		M	Jesuit*	France
	René Goupil	1642..35		M	Jesuit	France
	John de Brebeuf	1649..56		M	Jesuit*	France
	Gabriel Lalemant	1649..39		M	Jesuit*	France
	John Lalonde	1649..?		M	Jesuit	France
1930	Robert Bellarmine	1621	79	M	Jesuit**	Italy
1930	Theophilus of Corte	1740	64	M	Franciscan*	Corsica
1931	Albert the Great	1280	74	M	Dominican**	Germany
1933	Andrew Fournet	1834	82	M	founder*	France
1933	Bernadette Soubirous	1879..35		F	Sister of Charity	France
1934	Jeanne Antida Thouret	1826	61	F	foundress	France
1934	Maria Michaeli	1865	56	F	foundress	NA
1934	Louise de Marillac	1660	69	F	foundress	France
1934	Joseph Benedetto			M	priest*	Italy
1934	Pomilius M. Pirotti	1842	56	M	priest*	Italy
1934	Teresa Margaret Redi	1756	46	M	Piarist*	Italy
1934	John Bosco	1770	23	F	Carmelite	Italy
1934	Conrad of Parzham	1888	73	M	founder*	Italy
1934	John Fisher	1894	76	M	Capuchin	Bavaria
1935	Thomas More	1535	66	M	priest**	England
1935	Andrew Bobola	1535	57	M	married	England
1938	John Leonardi	1657	65	M	Jesuit*	Poland
1938	Salvatore of Horta	1609	59	M	founder*	Italy
1938		1567	47	M	Franciscan	Spain
<b>Pius XII</b>						
1940	Gemma Galgani	1903	25	F	single	Italy
1940	Mary Euphrasia Pelletier	1868	72	F	foundress	Brittany
1943	Margaret of Hungary	1270	?	F	Dominican	Hungary
1946	Francis Xavier Cabrini	1917	67	F	foundress	Italy**US
1947	Nicholas of Flue	1487	70	M	married** hermit	Switz.
1947	John of Britto	1693	46	M	Jesuit*	Portugal
1947	Bernard Realini	1616	86	M	Jesuit*	Italy
1947	Joseph Cafasso	1860	49	M	priest*	Italy

Date	Name	Died	Years	M/F	Status	Nation
					(* priest ** bishop)	
1947	Michael Garicoits	1863	66	M	founder*	France
1947	Jeanne Elizabeth de Ages	1838	65	F	foundress	NA
1947	Louis Marie de Montfort	1716	43	M	founder*	France
1947	Catherine Laboure	1876	70	F	Daughter of Charity	France
1949	Jeanne de Lesionnac	1640	84	F	married** foundress	France
1949	Maria Josepha Rossello	1880	69	F	foundress	Italy
1950	Emily de Rodat	1787	65	F	foundress	France
1950	Anthony Maria Claret	1870	63	M	founder**	Spain
1950	Barolomea Capitanio	1833	26	F	foundress	Italy
1950	Vincenza Gerosa	1847	63	F	foundress	Italy
1950	Jeanne de Valois	1505	44	F	married** foundress	France
1950	Vincenzo M. Srambi	1824..79		M	Passionist**	Italy
1950	Maria Goretti	1902	12	F	single	Italy
1950	Mariana Paredes	1645	27	F	single	Peru
1951	Maria Domenica Mazzarello	1881	44	F	foundress	Italy
1951	Emilie de Violar	1856	59	F	foundress	France
1951	Anthony M. Gianelli	1846	57	M	founder**	Italy
1951	Ignatius of Laconi	1781	80	M	Capuchin	Italy
1951	Francis Xavier Bianchi	1815	72	M	priest*	Italy
1954	Pope Pius X	1914	79	M	priest**	Italy
1954	Domenic Savio	1857	15	M	single	Italy
1954	Maria Crocifissa di Rosa	1855	42	F	foundress	Italy
1954	Peter Chanel	1841	38	M	Marist*	France
1954	Gaspar de Bufalo	1837	51	M	founder*	Italy
1954	Joseph M. Pignatelli	1811	74	M	Jesuit*	Spain
1958	Herman Joseph	1241	91	M	O.Praem	Germany
<b>John XXIII</b>						
1959	Joaquina de Vedruna de Mas	1854	71	F	foundress	Spain
1959	Charles of Sezze	1670	57	M	religious	Italy
1960	Gregory Barbarigo	1697	72	M	priest**	Italy
1960	John de Ribera	1611	79	M	priest**	Spain
1961	Bertilla Boscardin	1922	34	F	Sisters of St Dorothea	Italy
1962	Martin de Porres	1639	60	M	Dominican	Peru
1962	Peter Julian Eymard	1868	57	M	founder*	France
1962	Anthony Pucci	1892	73	M	Servite*	Italian
1962	Francis Camporosso	1866	62	M	religious	NA

Compiled from Felician A. Foy OFM, *Catholic Almanac 1989*, Huntington, Indiana, 1989, pp. 135 - 6; Donald Attwater (ed), *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, Hammondswoth, 1965; D. H. Farmer(ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, Oxford, 1978; and *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

priorities and troubles were mostly internal, personal salvation was a greater concern than evangelization, and the church's saints were generally people who had lived penitential and ascetic lives; while finally, in the era of the Reformation and Counter Reformation, the church recognised figures who had fought for reform as bishops, missionaries, martyrs, and on occasion, mystics whose supernatural experiences had promoted change within the church.<sup>20</sup> It would seem that the implicit answer to 'What is holy?' was perceived by the institution to be 'that which best serves the church'.

### *Twentieth-Century Saints*

Who then were the saints offered to the Catholic people in Perth and Adelaide in the twentieth century? Were there particular qualities especially valued as holy? From the beginning of Pius XI's pontificate until 1962 there were 77 additions to the Roman calendar. While, of course, Catholics in Adelaide and Perth continued to approach other saints of long standing as well as some new ones, an overview of the new saints provides some initial indications of the spiritual climate in which these Catholic people were operating. Newly canonised saints were seen as saints for the times, as Henri Ghéon pointed out in 1934 in the context of discussion of the popular Thérèse of Lisieux:

I do not mean to say we have the saints we deserve; we never deserve the saints we have. But we are given the saints whose outward appearance is most likely to attract us.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 236; see also Stephen Wilson, Introduction, *Saints and their Cults*, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup>Henri Ghéon, *The Secret of the Little Flower*, trans. Donald Attwater, London, 1977, p. 9, (first published 1934).

Of the new saints, 48 were men<sup>22</sup>, and 29 were women. The overwhelming majority (65 people or 84%) of both sexes were members of religious orders, and 29 (or 38% of the total) were founders of orders. Most of the men (35 or 73% of the men) were priests, and only eight of these priests were not connected with a religious order. Of the non-ordained men eight were members of religious communities and only three were lay men. Church law had made ordination unavailable to any of the women, but again the women saints are drawn almost entirely from non-lay ranks. Only three did not belong to a religious order; the remaining 26 (89%) were all nuns and 19 of these (65% of the total number of women) had founded religious communities. In addition to the church's high regard for those who dedicated themselves to the institution as nuns and monks, the lengthy process of canonisation itself favoured candidates from religious orders. The various stages of canonisation could often extend over several centuries, and continuing religious orders were much better equipped than less structured sections of the church to guide a cause through the process.<sup>23</sup> It is a statement of the obvious to say that statistical frequency of saints in a particular category of activity does not in itself guarantee canonisation of any one else who happens to belong to that category. At the most it points to the occupations likely to generate sanctity, but more probably the statistics show the kinds of people of whom the church was aware. This might go some of the way towards explaining the preponderance of successful candidates from religious orders in Italy and France (70 out of 77, or 90%), as not only were the advocates of these local cults likely to be geographically close to the Vatican, but they would also be advocating a style of sanctity that was culturally familiar and therefore pleasant for the bureaucracy to identify as 'holy'.

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<sup>22</sup> Including a group of 8 missionaries, 6 Jesuit priests and 2 Jesuit lay brothers, martyred in North America and canonised together.

<sup>23</sup>Delooz, 'Towards a sociological study of canonised sainthood in the Catholic Church', p. 200; Wilson, 'Cults of saints in the churches of central Paris', p. 257.

A meagre eight out of the 77 new saints were lay people (just over one percent). Seven of these had led atypical lives as visionaries or martyrs, and the remaining one had died at 15. Only four had ever married, with three of those 'moving on' from married life - one to a hermitage with the consent of his family, and the others, who were women, to found religious communities. The saints from religious orders were not all canonised for the same reasons, but the virtues considered characteristic of a successful life in a religious community did not necessarily translate into a practical way to live a holy life as a single working person, or as a parent. Stephen Wilson contends that saints who

exemplify the virtues of the religious...and not the more heroic and "worldly" virtues' could...be said to reflect a marginal attitude to the social world which is generally characteristic of the modern Church and its adherents, and which is perhaps in contrast to the attitudes of earlier centuries.<sup>24</sup>

The church's ambivalence towards lay life was evident in the treatment of St Joseph. Although a saint of long standing, a new feast in honour of St Joseph the Worker was proclaimed in 1956 and this new commemoration can be read as an attempt to reshape the existing devotion in response to the twentieth century. In the parishes, schools and institutions named in his honour St Joseph was consciously and conspicuously promoted as a saint who was 'good for' the church. Joseph had appeared in the infancy narrative of St Matthew's gospel as the husband of Mary. After languishing in the Middle Ages as a relatively obscure figure, something of an unlucky cuckold, devotion grew steadily, promoted by religious orders, especially the Jesuits, until 1847 when Pius IX rocketted Joseph to prominence.<sup>25</sup> He progressively became patron of families, workers, purity and of happy deaths, as the standing of his feast was elevated in

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<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>Wilson, Introduction, *Saints and their Cults*, p. 7.

the church.<sup>26</sup> His special status as the man closest to Christ and the Blessed Virgin, was called to the attention of Catholics in the twentieth century, and in his role as the head of the household of the family at Nazareth he was presented to working men as a special patron. By 1956 the *Record* reported the bishops of Canada declaring:

The role of St Joseph in our salvation was so unique and decisive that a constant devotion to him is an obligation for every Catholic.<sup>27</sup>

In that year, amidst increasing fears of Communism and the perceived need for men to be active in their faith, the feast of St Joseph the Worker was instituted to be celebrated on 1 May, or, significantly, the September equivalent of Labour Day in the United States. The proclamation of the new feast in March 1956 was marked in Perth by a procession arranged by the Italian community at St Brigid's in West Perth, with the strong assumption that Joseph the carpenter was especially interested in manual workers.<sup>28</sup>

Although St Joseph the Worker was a saint 'for men' his image moved between the masculine and feminine modes of spirituality. He was the 'Patriarch of Nazareth', 'Joseph most Just' and 'Gentle Joseph', the protector of Jesus, and Mary's 'most chaste spouse', as well as the most ordinary member of his extraordinary family. As the devotional magazine *Annals* pointed out in 1961, Joseph was represented in various ways in religious art.

Now he is feeble and old - the austere guardian of the Lily of Nazareth; again he is in vigorous middle age - the defender and supporter of the Son and Mother; with a

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<sup>26</sup>Francis L. Filas SJ, 'Appendix One: Devotion to St Joseph during the past 400 years', *Joseph Most Just: Theological Questions About St Joseph*, Milwaukee, 1956, pp. 109 - 34.

<sup>27</sup>*Record*, 26 January 1956, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup>*Record*, 15 March 1956, p. 1.

gravely intellectual head portraying the wise and prudent guardian of his Immaculate Spouse; or in comparative youth as the strong protector of the Flight into Egypt.<sup>29</sup>

In appealing to Joseph as the model of a working man, Catholics were also evoking an image which had resonances of purity, a hidden life and a happy death. The notion of work which was supported by the image of this saint was of a dedicated craftsman whose labour supported his wife and child. Joseph was a worker very much within the domestic scene whose image was in contrast to the rugged individualism of many male saints. Joseph's special patronage of family men was presented to women also. During the Depression of the 1930s a reader of the *Record* submitted 'A Wife's Prayer to St Joseph' to the 'For the Home' page. The petition reinforced both the notion that women would take responsibility for prayer, and the image of Joseph as a man in a family context.

Dear Saint, my man your fellow workman is  
 To you he turns in dire necessity  
 Help him, for he was never one to shirk  
 He'll do his best if you will send him work.<sup>30</sup>

A prayer published so that men could honour Joseph's feast day in 1961 also captured the various strands of the devotion and shows Joseph living a holy life as an independent worker, spiritually at one with, although one step behind, his family. He was a culturally ambivalent figure for Australian men; it is probably important to note that Catholics would have been aware of the traditional view that the marriage of Joseph and Mary was one of complete sexual abstinence.

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<sup>29</sup>*Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, 1 March 1961, p. 81.

<sup>30</sup>Submitted by 'M.B.W.', *Record*, 2 May 1931, p. 11.

### Prayer to St Joseph, The Working Man

O Glorious Patriarch St Joseph, humble and just craftsman of Nazareth, who gave to all Christians, but particularly to us [workers], an example of a perfect life of devoted work and of admirable unity with Mary and Jesus, help us in our daily work so that we also, Catholic craftsmen, might find therein an effective means of glorifying Our Lord, of sanctifying ourselves and of being useful to the society in which we live - the supreme ideal of all our actions....

Be with us in prosperous times when everything urges us to enjoy the fruits of our labour honestly, but be our support in times of stress when the skies seem to close in upon us and even the tools of our work seem to rebel in our hands.

Help us to follow your example and to keep our sight fixed on Mary, our Mother, your gentle spouse, who weaved silently in a corner of your humble shop, smiling sweetly. May we never avert our eyes from Jesus, who worked with you at your carpenter's bench, so that we may, in like manner, lead peaceful and holy lives on earth, the prelude to the eternally happy one which awaits us in heaven for ever more.<sup>31</sup>

The church made no secret of the relatively recent interest in St Joseph, but noted how appropriate devotion was proving in the twentieth century; many 'once it began...seemed surprised that they had not thought of it before'.<sup>32</sup> A 1956 commentary on devotion to the saint by the American Jesuit priest Fr Filas explained Joseph's particular honour in the twentieth century as part of the church's divinely guided response to the problems of the modern world.

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<sup>31</sup> *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, 1 May 1961, p. 152.

<sup>32</sup> *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, 1 March 1961, p. 80.

While admitting that we cannot fully understand God's reasons for postponing the devotion over so long a period, we are able to see the wisdom of the divine plan as it has been unfolded before us. St Joseph was reserved for our times because our times need him as the saint of social justice and the saint of the family. Joseph the carpenter is to teach the value and dignity of labor, the holiness of marriage, respect for authority, social and interracial justice, and the critical importance of saintly family life - all vital issues that have to be stressed again and again to combat the modern errors of worship of the state, of wealth, of pleasure and of power.<sup>33</sup>

Like many saints, Joseph was a multi-faceted personality whose variety was part of the strength of his appeal. In the twentieth century he was promoted by the institution as one model of piety for men in an image which captured the anti-modernist preoccupations of the church and moved between the domestic and social sphere by asking men to consider their work and spirituality in the context of family support.

The absence of a representative number of married saints amongst the personalities of the canon reflected and encouraged the general assumption within the church that it was more difficult to be holy if you were married. In 1942, the *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart* confronted the assumption head on in a four part series on married saints. Writing in response to a comment from 'a young [male] friend who is very interested in Catholic Action',<sup>34</sup> Father H.D. Morris MSC did not argue for new notions of sanctity but admitted 'the difficulty' of finding time 'to live with God and pray continually'<sup>35</sup> when married. However, as proof that it could be done, he went on to discuss

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<sup>33</sup>Filas, *Joseph Most Just*, p. 11.

<sup>34</sup>*Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, 1 September 1942, p. 261.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

some married saints. He began by acknowledging that married saints were often unknown:

Do we think all women saints were nuns? And all men saints priests or bishops? We don't, of course. We know that there have been saints in every walk of life, but somehow we don't know much about the ones who were not priests and nuns. It's a great pity for their stories are exceedingly interesting and inspiring.<sup>36</sup>

Morris accepted the notion that life as a religious was more holy than married life, but also clearly implied that married Catholics should consider the 483 saints who had been married as potential role models. He recorded his surprise at the number he could find, and analysed the figure further:

Four hundred and eighty three married persons who have arrived at remarkable, extraordinary, heroic holiness. So many stars of the first magnitude, along with the more numerous unmarried saints in the firmament of heaven.

Of those four hundred and eighty three, how many were men and how many were women? It is extraordinary,<sup>37</sup> but they are almost exactly divided. Two hundred and forty three were men, and two hundred and forty were women! A pat on the back, I say, to us men, for beating the women. Also, since the numbers are so close, we can perhaps say God gives husbands and wives about equal chance of becoming saints.<sup>38</sup>

Even more interesting than the fact that a writer was making calculations about the canon, or the subtle revelation of a male perspective, was Morris's

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> The reader wonders why 'extraordinary', but the author does not say which way he was expecting the balance to be tipped.

<sup>38</sup> *Annals*, 1 September 1942, pp. 261 - 2.

suggestion that some of these saints had not simply overcome the obstacles to sanctity created by marriage, but were saints precisely because they had married.

...there are about sixty instances where *both husband and wife* have become saints. That's a most inspiring fact. I suggest to all my married readers: Why cannot husband and wife start out for haloes together? John must not sanctify himself *in spite of* Mary, but *with* her. Let both tread the paths that Cecily and Valerian, Elizabeth and Louis and so many other noble ones trod together.<sup>39</sup>

The examples which followed however, did not bear out this optimism, and the church's difficulties with married life and sexuality were apparent in the stories of couples retiring to convents and hermitages, or agreeing to live in continence together. A number of the saints Morris selected were also kings and queens, who had lived in the context of being expected to marry, and then, when relieved of the day to day responsibility of work and child rearing, had been able to find time to endow church institutions and work for charity. Morris was not able to offer a model who had attained sanctity through the day-to-day joys and sorrows, crises and constants of living with a partner and bringing up children. However, he attempted to highlight the similarities with his readers as he saw them. He introduced his concluding article on a selection of English martyrs by drawing attention to the fidelity to 'little things' that characterised the martyrs.

Be convinced that nearly all the Saints were men and women like yourselves, who simply did well their daily duties and for the rest made the most of what daily opportunities came their way. Here is the story of some of the English martyrs at the time of the Reformation. Each of them was married, each bore a name that might easily have been yours, each was found worthy to offer

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

his<sup>40</sup> life for Christ, because he had been faithful in little things. All of them have been beatified.<sup>41</sup>

It seems in this case that the writer doth protest too much. The overwhelming popularity of saints whose spirituality was clearly seen to touch the real life of the laity, most notably Thérèse of Lisieux, supports the view that holiness was generally thought of as inaccessible to ordinary people.

In his figures on married saints Morris obliquely reveals the discovery, that within this sub-section of the canon, the numbers of male and female saints are comparable.<sup>42</sup> Such equality of representation is found only within this sub-section. For the saints canonised between 1922 and 1962, the figures show an increase in the proportion of women being canonised: 37% compared to the existing canon where only 20% of the saints were women. However, the fact that all but four of these new women were members of religious orders, and that the lay women amongst them sat comfortably within the tradition of female saints who were designated simply 'virgin' or 'martyr', and often both, may have limited the ways in which ordinary Catholic women thought of them and restricted their accessibility as role models for everyday life in Adelaide or Perth.

The lifestyles of sanctity modelled by women in the canon of the saints were not only different to those of the men, but also tended to neglect the experience of most Catholic women.<sup>43</sup> While seven women martyrs of the early

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<sup>40</sup>Morris is including here two women martyrs Margaret Clitherow and Margaret Pole.

<sup>41</sup>*Annals*, 1 December 1942, p. 325.

<sup>42</sup>*Annals*, 1 September 1942, p. 262.

<sup>43</sup>Mary Jo Weaver, *New Catholic Women: A Contemporary Challenge to Traditional Religious Authority*, San Francisco, 1985, pp. 190 - 201. See also Donald Attwater, (ed), *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, Hammondsworth, 1965; D. H. Farmer, (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, Oxford, 1978.

church were named each time the eucharist was celebrated, so that the reality and possibility of female sanctity was honoured and acknowledged, the range of women's activities which were recognised as holy was relatively limited. While there were women saints who had been wives and mothers, variously of independent mind and spirit, able administrators, theologians, nurses, teachers, and spiritual guides, they were not remembered as such during these years in Adelaide and Perth. Instead Catholic periodicals abound with stories stressing their absolute obedience, celibate marriages or the choice of the cloister, masochistic penances, sexually bizarre martyrdom, the need to be free of such impediments to reflection as husband and children, or miraculous, otherworldly abilities. The tradition of excessive and eccentric penances is stronger among women than among men and Mary Jo Weaver has commented on the doubtful value of canonising women for such practices.

It is difficult to weight the relative advantages of a skewed tradition against the absence of one...Worse than that women were described sexually - by way of their virginity - and typically upheld for martyrdom, is the debasement that forms a leitmotiv in the hagiographical tradition. ...[I]t is true that one can find male saints with the same grotesque routes to sanctity - but there are fewer of them, and there are many other options: males can be canonised for being abbots, intellectuals, hymn writers, soldiers, kings, preachers, teachers, hermits, wisdom figures, crusaders and popes. And they can do so without having to go down in history for their virginity.<sup>44</sup>

The proportion of women being canonised has been seen to increase in the thirteen century as well as in the twentieth. Weinstein and Bell argue that as urban society developed in the thirteenth century the understanding of sanctity

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<sup>44</sup>Weaver, *New Catholic Women*, pp. 190 - 1.

broadened to include characteristics that were accessible to women. Virtue was seen to rest in mystical experience of God, extreme penance, unassuming charity, simple living and private devotion.<sup>45</sup> Carolyn Walker Bynum's work on gender in religion indicates that men who sought these characteristics were finding God in the reversal of the social order, while women found God in the same characteristics which were, for them, continuous with their social role. While self understanding and images of God differed, the style of sanctity that resulted from the acceptance of these characteristics as 'holy' has justifiably been identified as 'androgynous'.<sup>46</sup> Weinstein and Bell note that women feature almost as much as men in this category, and that the thirteenth century acclaimed these saints more widely than those who had more stereotypically 'powerful' personalities.<sup>47</sup> The style of sanctity which the institution promoted through canonisations in the twentieth century was broadly in tune with the affective, emotive style of devotion discussed at the opening of this section.<sup>48</sup> In addition the increasing political attention being paid to the role of women in Europe at this time possibly heightened awareness of women as part of society and hence as potential saints,<sup>49</sup> as well as prompting the church to supply other role models to counter the suffragettes. An increase in the number of women saints who fitted the model of feminine piety was part and parcel of the development of devotional Catholicism as a response to the modern world.

One key addition to the calendar in the twentieth century presented a woman very much in the tradition of the virgin martyrs. Maria Goretti died at the age of 12 in 1902 as a result of stabbing after efforts to seduce her led to an

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<sup>45</sup>Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, p. 224.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup>See above chapter 3.

<sup>49</sup>For example Delooz, 'Towards a sociological understanding of canonized sainthood in the Catholic Church', p. 201.

attempted rape. She was canonised in 1950 as a martyr to purity. The story of Maria Goretti's life as one of seven children in a fatherless peasant family at Nettuno south of Rome was offered to Catholic children in Australia as a model of virtue. While the specifics of what she had resisted were left vaguely unexplained in Catholic classrooms it was understood that she had chosen to die rather than commit a mortal sin against purity. Maria was interpreted as a martyr, like the women of the early church, whose death was a rejection of the accepted values of the world and a spectacular affirmation of the value of virginity.

From one aspect [Maria's death] was a case of history repeating itself. In the first centuries of the Church, the blood of the virgins Agnes, Agatha, Cecilia, and a host of others proved a tide to sweep away sensuality; becoming, in turn, the source of a life-giving stream of purity to run through the lives of Christians and through the whole Church. And in our own days of little reticence and too easily given intimacy, Providence offers us another virgin martyr of purity, recalling all to their dignity and duty, with a unique reminder to women of their most beautiful bodily adornment.<sup>50</sup>

In translating Maria's virtues for young people in Australia the church was at pains to stress the qualities of her life which made her 'heroic death' possible, rather than the death itself. The Goretti Guild was a devotional society which aimed to encourage imitation of the saint; it emerges from the records of the Passionist Fathers as one of the ways in which Catholics could consolidate their efforts towards purity following a retreat or mission. Apparently flourishing in Adelaide in the early 1950s just after Maria's canonisation, the Passionist records show 1216 school students were enrolled in the course of 12

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<sup>50</sup> *Southern Cross*, 28 February 1947, p. 9. See also Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*, London, 1985, pp. 71 - 2.

missions over two years from May 1952 to July 1954.<sup>51</sup> Membership involved a promise of daily rosary, monthly communion, and avoidance of 'bad companions, pictures, books' and other threats to purity. The Guild's leaflet, which carried a picture of the saint holding the palms of martyrdom, included a message from Maria's mother, Assunta Goretti, who had lived to see her daughter canonised. The understanding that Maria's resistance and death had brought joy and glory to her mother, and to the church, was never far from the surface of this devotion. In the year of her canonisation a student at St Aloysius College recounted the celebrations that had been held in honour of the saint and maintained the church's distinction between honouring the saint for the strength of her convictions, and exulting in her suffering at the expense of sexuality. It was a fine line to walk.

Little did Marietta, a humble, unlettered little peasant girl, dream that her life would so soon be held up as an example to the world, and she herself, a few years later, in the presence of her own loved mother, be revered and acclaimed in the mighty Basilica of Rome: at a time when she would normally have still been alive, possibly as a nun, or perhaps a happily married mother.

She was simply a little girl born at the turn of the Century (sic), living in obscure poverty, unselfishly absorbed in helping her mother and caring for her little brothers and sisters, with nothing in her heart but the ardent desire to love God, and to advance in that Divine love day by day.

If she had yielded to temptation and cruel urging, in the face of such danger, surely few would have blamed her: she might have thus tried to rid herself of the constant threat that clouded her nights and days and brought such a

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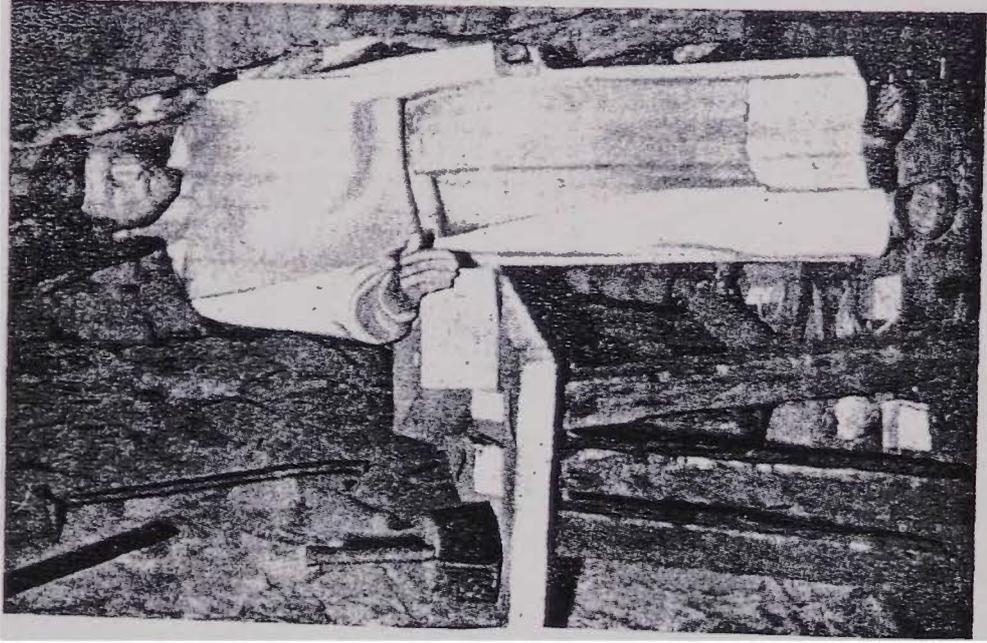
<sup>51</sup> *Mission Book*, 1952 - 54, Passionist Monastery, Glen Osmond, South Australia.

## *Goretti Guild*

*For the Protection and Leadership  
of Catholic Youth and Children*



*St. Maria Goretti*



**ST. JOSEPH, THE WORKING MAN.**



Figure 10. a) The young virgin martyr, St Maria Goretti, patron of youth and purity, as she appeared on the prayer leaflet distributed to children enrolled in the Goretti Guild. Courtesy of Passionist Monastery, Glen Osmund, SA. b) St Joseph the Worker, and c) St Joseph in the more standard image of foster father of Jesus. Courtesy of the author.

look of sadness her to lovely young face - and we would have been deprived of a saint. But she was chosen by God for the edification of a world in which after two frightful wars, the emphasis is placed on self-indulgence and fast living; where purity and goodness are openly scoffed at; and the tendency is to forget God in the frantic pace of today's civilization and its ruthless pursuit of pleasure.<sup>52</sup>

Although Maria Goretti was a lay saint the model of holiness the church drew from her life was one which stressed the need to avoid contamination in the world.

It is important to note that saints, like other religious symbols, can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Simply changing the categories of analysis can alter the pattern. This discussion has focussed on the saint's membership or otherwise of a religious order, to give some indication of their formal ties to the institutional church and the kind of lifestyle they had adopted, and on gender, to give some indication of both lifestyle and cultural stereotypes. However, different categories can be used to show different groupings. Sir Thomas More, for example, was canonised not for his marriage, but for his recollected life and martyrdom, over the same issue as Bishop John Fisher, thus joining the ranks of other martyrs such as Goretti and Marist missionary Father Peter Chanel. On the other hand, More's following amongst the intelligentsia in Adelaide focussed on his writing and linked him with the Dominican scholar Thomas Aquinas, while the Catholic scout movement adopted him because he 'feared God and honoured the King'.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, a number of saints canonised since 1922 were particularly devoted to Mary, and the causes of both Bernadette Soubirous and Catherine Laboure were assisted by their visions of Mary as the Immaculate Conception. Two of the lay women, Gemma Galgiani and Maria Mazzarello, were

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<sup>52</sup>Catherine Power, 'St Maria Goretti', *St Aloysius College Annual*, 1950, p. 24.

<sup>53</sup>*Scouts Prayer Book*, dedication, Prayer Book Collection, ACAA.

also visionaries. As Bill McSweeney has suggested, the chances of canonisation were also improved when the candidate was an illiterate peasant of simple faith from a country where the Vatican was having political problems with the intellectuals.<sup>54</sup> The scope of the canon of saints was one of its delights, providing Catholics with a range of possible favourites and any number of specialist or quirky patrons. Otherwise obscure saints could well have been powerful influences in some Catholic lives, and their very novelty might have been part of their appeal. However, as well as diversity in the overall pattern there was also the possibility of several strands of interpretation running through the cult of one saint. Thérèse Martin, a young French Carmelite canonised in 1925, who is the subject of the next chapter, was arguably the best known and most consistently honoured twentieth-century saint. By examining her life and the way in which it was interpreted historians gain access to an important dimension of the spiritual style of lay Catholics in Australia.

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<sup>54</sup>Bill McSweeney, *Roman Catholicism: The Search for Relevance*, Oxford, 1980. pp. 32 - 52.

Chapter 6: St Thérèse of Lisieux: 'The Greatest Saint of Modern Times'

O Miracle of Sanctity,  
 Of Virtue's 'little way',  
 Fine miniature so exquisite,  
 Bless us this day of May.  
 The God who made the pines  
 To brave the winter blast  
 The oak to spread its arms,  
 The fir with leaves downcast,  
 Who deigned to spin the beauty  
 The precious perfume of whose cup  
 In silence dies - so soon.  
 He willed that we should know thee  
 And how he led thee on  
 By lowly ways of sacrifice  
 The paths His Saints have gone.  
 O lovely star of this our age  
 Shine on us, Little Flower!  
 Rise up - fulfil your promises  
 And shed on us your rosy shower.

'La Petite Sainte Thérèse' ran the title of a poem by 'Una' which appeared in the 1930 *Annual of St Aloysius College* the Catholic girls' school run by the Sisters of Mercy in central Adelaide.<sup>1</sup> Its twenty lines provided a vignette of the multifarious devotion to Thérèse of Lisieux which swept Adelaide and Perth, as it swept the Catholic world in the years following the death of this young Carmelite nun in 1897.

Thérèse proclaimed a specific and accessible spirituality which offered the 'miracle of sanctity' to all. She was little, young, appealing, a miniature Madonna linked to Mary's month of May and like her called a 'star'; hidden and silent as the forest bloom during her life, she knew and demonstrated the power

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<sup>1</sup>'Una', 'La Petite Sainte Therese', *St Aloysius College Annual*, 1930, p. 42.

of God who carved the trees and had, like a strong tree herself, heroically withstood winter blasts of suffering. Her ordinary 'lowly' life, which earned her the title of 'Little Flower of Jesus' growing unnoticed among bolder blooms, was a recent and familiar story 'of this our age'. She had won her struggle for heaven and was triumphant in the many 'roses' of favour she could shower on the faithful who asked for her prayers. She was pictured near the poem in the traditional habit of her Carmelite order, clearly a nun, clearly familiar with the institutional church. She held a set of rosary beads in place of the symbolic roses of grace she usually carried. The beads also represented a significant aspect of her cult, for the young woman who had frankly declared that she found the rosary impossible to pray,<sup>2</sup> was often seriously misunderstood by her followers.

Thérèse Martin had died of consumption in the Carmelite convent at Lisieux on 30 September 1897 at the age of 24. An inconspicuous funeral had been held and an obituary notice, some of her own reflections on her life, had been sent to sister convents. These were events which apparently had no significance for Catholic life in Australia, but 28 years later the story of her seemingly uneventful life had made such an impact on the Catholic world that the young nun was a canonised saint, patron of innumerable church projects and the centre of a large and growing wave of devotion to her story and her spirituality.

A study of Thérèse's sanctity is a study of the many ways in which a religious symbol might be interpreted. Thérèse lived a short life in a very small circle of people, but after her death thousands and later millions of Catholics came to know her story and her approach to God through her short

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<sup>2</sup>Barry Ulanov, *The Making of a Modern Saint: A Biographical Study of Therese of Lisieux*, London, 1967, pp. 193 - 4, cites her remark, 'Saying the rosary is harder on me than scourging myself with an instrument of penitence.'

autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*. Her writing was read in many ways, and translated with many different emphases, not all of which were faithful to the text. One of the key aspects of studying the appeal of Thérèse is to identify the many diverse personas this historical woman has acquired. In Adelaide and Perth her cult was significant even before her beatification in 1923 and remained important beyond the Second Vatican Council. To understand Thérèse and the meanings of her 'Little Way of Spiritual Childhood' for Catholics in Adelaide and Perth is to understand a significant facet of the manner in which these Catholic people approached God.

Although she lived and died in obscurity, the details of this saint's story quickly became part of Catholic folklore. Born Marie-Françoise-Thérèse Martin, the youngest child of a devout jeweller and his equally religious wife, a lace-maker, in 1873, she grew up in Alençon and Lisieux, small towns in Normandy, with her four sisters. Following the death of her mother in 1877 when Thérèse was four years old, she was brought up by her older sisters Marie and Pauline in a close, quiet and pious environment. When Thérèse was nine, Pauline entered the strictly enclosed Carmelite convent in Lisieux, where she was joined four years later by Marie.<sup>3</sup> When Thérèse was fifteen she too entered that Carmel having persuaded the church authorities, with her father's support, to waive the usual requirement for a candidate to have turned 21. She spent nine years in the convent, working at the various daily tasks of prayer and housekeeping required of the nuns, living the austere life of only one meal a day for seven months of the year, little free time and heating in only one room of the

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<sup>3</sup>I. F. Grant-Duff, writing soon after her canonization, concluded that the trauma of repeated loss of mother figures had made Thérèse mentally ill, see 'A Psycho-Analytic Study of the Phantasy of St Thérèse of Lisieux de l'Enfant Jesus', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, vol. 5, 1925, pp. 345-53. This claim, which gained some currency, was disputed by the church and other writers. See for example Thomas Verner More, *Heroic Sanctity and Insanity: An Introduction to the Spiritual Life and Mental Hygiene*, New York, 1959. Monica Furlong's biography, *Thérèse of Lisieux*, London, 1987, explores some of the psychological drama of the saint's life.

building. In 1893 Thérèse's duties were expanded to include teaching the newcomers to the convent, although she was never formally appointed mistress of novices. Between 1895 and her final illness and death in 1897 she was directed to write the three documents which have been published as her posthumous autobiography *The Story of a Soul*. This book was edited by her sister Pauline, the Carmelite Mother Agnes of Jesus, and distributed to other Carmelite convents and people in contact with those communities instead of the usual obituary notice. As news of Thérèse's story spread, demand for the book grew rapidly and it was distributed widely and in great numbers, and translated into 35 languages in thirty years. The possibility of her canonisation had been raised in Rome by 1906;<sup>4</sup> she was beatified in 1923 and officially proclaimed a saint of the church amidst ever growing popularity on 17 May 1925.

Thérèse conformed to the standard profile for canonisation at this time when 80% of additions to the canon were clerics or members of religious orders and 65% from Spain, Italy or France.<sup>5</sup> She also had family and friends and a well organised religious order to sponsor her cause. However, this does not account for her speedy journey of 28 years through the Vatican bureaucracy which kept St Thomas More waiting 400 years, and Joan of Arc nearly 500. The church's answer, that it could not argue for long against such a flood of miracles as could be produced to demonstrate that Thérèse really was in heaven close to the ear of God, merely leaves the historian wondering not so much what constitutes a miracle, as what prompted so many Catholics, and diverse Catholics at that, to turn to Thérèse in their prayers in the first place. She was explicitly claimed as a saint for ordinary folk:

Saint Teresa (sic) buds in the heart of all men, in all lands and in all continents. She might be scorned by the

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<sup>4</sup>Barbara Corrado Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics: The Little Flower of Jesus and Her Times', *Church History*, vol. 57, 1988, p. 51.

<sup>5</sup>Pierre Delooz, cited Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics', p. 52.

sages and powerful of the earth, but this does not prevent her from being the beloved of the people, the beauty of society and the one who with her smile animates the world. She is small but she covers the earth.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time Pope Pius XII, at the pinnacle of the hierarchy, called her 'the greatest saint of modern times',<sup>7</sup> the *Southern Cross* made much of Archbishop Spence's devotion to her, and the *Record* numbered Archbishop Clune among her admirers. Why and how the spirituality of this young woman came to seize the spiritual imaginations and embody the ideals of Catholic men and women, clergy and laity, is an intriguing story.

#### *Thérèse's Popularity in Adelaide and Perth*

There is abundant evidence that Thérèse's story attracted the attention of Catholics in Adelaide and Perth. The Australian Catholic Truth Society published their pamphlet *Little Sister Therese of the Child Jesus* in 1914. Written by Dominican priest Father S. M. Hogan, who worked in Adelaide until his death in 1947, this pamphlet had run to five editions even before Thérèse was canonised. The Society followed this in 1915 with *Little Thérèse: A True Story for Little Readers* by Miriam Agatha the children's columnist in Sydney's *Catholic Weekly*. Proposals for Thérèse's beatification were reported while many others went unrecorded<sup>8</sup> and, while the subsequent awarding of the title 'Blessed' did not wildly excite Adelaide's *Southern Cross*, the paper did show more interest in her cause than in those of other saints-in-waiting, and noted that the Carmelite community at Marrickville celebrated 'the beatification of the little Carmelite

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<sup>6</sup>*Southern Cross*, 21 January 1927, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup>Pope Pius XII, in audience with Monsignor Germon, cited *Record*, 2 October 1947, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup>*Southern Cross*, 22 September 1922.

nun' with three special masses, a Solemn Triduum, where 'every effort was made to ensure the solemnity of the ceremonies and make them worthy of the great occasion'.<sup>9</sup> This report was wedged unobtrusively in a list of 'Australasian Catholic Notes' between news of the Sacred Heart Mission in Yule Island and the Golden Jubilee of the Mercy Sisters of Rockhampton - but it was reported. In 1924, again rather unusually for someone who was only officially 'Blessed', the *Southern Cross* included her feast in their liturgical calendar for September, together with news of a session of the Congregation of Rites in Rome which was considering evidence for her canonisation,<sup>10</sup> and leaflets with a novena of prayers 'in order to obtain Graces through the intercession of Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus, Carmelite nun' were in circulation.<sup>11</sup>

Thérèse was a saint of the people who was also firmly endorsed by the institutional church in Australia. The church's formal canonisation in 1925 boosted her popularity, and the *Record* joined the *Southern Cross* in a chorus of acclamation. It is difficult to say whether the 'official organs' of the two dioceses suddenly felt they should welcome Rome's new persona; or whether a groundswell of popular devotion had been growing steadily until it swept the editors along; or whether, as is most likely, the complex dialogue between popular and official piety meant her popularity could be given free reign once she had the unequivocal sanction of the hierarchy; but certainly the 'Little Flower' was big news. On 28 August 1925 the *Southern Cross* produced a special 'Little Flower Number' with reports of lectures and devotions held in her honour. It was estimated to have reached ten thousand readers.<sup>12</sup> At

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<sup>9</sup>*Southern Cross*, 28 September 1923, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup>*Southern Cross*, 26 September 1924, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup>Copies have been found in prayer books used by pupils at Loreto Convent Maryatville from 1924. The leaflets were printed in England. In Adelaide an undated pamphlet of novena prayers and litany in honour of Thérèse was produced locally and approved by Archbishop Spence. Copy held by the author.

<sup>12</sup>*Southern Cross*, 4 September 1925.

various times in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s the weekly Catholic papers ran regular columns of spiritual advice drawing on Thérèse's writings and keeping readers informed of the developments in her cult elsewhere. The earliest of these, the 'Little Flower's Corner' in the *Southern Cross*, was funded by donations and, removed as it was from direct influence of editorial policy, it provides valuable insight into the popular working of Thérèse's cult. Donations from these supporters of Thérèse also funded directly institutional schemes, such as the establishment of the parish of Colonel Light Gardens in Adelaide, while in Perth priests and people sustained a fund in the midst of the Depression for building a shrine in her honour in Perth's cathedral.<sup>13</sup> She was patron of the Children's Page in the *Record* and, after a competition among other candidates, she was elected by the young readers to that role in the *Southern Cross* as well.<sup>14</sup> In 1927 she was proclaimed co-patron of mission countries, and hence of Australia, together with St Francis Xavier. Her statue (but not Francis Xavier's) was introduced to parish churches throughout the country.

Far from being a passive figure head, Thérèse's help was actively sought and found for many projects.<sup>15</sup> She had said that she would spend her time in heaven 'doing good upon Earth' and her reputation as a miracle worker was world-wide. As Pierre Delooz points out, a miracle is a social event 'since it can only exist as a miracle if someone sees it as such'.<sup>16</sup> Both the constant invocation of Thérèse's prayers in the expectation of her effectiveness in patronage, and the reports of local miracles in Adelaide and Perth, throw light

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<sup>13</sup>See below, chapter 7 for a discussion of the shrine in Perth's St Mary's Cathedral.

<sup>14</sup>*Southern Cross*, 14 May 1926, p. 23. The list from which the children could choose was 1.St Joseph, 2.St Anthony, 3.St Vincent de Paul, 4.St Teresa (the Little Flower), 5.St Simeon, 6.St Aloysius, 7.St Joan of Arc, 8.St Agnes, 9.St Rose of Lima, 10.St Dorothy, 11.St John, 12.St Francis Xavier, 13.St Nicholas, 14.St Patrick

<sup>15</sup>Often these were diocesan projects relating to children and education - especially the Largs Bay and Goodwood Orphanages in South Australia and the much publicised Bushies Scheme for isolated country children in Western Australia.

<sup>16</sup>Delooz, 'Towards a sociological study of canonised sainthood in the Catholic Church', p. 208.

on the Catholic culture which sought her intercession as much as on the spiritual personality of Thérèse, and the role of 'signs and wonders' in her spiritual appeal is referred to again below. In the development of the parish of St Thérèse at Colonel Light Gardens in Adelaide her help was called upon in a particularly confident and insistent tone.

*Australian Devotion to Thérèse in Action: The Parish of Colonel Light Gardens, Adelaide*

Colonel Light Gardens was an area south of the city of Adelaide opened up for housing in 1924 in order to provide a garden suburb of 'the thousand homes' needed by working class families in Adelaide.<sup>17</sup> In anticipation of a flood of working-class Catholics into the area, the parish of Colonel Light Gardens was created and given to the charge of Father C. B. Crowley, who undertook the unprecedented task of building a church-school without any parishioners, and without the prospect of getting any who had the resources to fund buildings.

Father Crowley, whose 'life was devoted to the Little Flower and to the poor',<sup>18</sup> placed the project in the hands of Saint Thérèse. Catholics across the Adelaide diocese were appealed to for funds, and the Little Flower's intercession was sought consistently through the pages of the *Southern Cross*. While the monitoring of donations was not exactly a trial of her efficiency it was certainly billed as a measure of the local response to her assumed wish that the project succeed. In the first nineteen weeks of the campaign £1 719 was subscribed,<sup>19</sup> and a building to serve as church and school as well as a small wayside shrine to

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<sup>17</sup>Dean Jaensch, 'Stability and Change 1910-1938', in D.Jaensch (ed), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Political History*, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 232 - 33; also Susan Marsden, *Business, Charity and Sentiment: The South Australian Housing Trust, 1936 - 1986*, Netley SA, 1986, pp. 1 - 8.

<sup>18</sup>*Southern Cross*, 11 September 1925, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup>*Southern Cross*, 18 September 1925, p. 5.

Saint Thérèse were built on an acre of land in the new suburb. On the Sunday afternoon of 13 September 1925 Archbishop Spence blessed the buildings in a ceremony that a contributor to the *Southern Cross* (not a staff writer) claimed 'marked the materialisation and the ratification of the devotion to the Little Flower in South Australia'.<sup>20</sup> The day was promoted in Adelaide as one of pilgrimage, and appropriately enough as it was a dusty journey along Goodwood Road; trams stopped a mile from the new church and many people not on a direct tram route made the whole journey on foot. Between 4 000 and 5 000 people were reported to have attended the ceremonies: such an unexpectedly large crowd that the supplies of pilgrims' badges made up with Thérèse's image and blessed for the occasion ran out. The large crowd, the money subscribed, the fine weather (together with the showers for the farmers on the previous day) were all attributed to the patronage of the Little Flower. Presumably referring to the allegations of financial scandal surrounding the Thousand Homes Scheme Archbishop Spence was reported by the *Southern Cross* as saying:

St Teresa was showering down roses on all irrespective of creed or race. Whatever trouble there had been at Colonel Light Gardens was now a thing of the past. She would smile on them and give blessing to all, and prosperity would reign in the district.<sup>21</sup>

It was expected that prosperity would be helped along by the Catholic people, as part of their commitment to Thérèse. The Archbishop continued:

since all present loved and honoured [Thérèse] they could show it by making some offering to help the school...Whatever they gave, much or little, would draw down a blessing from Almighty God and give pleasure to the little saint<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

As the months went by the 'Little Flower's Corner' in the *Southern Cross* continued to publicise miracles she had worked, mostly overseas, and to collect donations for the parish at Colonel Light Gardens which were labelled 'Gifts to St Teresa'. From time to time Father Crowley or Miss Rose Donnelly of the Catholic Women's League, who collected donations, would remark on the progress being made. Their aim was two-fold: to increase devotion to Thérèse in South Australia and thus increase the number who could help in 'her work' at Colonel Light Gardens. They could generally report favourable progress in both aspects. For example, a typical comment was published in January 1926:

A client when handing in a donation this week, remarked that as we troubled Saint Teresa in our troubles so we should help with her work. His donation brought the total amount given to the Little Flower since May to £2,424/10/-. This fact one cannot help thinking is a miracle in itself and it should strengthen the faith of all those who are looking for the Saint's help, either for their own needs or on behalf of others. We started out with the simple conviction, based upon her own words, that if we tried to make her known throughout the State she would not fail us. Our conviction was justified. In her own time and way she will likewise help every client of hers throughout South Australia.<sup>23</sup>

A little over a year later they disclosed a slightly beleaguered past, a faltering over terminology that might point to a lay rather than clerical author, but a no less confident faith in Thérèse's interest in their work:

Many people predicted that interest in the Little Flower's Corner would not be kept up. They said it was just a novelty. But it still keeps going and this issue of the *Southern Cross* marks the ninety-third week on which, on the one hand something has been said about St Teresa, and on the other, sums of money have been acknowledged for her work; money which one cannot help believing has

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<sup>23</sup>*Southern Cross* , 22 January 1926, p. 9.

been sent at her suggestion or inspiration or whatever the proper word may be. Somebody said the other day that it would really not be fair of Saint Teresa to get people to send and keep on sending, unless she were doing or intended doing something for them in return. We don't suppose it would.<sup>24</sup>

Plans for further expansion of the parish were shelved when the financial strictures of the Depression finally intervened, but it is unlikely that the readiness to ask for Thérèse's prayers abated. In Perth she was seen as a powerful ally in prayers to combat the Depression. In 1931 the *Record* marked her feast day with a prominent article that lamented the economic suffering and asked its readers 'in these days when so much is needed could we turn to a more powerful intercessory before our Divine Master than the Little Flower?'<sup>25</sup>

#### *Thérèse as a Powerful Intercessor*

One of the keys to Thérèse's appeal was her ability as a miracle worker, an intercessor able to turn the logic of the secular world on its head. Belief in signs and wonders had been part of Christian tradition since Biblical times. As Barbara Corrado Pope has pointed out, belief in miracles had an added value in an increasingly anti-modernist Catholic culture where divine intervention could be seen as confounding prevailing belief in science and rationality.

Within that context [Thérèse] became the perfect Catholic heroine: an innocent, suffering, miracle-working girl who expressed and lived a profound alienation from the world.<sup>26</sup>

The political content of adopting Thérèse as a model was therefore very much at one with devotional spirituality focussed on the next world. In 1954 on the

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<sup>24</sup>*Southern Cross*, 4 February 1927, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup>*Record*, 3 October 1931, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup>Barbara Corrado Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics', p. 52.

occasion of the dedication of a basilica in her honour in Lisieux, Pius XII broadcast a message to pilgrims which the *Record* reproduced. The Little Flower was presented as the 'Living Antithesis of the World' who had rejected the values which made for material progress and secular success.

What a strange apparition in the midst of a world full of itself, its scientific discoveries and its technological virtuositities. ...While people and social classes are distrustful of one another and vie with one another for economic or political preponderance, Theresa of the Child Jesus appears with empty hands: fortune, honour, influence, temporal efficiency, none of these attracts her, nothing claims her attention but God alone and His Kingdom.<sup>27</sup>

By rejecting the political and economic concerns of the modern world Thérèse had achieved great sanctity. Pius XII called on Catholics to do the same.

'[T]he Lord has taken her into His house and confided His secrets to her: He has revealed to her all those things He has concealed from the wise and powerful.

'Therefore,' the Pope urged his listeners, 'do not rely on power, money, intelligence and all the other human resources. Seek for the one thing necessary. Accept the soft and light yoke of the Lord, recognise His sovereign domain over your persons, your families, your associations and your nations. ...Renounce the illusory supports of a completely materialist civilisation and you will find the true security which God gives to those who adore only Him.'<sup>28</sup>

The Pope's address acknowledged that Thérèse's style ran counter to the expectations of the world and would be especially difficult for contemporary Catholics to practice. However, trust in the power of God would counter the

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<sup>27</sup> *Record*, 22 July 1954, p. 13.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

resistance of modern society to true and unworldly values. The answers to prayers which Thérèse was able to provide to those who trusted her Little Way of Spiritual Childhood were signs that her spirituality was a valid approach to God.

The shower of roses that Thérèse had promised to let fall on the world after her death was usually understood to mean 'the gifts, spiritual and temporal, that are to come from heaven through her intercession'.<sup>29</sup> However, the literal and the symbolic sometimes came close to merging and

many thousands of her devots...looked for her roses as a sign of her intercession as delightful and as certain as the scarlet pimpernel that promised rescue...in Baroness Orczy's novels.<sup>30</sup>

The institutional church, adept in the use of symbols, incorporated the tradition of Thérèse's roses very early. A 1926 handbook used by priests in WA and SA, and reprinted in 1947, gave a formula for blessing roses in her honour.<sup>31</sup> Students at Our Lady of Mercy College in Perth regularly attended a weekday ceremony in the cathedral where rose petals were blessed in this way and given to the children as a reminder of the saint,<sup>32</sup> and on at least two occasions roses were distributed at ceremonies in Adelaide. Archbishop Spence distributed blessed flowers to 'all who were present' at a 'Little Flower Afternoon' at the Dominican school, Cabra, in 1925,<sup>33</sup> and students from St Aloysius College who attended celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of her death at the Glen Osmond Carmel returned "excitedly guarding our treasures - blessed rose

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<sup>29</sup>*Southern Cross*, 23 Oct 1925, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup>Barry Ulanov, *The Making of a Modern Saint*, p. 313.

<sup>31</sup>Rev. Paul Griffith, (compiler), *The Priests' New Ritual for the Convenience of the Reverend Clergy in the Administration of the Sacraments and Various Blessings*, New York, 1926, 1947, p. 301.

<sup>32</sup>Sr Joan Smith RSM, correspondence with the author, 14 November 1989.

<sup>33</sup>*Southern Cross*, 25 Sept 1925, p. 8.

petals, blessed 'Little Flower' water and souvenir cards'.<sup>34</sup> The external signs of devotion were an important part of the cult, and Thérèse's roses formed part of a world-view in which the faithful could everywhere see signs of the efficacy of her prayers.

Belief in the power of prayer to alter the course of events was the founding principle of Thérèse's contemplative order, and it remained a central conviction of her cult. In a public lecture given in Adelaide in August 1925 to celebrate her canonisation the image of Thérèse kneeling in front of the Christ Child in his mother's arms and strewing roses from his lap to the world below was used to explain 'the true Catholic understanding of the intercession of the saints' : Thérèse was not acting independently of God, but working as an intermediary. The report of the lecture in the *Southern Cross* was headed quite simply 'Heavenly Roses and How to Obtain Them'<sup>35</sup> and explained how willing Thérèse was to act as an intermediary. The Dominican lecturer, Fr Vincent McEvoy, noted cautiously that:

Undoubtedly the vast majority of cures and other answers to prayers are not miraculous in the strict sense - that is to say, not outside the scope of merely natural means. An event may, however be of supernatural origin without being miraculous. Many a time the answer to prayer will consist in God's guiding a person to the adoption of the necessary natural agency or means. Hence in making prayerful petition one should never neglect the dictates of human prudence, whilst at the same time relying confidently upon the intercessory power of prayer.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Saint Aloysius College Annual*, 1947, p. 14.

<sup>35</sup> *Southern Cross*, 28 September 1925, p. 13.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

The thaumaturgical ability of Thérèse was beyond dispute. McEvoy reminded his listeners that the church had endorsed her sanctity and that her prayers had been effective on behalf of local people.

...the Church has authoritatively declared that miracles have taken place through the intercession of Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face. ...It would be easy to draw an interesting narrative from the six volumes published by the Carmelites of Lisieux recording instances of the reputed intercession of their sainted sister. We need not however go so far afield. Writing in this South Australian Paper we shall do best to gather into a vase of our own some roses showered by her hands upon our Southern Hemisphere.<sup>37</sup>

Fr McEvoy gave five examples of Australian miracles - a local priest cured of tuberculosis, after a novena to the Little Flower produced a letter from Melbourne mentioning a new treatment; a girl still living in North Adelaide because 'the Little Flower asked God to leave her there' when doctors said there was no hope; a nun in Sydney able to see, thanks to Thérèse, although 'her retina is unconnected to her brain by any nerve'; and, just in case the sceptical would point to optimism or imagination as causes of these cures, McEvoy cited cases of a condemned horse cured at Peterborough and an unconscious child 'with an abscess spreading from ear to brain' sitting up, hungry, after being touched with a relic of Saint Thérèse at Balaclava.

However, Thérèse was not a saint because her prayers were powerful and she could work miracles. Miracles within the Catholic tradition were '*revealers* of sainthood [that]...signify *to others* that a given person intervened ...as a saint',<sup>38</sup> not causes of sanctity in themselves. Thérèse was therefore

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Delooz, *Towards a sociological study of canonised sainthood in the Catholic Church*, p. 207.



Office Central de Lisieux 37c



A BOUQUET OF ROSES

I wish to spend my Heaven  
doing good upon Earth.



ST. TERESA  
OF THE CHILD JESUS  
PRAY FOR US.



Figure 11. The many faces of Thérèse of Lisieux (a) from a photograph taken during her life in the convent, Office Central de Lisieux, 37c. (b) as she appeared on the front of an novena devotion in *The Key of Heaven*, c. 1924. Courtesy Mrs M. Crombie. (c) as the focal point for novena devotions in Adelaide, c. 1925. Courtesy of the Archdiocesan Catholic Archives, Adelaide. (d) an early 1960s image of a more slender and glamorous saint. Courtesy of the author.

perceived to be a miracle-worker because she was recognised as a saint. While a good deal of the emphasis in the story of Colonel Light Gardens was on her ability to get results, there was always the companion aim of making her better known, and so advertising her spirituality as a road to sanctity. The reasons for the widespread acceptance of the influence of her prayers, and hence of her spirituality, are complex, linked as much to the personas of Thérèse in her cult as to the individual woman of the late nineteenth century.

*Thérèse of Lisieux: Holiness in Many Different Guises*

In common with many saints within the canon Thérèse was interpreted and misinterpreted by the devout and took on a variety of spiritual meanings. She initially came to the attention of Catholics outside her community through her autobiography. This work, which had been written in three parts between 1895 and her death, had sold 47 000 copies by 1910, and by 1958 sales could 'only be counted in millions'.<sup>39</sup> The first editions of the autobiography were versions which had been edited with good intentions but distorting effect, by Mother Agnes, the eldest of the Martin sisters.<sup>40</sup> It was not until 1958 that an English translation of the original text became available in Australia. This version, by Biblical scholar Ronald Knox, was not definitive, but it was certainly a genuine attempt to recover the particular humanity of the saint. It arrived late on the scene of her cult however, and so, much of Thérèse's public persona grew from incomplete and adapted versions of her life. Her sheer popularity meant that myths were likely to multiply - the possibility that she had nursed soldiers in North Africa was discussed and debunked in the letter

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<sup>39</sup>Fr Francois de Sainte Marie OCD, 'Introduction', *Autobiography of a Saint: Therese of Lisieux*, trans. R. Knox, London, 1958.

<sup>40</sup>The editor of the facsimile edition counted 7000 variations and a quarter of the text omitted, according to the flyleaf of the 1958 *Autobiography*.

pages of Perth's leading secular daily the *West Australian* in 1933.<sup>41</sup> Even when they were working from 'the facts' as the autobiography presented them, Catholics, like all readers of texts, sifted meaning in a variety of ways. The disparity between the persona of Thérèse as she reached the public in Australia and the Thérèse revealed by a close study of the texts is similar in degree to the disparity between the untouched photographs of 'a strong-willed, almost strapping young woman'<sup>42</sup> and the progressively more idealised images produced as devotional art.

In looking for an explanation of Thérèse's popularity, the obvious starting place is her autobiography, and a thorough search of its meanings. In her analysis of the cult of St Thérèse, Barbara Corrado Pope has suggested six possible readings of *The Story of a Soul*, each resulting in a different face for Thérèse which appealed to a particular group of readers. These six subtexts of: 'a family romance, a story of model girlhood, a realistic drama of clerical life, a portrait of female autonomy, an ethical guidebook, and a theological treatise'<sup>43</sup> can all be traced in the image of Thérèse current in Adelaide and Perth, and together with the saint's acknowledged success as a miracle worker, help to explain her appeal.

*The Story of a Soul* related Thérèse's perceptions of God's dealings with her in her childhood and during her life in the Carmel. The spirituality she practiced and described was founded on an absolute and unshakeable belief in the overwhelming love of God for all his sinful creatures. Her 'little way of spiritual childhood' meant that even the smallest of souls, as Thérèse saw herself, could please God and hope for salvation by offering the God of Love the

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<sup>41</sup> *West Australian*, 18 August 1933, p. 15.

<sup>42</sup> Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics', p. 56.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

smallest of efforts and sacrifices, inspired by love as great as their human limitation would allow, trusting God to supply what was beyond them. The message of love stood in marked contrast to much of the rigid practice of Thérèse's own time. As Joann Wolski Conn has noted Thérèse was sounding a note of gentleness and compassion which had become unfamiliar in the harmonies of Catholic spirituality:

[I]n a Catholic milieu permeated by fear and rigorism  
Therese proclaims her experience and convictions about a  
God who is full of tenderness, mercy and love.<sup>44</sup>

Her belief in God's love was lived out with a toughness and independence of spirit which is often lost in the popular impression of her 'little way'.

It is worth noting too that the *Story of a Soul* and its author offended some Catholics as sentimentally limp and lifeless. Oral history shows some Catholics found her story 'too good to be true'.<sup>45</sup> Thomas Merton, the American Trappist, commented that Thérèse on first impression was 'a mute, pious little doll in the imaginations of a lot of sentimental old women'<sup>46</sup>; three of the Carmelite convents that received copies of the autobiography just after Thérèse's death 'did not like it at all';<sup>47</sup> and as early as 1934 Henri Ghéon wrote of the efforts he had to make to find the real Thérèse beneath the 'sugar roses' and bad art of her cult.<sup>48</sup> As Robert Orsi has pointed out, more recent commentators have also concentrated on Thérèse's strength and emphasised facets of her thoughts which are saintly in much less conventional ways.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Joann Wolski Conn, 'Therese of Lisieux from a Feminist Perspective', *Spiritual Life*, vol 28, 1982, p. 234.

<sup>45</sup>Interviews, Interview A, Name in confidence, 12 March 1990; Mr Trevor Nichols, Goodwood SA, 12 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

<sup>46</sup>Cited Conn, 'Therese of Lisieux from a Feminist Perspective', p. 233.

<sup>47</sup>Mother Agnes at the canonisation process, cited Introduction, *Autobiography*, p. 27.

<sup>48</sup>Henri Ghéon, *The Secret of the Little Flower*, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup>Robert Orsi, ' "He Keeps Me Going": Women's Devotion to Saint Jude Thaddeus and the Dialectics of Gender in American Catholicism, 1929 - 1965', in Thomas Kselman,

Michael Gallagher has recently linked her with Dostoevsky as a prophet of the twentieth century's struggle with doubt and atheism.<sup>50</sup> The anguished, desolated passages of her work which are the basis for his interpretation were not included in the early popular reckoning of what had made this woman a saint. The first impression is indeed one of sweetness and light.

Initial reaction to Thérèse in Western Australia and South Australia focussed on the twin themes of the family romance within which she spent her model girlhood. She was promoted particularly as a saint for children. The 1915 Australian Catholic Truth Society pamphlet by Miriam Agatha, the children's editor of Sydney's *Catholic Weekly* which tells the story of Thérèse's childhood stops at her entry into Carmel. It is subtitled 'A True Story for Little Readers' and assumes an audience of primary school aged girls. There was a certain fairy tale quality to the pamphlet, and Thérèse was painted as a heroine who could compete with the best of children's favourites:

Some children think 'saints stories' are dull - they would much prefer a story about a beautiful princess, with long hair and wonderful dresses. But this sweet little girl I am going to tell you about is a princess because the Heavenly Prince, Jesus, is her Brother.<sup>51</sup>

In this and other things, such as reading *The Imitation of Christ* and praying for sinners, the young readers were encouraged to imitate her.

You may be a princess too if you like - if you take the Little Heavenly Prince for your Brother, and try hard to be the kind of child He would have played with when He was a child on earth.<sup>52</sup>

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(ed), *Meaning in History : Innovative Approaches to European and American Religion*, Notre Dame, 1991, p. 138.

<sup>50</sup>Michael Paul Gallagher SJ, *Help My Unbelief*, Dublin, 1983, p. 17.

<sup>51</sup>Miriam Agatha, 'Little Therese: A True Story for Little Readers', Melbourne, 1915.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*

The story of Thérèse's childhood was more fully documented than that of almost any other saint. The details were sometimes slightly confused <sup>53</sup>, but the general impressions of Thérèse's devout early life were far from idle in Catholic imaginations. In 1925 Fr Vincent McEvoy asked Adelaide's Catholics:

How many a child's love has turned to Jesus through beholding the picture showing her strewing flowers before the Sacred Host! How many a first communicant has thrilled in imitation of her! How many a little one has more confidently made petition to the Mother of God through remembering how graciously she smiled upon the sick Teresa.<sup>54</sup>

For readers of the *Southern Cross* and the *Record* in the first years of her cult Thérèse was a 'child saint',<sup>55</sup> a protector of the young 'who knew naught but the innocence of Christ'.<sup>56</sup> The most common adjective used to describe her was 'little' and more often than not her devotees would forget her full name in religion, 'Sr Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face', and only refer to what they saw as the potent part of her title 'Thérèse of the Child Jesus'. The hymn produced in honour of her feast day in 1926 and distributed (both words and music) as a supplement to the *Southern Cross* provided typical images of her as well as commenting on her popularity in this guise:

Countless thy friends, sweet child of God  
They dwell in every land,  
Learned and simple, young and old  
Both rich and poor we stand -  
Stand neath thy banner, little queen  
And raise to thee our eyes  
Enthroned in the Great King's Court  
Beyond the star-lit skies.

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<sup>53</sup>For example, even Miriam Agatha gave her three sisters, not the actual four.

<sup>54</sup>*Southern Cross*, 28 August 1925, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup>For example, *Southern Cross*, 18 September 1925, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*

Prophetic at the dawn of life  
 Thy father's name for thee,  
 His 'little queen' doth queen it now  
 O'er hearts right royally....

Eternal light is thine today  
 Child after God's own heart!  
 Well-proven now thy little way  
 It leadeth where thou art.  
 Our hearts with holy joy are thine  
 Glad voices do we raise  
 In thanks to God for all his gifts  
 To 'little Saint Therese'.<sup>57</sup>

The reference in this tribute to Thérèse under the title 'Little Queen', her father's pet name for her, places her firmly in the role of a much loved child, and not an isolated child either, but one securely within the context of an idyllic Catholic family. Thérèse was very much a family saint. Her memories of her childhood glow with affection, and although she often denied herself the company of her natural sisters in the convent, as one of the many 'small things' she offered God, she always wrote of herself as part of her family. Faced with repeated partings in this world, Barry Ulanov comments that: 'Her vision of heaven was filled with families more tightly united than ever before'.<sup>58</sup> In a world where Catholics felt their vision of family life was under threat, this picture of the Catholic home as the seedbed for sanctity and enduring affection had great appeal. An added bonus, but a significant one, was that Thérèse and her family had lived in the far from distant past. An unusually self-reflective article published in the Children's Corner of the *Record* in 1947 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of her death identifies precisely these

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<sup>57</sup> *Southern Cross*, supplement to 1 October 1926.

<sup>58</sup> Barry Ulanov, *The Making of a Modern Saint*, p. 201.

characteristics of recent experience of a perfect Catholic home as key factors in Thérèse's popularity:

St Therese of Lisieux is one of the canonised saints of the Church. To us she is particularly interesting, because she is herself a modern, a saint of our own days... If she were still alive today she would be 75. ...St Therese is, perhaps the only solemnly canonised saint who has ever travelled in fast railway trains and who has been actually photographed by camera. Definitely she is a saint of our modern age; for that reason alone she specially attracts us.

Another attractive feature in her story is her wonderful home life. Today we Catholics have to listen to the decrying of home life. The joys of the large family group are little known and much despised by our contemporaries. St Therese came from a large French family, a model Catholic family, a family radiantly happy. Her heroic sanctity is due, after God, to that home. Her life pays and eloquent tribute to the enormous influence towards sanctity that is wielded by holy parents.<sup>59</sup>

As part of an ideal Christian family, it was not only Thérèse who was available to Catholics as a model, but also her parents. As Pope points out, the lives of Louis and Zélie Martin would have touched the experience of other married Catholics dealing with multiple births and deaths, and encouraged those who hoped to raise a child to be a nun or a priest.<sup>60</sup> The cause for their canonisations was promoted throughout the period.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>*Record*, 25 September 1947, p. 16.

<sup>60</sup>Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics', p. 57.

<sup>61</sup>For example, Gladys V. Towers, 'A Catholic Marriage: The Martins of Alençon, parents of St Therese of the Infant Jesus', *Annals*, 1 February 1961, pp. 43 - 4. Commenting on the cause of the Martins' canonisation in 1990 Kenneth Woodward noted the extremely atypical marriage of these two 'misplaced monastics' and argued that the church's view of marriage as second choice to religious life remained unchallenged by them. Kenneth Woodward, 'Who's missing from the litany of saints', *US Catholic*, 1 November 1990, pp. 29 - 33.

The emphasis in Thérèse's writing on a family life that was idyllic (although touched by tragedy) contrasted with her unromantic description of life in a religious community. Pope has identified this 'realistic drama of clerical life' as a third strand in Thérèse's appeal, one which would have struck a chord with priests and religious who were isolated in their vocations, and struggling to live them out, perhaps confronted with the spiritual dryness which Thérèse had admitted to and accepted so frankly. The extent to which the 'Little Flower' was socially constructed is seen when some writers of the time (often priests) can reveal her to be a soul of great strength and independence, quite masculine in character. For example, Pope cites four priests, writing between 1946 and 1961 who refer to Thérèse as 'virile',<sup>62</sup> and Pope Pius XI described her in a private audience with the Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux in 1932, as 'a great man'.<sup>63</sup> The Dominican author, Bernard Bro, reports that when the bishop told the nuns at the Lisieux Carmel this they were rather disconcerted at such a reference to 'their little angel'. It was not often remembered that Thérèse had described herself as 'armed for war', in line with Teresa of Avila's determination that her Carmelite daughters would be 'the equal of strong men'<sup>64</sup> and certainly not that she had wanted to be a priest.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics', p. 57, note 35.

<sup>63</sup>Bernard Bro OP, *The Little Way : The Spirituality of Therese of Lisieux*, trans. Alan Neame, Westminster, Maryland, 1980, p. 8.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup>Thérèse's desire for ordination is increasingly referred to, for example William Barry, 'Women and the Priesthood', *The Tablet*, 26 October 1985, p. 1121; Eric Doyle OFM, 'The Ordination of Women in the Roman Catholic Church', in Monica Furlong (ed), *Feminine in the Church*, London, 1984, cites the testimony of Sr G enevieve (C eline Martin) at Th er ese's canonisation process that Th er ese had felt God was minimising her disappointment at not being ordained by allowing her to die at 24, the canonical age for admission to the priesthood, *St Th er ese of Lisieux by those who knew her: Testimonies from the process of beatification*, C. O'Mahony OCD, (ed and trans.), Dublin, 1975, pp. 155 - 6.

The image of Thérèse as a model of courage and virility in the face of the rigours and loneliness of religious life did not gain as much currency in Australia (or elsewhere) as her gentle childlike face, but there are some suggestions that she was understood in this persona also. There is at least the fact that priests in Adelaide and Perth are on record as being particularly devoted to her, when there is virtually no public record of priests being devoted to any other saint in particular. Fr C. B. Crowley, Fr S. Hogan OP, Fr V. McEvoy OP, Fr P. McCarthy SJ and Archbishop Beovich himself were all known to admire her; Fr Kelly was the focus for the campaign to establish her shrine in Perth and Archbishop Clune happily supported that project. The reasons for their devotion are hidden, and Fr Hogan at least seems to have favoured her simplicity of spirit and abandonment above other more dynamic qualities.<sup>66</sup> Celebrations for her Golden Jubilee in 1947 saw the *Record* publish two articles which pointed to her strength and resilience in the face of a difficult life.<sup>67</sup> Significantly her masculine qualities were linked on the one hand to the energy with which she pursued her Carmelite vocation - an example of the tradition within Catholicism of awarding the status of honorary man to women who had proven themselves through monastic celibacy; and on the other to her heroism in self-control - which also evokes something of the hierarchy's traditional distrust of female impulsiveness and perversity. Both articles question the suitability of the title 'Little Flower'. One makes the point simply that she was a forceful personality:

That title is misleading if it makes us picture her as nothing more than sentimentally pious and pretty. She is much more than that. In her self conquest she displays a strength that staggers the mind in trying to grasp it.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>*Record of the Dominican Priory, North Adelaide, 1947.*

<sup>67</sup>*Record*, 25 Sept 1947, pp. 7, 16.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 16.

The other explicitly calls attention to her femininity as a mere veil for her tough spirit:

What a test of vocation! What courage, what constancy she showed! Her other name, the Little Flower, may mislead us. She was as pure and as beautiful as a little flower, but beneath her feminine delicate exterior lay concealed a soul of steel.<sup>69</sup>

This perception did not simply evolve with time. The powerful impact of her spirituality had seen Fr McCarthy comment at the opening of Colonel Light Gardens that

[Thérèse] was a man's saint. There was nothing feminine and puerile about devotion to her.<sup>70</sup>

However, he did not follow with a straightforward statement of her strength, but couched his appreciation in a certain wonderment that a female child had reached such heights, attempting to explain why men might be drawn to her:

As a weak child she stood up and showed what a child could do, and men understood and appreciated. That was why they had come in their multitudes there today at the invitation of their parish priest. They understood that a little child should lead them...<sup>71</sup>

The case rang hollow and in practice, as with much in the devotional style of Catholicism, she seems to have been much less a 'man's saint' than a woman's.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>70</sup>*Southern Cross*, 18 September 1925, p. 16.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup>Orsi, ' "He Keeps Me Going": Women's devotion to St Jude', pp. 137 - 140, notes that devotion to the manly figure of St Jude was also practiced mainly by women. He suggests that devotion to St Jude developed in the South Chicago parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in preference to the Little Flower whose statue was also in the church, in part because of Thérèse's excessively feminine persona.

Thérèse's strength and independence of spirit within a conventional structure have led Pope and others to suggest that she offers a particularly useful model for women within the patriarchal church. Joann Wolski Conn has considered the advantages that Thérèse's emphasis on the individual as an 'autonomous ego', a separate actor in a divine drama, might provide for women seeking to negotiate a response to a Church where they had little decision making power.

Thérèse demonstrates a consistently developing appropriation of her own original vision of life...she trusts her own experience of God and her own insight...[When misunderstood] she makes a basic effort to clarify her ideas but does not pursue the explanation. She does however, peacefully persevere in her own original vision.<sup>73</sup>

Conn's reading of Thérèse's vision and its links to feminist concerns depends on a closer scrutiny of the autobiography and letters than was common in forming the popular view, but the sanction which Thérèse gave for mentally distancing oneself from difficulties by sharing them with an ever-loving God could still have come through as a useful strategy for women. As Pope notes

[S]he validated the tendency that women have in patriarchal systems to concede authority to men while doing their own thing - like choosing and shaping their own devotions and sticking to their ethical priorities.<sup>74</sup>

Thérèse's spirituality also fitted the more conventional understandings of femininity common in the Church of her times. Pope comments:

hers was a very feminine kind of good, in the nineteenth century meaning of the word 'feminine'. It was self-

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<sup>73</sup>Conn, 'Therese of Lisieux from a Feminist Perspective', p. 234.

<sup>74</sup>Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics', p. 58.

abnegating, passive, smiling; it was hidden, it revelled in its littleness.<sup>75</sup>

Indeed 'hidden' is one of the most frequently used words in her book.<sup>76</sup>

However, there was a certain paradox in Thérèse's understanding of being hidden, in that it is not an end in itself, but the means to a more perfect spiritual state, to a greater glory for God. This added an important dimension to her appeal to women; one which makes Pope's sub-text of 'female autonomy' a more complex story. Thérèse took the religious symbol of being 'hidden and little' from her male dominated culture, and injected it with meaning particular to her experience as a woman. Like the medieval women Carolyn Walker Bynum has studied, Thérèse used a man's symbol in a woman's way, and saw herself withdrawing from the world to express

not so much reversal or renunciation of worldly advantage as the deepening of ordinary human experience that came when God impinged on it.<sup>77</sup>

While the orthodox understanding of Catholic monasticism hinges on the paradoxical (and, Bynum would say ,feminine) understanding that monks and nuns retire to the cloister not to reject the world, but to love and serve it better, in the masculine climate of the Church of Thérèse's time, withdrawing from the world had come to signal much more clearly a rejection of it. Thérèse too was alienated from most of the mainstream secular culture, but her move to the convent was much more a gentle and obvious development of her life at home than any dramatic rupture with the world of her family. Difficult as it was in some respects, she was, in the end, only going around the corner to where two of

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, p. 59.

<sup>76</sup> Conn, 'Therese of Lisieux from a Feminist Perspective', p. 236.

<sup>77</sup> Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: the religious significance of food to medieval women*, Berkeley, 1987, p. 295.

her sisters were already living to perfect a lifestyle she had virtually already adopted.

The spiritual message which Thérèse lived out can be seen as an example of the powerful dynamic in women's spirituality, whereby women's symbols for their relationship with God 'did not reverse social fact, but enhanced it'.<sup>78</sup>

Thérèse's one direct reference to the place of women in *The Story of a Soul* illustrated this approach. She reflected that the strictures imposed upon women by church and society were a share of Christ's sufferings and preparation from heaven.

I still can't understand why it's so easy for a woman to get excommunicated in Italy! All the time, people seem to be saying: 'No you mustn't go here, you mustn't go there; you'll be excommunicated'. There's no respect for us poor wretched women anywhere. And yet you'll find the love of God much commoner among women than among men, and the women at the Crucifixion showed much more courage than the Apostles, exposing themselves to insult and wiping Our Lord's face. I suppose he lets us share the neglect he himself chose for his lot on earth; in heaven, where the last shall be first, we shall know more about what God thinks.<sup>79</sup>

It was part of women's understanding of themselves in nineteenth century Catholic France that they were destined to be daughters and wives, obscured and hidden as individuals. Thérèse did not challenge that prevailing view, but translated her destiny to being the little spouse of Jesus, cloistered from the world. Bynum would suggest that in synthesizing her experience as a woman with paradoxical Christianity Thérèse finds 'it is finally the humanity that we most despicably are that is redeemed'.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Bynum, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast*, p. 279.

<sup>79</sup>*Autobiography*, p. 141.

<sup>80</sup>Bynum, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast*, p. 290.

This particularly feminine approach to God ran through the two final and most enduring of the sub-texts of *The Story of a Soul* in which readers found both theology and ethics. The message that God loves humanity as it is resounded throughout Thérèse's writing. This was the foundation of her theological treatise on God as Love. Thérèse's ethical system of finding God in the ordinary, everyday activities of life gave almost perfect expression to the notion of a spirituality of continuities, and was in itself a paradoxical definition of spiritual greatness consisting in small, hidden things.

That Thérèse's sanctity was made of the stuff of everyday activity is one of the frequently recurring themes in the commentaries on her life. Like an 'alchemist of old' she 'transmutes her workaday worries to heavenly treasure'.<sup>81</sup> It was the 'commonplace trials of everyday',<sup>82</sup> that were the theatre in which Theresian spirituality was played out, and this was a theatre to which everyone had access and in which everyone could be the star performer.

Perhaps one indirect measure of the acceptance of her message that ordinary life was sacred was the emphasis on the here and now of the local scene in stories of devotion to Thérèse. In Adelaide's earliest devotions there was a marked concern with establishing a 'South Australian' response to her story. This extended to an unusual awareness of the environment:

Benediction was over and lovers of the Little Flower began to disperse. It was a glorious day. The hot beams of the Australian sun were absent, the invigorating freshness of spring enfolded us. Eyes wandered from the chaste image of the Little Flower to green hills in the distance. Teresa was leading our eyes and hearts to the heights.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Southern Cross*, 25 Sept 1926, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Southern Cross*, 18 September 1925, p. 5.

In 1952 the *Record's* whimsical column by 'Francis Gilbert' used the notion of Thérèse being despatched by the 'Celestial Jubilees Committee' to special duties in WA to comment on the role of religion in two suburbs of contrasting socio-economic circumstances. Following her instructions, the young and childlike saint of 'Gilbert's' column arrived in Dalkeith where the area surrounding the local Carmel was caught up in the things of this world.

Therese was dumbfounded. Western Australia! She couldn't speak a word of Arunta, nor even make a damper! However, orders were orders and she left without fuss for Dalkeith. ...The good nuns were in the midst of making preparations for her feast day, but there was another topic of conversation. It seemed that some of the delicately nurtured people in the parish were objecting to the bell being rung in honour of the holy Rosary. ...For all her simplicity, Thérèse found that a little hard to swallow. Nedlands, she had found, was not a working class suburb. There was no question of men worn out by physical toil on night shift being unseasonally aroused. The late sleepers were frequently people whose livers were disordered through dissipation.<sup>84</sup>

The celestial visitor was sent on to more congenial surroundings in Gwelup, a market gardening suburb with a high proportion of European migrants.

'Francis Gilbert' took the opportunity to comment approvingly and condescendingly on 'feste' - style Catholicism and to predict that simplicity would triumph over the European politics which aroused suspicion of the church.

Thérèse was a little flustered on arriving at Gwelup. [S]he didn't know how the Slav and Italian people would receive a young French woman. ...Then she discovered, with child-like delight, that they had planned a procession

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<sup>84</sup>*Record*, 2 October 1952, p. 5.

in her honour. She recalled the ecstasy of her childhood - 'The Fetes! How she had loved them!

...My task here, she ruminated, will be easier than in Nedlands. Being myself a little white flower I shall enjoy working with them in the fields. They are near to nature, even though their faith may sometimes rely heavily on mere externals, their roots are solidly planted. Some of them have been lead astray by poisonous politics, but their simplicity will eventually let in the Grace of God.<sup>85</sup>

Thérèse was perceived as a mediator between people and institution. who favoured the simple and unpretentious approach to God.

Many of the anecdotal examples of Thérèse's 'Little Way of Spiritual Childhood' drew on her experience as a woman involved with domestic duties, living with others - smiling kindness to those she did not like, not complaining when her face was splashed with dirty laundry water, choosing an old and ugly jug rather than a pretty one, swallowing foul tasting medicine slowly- were all examples ordinary people, and women especially, would identify with, and all offered Thérèse the scope to forget herself and set about re-interpreting the experience as a heaven-sent opportunity to put her love for God and neighbour into practice. This system 'put Therese at the centre of a drama in which any of the faithful could star'. God was the audience for a one-actor show which encompassed every moment of each life. The consciousness that God was watching changed the perspective on even the most routine tasks and small challenges, so that they became dramatic opportunities to act in ways pleasing to God. It is often said that Thérèse's spirituality appealed because it was 'unheroic'. Certainly it was straightforward and compatible with everyday life. But, rather than being 'unheroic', this spirituality redefined heroism and put the opportunity for heroic effort firmly in the context of a God-watched daily life.

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

Thérèse was seen as a particularly appropriate model for Catholics in the turmoil of the Depression - she approached God with an intense and personal devotion and valued a life of prayer over direct involvement with the world. Pope has identified this as part of her appeal: Thérèse provided a model for maintaining great personal integrity by keeping God at her side and the world at arms length. People identified with her as a saint of modern times - she had travelled by train, as they did; had her picture taken, as they did. She knew something of the industrialised West and she rejected it as completely as she could. The broader concerns of the social encyclicals of Leo XIII (to whose knees she had tenaciously clung to ask permission to enter the convent before the prescribed age) and those of his successors did not really impinge on the drama of her sanctity. This was in tune with the aspirations of the majority of Catholic men and women (but perhaps especially women) 'who recoiled from the changing political and intellectual currents of modern life [and found] this emphasis on personal morality to be a validation of their existence'.<sup>86</sup> For Catholics in Perth and Adelaide who felt themselves to be a minority group embattled against prevailing powers, her alienation from the modern world mirrored their separate development of schools, sporting and social events.<sup>87</sup>

Thérèse's spirituality was regarded as an ideal way to make sanctity available to the people in the pews of the Church, the rank and file who had no time to become spiritual specialists:

She...realised that for the majority of us the higher approaches to prayer and mysticism are out of the question. She realised that if we are to attain sanctity it must be done in our own walks of life...[ Thérèse speaks] to and for the many - the unpretentious men and women

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<sup>86</sup>Pope, 'A Heroine without Heroics', pp.58 - 9.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 55. Pope points out that this is also the case in France, England and the USA.

who were troubled, who were confused, who wanted an intelligent interpretation of the inklings they felt within them. She wanted to make us saints as she herself was, to love and serve God as she loved and served Him.

Now we cannot like the fathers of old leave our homes and our families and retire to the desert to meditate and pray. We probably won't have to face the firing squads in testimony of our Faith, so the path to sanctity must be found elsewhere. It is found by doing the most ordinary actions of our day extraordinarily well, and doing them for Our Lord, not changing what we do, but how and why we do it.<sup>88</sup>

Thérèse offered an autonomous, self-directing programme of action which was, as the *Record* hastened to add, compatible with the requirements of the institutional Church.

In offering up to God all our daily thoughts and words and deeds, we are making our lives one big sacrifice, united to the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Perpetual Sacrifice of the Mass.<sup>89</sup>

Thérèse's revolutionary re-emphasis of God's love did not confront the institutional emphasis on God's justice in any direct challenge. The message of this solemnly professed and loving daughter of the Church simply permeated the existing order and structures. For example, a contributor to the *Southern Cross* acknowledged both Thérèse's place in the official canon of the Church, and her difference in style:

A St Augustine, a St Dominic or a St Thomas might, by severe scrutiny, conquer heresy and win followers; this saint of yesterday overcame all by her simplicity and love, Jesus of the Mount of Beatitudes is the Jesus who cleansed His Father's temples of the money lenders: but

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<sup>88</sup> *Record*, 2 October 1947, p. 16.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

most people prefer the gentler Jesus. Teresa is the gentle saint, whose soul was consumed with love and love alone.<sup>90</sup>

Thérèse's boundless confidence in God offered Catholic lay people a particularly healthy approach to their faith. If, beneath the sugar and the cherubs, they could get to the heart of her thinking, they found a woman who approached God utterly without pretence, who prayed spontaneously and simply and who had written frankly and as honestly as she could of her spiritual journey.

Far from being monolithic, Catholic devotional spirituality had a number of guises. As the interwoven threads of Thérèse's sanctity were gradually pulled apart, she was made available to an enormous number of Catholic people in a variety of ways. She provided Catholics in Perth and Adelaide with a 'little way' to sanctity that could be lived in everyday life. Catholic experience of Australian life was often that of being 'other' and separated from the mainstream. Thérèse provided a model for coping in an alienating world. Her spirituality did not encourage her followers to challenge the existing order, but showed how they could protect themselves from the world by conducting their own drama of loving within it. The likelihood that this negotiated response appealed particularly to Catholic women is an important consideration in further analysis of the affective strand in the spirituality of the time. Like other 'feminine' devotions, Theresian spirituality of love and trust in God's mercy was not designed to transform social structures, but it certainly brought Catholic people to the centre of their own spiritual adventure and highlighted the opportunities of acting for God in the everyday world. In fostering a sense that sanctity was accessible to all, the highly personal drama of devotional spirituality was, perhaps paradoxically, laying some of the foundation for

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<sup>90</sup>*Southern Cross*, 18 September 1925, p. 5.

Gospel focussed movements of the Catholic Action era, which sought to move ordinary Catholic people to apostolic action in their world.

### PART III: AN INSTRUMENTAL SPIRITUALITY: TOWARDS ACTIVE CATHOLICISM

#### Chapter 7: Catholic People and Public Prayer

By examining the ritual life of Catholicism in Australia, historians are taken closer to the expressive dimensions of faith in the lives of Catholic people. While Catholic liturgy was heavily governed by the rubrics of the institution, the rhythm of public prayer spoke a language of signs and symbols quite different from the definitional style of the catechism. The public prayer of the church, especially the sacrament of the eucharist, was a key indicator of Catholic identity and an important guide to both the structure of the institution and the way the faith of lay people was perceived within it.

In the years leading up to 1962 Catholic liturgy in Adelaide and Perth caught echoes of a broader 'Liturgical Movement' in international Catholicism which aimed to encourage priests and people to 'pray the mass' together. Such an understanding of the eucharist as a celebration in which all should participate was strange and slow to gain acceptance in Australian parishes where ordinary Catholics were accustomed to a Tridentine liturgy in which they were spectators, prayerful or passive observers of the sacred action of the altar. However, the model of the Catholic community as the Mystical Body of Christ, which became prominent in some circles of Catholic thought from the late 1930s, was a powerful springboard to liturgical renewal. As lay people became more commonly identified as members of the Mystical Body and active participants in the apostolic mission of the church, so the need for inclusive and participatory styles of public worship became increasingly evident.

The Australian explorations of liturgical renewal in the years between 1922 and 1962 are important in this thesis on two counts. At one level changes in the liturgy were preparatory and complementary to the development of the lay apostolate and thus provide a continuing narrative of the role of ordinary Catholics in the institution. At a step apart from this, the liturgical narrative is itself interesting to historians not simply for what it reveals of lay spirituality, but also as a method of communication. The liturgy represented Catholicism in a highly expressive mode in which values and commitments were articulated through ceremony.

### *The Role of Liturgy*

The sacramental system was designed to take church members from the cradle through the landmarks of life to the grave. For ordinary Catholic people the sacraments were key aspects of their experience of church, and also, though not always, of God. The participation in the visible external rituals and the fulfilment of institutional obligations were central, in the minds of most church-going Catholics at least, to being a 'good' or 'practising' member of the church. Thus, the orthodox Catholic definition that sacraments were signs of God's grace at work in the world took on increased significance as participation in the sacraments was read as a social sign of Catholic identity.

Participation in the sacrament of the eucharist, or fulfilment of the obligation to hear mass on Sundays, was an especially important indicator of Catholic identity throughout the 40 years leading to the Second Vatican Council. Historians have found church attendance a valuable, although sometimes dissembling, indicator of lay piety. Both Emmet Larkin and F. Boulard have observed that in an era when religious practice was obligatory the number of

people present or absent from Sunday mass is a starting point for analysis.<sup>1</sup> As Natalie Zemon Davis has shown, the acknowledgement that attendance was significant invites more detailed study of the liturgy itself as a way of edging closer to the religious experience of the laity. She advocates an approach to liturgy which is sensitive not only to the doctrine implicit in the services, but also to the metaphor that the performance of liturgy provided for the relationships within a community. She sets broad terms of reference for her enquiry.

By metaphor I mean all those features of language, gesture and movement which make statements about human relationships. By performance I mean the actual event, as close as we can get to it, as experienced by worshippers in a given time and place.<sup>2</sup>

Attendance at Sunday mass was an action which represented a variety of relationships between Catholics and the institutional church. Oral evidence reveals that many individuals defined themselves as Catholic or not Catholic according to the criterion of participation in the liturgy and sacraments of the institutional church. Catholics who were absent from the Sunday mass were regarded by church authorities as aberrant, and ran the risk of being labelled 'careless' or 'lapsed'. For some, among the significant proportion who did not regularly fulfil their 'Sunday obligation',<sup>3</sup> mass marked particularly important

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<sup>1</sup>Emmet Larkin, 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland', *American Historical Review*, vol. 77, 1972, pp. 625 - 652; F. Boulard *An Introduction to Religious Sociology*, London, 1960, p. 3, cited Robert Towler, *Homo Religiosus: Sociological Problems in the Study of Religion*, London, Constable, 1974, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Natalie Zemon Davis, 'From Popular Religion to Religious Cultures', in Steven Ozment, (ed.), *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research*, 1982, p. 331.

<sup>3</sup>Precise figures are not available, but the Adelaide Episcopal visitation records for two parishes with relatively detailed survey history provide a guide to practice over the period.

<u>Number of Catholic People</u>	<u>'Should' attend</u>	<u>'Do' attend</u>
Hectorville, 1941	450	200
1947	386	350
1958	3500	1800

occasions - Christmas, Easter, personal landmarks, feast days.<sup>4</sup> Some Catholics from traditions outside the dominant Irish strand of faith practice, such as those from Italy, Yugoslavia, Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe, regarded the mass as a particularly momentous interruption to the celebration of family which usually centred on the home. For others attendance at the mass was in itself an expression of family solidarity - a public declaration of unity which was valid even when the members were dispersed by distance, or simply attending different masses in the parish because of commitments to sodalities. The public worship of Catholicism also functioned at a social level in that young men and women could be fairly sure that prospective Catholic marriage partners would be there.

At a broader level the community as a whole read attendance at mass, and especially reception of communion, as an announcement of Catholic identity. Prospective employers, men concerned to recruit for quasi-secret Catholic organisations such as the Knights of the Southern Cross or the Catholic Social Studies Movement, sodality leaders and Catholic Actionists as well as undifferentiated parishioners who were concerned about the fervour of their neighbours or simply curious about who was, in the parlance of the day, a 'practical Catholic', used the weekly public worship as the main criterion of orthodoxy. On similar grounds of encouraging Catholicity organisations as diverse as the Catholic Guild for Social Studies, the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Newman Society and groups of old scholars from Catholic schools brought

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Glenelg, 1941	1750	1400
1948	2150	1400
1952	3400	2900
1958	4400	3080

See also David Hilliard, 'God in the Suburbs: The Religious Culture of Australian Cities in the 1950s', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 97, 1991, pp. 399 - 419.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem 1880 - 1950*, New Haven, 1985, examines the interaction between culture and religious practice in Italian Harlem.

their members together for General Communion. On these occasions members would attend mass together, receive communion and gather for a formal breakfast at which they would be addressed by their chaplain or another appropriate speaker.

Ritual is a powerful way of bonding a community. Football crowds know this, as do the Australian secularists who annually feel the pull of Christmas and New Year celebrations, and the advertisers who exult the Aussie barbecue in the absence of other cultural forms. The public prayer of Catholicism has long been recognised as an important influence on the whole community of the church. Natalie Zemon Davis has suggested that the sixteenth century reformers of Catholic liturgy were faced with questions of finding new 'markers for group identity and social linkage and exclusion'<sup>5</sup> so that the powerful group effect of the Catholic liturgy would not be lost. John Bossy has also noted that the balance of interpretation of the mass, either as sacrifice or sacrament, was reflected in the understanding of the church community as an 'assembly of distinct parts' or 'a transcendent whole'.<sup>6</sup> The religious sociologist Purnell Handy Benson similarly observed in 1960 that liturgical actions were a vital influence on the organisation of church culture.

The heart of religious organization is found in the activity of worship. While worship to the outsider may appear to be couched in apparently inconsequential forms, the manner in which worship is performed according to the convictions and aspirations of the participants profoundly affects the entire structure of the church.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Davis, 'From Popular Piety to Religious Cultures', p. 325.

<sup>6</sup>John Bossy, 'The Mass as a Social Institution', *Past and Present*, no. 100, 1983, p. 35

<sup>7</sup>Purnell Handy Benson, *Religion in Contemporary Culture: A Study of Religion through Social Science*, New York, 1960, p. 616.

But, for all that Sunday mass was a public occasion and open to interpretation as an expression of community, the liturgy itself generally encouraged an individual experience of God, rather than a shared action of worship.

In the Tridentine liturgy the people had almost no active role, but were simply present while the priest prayed on their behalf. From the 1920s there were echoes of the liturgical movement in Australia which aimed to encourage a greater sense of participation in the lay congregation, and these will be examined below, but efforts at renewal were mostly peripheral to parish life. The dominant understanding of praying the mass was to be present in the sanctified space while the priest performed rites that replicated Calvary, and in this sacred setting to offer individual prayers which could be quite tangential to the liturgy. In order to understand the spirituality of ordinary Catholics it is important to examine more carefully the experience of church and of God which the institutional church offered through its liturgical practice.

#### *The 'Meanings' of the Mass for the Laity*

From the moment a Catholic man or woman walked into their parish church the environment immediately began to define their relationship to the sacred. While some of the complex interaction between architecture, church furnishings and spirituality are considered below, it is important to note from the outset that, as the focus of the eucharist, the high altar, the tabernacle and the surrounding sanctuary were a sacred space out of bounds to the general congregation. The location of the sacramental sacrifice was railed off from the main body of the church and to receive communion the people came forward from their places to kneel at the altar rails at the edge of the sacred space. In her study of the mass in a Tridentine-style convent Suzanne Campbell-Jones

has noted that the division between sacred and profane space reinforced the distinction between God and the world which the mass was to mediate.

In the context of the Gothic chapel, the nun comes close to the immanence of her God but not too close...The nun at mass was witness to a drama. A drama played out in a representation of cosmological space: the high altar, the shrine representing the Other-world; the area before the altar, liminal space; the place for the congregation, this World. The action takes place in cosmological time, in which mythological events are replayed for the present.<sup>8</sup>

The customary genuflection to honour the Blessed Sacrament on entering the church and passing the high altar, the expectation that voices would be hushed and talking kept to a bare minimum so as not to disturb others at prayer or appear irreverent, and the flowers, candles and other church furnishings all reinforced the notion that the church was a sacred and separate world.

The understanding of the mass as the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, in atonement for the sins of human beings, was central to Catholicism in the period under review. The catechesis of the church presented the idea of Christ's sacrifice for the world's sins in the mass as straightforward and unquestionable. Father McMahon's brisk prose moved the Grade Four correspondence students of his Bushies' Scheme through the mystery of the sacrifice with a no-nonsense air of outlining self-evident truths.

[T]he Holy Mass represents - or more truly confirms the Sacrifice of Calvary. For a sacrifice requires a victim offered and a priest who offers, is that not so? Well at the holy and dread scene of Calvary, Our Lord offered Himself to die in satisfaction for the sins of the world, thus He was both the priest who offered and the victim offered. In the Holy Mass, again, He is the priest for He offers Himself by the hands of His ministers on our altars: He is the

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<sup>8</sup>Suzanne Campbell-Jones, 'The Mass in a Convent Setting', in M. F. C. Bourdillon and Meyer Fortes, (eds), *Sacrifice*, London, 1979, pp. 95 - 6.

victim because it is Jesus Christ Who is offered. Hence we see that *the Mass* is the same sacrifice as *the Cross*...the Mass is the perpetual renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross left by Jesus Christ to His Church to be offered to God.<sup>9</sup>

In the prayer books however, the magnitude of Christ's offering on the world's behalf was stressed in language which was much more emotive. The *Loreto Manual* encouraged the laity to pray to Christ present in the eucharist and to prepare for communion by reflecting on his sacrifice in contrast to their unworthiness.

Here is my Saviour and my God! He is hidden that He may not dazzle me with the brightness of His glory...O King of Glory! why thus pursue me, a vile creature? How have I deserved Thy mercy? Alas I have a thousand times made myself unworthy of it by my sins. What do I say? Art Thou not here to blot them out? Offering Thyself to the Divine Justice as Victim for the redemption of sinners? O God! look upon Thy Christ. If Thou seest nothing in me but the image of sin, Thou wilt find in Him the most pure and perfect sanctity. Look upon this spotless Lamb stretched out as dead upon this altar; hear the voice of His precious Blood; He sheds it on me, to purify me, and it is through Him that I shall become worthy to unite myself to Him. It is after having offered Him to Thee as Victim, that I shall have the confidence of receiving Him as my food.<sup>10</sup>

The ardent language of homage and holocaust jarred against expectations of sophistication and restraint in religion. However, as the anthropologist Mary Douglas has argued, the operation of symbol in sacramental Catholicism, and especially in the identification of the host as the sacrificial victim, was not necessarily nuanced for contemporary taste. In Douglas's view the traditional

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<sup>9</sup>Fr J. T. McMahon, *Religion by Post, Grade IV May*, McMahon papers, ACAP.

<sup>10</sup>*Loreto Manual, Compiled for Use of Pupils educated by the Religious of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Dublin, 1924, pp. 110 - 111.

Catholic understanding of the mass depended on the ability to apprehend symbols of orientation and boundary; an ability she considers individuals from strongly verbal cultures have lost. The sacramental system spoke in a non-verbal language of ritual, which offered Douglas's 'bog Irish' Catholics 'the only wordless channel of communication which [was] not entirely incoherent'.<sup>11</sup> She argues that the Catholic eucharist and the doctrine of transubstantiation drew on powerful and primitive understandings about the relationship between God and the world.

Here is a doctrine as uncompromising as any West African fetishist's that the deity is located in a specific object, place and time and under control of a specific formula. To make the deity inhabit a material object, whether shrine, mask, juju or piece of bread, is ritualism at its starkest. The condensation of symbols in the Eucharist is staggering in its range and depth. The white circle of bread encompasses symbolically the cosmos, the whole history of the Church and more, since it goes from the bread offering of Melchisedech, to Calvary and the Mass. It unites the body of each worshipper to the body of the faithful. In this compass it expresses themes of atonement, nourishment and renewal. Such intensive condensation is hard for anyone to stomach who has had a highly verbal, personal upbringing.<sup>12</sup>

Catholics of the 1920s through to the 1960s would have been quick to correct the notion that the eucharist was 'merely' symbol, alert to the threat of Protestant modifications to the sacrament. As Natalie Davis has noted for sixteenth century France, the issue of whether the sacred could be localised in a particular space was a sharp point of division between Catholic and Protestant.<sup>13</sup> Douglas acknowledges that understanding the symbolic complexity

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<sup>11</sup>Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols Explorations in Cosmology*, London 1970, p. 51.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>13</sup>Natalie Davis, 'The sacred and the body social in sixteenth century Lyon', *Past and Present*, 1981, vol. 90, pp. 40 - 70.

of the eucharist does not explain the Catholic belief in transubstantiation in its entirety. The Catholic doctrine of the real presence of Jesus in the host expressed a view of God in the world which was quite different from religious traditions which had rejected or modified this position.<sup>14</sup>

If [the eucharist] were just a matter of expressing all these themes, symbolising and commemorating, much less blood and ink would have been spilt at the Reformation. The crux of the doctrine is that a real invisible transformation has taken place in the priest's saying of the sacred words and that the eating of the consecrated host has saving efficacy for those who take it and for others. It is based on a fundamental assumption about the human role in religion. It assumes that humans can take an active part in the work of redemption, both to save themselves and others, through using the sacraments as channels of grace - sacraments are not only signs, but essentially different from other signs, being instruments.<sup>15</sup>

Carl Jung has also identified the transformation rite of the mass as a unique embodiment of a universal and transcendent theme of the human psyche. He outlined the numinous process of the sacrifice which repeated

as its essential core, the mystery and miracle of God's transformation taking place in the human sphere, his becoming Man and his return to his absolute existence in and for himself.<sup>16</sup>

Jung suggested that for Catholics who held a world-view in which Christ was the most powerful symbol of the redeemed self, the mass would be part of a process of individuation and psychological growth.

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<sup>14</sup>Douglas includes post-Vatican II Catholics among those who operate at the edges of the Eucharist's meaning, *Natural Symbols*, p. 48 - 50.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>16</sup>Carl Jung, *Psychology and Religion: West and East, Collected Works*, vol. 11, p. 221, cited June Singer, *Boundaries of the Soul: the practice of Jung's psychology*, 1ed, Garden City, New York, 1972, p. 344

Looked at from the psychological standpoint, Christ...represents a totality which surpasses and includes ordinary man, and which corresponds to the total personality that transcends consciousness. ...the mystery of the Eucharist transforms the soul of the empirical man, who is only a part of himself, into his totality, symbolically expressed by Christ. In this sense, therefore, we can speak of the Mass as the rite of the individuation process.<sup>17</sup>

Jung's views not only underscore the importance of ritual in a religious system, but also highlight the multidimensional nature of liturgy. While for some Catholics the mass gave expression to the core of their spiritual essence and identity,<sup>18</sup> Campbell-Jones has pointed out that images of death of the self, and of self-abnegation in order to participate in Christ's sacrifice were also powerful corollaries of the Tridentine view of the eucharist.<sup>19</sup>

The Tridentine rite followed a pattern codified at the last session of the Council of Trent in 1563 to protect the sacrament of the eucharist against divisive local influences and abuses,<sup>20</sup> and that tightly controlled liturgy remained the standard practice of the church until 1963. The rite began with penitential psalms which stressed the unworthiness of human beings before God. Following the confession of sin, the Gloria, a hymn of praise, proclaimed the salvation won by Christ and led to readings from the New Testament and the Nicæan Creed, the formal statement of Christian belief adopted by the Council of Nicæa in 325 AD. The liturgy moved to the preparation for the sacrifice and then the central action, or 'canon' of the mass in which bread and wine were

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<sup>17</sup>Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, p. 273, cited *Boundaries of the Soul*, p. 345.

<sup>18</sup>Paul Collins discusses the role of pre-Vatican II liturgy in these terms in *Mixed Blessings: John Paul II and the Church of the Eighties*, Ringwood, Vic., 1986, p. 65.

<sup>19</sup>Campbell-Jones, 'The Mass in a Convent Setting', p. 93.

<sup>20</sup>Theodor Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections*, trans. John Halliburton, 2ed, Oxford, 1979, p.127. The ritual of the mass is also outlined in Bossy, 'The Mass as a Social Institution', p. 34.

consecrated as the body and blood of Christ. Communion followed and the priest, and members of the laity who had carefully prepared themselves, received the eucharist. The mass concluded with a reading of the first 14 verses of the Gospel of St John, and the blessing of the congregation. At the end of mass the priest paused at the steps of the altar and, together with the people, prayed especially for the well-being of the church. Initially focussed on the threat to the Papal States, and then on the problems of the German kulturkampf, under Pius XII these prayers were offered for the conversion of Russia. As Gerard Podhradsky points out, the addition of such prayers at the end of mass, rather than their incorporation into the service, indicated that the church's priorities were in a stable and immutable liturgy rather than responses in common prayer to particular situations.<sup>21</sup>

The prayer books and missals used at mass reflected the relationship between God and ordinary Catholics which the liturgy promoted. A popular and typical prayer book, *The Key of Heaven*, provided Catholics with a range of prayers and devotions which functioned, as Ann Taves has put it, as 'lenses through which the laity could view the mass'.<sup>22</sup> The 'Ordinary of the Mass' was reproduced, in the first section of the book, in two columns, one in Latin and the other English translation. The archival copies of the book show these sections as well-thumbed and oral evidence confirms that some Catholics followed the Latin of the liturgy with understanding.<sup>23</sup> That such understanding or a close-up view of the liturgy was not necessarily the aim of the institution is attested to by the section which followed in *The Key of Heaven*. This section offered the

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<sup>21</sup> Gerard Podhradsky, *New Dictionary of the Liturgy*, English edition, Lancelot Shepherd, (ed), trans. Ronald Walls and Michael Barry, New York, 1966, p. 163.

<sup>22</sup> Ann Taves, *The Household of Faith: Roman Catholic Devotions in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, Notre Dame, 1986, p. 42.

<sup>23</sup> Interviews, Miss Margaret Collopy, Perth WA, 28 March 1991; Monsignor Tom Horgan, Semaphore SA, 30 March 1990; Mrs Margaret Regan, Adelaide SA, 31 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

laity 'A Devout Method of Hearing Mass' in the form of prayers in English with directions in small type to prompt the readers to particular prayers at particular times in the liturgical action. The language of both these prayers and the English translation of the Latin was distanced from the discourse of everyday. God was formally addressed as Thou and Thy, capital letters were used not only for references to the Divine, but for other people and things which were to be especially honoured - Prophets, Apostles, Priests, Altar. The prayers usually used the first person singular, except for those recommended during the eucharistic prayer itself when 'we' was used, not to refer to the community present in the church, but to allow the individual to identify more closely with the action of the priest on behalf of the laity.

The English prayers of *The Key of Heaven* more or less approximated the mood and movement of the Latin liturgy, but other missals suggested prayers which followed a dynamic of their own and cast the liturgy of the eucharist into the background. For example the *Loreto Manual*<sup>24</sup> offered an 'Indulgenced Method of hearing Mass' which used the divisions in the liturgy as broad indicators of time to be devoted to prayers which called attention to the sacrificial nature of the Catholic eucharist, but did not require lay people to pay close attention to the priest's action. Lay people at the same mass would follow different prayer books, and it was common practice for people who intended to receive communion to use special prayers in preparation which were printed separately from the ordinary of the mass. Thus, not only was the prayer of the laity at mass distinct from that of the clergy, but individual lay people followed different private paths of prayer, and as some nineteenth century commentators advised, selected their devotions from the range provided according to their mood or their needs at the time.<sup>25</sup> Prayer books, oral evidence and

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<sup>24</sup>*Loreto Manual*, pp. 51 - 8.

<sup>25</sup>Taves, *The Household of Faith*, p. 43.

contemporary accounts all stress the ritual nature of the mass. Lay people were not key players in the drama of the eucharist, but even as spectators their actions were defined. Through the liturgical patterns of kneeling and standing, prescribed gestures of prayer such as acknowledging blessing in the sign of the cross, the congregation's movement underscored the ebb and flow of the liturgy conducted by the priest. Some prayer books included very specific directions about the laity's behaviour at various times in the mass. For example, the *Manual of the Sacred Heart Sodality* prescribed a particular response to the consecration of the host. The adult women members were carefully directed to

Be sure to look up to the Host, before bowing the head and saying...'My Lord and My God.'<sup>26</sup>.

The devotional prayers suggested to the laity often emphasised the mass as the timeless re-creation of the passion and death of Jesus. These prayers did not shy away from the emotive language of love and immolation, and like other strands of devotional Catholicism, the approach to the sacrament of the eucharist has been characterised as of particular concern to women.

#### *Affective Devotion to the Eucharist*

Carolyn Walker Bynum's work on women in medieval Europe has examined the particular importance of the eucharist in the spirituality of women mystics. Bynum notes that the eucharist spoke to women of the Divine as food, and that food was an aspect of life over which women could exercise some control.<sup>27</sup> Women were also drawn to the eucharist as a devotion to the humanity of Christ and found in his suffering and service a direct correlation with their own experience. Bynum contrasts this feminine identification with

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<sup>26</sup>A Vincentian Father, *The Australian Manual of the Sacred Heart Association*, Sydney 1932, p. 58.

<sup>27</sup>Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: the religious significance of food to medieval women*, Berkeley, 1987; also 'Women mystics and eucharistic devotion in the thirteenth century', *Women's Studies*, 1984, vol. 11, pp. 179 - 214.

Christ to the call to liminal reversal which the traditional Christ issued to men. The stress on the physicality of Christ in the eucharist also played upon the thirteenth century assumption that women were essentially 'bodily', and prepared the way for the profound response of women mystics to the eucharistic Christ as the God of the Incarnation, who was truly human as the infant, the crucified victim and, in powerful metaphor, the bridegroom of humanity.

While it is difficult to test the evidence of the influence of gender in medieval devotion to the eucharist, which was linked to issues of power and autonomy in medieval society, against the evidence of twentieth-century Australia there are some hints of a similar pattern. While most of the institutional stress was on the eucharist as Divine and Other, there was implicit in many prayers an acknowledgement that Christ's suffering was part of the burden of the Incarnation. Explicit identification with the humanity of Christ was rare, but the *Bulletin* produced by the lay members of the Perth Secretariate of Catholic Action offered a compelling endorsement of the mass as a communal celebration of Divine Humanity. In an equally unusual turn of phrase the *Bulletin* replaced vague notions of 'spiritual growth' through the eucharist with the statement that the mass led to full Christian maturity as men and women. The phrase was simple enough in itself, but the unaccustomed acknowledgement of gender in such a context suggested that physicality was to be incorporated into the lay response to the eucharist, not shied away from. Significantly the whole treatment of Christ's humanity occurred as the *Bulletin* was urging Catholics to pray in community as well as in private.

[The] divine seed is destined to blossom into the light of glory, and the most efficacious way of nourishing it in this world is by the fervent and repeated consecration of ourselves to God.

We may do this privately in our bedroom, or when we pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

But however fervent these private acts of self-dedication may be they cannot bear the fruitfulness intended by God unless they are linked up with the human nature of Our Lord.

This does not mean we should not make them. On the contrary they are very necessary.

But we should make them as a remote preparation for the more perfect offering of ourselves in unison with the Sacred Humanity AT MASS.

Those who truly make the Mass an act of sacrifice for themselves, in the sense that at Mass they make a genuine offering themselves to God in union with Christ's offering of Himself upon the altar, are taking a real share in Christ's sacrifice.

The spirit of Christ, the gradual growth into the full stature of Christian manhood and womanhood, will be the reward of those who assist at Mass in this way.<sup>28</sup>

In more traditional circles devotion to the Blessed Sacrament took on characteristics that were stereotypically feminine as it was promoted as an other-worldly attribute in the emotive language of devotional Catholicism. The *Loreto Manual* urged its readers, who were mostly young women students at convent schools, to specific emotional states as they knelt at the altar rails.

When near Communion, endeavour to excite yourself to great devotion. Imagine to see all heaven paying homage to their sovereign King, and that you are surrounded by the angels, who adore Him with the most profound respect.

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<sup>28</sup> *Catholic Action Bulletin*, 22 June 1940, no. 6, n.p.

At the Confiteor, renew your sorrow for your sins. When the priest gives absolution, receive it with an humble confidence and gratitude. When you hear 'Behold the Lamb of God!' etc., enliven your faith in the Real Presence. When you hear 'Lord, I am not worthy, ' etc., humble yourself in a most profound manner, say the same over and over until you receive. When the priest says 'Corpus Domini,' etc. 'May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ keep thy soul to life everlasting, Amen,' burn with an ardent desire that Jesus may take entire possession of your heart, soul and all your affections; and that He may deliver you from the tyranny of your enemies, and unite you to Himself, that nothing may evermore separate you from Him.<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting for the gender analysis of Catholicism that the prayer manual of the men's sodality, the Holy Name Society, was neither so specific nor so abandoned in its approach. The manual did not follow the liturgy of the eucharist step by step, but instead offered general guidance on approaching the sacrament. Holy Name men were encouraged to receive communion frequently as an aid for a life of faith in which they co-operated with God. While it would be presumptuous to push the evidence of the contrast between these broadly contemporaneous prayer books very far, it is interesting to note the greater degree of autonomy which the Holy Name Society promoted.

In Holy Communion we come into immediate communion with Our Divine Lord Who will be for each of us, all that He was to those who went to Him with faith and confidence during the days of His mortal life on earth. Pray for a quick, strong faith, and pray for confidence. Think. Don't simply read the prayers before and after Communion: Think, and think deeply and long. There is nothing that will do what Holy Communion will do; for it is Our Lord Himself Who does everything then; but we must co-operate with Him. Talk to Him freely and frankly; put

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<sup>29</sup>*Loreto Manual*, p. 113.

your requests before Him; nothing is too small, no request too insignificant.<sup>30</sup>

The Holy Name manual also set a slightly different tone in that it included short passages from scripture on a eucharistic theme as preparation for communion, together with a 'Prayer of St Thomas of Aquinas' which used the relatively masculine image of 'Physician of life' to refer to God. However, the section was framed in more flowery terms with Marian prayers and an extract from the writing of St John Chrysostom which catered directly to the emotional imagination and stressed union with Christ.

How many are there to-day who say: Would that I could see Christ Himself, look at Him, gaze upon His figure, His garment, or even His sandals! Lo! thou seest Him, does touch Him, eatest Him! Thou desirest to look even at His garments, but He giveth thee not merely to see Him, but to eat, and touch, yea, even to receive Him within thyself.<sup>31</sup>

The sacred nature of the eucharistic liturgy was a constant theme of catechesis and reverence for the 'real presence' of Christ in the host was instilled in Catholic children, both boys and girls, from an early age. These values were evident in the special status that was accorded to the occasion of First Communion. The magazines of Catholic schools recorded the annual celebration when the children of the Grade II class received the host for the first time. Often a photograph of the children was published showing the girls in white dresses and veils, dressed as small brides, and the boys in white shorts and shirts which signified their ritual purity. The *St Aloysius College* magazine included accounts of the day by the students themselves which reflect their catechetical training, and their seven and eight year old delight in the excitement and splendour of the occasion. It was a day to enjoy special clothes

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<sup>30</sup>S. M. Hogan OP, *Manual of the Holy Name Society*, Camberwell, 16ed, 1945 (first published c. 1923), p. 193 - 4.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 193.

and party food, be kind to little brothers and receive presents, as well as take part in the eucharist in a more adult way.

As soon as I woke up I remembered what a great day it was! I put on my lovely, long white frock, and Mummy fixed my veil.

During Mass I read my prayer book, and then when the little bell rang, I went up to the altar rails, and the priest gave me Holy Communion. Then I thanked Our Lord for coming to me, and I asked Him to come again soon, and to bless us all.

At our Communion party I had some cakes and sandwiches, and a drink of tea, and I gave my brother a lolly. Then we went out and had a swing and a see-saw. After I had my photo taken it was time to put my school clothes on, and Mummy took us to the pictures for a treat.<sup>32</sup>

As well as accounts by the students the annuals also published official reports of the day. Both groups of narrators described the liturgy as a sacred context in which the first communicants had been carefully prepared to move correctly. Receiving communion was the focus in and of itself, the broader events of the mass flowed around them as they prepared for this, and the experience was one of individual rather than group attention to God.

In 1953 the official voice noted the external signs of holiness on this feast of childhood.

Dressed in white, the First Communicants stood waiting to go to the Cathedral where they were to receive Our Lord into their hearts for the first time. Parents, who had come to see this great event in the little children's lives, were adding final touches to veils or dresses.

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<sup>32</sup>Joan Nelligan, Grade II, 'My First Communion Day', *St Aloysius College Annual*, 1947, p. 69.

When at last the time came to go to the Cathedral, the white-clad girls walked into the Church in pairs, followed by the girls who were to sing hymns during Mass. The little ones looked like angels as they knelt, listening to the words of the hymns, or reading their tiny white prayer books.

As the bell rang at the Consecration they bowed their heads, thinking of Our Saviour, who was soon to be theirs in a special way. When the rime came, with bowed heads they reverently went to the Communion rails, waiting for the priest to place on their tongues the Sacred Host.<sup>33</sup>

A few pages earlier a child's account had captured the essence of this day in a similar way. Jane McGowan of Grade II recorded her happiness, her passive acceptance of God and the ritual to which she conformed.

I loved my First Communion Day. I felt that I could not wait for God to come to me. When we were called on to the line we put our hands together and looked down. At Communion I was very, very happy.<sup>34</sup>

Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament outside the context of the mass was also significant in the ritual life of the church. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation had identified the doctrine of transubstantiation as one of the hallmarks of Catholicism, and practices such as visiting a church to pray before the tabernacle, participating in quarant'ore devotions (literally 'forty hours' of prayer, usually organised by roster in a parish, in order to commemorate the 40 hours Jesus had lain in the sepulchre), and attending Benediction (the public blessing of the congregation with the host), were all based on reverence for the presence of Jesus Christ in the eucharistic wafer.<sup>35</sup> These were popular devotions very much centred on the institution, conducted in the church,

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<sup>33</sup>'Our Little Ones' First Communion', *St Aloysius College Annual*, 1953, p. 19.

<sup>34</sup>Jane McGowan, Grade II, 'My First Communion Day', *St Aloysius College Annual*, 1953, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup>Taves, *The Household of Faith*, pp. 30 - 2, 106.

affirming the sacramental power of the priesthood and implicitly casting the laity into a client role. They formed part of the network of affective, stereotypically feminine devotion, deeply emotive in their regard for the Saviour present in an often hostile and irreverent world.

In particular it is interesting to speculate on the contrast between the general mood surrounding the ceremony of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and the tone of the mass itself. It is possible to suggest that Benediction emphasised a feminine approach to God, while the concern of the mass was more masculine. While both rituals spoke powerfully to the people of a transcendent God, made accessible through the eucharist, the concern of Benediction was almost entirely expressive, a process simply of reverence, with the emphasis on God present in the host and in the world. This was in keeping with notions of the feminine in spirituality. In comparison, the mass was more instrumental in its concern with a particular sacrifice, and the consecration of the host. The mass maintained a focus on the power of God, who, especially in a context where the reception of communion was rare, remained almost entirely transcendent, corresponding more closely with the masculine approach to the divine. An examination of the ritual of Benediction in some detail highlights the concern with the expressive.

### *Benediction*

Benediction was often held in the evenings in tandem with other prayers, especially the rosary or a Marian novena; it was often a feature of parish missions. The congregation was smaller than at the 'obligatory' Sunday mass, and the church quiet. Flowers, candles and incense, together with rhythmical Latin prayers and English hymns evocative of tenderness and calm, made an impressive combination. Benediction was an intermediary devotion

encompassing institutional Latin forms and the hymns and prayers of popular piety. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* identifies Benediction as a devotion of the people, contrasting it with the formal office of vespers in the same way as the rosary was a popular substitute for the psalter, and noting that the ceremony was not always encouraged by church authorities because of a suspicion that it would be taken to substitute for the mass itself.<sup>36</sup> The focus of the ceremony was solidly institutional, firmly linked to the eucharist and requiring a priest to approach the host on the altar. However, as a clerical writer in the *Record* of 1954 hinted, the ritual could also offer space for local colour. Free of the rubrics of the mass sentiment could run riot. The writer went so far as to identify the 'psychologically satisfying service of Benediction' as the much loved recreation of Sisters in convents, with an implicit comparison to the hard work of the mass. He noted that lay people and priests also 'enjoyed' Benediction. The article explained the appeal of Benediction in terms of its rational theological underpinnings, but could not ignore the ceremony's direct and spectacular appeal to the senses.

Christ is of course present constantly in the tabernacle. But what a boost to our devotion when the candles are lighted on the altar, when the priest and servers enter the sanctuary, when the sacred host is exposed in the monstrance and the organ breaks forth in the familiar melody of the O Salutaris.

The flowers, the candles, the vestments, the sweet smell of incense, the heads bowed in adoration, the music, the Blessing - all create an atmosphere of spiritual joy and devotion....

Benediction is remarkable...it is a beautiful blending of the fixed and the flexible, the official and the informal.

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<sup>36</sup>M.Burach, 'Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament', *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, pp. 303 - 4; see also Taves, *The Household of Faith*, pp. 28 - 32.

The Benediction service uplifts as only the stately liturgy can, yet it is at the same time, adaptable to the season, occasion or circumstance.

And when you stop to consider that Benediction is an extension of the Mass, then the theological importance of this simple service makes a deep impression.

After all, this Sacred Host with which the priest blesses the adoring people comes from the Mass. It is Christ with us. It will be consumed by the priest at Mass. It is, so to speak, the Mass in suspension.<sup>37</sup>

The ceremony of Benediction was not acknowledged as a liturgical action by Rome until 1958, but it had a history in public devotion to the Blessed Sacrament from the fifteenth century.<sup>38</sup> At the service the consecrated host was displayed on the altar in a monstrance, while the priest knelt at the steps of the altar to lead the people in Latin hymns and prayers. The monstrance was a relatively ornate sacred vessel. Essentially a round glass case the size of the host which was mounted on a stand about 18 inches high, the receptacle was usually framed in metal work which evoked the rays of the sun, and so spoke of the saving radiance of Christ's glory and God's grace. The Latin hymn 'O Salutaris' which began the ceremony was a plea to the Saving Victim of the eucharist for the strength to achieve salvation. It was followed by the 'Tantum Ergo', a hymn of praise to the Blessed Sacrament which focussed attention on the honour due to Christ in the sacrament, as the replacement of 'types and shadows' of all other rites of worship. The swelling cadences of the organ accompaniment moved slowly and directly with the melody of the congregational singing to enhance the dignity of the Latin syllables, rather than draw attention to the music itself. The singing was usually pitched quite low, and the bottom range of

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<sup>37</sup> *Record*, 14 January 1954, p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Burach, 'Benediction', p. 303.

the organ added to the solemn sense of awe and reverence. The hymns led into chanted prayers for greater awareness of the gift of the Blessed Sacrament, and then the priest, assisted by altar servers, used incense to honour the host.

The elaborate vestments which the priest wore at Benediction included a long cape like garment, called a cope, which was often richly embroidered and which fell gracefully as he swung the charcoal incense burner towards the altar. Oral evidence points to the liturgical power of both the vestments and the gesture, recalling the priest as a man transformed by his office at that time. Quite literally human clumsiness was veiled. In an atmosphere heavily scented with the sacred, the priest, whose hands were shrouded in a flowing stole, lifted the monstrance from the altar and raised it in the sign of the cross over the congregation as the servers rang small hand-bells used at mass to signify the Real Presence of Christ. After the blessing the priest knelt at the altar steps again and led the congregation in further prayers of praise, including the litany of Divine Praises honouring the Trinity, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St Joseph. The ceremony concluded with a hymn in English as the sacrament was returned to the tabernacle.

The vernacular hymns which were used at Benediction were often highly emotive prayers to the Blessed Sacrament, or else identifiably Catholic rallying cries such as the militantly rhythmical 'We Stand for God' or the triumphant celebration of past persecution of the ubiquitous 'Faith of our Fathers'. Some were theologically inaccurate but popular nonetheless. For example, the Holy Name Society recommended 'Goodnight Sweet Sacrament, Goodnight' as one hymn suitable for the end of Benediction. The words had a sentimental aura of a romantic farewell to a friend, perhaps in the style of Bing Crosby. The Sydney priest Father Ted Kennedy recalled in 1984 that when a similar hymn was authoritatively repressed in the United States the outcry was so great that the

bishop granted an exemption to some parishes, with the stinging proviso that 'as they sang it the priest and people stood on their tiptoes and waved' until the tabernacle door was closed.<sup>39</sup> This story illustrates the tension between institution and the Catholic people which is also hinted at in Australian evidence. In the 1942 edition of *The Australian Hymnal*, a collection edited by Father Percy Jones as part of efforts to encourage more meaningful lay participation in the liturgy, noted tersely that some hymns were included because they were popular, not because their singing was officially encouraged.

Certain hymns, like hymn No. 12 [O Sacred Heart by Sir J. Stephenson], which are poor musically and difficult to sing in correct time, are unsuitable. This and several other hymns have been included merely on account of their universal use in this country, but it is hoped that in future editions hymns of this type will not be needed to secure the hymnal's general acceptance.<sup>40</sup>

The preface displayed an awareness of the role of vernacular hymns in fostering the emotive aspects of popular piety and explicitly referred to their function in complementing the institutional liturgy.

...the singing of such [ie vernacular] hymns has played a most important role in the life of the Church in every country. Since they are not part of the Church's liturgy, they supplement the liturgical music in so far as they allow the more personal and individual emotions a legitimate means of expression. They are a necessary counter-balance to the tendency to dry formalism, which is only too evident in many who endeavour to base their spiritual life exclusively on the liturgy.<sup>41</sup>

The endorsement of the English hymns as an expression of devotion was not an endorsement of too much emotion. Jones went on to warn against 'misguided

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<sup>39</sup>Ted Kennedy, Foreword, in Peter Kearney, *Turn it all around: Songs for Peace and Justice*, Melbourne, 1984.

<sup>40</sup>Percy Jones, Foreword, *The Australian Hymnal: A Collection of Plainsong Masses and Motets and of English Hymns for the Catholic Church in Australia*, Melbourne, 1942, p. vii.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

sentimentalism (as opposed to true sentiment)' and to affirm the need for hymns to exploit their potential to teach dogmatic truth as well as to encourage the people to lift their hearts to God. He argued for hymns in which the outpouring of affection was linked to contemplating a particular truth.

A good example of this balance of dogma and devotion is hymn No. 22

(Dogmatic truth)	Jesus, ever-loving Saviour, Thou didst live and die for me.
(Affections arising therefrom)	Living, I will live to love Thee; Dying, I will die for Thee, Jesus, Jesus, By Thy life and death and sorrow Help me in my agony. <sup>42</sup>

Jones acknowledged that some acceptable hymns are not so clearly balanced. Significantly he singled out Marian hymns as likely to offend by being too emotive, and insisted that 'here, too, there must be solid doctrine supporting our affections.'<sup>43</sup> He noted that with the exceptions of carols, which 'teach not so much as dogmatic truth as a historical truth connected with the mysteries of religion',<sup>44</sup> the selection offered to parishes in Australia had been chosen with an eye to this balance between dogma and devotion.

The 'Living Parish' series of the 1950s continued this effort at balance, encouraging hymns which reflected theology sensitively and accurately. In Sydney Fr Ted Kennedy encouraged Richard Connolly and James McAuley into a partnership which produced about 20 hymns for the significantly titled series which was popular around Australia. Kennedy located his efforts in the thinking of the movement to encourage more meaningful lay participation in the liturgy.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

The fine hymns [of] the Living Parish series...helped to bring about a better awareness of the theology of the Mass, the Sacraments and the Seasons of the Church; and they encouraged lay people to take their rightful place in them.<sup>45</sup>

A concern with balancing the masculine and feminine, the expressive and the instrumental, in the mass, as in music for the liturgy, was apparent throughout the period under review and especially from the 1940s. The liturgical system of symbol has been pointed to as a safeguard at the heart of the church against the overriding influence of rationality.<sup>46</sup> However, the post-Reformation liturgical style which emphasised clearly defined laws, hierarchical patterns of thought and worship and the transcendence of God was predominantly masculine and gave Catholics access to only part of the church's liturgical heritage. This pattern needs to be balanced against the awareness in some lay circles that participation in the eucharist was not only more spiritually demanding and fulfilling, but was also encouraged by Rome and the natural correlative of the model of the church as the Mystical Body of Christ. The Scriptural analogy of the church as a body in which all members participate in the life of grace and have a vital and distinct part to play in the functioning of the whole was a significant theme for change in both the lay apostolate, as will be seen in chapter 8, and the liturgical life of the church. The efforts of the international liturgical movement to encourage lay participation and revive the communal nature of the Catholic eucharist, and to promote worship which reflected an understanding of the church as a Mystical Body, a relational whole of many equal parts, can be characterised as efforts to reclaim the feminine.

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<sup>45</sup>Kennedy, Foreword, in Kearney, *Turn it all around*.

<sup>46</sup>Rosemary Haughton, 'The Emerging Church', in [Missionaries of the Sacred Heart eds], *A New Heart for a New World: an exploration of the desires of God's heart*, Homebush, NSW, 1986, p. 131.

*Lay Participation and Echoes of the Liturgical Movement in Australia*

The discussion of lay participation in the eucharist took place in twentieth century Australia against the background of a broader international movement for the renewal of the public prayer of Catholicism. Moves towards change have been traced to the late eighteenth century when in the European cultural climate of the Romantic movement a concern with origins went hand in hand with increased interest in Biblical scholarship and more discussion of the sacramental nature of the church.<sup>47</sup> In particular, the work of the Benedictine Dom Prosper Guéranger and the community he established at Solesmes in France in 1833 helped to demonstrate the value and beauty of the collective prayer of the church, especially through reclaiming medieval traditions such as the communal singing of plainchant.

Guéranger's scholarly and monastic initiatives were translated into pastoral concern for the participation of lay people in the eucharist by Pope Pius X. In Australia, popular commemorations of Pius X, who was canonised in 1954, identified him as a saint of the liturgy who brought the sacraments to the people.<sup>48</sup> His 1905 decree urging lay people to receive communion frequently, ideally each day and as a common practice once a month, and the 1910 letter which lowered the age at which children could make their First Communion, began to encourage the view that ordinary Catholics should have frequent access to the grace of the eucharist available through the church. The importance of

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<sup>47</sup>M.H.Shepherd Jr, 'Catholic Liturgical Movement', in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, p. 901; Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy*, p. 121; H. Ellesworth Chandler, 'The Liturgical Movement' in J. G. Davies, (ed), *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, London, 1972, pp. 216 - 22; M. Ducey, 'Guéranger, Prosper', in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 6, pp. 831 - 2.

<sup>48</sup>For example *Record*, 10 June 1954, pp. 4, 14; Winfrid Herbst SDS, *Frequent Communion and the Eucharistic Fast*, Australian Catholic Truth Society, Melbourne, 1959.

common membership of the church also lay beneath the efforts of the next pope, Pius XI, to promote liturgical reform. The writings of Pius XI did not deal with liturgy as a separate issue, but pointed to the need for effective public prayer as part of a strategy to restructure the social world on Christian principles. In 1937 in an encyclical on fascism Pius XI remarked: 'In the final analysis all permanent Catholic social reform begins in the sanctuary'.<sup>49</sup> The link between liturgical renewal, a concern with a very institutional flavour, and social action, where the institution was thrown into question by the concerns of the industrial world, was not always made firmly. However, both concerns were increasingly linked as the conception of the church as the Mystical Body of Christ became a key theme of the lay apostolate. Certainly the concept of the Mystical Body, in which all members were called to a special and specific contribution, was central to the work of Dom Virgil Michel, who as a Benedictine priest of St John's Abbey in Minnesota fostered the liturgical movement in the United States and, through the journal *Orates Fratres*, in much of the English speaking world including Australia.

The reception of the liturgical movement in Australia points to an issue which would also affect the development of Catholic Action in that the comprehensive programme behind both activities was communicated slowly and taken up with only partial understanding.<sup>50</sup> While the external forms could be imitated, the Australian church was slow to apprehend the conceptual shift in the notion of the church and lay participation in the church which made the external forms valid. Initial contact between Australia and the *Orates Fratres*

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<sup>49</sup>Pius XI, 'Mit brennender Sorge', 1937, n.154, cited Paul B. Marx, *Virgil Michel and the Liturgical Movement*, Collegville, Minnesota, 1957, p. 208.

<sup>50</sup>Edmund Campion, *Australian Catholics: The Contribution of Catholics to the Development of Australian Society*, Ringwood, Vic., 1987, pp. 208 - 10 describes the main impact of the liturgical movement on the east coast of Australia as dating from the 1950s. He points to Tasmania in particular and the impact on Archbishop Young of a visit to St John's in the late 1940s. The Perth link is not covered.

group was made in 1926 - 28 when the Perth priest Father John McMahon made a two year visit to the United States as a student of the Catholic University in Washington. In a process which is not clear from the Australian records, McMahon made contact with the liturgists at St John's and became an associate editor of *Orates Fratres*. McMahon's involvement with the journal continued after his return to Australia until 1932, but, while his position was recorded on the flyleaf of his 1969 autobiography,<sup>51</sup> and while this work celebrates many other aspects of his American experience, McMahon's writing is surprisingly mute on the liturgical movement. Given that *Orates Fratres* recorded his contribution as substantial,<sup>52</sup> and given McMahon's usual frank delight in innovations with which he was associated, his silence on Virgil Michel's work requires explanation. McMahon certainly promoted participation in the liturgy, both through his editorship of the *Record* and through his work as inspector of schools. The clear signs of the influence of the American group can be detected not only in the religious education programmes McMahon promoted but also in the art work accompanying the liturgical calendar published each week by the *Record*. McMahon's support for the activities of Virgil Michel cannot be questioned. What is absent is an awareness that the liturgical movement linked into a broader critique of the nature of the church and society. Such an oversight meant that efforts to encourage a full and vibrant liturgy could be presented as noble ends in themselves, designed to encourage a more acute awareness of God amongst the laity; liturgy did not have to encompass an understanding that the Mystical Body which the community was celebrating was the key to a new society, or imply a change in the perception of power in the church.

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<sup>51</sup>J. T. McMahon, *College, Campus, Cloister*, Perth, 1969.

<sup>52</sup>*Orates Fratres*, vol.3, 1929, pp.429 - 30; vol.4, 1930, p.186.

Virgil Michel's view that reform of society and of liturgy were inseparable contrasted with the understanding of both social Catholicism and the liturgical movement as they developed in Europe. In 1938 one Catholic commentator noted that Virgil Michel's movement in America was unique in stressing the vital link between reviving an awareness of the social nature of the liturgy and the need for change in industrial capitalism.<sup>53</sup> In Australia, as in Europe the two strands of Catholic thought tended to move along separate axis, with questions for liturgical renewal dictated by history and dogma, rather than by the growth of the lay apostolate. Thus while Virgil Michel quoted the social encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* to illustrate that the Mystical Body was both the pattern for society and the inspiration of good liturgy,<sup>54</sup> the *Record* introduced its weekly liturgical calendar with words from the same pope focussed much more directly on liturgy. *Orates Fratres* commended the *Record's* 'call to action', but it was unmistakably a call to the sanctuary not the world beyond.

The Liturgy is certainly a sacred thing. Through it we are raised to God and are united to Him. The faithful come to the sacred place of worship to draw piety from its chief source by active participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. It is really necessary that the faithful should not assist at the sacred ceremonies as outsiders or mute spectators

Pius XI

*Answer the call of the Pope*  
*Learn to use a Missal at Mass*  
*Follow the priest with a Missal*  
*Read our Calendar weekly*<sup>55</sup>

The revival of Gregorian chant, or plainchant, was a hallmark of the liturgical movement and the way in which the monastic model of congregational

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<sup>53</sup>H. A. Reinhold, 'Liturgy, True Remedy', *Social Forum*, December 1938, cited P. Marx, *Virgil Michel*, p. 180.

<sup>54</sup>P. Marx, *Virgil Michel*, p. 182.

<sup>55</sup>Cited *Orates Fratres*, vol. 3, 1929, p. 429

was promoted in Perth gives some insight into the ebb and flow of liturgical renewal. Gregorian chant was taught to children in Catholic schools from the mid-1920s, while Fr McMahon was responsible for Catholic education and before his time in the United States. As part of the syllabus the unaccompanied Latin chant, evolved from monastic services, expressed Catholic commitment to beauty in liturgy and reminded students of the pre-Reformation traditions of worship; and over the period the rationale for training students in its controlled and flowing patterns became more explicitly linked to participation. In 1925 the Diocesan Inspector of Education in Perth reported on the progress of sacred music in schools, and presented congregational singing of the mass not as an end in itself but a means to giving glory to God. He identified a problem in encouraging talented musicians to remain involved in church music.

The schools which prepared the *Missa de Angelis* this year did quite well. It was an achievement to have all the children know the words and sing the mass through. The new Irish syllabus expects every child from twelve onwards to join in the singing. That is our ambition also. We do not want a picked choir doing it, because the aim is to introduce congregational singing into our churches, through our schools. The 'using of God's gift of song for God's service' needs preaching at school. What happens to the musical talent from our schools? See the *Record* each year studded with portraits of lettered musical talent - where do they use God's gift in after school years? You will look in vain among our parochial choirs for those gifted ones. God's service is not benefiting by the musical product of our schools.<sup>56</sup>

By 1942 Father Percy Jones, editor of the *Australian Hymnal*, which was widely used in the liturgical and devotional life of the Australian church, gave a slightly different emphasis to learning plainchant. He reproduced Pius XI's 1928 document on the liturgy not so much to encourage art in the service of

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<sup>56</sup>Fr J. T. McMahon, 'Report of the Diocesan Inspector of Schools', 26 January 1925, McMahon Papers, ACAP.

worship, though this certainly remained part of the principles of Catholic liturgy, but more explicitly to provide a vehicle for lay involvement in the mass.

This is not the place to elaborate these basic principles of the liturgy. For us, it should be enough that the Church, through the voice of her Sovereign Pontiffs, calls us to return to the sung Mass, where congregations will no longer be passive spectators, but active co-offerers in the Holy Sacrifice.

'In order that the faithful may more actively participate in divine worship, let them be made once more to sing the Gregorian chant, so far as it belongs to them to take part in it. It is most important that when the faithful assist at the sacred ceremonies, when pious sodalities take part with the clergy in a procession, they should not be merely detached and silent spectators, but, filled with a deep sense of the beauty of the liturgy, they should sing alternately with the clergy or the choir, as it is prescribed.'<sup>57</sup>

For Catholic school children the process of learning plainchant was a highly disciplined procedure, a blend of choral singing and religious education lessons. Translations of the hymns encouraged students to regard the activity as prayer, and indeed Jones commented that promoting plainchant was 'a golden opportunity to give children and adults alike other prayers than the few they commonly know. No lovelier prayers could be taught them...'<sup>58</sup> The culture of the classroom in which plainchant was taught varied considerably, but on the whole lessons in 'how to participate in the mass' could only move a certain distance from the view that the laity had a strictly prescribed role to fulfil in the liturgy, even if that role was understood to be expanding. The significant

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<sup>57</sup>Pius XI, 'Apostolic Constitution on the Liturgy and on Fostering Gregorian Chant and Sacred Music', 1928, cited Percy Jones, Foreword, *The Australian Hymnal*, p. vi.

<sup>58</sup>Percy Jones, Foreword, *The Australian Hymnal*, p. vi.

contribution of Gregorian chant was not so much in increasing the laity's sense of 'belonging' in the service, but of fostering a sense of community amongst those present. The separate activity of the laity as a distinct group in the collective prayer of the church was expected to replace the individual and autonomous prayers of individuals silently following missals.

The eucharist was regarded as the public expression of Catholicity *par excellence*. Working closely with the institution and treasuring their mandate from the bishops, Australian Catholic Action identified the mass as the central celebration of Catholicism. In the same way as sodalities marked significant feast days with the eucharist, so Catholic Action promoted Social Justice Sunday and the Labour Day mass. On these occasions the traditional liturgy offered legitimacy to the prepared publications of the National Secretariat and provided a convenient way for Catholics to identify themselves with the cause of the social encyclicals, even if they had not read them or grasped their implications. The call from the lay broadsheet *Catholic Action Bulletin* for Perth's Catholics to demonstrate their commitment to social reform by attending the first Labour Day mass in 1940 was urgent and exulting in the importance of the event.

Where Are You Going on Labour Day?

THIS IS THE QUESTION WE WANT YOU TO ASK ALL YOUR  
CATHOLIC FRIENDS. IF THEY DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER  
TELL THEM!

For the first time in Perth's history, Labour Day will be solemnly celebrated by the Catholic community at a special Mass in St Mary's Cathedral.

On the previous day, May 5th, Social Justice Sunday will be observed throughout the Archdiocese.

The establishment of Social Justice Sunday has aroused intense interest throughout Australia. It is an important step in the advance of the crusade for Christian social reform in this country.

In search for the solution to our social problems the Church is not a passive neutral spectator. In fact, the Church has THE solution. And it is our duty to see that the latest advance in the Church's fight for social justice becomes a striking event in the ears of our fellow-countrymen.

...The Mass on Labour Day will be a fitting climax to the observance of Social Justice Sunday. His Grace, the Archbishop, will preside at the Mass, and the sermon will be preached by the Rev. Father Cahill, C.S.S.R.

It is expected that a huge attendance will throng St Mary's Cathedral for the occasion.

We appeal to the members of groups throughout the city to discuss and decide on ways and means of spreading interest in this great event. Here is a glorious opportunity for action. Make this great Catholic rally in the cause of Social Justice an event to be remembered.<sup>59</sup>

In keeping with this view of the mass as a public expression of support for Catholic social action, the June issue of the same broadsheet urged a more communal understanding of the liturgy. The front page article affirmed the significance of the mass, and in an underlining of the orthodox Catholic position, not only reminded readers that the sacrifice was Christ's self-offering on Calvary, but also insisted that this offering should be understood as a prayer for the community of the Church. The editors regarded the prevailing practice of private devotion as a hindrance to the real worship of the mass. For Catholic

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<sup>59</sup>*Catholic Action Bulletin*, no. 2, 27 April 1940, n.p.

Action the liturgy was ideally a social act in which the lay congregation should be engaged.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the official public and social act of divine worship offered to God by the whole Church for the sanctification of human society.

It is the central act of our holy religion and is concerned principally with the social distribution of the fruits of Calvary. These fruits come to us in proportion as we join actively with the offering of the Holy Sacrifice.

To indulge in private devotions not related to the sacrificial action of the Mass makes us virtually into spectators.

We must remember that the only way to assist fruitfully at a sacrifice is by offering it.

...The gifts we offer to God are intended to represent ourselves, but they cannot do this unless we join in with the actual prayers which accompany their offering.

In other words, if we say prayers at Mass which have no relation to the sacrificial action we cut ourselves off from what is going on at the altar.

This is why Pius X wrote exhorting the faithful to 'not merely pray during the Mass, but to pray the Mass.'

The real prayerbook of the Mass is the MISSAL. The missal is the prayerbook of the whole Body of Christ and therefore the prayers in it are not private but social prayers.

This fact alone shows that we are not present at Mass as private individuals in isolation from each one another, but that we are gathered together as a social unit.

This means that the offering of the Holy Sacrifice is the united offering of the whole congregation with the priest who represents them at the altar.<sup>60</sup>

The official diocesan newspapers also began to report the influences of the liturgical movement. In the same year as Perth's *Catholic Action Bulletin* called for public consciousness at mass, the *Record* gave a detailed analysis of the rites particular to the week before Easter, emphasising not only the sacredness of these days but also their interest 'to the student of liturgy', a phrase which recognised the possibility that liturgy was not simply taken for granted.<sup>61</sup> The possibility of change was also acknowledged in that the article noted the service of Holy Saturday morning was originally held during the night between Saturday and Easter Sunday. The *Record* stopped short of advocating a return to the ancient practice, but used the early church rather than recent tradition as the yard stick for church practice in the approving comment that:

There is no office of the Church now existing which preserves such clear traces of antiquity as does this.<sup>62</sup>

As liturgical issues moved into the common parlance of the diocesan papers changes were customarily presented as part of a rediscovery of earlier practice, never as innovation. In 1951 Pius XII revised the rite to permit the night celebration of the Easter Vigil, and changes to the other ceremonies of Holy Week followed in 1955. The new rites were celebrated in Perth in 1952<sup>63</sup> and in 1954 in Adelaide.<sup>64</sup> The dominant mood was one of caution, rather than exultation of the changes. Students from St Charles' seminary writing a feature

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<sup>60</sup>*Catholic Action Bulletin*, no. 5, 8 June 1940, n.p.

<sup>61</sup>*Record*, 28 March 1940, p. 11.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup>*Record*, 3 April 1954, p. 3, 11.

<sup>64</sup>Margaret M. Press, *Colour and Shadow: South Australian Catholics 1906 - 1962*, Adelaide 1991, p. 207.

article for the *Record* to explain the new rite for the Easter Saturday service reassured readers that:

Celebrating the Vigil Mass at Midnight on Saturday is not something new, but is the re-introduction of a practice that was carried out from the earliest days of the Church until the end of the seventh century...<sup>65</sup>

The practice of the early church remained an important criterion for the review of the liturgy for the ordinary Sunday mass. Pius XII's encyclical *Mediator Dei* in 1947 adjusted some of the regulations of the church surrounding the eucharist, decreasing the length of the eucharistic fast, and allowing for masses in the evening and for some use of the vernacular. The possibilities for experiment were taken up very slowly in Australia. In 1950 an Australian pilgrim in Paris wrote back to the *Southern Cross* in rather wondering approval of the French weekday mass where the priest faced the congregation and the people answered the responses. Significantly once again, these changes were described as evoking the early church, perhaps on the grounds that such involvement made the active commitment of the laity more obvious and fostered a sense of community forging new styles.

Here, in Paris these [more flowing] vestments, the severely plain altar table, and the congregation answering the Mass, dialogue form, had an impressive character as of the early Church. ...Mass said in this manner is not only strange but interesting to Australians, who, where they are able, readily fall into the custom of answering the responses aloud.<sup>66</sup>

The support for liturgical issues which was latent in established devotions was called upon to help explain the changes. For example, in October 1945 the *Southern Cross* noted in its regular column 'With St Therese of the

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<sup>65</sup>*Record*, 3 April 1954, p. 11.

<sup>66</sup>*Southern Cross*, 1 September 1950, p. 8

Child Jesus' that the saint had 'rejoiced' in the liturgical cycle of the church and in the rhythm of the feasts as they came around. The paper further identified her with the liturgical movement by pointing to the way in which St Paul's analogy of the body was central to Thérèse's explanation of her vocation.

St Therese had entered deeply into the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, as is shown in the famous thirteenth chapter of her *Autobiography*, where she tells how she sought to find her place among the members - 'Charity gave me the key to my vocation; in the heart of the Church, my Mother, I will be Love!'<sup>67</sup>

The implementation of new provisions, such as the possibility of evening mass, was also prompted by traditional devotions. A trial period of evening mass on the first Friday of each month was introduced at the cathedral in Perth in 1954 'in order, primarily, to give industrial workers the opportunity of "making" the nine first Fridays'<sup>68</sup> in accordance with the established practice in honour of the Sacred Heart. This particular move proved popular. The *Record* noted that 400 people attended in July; something of the mood of the time is evident in the approving comment that of those 400 some 190 received communion.<sup>69</sup>

Although the philosophical link between the lay apostolate and the liturgical movement was not so strong in Australia as it was in America, it appears to have been the groups with a special interest in the lay apostolate who most readily took up the examination of forms of collective prayer. Although a wider search of parish experience than has been possible in this thesis might reveal pockets of experimentation, the evidence so far suggests that it was primarily the concern of groups who wished to express a new relationship with the church, or a particular identity within it, who took advantage of the flexibility in liturgy offered by Rome. Thus, in the Perth of 1940 the lay

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<sup>67</sup> *Southern Cross*, 26 October 1945, p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> *Record*, 13 May 1954, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> *Record*, 29 July 1954, p. 1.

editors of *Catholic Action Bulletin* urged frequent communion as the source and safeguard of the emerging sense of mission among lay people.

Inevitably, once frequent Communion had become common, Catholic Action was bound to follow; for one cannot associate with Christ in the intimacy of the Eucharist without wanting to bring Him to the world He loves and came to save. Catholic Action is the corollary of frequent Communion.

Beyond that, however, the Pope [who had promoted frequent communion] knew that Catholic Action was suited, not merely to the needs, but to the particular characteristics of this generation. An age so restlessly in motion, so eager to do remarkable things, could not be content with an inactive faith and a religion without achievement. A generation made up of young men and women of initiative, resourcefulness and relentless activity must be given a participation in their religion that would fire their imagination and stimulate their desire for achievement.

...The particular genius of this age meant that Catholic laymen must be given a fuller share of responsibility for the destiny of the Church. Yesterday was opened to them as an almost priestly participation in the Eucharist. Today is offered to them an almost priestly participation in the apostolate of the Church.<sup>70</sup>

The proponents of Catholic Action did not see a need to question the established framework of the liturgy, but they did make opportunities to emphasise the link between the world of work and the public worship of the church. For example, it became a feature of public masses of the Young Christian Workers that the lay people would build and prepare the altar in a display of lay talent and skill in God's service before the traditional form of the mass was celebrated. Oral evidence attests to that practice as a powerful statement of the importance of the

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<sup>70</sup>*Catholic Action Bulletin*, no. 12, 28 September 1940, n.p.

lay apostolate, and one which reinforced the centrality of the eucharist in Catholic life.<sup>71</sup> The *Catholic Action Bulletin* described the first such construction in Paris in 1938.

[V]arious classes of workers united to build the altar on which the Holy Sacrifice was to be offered. The stoneworkers laid the foundations, the carpenters erected the framework, women brought and arranged the linen and so on - the various callings supplying whatever else was needed, not forgetting the bread and wine for the Offering. Thus was symbolised the dedication to God and His Church of all the callings represented in the vast throng which assembled to share in the offering of the Mass.<sup>72</sup>

In some instances the search for new models of worship took the form of negative reaction to established forms. In planning the 1951 convention of the University Catholic Federation of Australia, the national council of graduates and students moved against large public demonstration style liturgies as detracting from the coherence of the delegates and distracting from the business of the group to discern their role as university Catholics. The aim was for liturgy that would suit the style of a working meeting of a relatively small crowd.

[The Council] disagreed with the emphasis put upon liturgical devotion in the Sydney conference and upon the large, successful public sessions that had there taken place. It was decided...not to have any High Masses, nor Solemn Benedictions, nor to have a Special Mass at the Cathedral, and the whole work of the Conference took place within the sphere of the Conference itself.<sup>73</sup>

By the time of the Perth conference in 1958 the liturgical activities of the same group were more positively defined, and, while remaining within the

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<sup>71</sup>Interviews, Archbishop James Gleeson, Adelaide SA, 27 March 1990; Mr Brian Moylan, Adelaide SA, 29 March 1990. Tape held by author.

<sup>72</sup>*Catholic Action Bulletin*, no 9, 3 August 1940, n.p.

<sup>73</sup>University Catholic Federation of Australia (UCFA) Scrapbook, UCFA/TCFA papers, Mitchell Library of New South Wales, p. 40.

institutional framework, delegates found appropriate forms of collective prayer. Mass was celebrated in dialogue style and compline, the monastic evening prayer which the revival promoted as also the province of lay people, was sung. In keeping with the liturgical emphasis on a broader apostolate the visiting specialist in liturgy, Father Clifford Howell SJ, spoke to the delegates on the need to develop an awareness of their particular role in the Mystical Body, to move 'in the world of thought' helping to provide a soul for the emerging new civilisation.<sup>74</sup>

Many Catholics were unaware of the liturgical movement. During his visit Fr Howell spoke to a public meeting on 'The Mass and the Masses', giving an address that was also advertised as 'What is the Liturgical Movement?'.<sup>75</sup> That such an explanation was required in 1958 is an indication of the limited impact the movement had made. Howell described the average congregation of 1958 as uninvolved and uninformed about the liturgy, and described the liturgical movement as a response designed to revive the early Christian spirit of community.

[I]n the early Church people understood and took part in the liturgy; they really 'celebrated' the Mass. It was to them a joyous occasion in which they took an active part. But now the Mass does not inspire people with joy, and they take no active part. They are just spectators.

[The Mass] has become a mere clerical performance in which the people take no active part. The stimulating and didactic power inherent in the liturgy is in fact not being used.

In recent years a considerable number of priests and laity have come to realise these facts; their reaction to the

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<sup>74</sup>UCFA Scrapbook, p. 58.

<sup>75</sup>*Record*, 2 January 1958, p. 1.

situation is what is called the liturgical movement - a concerted effort to cause the liturgy to be used according to its inherent nature as a communal celebration.<sup>76</sup>

For the students and Catholic Actionists in the church who were increasingly interacting with sympathetic priests as close friends and co-workers the notion that the liturgy was a shared celebration was easily understood. For other Catholics, isolated from the activities which the new liturgical thinking was supposed to reflect, the belief in the action of the mass as the same sacrifice as Calvary underpinned a great deal of priestly power, against which the laity's position was thrown into relief. Their parish experience of the eucharist also demonstrated that access to God was not direct, but mediated through the ritual action of the priest. In 1950 one lay woman wrote to the nuns who had taught her commenting on the privilege of having had a priest celebrate the eucharist in her home. The unusual event had given her a heightened awareness of the liturgy which had previously been more physically and spiritually remote in a church.

Early in the year we had a wonderful experience. Father X came to spend a week with us and he had special permission from his Bishop to say Mass in the house each morning. Think of it...never did I realise before what it meant to have Our Lord really with us under the same roof.<sup>77</sup>

Contemporary reflections on participation in the eucharist are rare, but in 1946 the *Catholic Young Man*, the magazine of the Catholic Young Men's Society in South Australia, published the David Donovan's account of his experience of being married at a service which included a nuptial mass. The article traced the groom's initial reluctance to participate in a long public ritual, during which his religious behaviour would be open to scrutiny.

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<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup>*Loreto Magazine*, 1950, p. 57.

Significantly, his reservations included the unusual and exposed location of the bride and groom within the 'liminal space' of the sanctuary during the service.

In the days preceding my marriage, I was troubled with thoughts of the apparently long ritual of a Nuptial Mass. I could see myself inside the altar rail, self-consciously going through a series of devotional acts, exposed to the minute gaze of parents, relatives, friends and other worshippers.<sup>78</sup>

However, Donovan portrayed his intended bride as insisting on the matter. The young woman's point of view, which he attributed to her membership of a sodality, was that the eucharist gave an added and indispensable flavour of Catholicity to the ceremony.

My fiance (sic), an active member of Our Lady's Sodality, would submit to no compromise. She insisted that the most Catholic, and hence the most desirable, marriage ceremony is one with a Nuptial Mass.<sup>79</sup>

Faced with 'the inevitable' Donovan decided to make the most of the situation and study the ritual 'in which I was to be an unwilling participant.' The liturgy was not intelligible to the lay man until he made a concerted effort to understand what was going on. He recorded his growing appreciation of the church's ceremony. He suggested that his lay status restricted his ultimate appreciation of the rite, but noted that a Catholic wedding offered levels of meaning not available in secular services, or in the less rich traditions of other churches.

It occurred to me that almost every man contemplating the married state has a similar desire to make his marriage ceremony not only joyful but solemn. Yet even assuming a background of high cultural and aesthetic development, the sincerest groom is limited in bringing this desire into fact by his religious limitations. A person whose idea of a

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<sup>78</sup>David Donovan, 'Nuptial Mass and the Man', *Catholic Young Man*, December 1946.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*

marriage ceremony is limited by a secular legality never realises any intense solemnity in the office of a registrar or in the parlour of a judge's home. Even a man whose religious views demand merely a ceremony in a church by a clergyman cannot hope to find much intensity in candlelight services or fashionable society gatherings. Only he who recognises that the act of marriage can be visioned only in the terms and dignity of a sacrament instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ can truly anticipate the meaning of his vows to love, honour and cherish until death.<sup>80</sup>

The description of the nuptial mass which follows is remarkable for the almost complete absence of the bride. The experience is marked for Donovan as a rare chance to be powerfully involved in and close to the sacramental action of the church.

My bride and I were married at 9 o'clock in the morning. When we were man and wife I saw the *alter Christus* begin the Mass and heard the opening chant.... I appreciated fully that never again in my life would I be so closely associated with the priestly power to do infinite honour to the glory of God. I forgot relatives and friends, the inconvenience, and even time. As the Holy Mass progressed, I was the unworthy guest in the House of God.<sup>81</sup>

The physical structure of the 'House of God', the location for so much ritual activity, and the arrangement of space and decorations within it are also essential aspects of the liturgical vocabulary with which the institution spoke to the people.

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

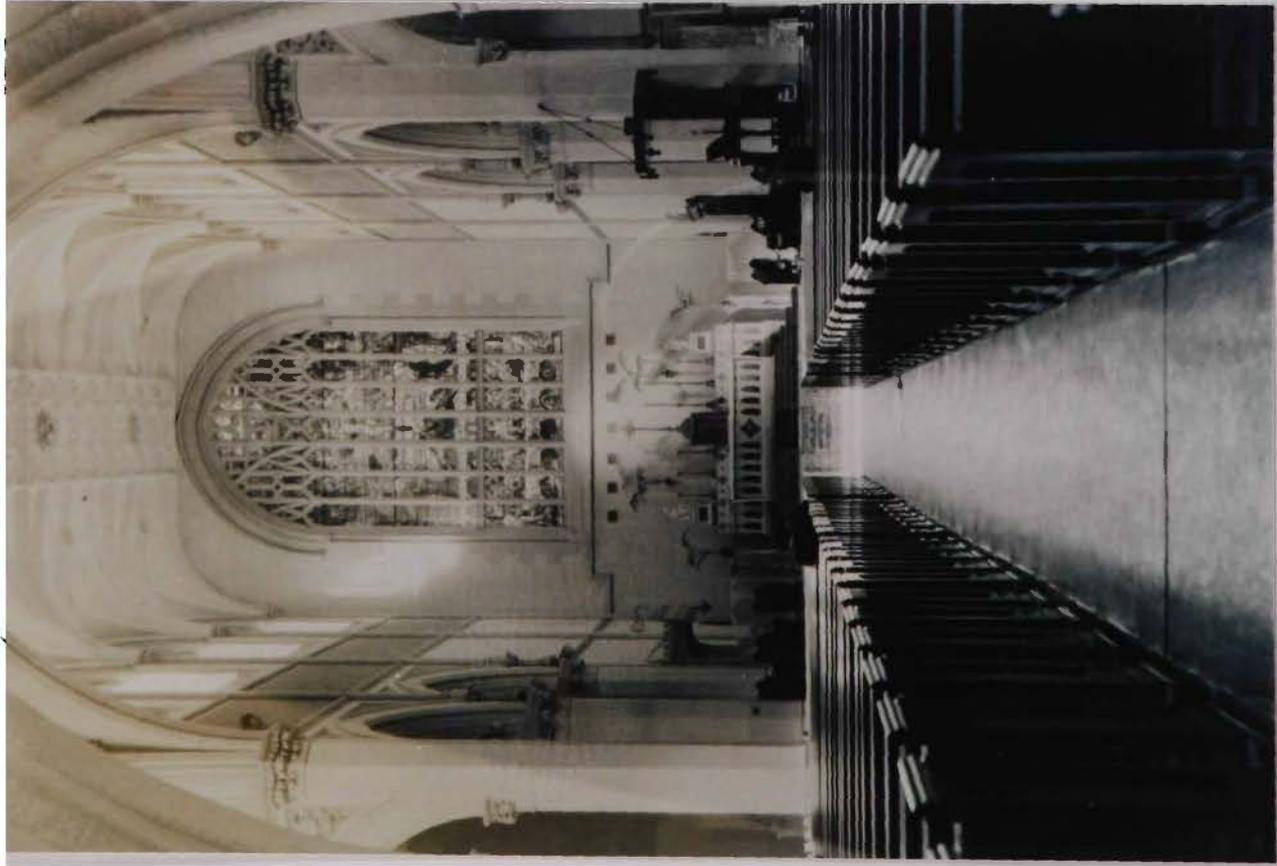


Figure 12. a) The main aisle of St Mary's cathedral, Perth, at the time of the cathedral's dedication in 1930. Courtesy of Fr F. D. Bourke CM.

b) Our Lady of Victories, Floreat Park, WA, described as an 'architectural gem' on its dedication in 1954, *Record*, 26 August 1954, p. 8. Courtesy of the author.



### *The Environment of Worship*

The material culture of prayer and ritual was an intrinsic aspect of the way in which lay Catholics experienced God. It is becoming an historical commonplace to note that buildings are important texts. Yi-Fu Tuan has commented, in a study of the human experience of space and place, that the architecture of the built environment ordered human reality in a similar way to language.

How does architectural form influence human feeling and consciousness? The analogy of language throws light on the question. Words contain and intensify feeling. Without words feeling reaches a momentary peak and quickly dissipates. ...The built environment, like language, has the power to define and refine sensibility. It can sharpen and enlarge consciousness. Without architecture feelings about space must remain diffuse and fleeting.<sup>82</sup>

Such comments are especially relevant to the conscious construction of churches and other places of worship. Jean Delumeau has observed that for the historian of belief physical symbols are not simply interesting but vitally important. While acknowledging the difficulties of collecting evidence from structures which have been adapted inside and out over time, Delumeau argues that 'no adequate study of religious life can afford to exclude as exhaustive an analysis as possible of the material conditions which gave...worship its shape.'<sup>83</sup>

In Catholic parishes in Adelaide and Perth the view of the church building as a symbol of the institution combined with the experience of that

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<sup>82</sup>Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis, 1977, p. 107.

<sup>83</sup>Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter Reformation*, trans. Jeremy Moiser, Philadelphia, 1977, p. 144.

location as the hub of recognised Catholic activity. The institutional records show that 97 parishes were consecrated in the archdioceses of Adelaide and Perth in the 40 years leading up to 1962.<sup>84</sup> Once parishes were established the expectation of priests and people was that physical structures would follow, and the period was strongly characterised by the building of new churches. Construction was not a steady process, but mirrored the ebbs and flows of economic stability and the expansion of parishes. The two periods of intense building in the 1930s and 1950s were characterised by contrasting styles. While the churches of the Depression cast back to various styles of the past, the post-war churches of the 1950s mirrored trends in contemporary secular architecture.

In many parishes the construction of the parish church was an important focus for the Catholic community. A typical pattern of parish development involved the construction of a hall which served as a school on weekdays, social centre on Saturday nights and church on Sundays. The energy of the community was then directed to mustering the physical and financial resources to create a separate sacred location so as to free the liturgy from the makeshift accommodation. The heavy emphasis on building a church went hand in hand with the priority given to the sacramental role of the institution. In 1933 the *West Australian* reported the opening of a new church on the rural edge of Perth at Mundaring. The secular daily reproduced the comments of the Vicar General to explain the building's role as the locus of institutional church life in a district.

With Catholics the Church was...the house of God...a centre of light and teaching and a treasure house of grace because here the Sacraments were dispensed to the people.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> *Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia, 1981 - 82*, Sydney, 1981, pp. 11 - 19, 197 - 206.

<sup>85</sup> *West Australian*, 23 January 1933, p. 11. The significance of familiarity with a local church is discussed by Robert Towler, *Homo Religiosus: Sociological Problems in the Study of Religion*, London Constable, 1974, p. 166.

The structure of the churches built between 1922 and 1962 reflected the Catholic understanding of the sacred, mediated through a variety of architectural fashions which offered a shorthand to the community on the nature of the Divine. The shape of the church could cast parishioners back to the rich heritage of Catholicism, and shape their understanding of themselves as inheritors of an honourable past.<sup>86</sup> In particular the revival of Gothic architecture in nineteenth-century England encouraged a self-image of the institution among its adherents which drew on the associations of Gothic with medieval community life. Both in terms of liturgy and community the Catholic landscape in Perth and Adelaide played a significant role, more often as a factor consolidating the past than as a force for innovation.

In Adelaide, 'the city of churches', the understanding that the building should be a worthy venue for the mass and 'home' of Christ in the eucharist underpinned Catholic churches modelled in different historical styles.

Styles of churches are most varied - classical, gothic, romanesque, byzantine and their many modifications - and thus serve to promote interest in the Church. For visiting and appraising them we take satisfaction in the many outward forms in which our Church is able to give expression to loving respect for the Christ whose Presence is in our Churches.<sup>87</sup>

Perth's Catholic churches displayed a more unswerving commitment to an imitation Gothic style in architecture; in particular the extensions to St Mary's Cathedral which Perth's Catholic community financed between 1926 and 1930

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<sup>86</sup>Frank Getlein and Dorothy Getlein, *Christianity in Modern Art*, Milwaukee, 1961, p. 8.

<sup>87</sup>Fr Vincent McEvoy, *Pledge of the Holy Name Society*, Camberwell, Victoria, 1950, p. 42.

encapsulated many of the hopes behind Catholic buildings of the period before the Second Vatican Council.

The gothic design of St Mary's cathedral was a deliberate choice on the part of Perth's Catholic hierarchy, and so it is especially fruitful to examine the relationships between people, institution and God which were embedded in the structure. The £90 000 project, which aimed to transform the existing cathedral into a much larger and more elaborate structure, was a significant commitment of resources, raised mostly by public subscription. The Depression brought work to a stop before the extensions had been completed, but the new sections of St Mary's rose compellingly on the Victoria Square site, just beyond the centre of Perth. As a structure designed 'for the years to come'<sup>88</sup> the cathedral was designed to be a temple of the eucharist, an uplifting and edifying environment for the faithful, and an impressive testament to Catholic achievement in a non-Catholic world. When the new sanctuary, extended nave and sections of the transept were completed, 20 000 people attended a solemn and elaborate liturgy of consecration lead by 13 representatives of Australia's hierarchy. The *Record* regarded the addition of a Catholic cathedral to Perth's landscape as an historic event for the community in general as well as for Catholics.

When His Grace the Archbishop opened the door of this Gothic fane to all who would worship therein whether they come in crowding numbers on the great occasions, or whether at solitary moments they come as individuals for peace and shade and rest...those who were present will treasure that scene so that in due time they may hand it on to their children's children. The citizens of the State may now point to another milestone in their growth. It is a Catholic church and yet non-Catholic citizens share in it

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<sup>88</sup>*Record*, 10 May 1930, p. 17, caption of photograph of the building.

because another monument has been added to beautify the capital city.

...The most that can be said of St Mary's Cathedral is that it is worthy of its site, a position unrivalled in any city of the Commonwealth, a pedestal designed by nature to hold aloft this Gothic poem, this prayer writ in stone, for all to see and seeing to join in honouring Him to Whom it is dedicated, so that He may return in His own way, and in His own time, a shower of blessings on those who dwell beneath its shadows.<sup>89</sup>

While the *Record* made it clear that the cathedral was to be read in part as a parable of progress and successful civic achievement, the paper also gave space to view of the layman-architect, Mr M.F. Cavanagh, who explained its primary function as a house of worship. The opening paragraph of Cavanagh's description for the *Record* commented on the devotional needs of worshippers. While St Mary's reflected a liturgy in which the congregation was generally static, Cavanagh aimed for a church in which the sight and sound of the sacred were accessible to the people in their role as spectators.

In designing the Cathedral, the first thing that was thoroughly considered was that it was to be a place of worship, and everything that was necessary for devotional purposes was to receive first consideration, such as a clear view of the High Altar and of all the beautiful ritual of the Church; clear sound within the compass of the human voice and good acoustic properties for preaching and for the Church music.<sup>90</sup>

Ironically, the conservative design of the layman Cavanagh had won the favour of Archbishop Clune quite late in the day over the less standard designs of

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3 - 4.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

the priest-architect, Fr John Hawes.<sup>91</sup> Fr Hawes's plans for a Romanesque cathedral in Perth drew on the architecture of southern Europe and had been virtually approved by Archbishop Clune when lobbying for the more familiar northern European Gothic style carried the day. Hawes was aiming, in his oft repeated phrase, for a poem in stone. Others among the clergy wanted a sermon. Hawes wrote to his architect friend Sir Giles Scott of his disappointment, and of the conservatism which bound some of the clergy who saw the established architect Cavanagh as their champion.

I know perfectly well what the clergy really desires: imitation Gothic, geometrically decorated; a church with steep-pitched roof and ornamented parapet and flying buttresses, even though they buttress nothing, since there is no vault. But they must have their pet flying buttresses, also a spire, though by the time the towers for them rise to roof level, all the building enthusiasm and flow of donations will probably have ebbed away.<sup>92</sup>

In the same way that written and oral texts speak with multiple voices, so physical evidence, such as the gothic shape of Perth's cathedral, contains layers of meaning. Umberto Eco has used the example of Gothic architecture to illustrate the variety of connotations which could accrue to a building. He has noted some of the diverse interpretations of the Gothic cathedral - the vault evoked Celtic forests and the religion of the Druids for proto-Romantic readers, the walls and windows allowing light into dark interiors to connote the

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<sup>91</sup>Hawes, a professional architect before his conversion to Catholicism, had designed innovative secular buildings and churches in England and the Bahamas before coming to Western Australia as a missionary priest in 1915. He worked in the Geraldton diocese from 1915 - 1939. His plans for the Geraldton cathedral, which had been begun in 1916, and other churches in the district were marked by a sense of proportion, the use of local stone and original adaptation of a variety of architectural styles. See A.G.Evans, *The Conscious Stone: A Biography of John C. Hawes*, Melbourne, Polding Press, 1984, p. 109; see also Peter F. Anson, *The Hermit of Cat Island, The Life of Fra Jerome Hawes*, London, Burns and Oates, 1957.

<sup>92</sup>Letter, Fr John Hawes to Sir Giles Scott, c.1926, cited A. G. Evans, *The Conscious Stone*, p. 109.

movement of God's spirit in the world for medieval readers, and the congruence of the whole Gothic code with notions of 'the religious' in the nineteenth century.

One had at that time [nineteenth century Gothic revival] the identification of 'Gothic style = religiosity' an identification that undoubtedly rested on other, preceding connotative identifications, such as 'vertical emphasis = elevation of the soul Godward' or contrast of light streaming through great naves in 'shadows = mysticism'. Now these are connotations so deeply rooted that even today some effort is required to remember that the Greek temple too, balanced and harmonious in its proportions could connote, according to another lexicon, the elevation of the spirit to the Gods, and that something like the altar of Abraham on the top of a mountain could connote mystical feelings; thus one connotative lexicon may impose itself over others in the course of time, and, for example, the contrast of light and shadow becomes what one most deeply associates with mystic states of mind.<sup>93</sup>

The association of gothic style with religion contributed to the popularity of building secular structures in this style.<sup>94</sup> The nineteenth-century secular buildings in gothic style, of which the British Houses of Parliament are the most frequently cited example, spoke to the industrialising society in a powerful way. The gothic buildings have been interpreted as offering the emerging middle class of industrial England structures whose upward movement reflected their social mobility, reinforced the middle class claim on morality and made available the connotations of community to an increasingly fragmented society; all while only demanding a relatively small area of land in a city.<sup>95</sup> Churches built in the

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<sup>93</sup>Umberto Eco, 'Function and Sign: The Semiotics of Architecture' in M. Gottdiener and Alexandros Ph. Lagopoulos, (eds), *The City and the Sign: An Introduction to urban Semiotics*, New York, 1986, pp. 67 - 8.

<sup>94</sup>Kenneth Clarke, *The Gothic Revival, An Essay in the History of Taste*, Hammondsworth, 1964, p. 93 - 133.

<sup>95</sup>Felicity Morel, 'Symbol and Social Control, Public Architecture in the Swan River Colony, 1851 - 1870', BA (Hons) thesis, Department of History, University of Western Australia, 1986, pp. 23 - 24, 66 - 67.

gothic style therefore reinforced the symbolism which was important to the secular revival, while also drawing on the secular discussion of the meaning and importance of the gothic building. Thus, Father McMahon began his article commemorating the opening of St Mary's in Perth by quoting John Ruskin in support of his view that architecture was memory made visible. The special issue of the *Record* was full of references to the revived skills of the middle ages which had been required to build the cathedral. In constructing the building of the cathedral as a medieval activity McMahon was encouraging his readers to view their own age as one of similarly great faith.

Watching the walls of St Mary's arising sends one's thoughts back to the age that has enriched all others; the age of the medieval cathedrals. Go around to the stone-cutters, sit down, close your eyes, listen to the tap of the pestle on chisel and the bite of the chisel on stone, and back to the golden era you go in fancy. ...Open your eyes again, you miss the picturesque garb, but you see the same painstaking work of carving Donnybrook stone into ornamental pinnacles and flowering crockets. Ignore the steel travelling crane, and the electric saw, and you lose the sense of the present, and see the guilds of the Middle Ages building their appointed part of the cathedral.<sup>96</sup>

As Kenneth Clark has observed in relation to the Tractarians and their promotion of the English Gothic form, the physical structure of the church was bound up with the nature of the liturgy which was to take place there. The Oxford movement demanded churches of a more 'Roman' shape, with an increased emphasis on altar and sanctuary at the expense of the pulpit so that a Roman-style liturgy could be celebrated. The Gothic style spoke powerfully of Catholicism and ancient forms of worship.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>*Record*, 10 May 1930, p. 3

<sup>97</sup>Kenneth Clarke, *The Gothic Revival*, pp. 138 - 9.

The link between the physical style of the church building and the manner in which the worship of God was envisaged was evident in the subtle changes in the architecture of Australian Catholic churches in the years after the Second World War. As funds became available for church building in the 1950s, new churches were established in suburban parishes and praised for their modernity. The liturgy had not yet changed substantially, the notions of lay participation in the mass were still in embryo, but the increasing commitment to taking Catholicism into the modern world, was echoed in churches less concerned with the shapes of the past and more at ease with modern brick and tile. For example, the design of the new parish church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Alberton was explicitly acknowledged to reflect the triumphant spirit of the Catholicism of the 1950s.

By day this building is distinguished by its enormous, steep pitched roof and life-size bronze of the Crucified Christ, while at night, subtle lighting also highlights the stained glass windows of unique design.

This building is not simply one of the many interesting churches in Adelaide, nor is it simply one of the architecturally imaginative churches built in this state in the last thirty years. Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a unique church in South Australia in that it captures the spirit of confidence of the age about the strength and growth of Catholicism within its creative architecture.<sup>98</sup>

In 1954 the *Record* lauded the opening of the Floreat Park church of 'Our Lady Queen of Apostles' and carried a photograph of the red brick box structure which provided a niche for a white marble statue of the Queen of Apostles over the main door.<sup>99</sup> The adjective 'modern', once regarded as mostly applicable to heresy, was proudly used to describe the building which would be a centre for Catholics in the newly developing middle class suburb. The tension between the statue and

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<sup>98</sup>'Our Lady of Mount Carmel', Alberton Parish Box, ACAA.

<sup>99</sup>*Record*, 17 August 1954, p. 1.

the total structure itself reflected the tentative embrace which the church offered the modern world and the sometimes incongruous mix of institutional tradition and authority with promptings for a lay presence in the world.

### *Church Interiors*

Notions of the sacred and profane were not only important in determining the structure of the building, but also the church furnishings and decorations. The location and nature of fixed and mobile features of a church interior, such as special altars, shrines and statues, were keys to reading the relationship between the piety of the people and the devotions sanctioned by the institution. In his work on devotion to the saints whose images figure in the churches of central Paris, Stephen Wilson has considered such physical evidence of popularity as the location of statues and paintings, as well as flowers, candles and plaques of thanks for favours received through the saint's prayers.<sup>100</sup> While offerings of flowers and candles are almost impossible to trace except through photographs, and dedicatory plaques not common practice in the Irish Australian tradition, Wilson's discussion of the location of images has implications for an analysis of popular piety in Australia.

The orientation of Catholic churches was prescribed as east-west, with the high altar at the east end. The altar was the focal point of the sacred action of the liturgy and Wilson suggests that the closer an image was to the altar, especially to the right side of the altar, the more institutional favour that image enjoyed. In contrast, devotions which were less established, either because they were more recent or drew their impetus from the people rather than the

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<sup>100</sup>Stephen Wilson, 'Cults of saints in the churches of central Paris'. in Stephen Wilson, (ed), *Saints and their Cults, Studies in Religious Sociology*, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 233 - 60.

institution, were often represented by free standing statues or pictures beyond the edge of the most sacred spaces.

The authentically popular cult might enter by the door quite literally; it may then progress into the body of the Church, where it tends to remain in the middle area the people's space, rather than move into the clergy's eastward space.<sup>101</sup>

Wilson's study suggests that maps of the interior of churches are a valuable guide to the dominant facets of a community's spirituality. For historians of the pre-Vatican II period in Australia the exact details of church furnishings are difficult to trace, however the full scale shrines built into the new churches being constructed during this period and details gleaned from photographs and oral evidence can contribute to an analysis of popular spirituality.

Something of the interplay between popular piety, official sanction and the role of art in Catholic devotional life is evident in the decision to dedicate one side chapel in St Mary's Cathedral in Perth to St Thérèse of Lisieux. The original intention was that the building's three side chapels would be assigned to the Sacred Heart, on the left nearest the sanctuary, the Blessed Virgin, further left, in the space which had been proposed as a chapter house in the earliest building plans, and, on the right, St Joseph. The chapel for the Sacred Heart and the Lady Chapel were duly built, but Archbishop Clune's original decision in favour of St Joseph was overturned by the popularity of the Little Flower. A statue of the young Carmelite was placed above an onyx altar and mosaic roses entwined the inscription of her last words, promising miracles to the faithful. St Joseph was relegated to a small alcove in a pillar at the mid-point of the cathedral and the Little Flower's shrine was blessed and opened on 9 March 1935.

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<sup>101</sup>Wilson, 'Cults of saints in central Paris', p. 251. See also R. Needham, (ed), *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification*, Chicago, 1973.

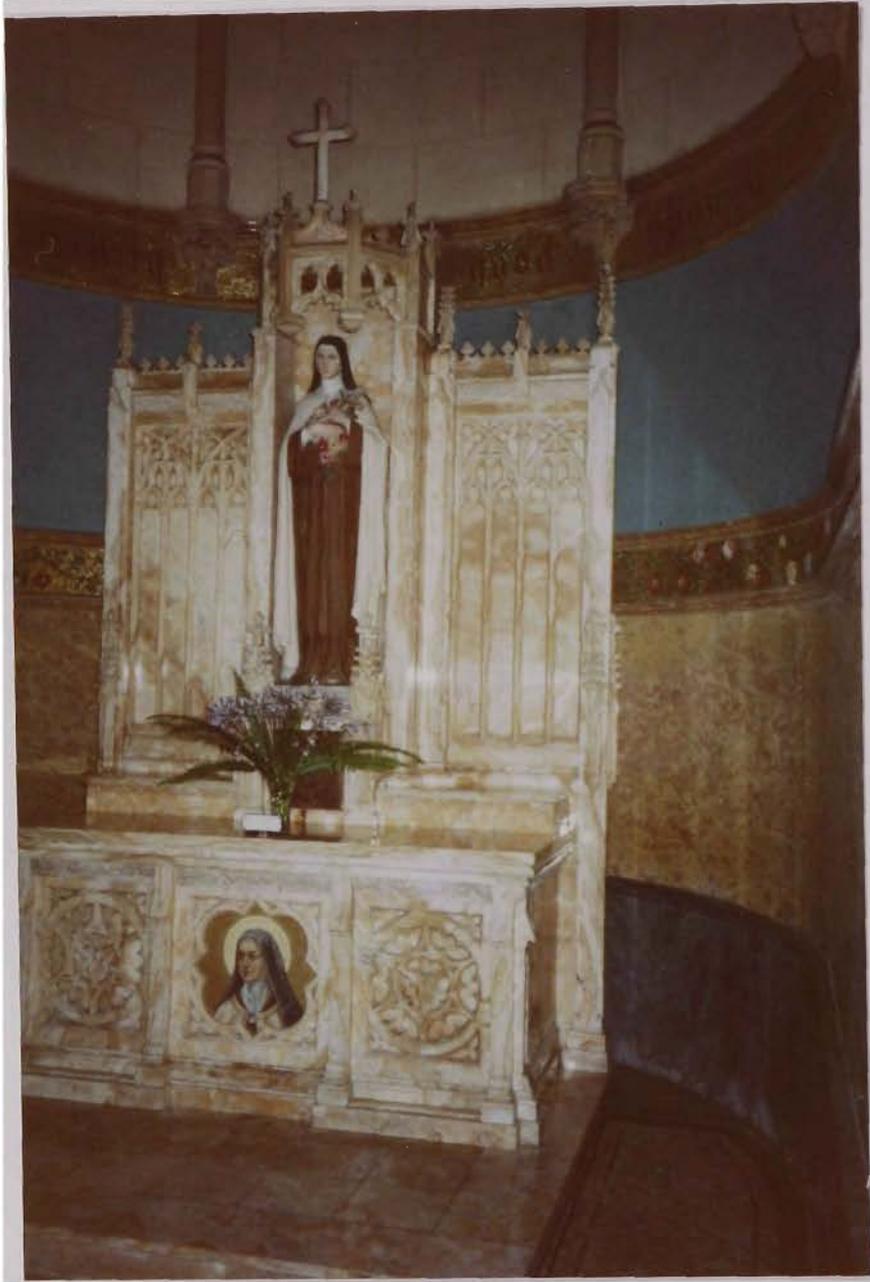


Figure 13. The altar of the Little Flower Shrine in St Mary's Cathedral, dedicated to St Thérèse of Lisieux in 1936. Courtesy of the author.

The shrine to Thérèse, close to the sanctuary of the cathedral, was regarded as a special location. Although the *Record* does not go so far as to suggest that prayers offered there would be more readily heard, it was certainly promoted as an appropriate setting in which to ask Thérèse for favours.

[Thérèse] was being honoured by our aged Archbishop and her many clients by the unveiling of a new and ornate Shrine that was to remain within the Cathedral in a chapel specifically set apart for it where her faithful clients might come and tell to her their cares, anxieties and love, and ask for at least a petal from one of the many roses she said she would send to earth.<sup>102</sup>

The *Record* reported the care that had been taken to create an altar 'worthy of the world's most endearing Patroness'.<sup>103</sup> An editorial on the opening noted that the splendour of the chapel and, in particular, the relic of the saint which would be held in a monstrance upon the altar would 'serve to increase the fervour of her clients, who daily come to her Shrine to seek her intercession with God Who has so richly favoured her'.<sup>104</sup>

It is unlikely that Thérèse would have been recognised so prominently in a diocesan structure if not for the institutional support of her cult. Archbishop Clune's correspondence clearly indicated that the shrine had been proposed by a priest, supported by the people and approved by the archbishop once the collection of funds had begun.

We have a priest in the Diocese who has been cured of spine trouble by the Little Flower. He started collecting money for a shrine in her honour in the Cathedral. The collection has now reached £2000 and just as we had

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<sup>102</sup>*Record*, 9 March 1935, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup>*Record*, 16 March 1935, p. 12.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*

approved of the plan this offer of a foundation came from [the Carmelite mother house]...in Sydney.<sup>105</sup>

Clune saw Divine approval for the plan in the 'almost miraculous co-incidence that the day I approved of the plan for the shrine I got a letter from the Mother Prioress'.<sup>106</sup> The total of £2,650 to build the shrine was raised by a blend of popular and clerical efforts in a campaign of public subscription spearheaded by Father Kenny, whose recovery Clune reported in his letter to Ireland. As money was accumulated, usually through donations of 5 or 10 shillings, the *Record* reported the progress of the fund indicating diocesan support for the project. The ease with which donations were gathered was all the more compelling in the context of the Depression which was affecting other church causes. Archbishop Clune was known to be devoted to Thérèse and his correspondence continued to acknowledge that he saw her hand in smoothing the path of the Carmelite foundation in Perth.

The Carmelite nuns have offered a foundation next year which we have accepted. It looks like a gift from the 'Little Flower' to reward us for the shrine we are going to erect in her honour in the vacant Chapel in the Cathedral.<sup>107</sup>

As I am on the subject of the Little Flower Shrine, I may as well tell you that we expect a foundation of Carmelite nuns by Xmas (sic)...I have no doubt they will draw down God's special blessing on the Diocese. It looks as if the 'Little Flower' has already rewarded us for the erection of a Shrine in her honour in the cathedral.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Archbishop Clune to Sister Genevieve, Convent of Mercy, Kilrush, Ireland, 1 February 1934, Clune Papers, Box A11/10, ACAP.

<sup>106</sup>Archbishop Clune to Mother Stanislaus Kilkee, 1 February, 1934, Clune Papers, Box A11/9, ACAP.

<sup>107</sup>Archbishop Clune to Father Hannigan CSsR, 15 February 1934, Clune Papers, ACAP.

<sup>108</sup>Archbishop Clune to Father Hannigan CSsR, 29 May 1934, Clune Papers, ACAP.

Thérèse's shrine, decorated to indicate her earthly origins and her other-worldly status, was blessed by the institution to enhance and reflect the prayers of the people.

In general, churches were decorated with images in the devotional tradition.<sup>109</sup> The view that the quality of religious art should be determined by criteria of piety not by general taste and artistic merit prevailed in official circles throughout the period. In 1950 the *Southern Cross* question-box page published a letter from a Protestant complaining about the poor standard of Catholic religious art. In reply, while noting that great artists had been Catholic and even admitting in passing that some contemporary religious art was poor, the paper took the opportunity to point out that religious art was not an end in itself but the means to devotion. The reply suggested that art which appeared 'tawdry' to an outsider might well uplift the sentiments of one with a Catholic world-view.

(Q)I hate the images, the silly tawdry things one sees in shops that sell such Roman Catholic paraphernalia...I hate the Roman Catholic type of Holy Picture. ...Such things divert people's minds from the things that matter.

(A)A Catholic on seeing any sacred image or picture however poor its artistic value, finds his mind diverted to the heavenly reality for which it stands. Is diversion of the mind from earthly to heavenly realities a diversion from the things that matter?

You, on the other hand, are reminded of nothing by such images and pictures and judge them solely by the degree of artistic pleasure you get out of them. If they afford you some satisfaction very well, but if they give you no pleasure they're no good. The

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<sup>109</sup>The nature of devotional art is discussed above in chapter 3.

Catholic, his mind diverted from things that don't matter, asks himself not whether the image is pleasing to him, but whether he himself is pleasing to God.<sup>110</sup>

The institutional commitment to Sulpician images was not in keeping with the shifts taking place in the art-world or in the faith-life of some priests and people. As the European art critic André Rousseau suggested in 1951, images in the devotional style were safe and free from the taint of heresy that often plagued 'modern' art. He noted that while the traditional images offended some European tastes, unlike some modern images, they were never the focus of horrified protest.

With respect to modern art, the cries of scandal are so loud that the Bishop orders removal of the scandalous object, ...on the other side nothing happens. I have never heard that scandalized opinion ...has ever demanded the removal of a caramel St Thérèse or a whipped cream Virgin of Lourdes.<sup>111</sup>

In Australia, movement away from the devotional style was very slow.

Rosemary Crumlin has commented on the way artistic development was left behind other changes in the church as Pellegrini's and E.J.Dwyer, the suppliers of religious artifacts, maintained their cultural dominance.

While the years around 1950 saw the Church moving with real assertiveness into politics and education, they witnessed no upsurge of interest in the arts. On the contrary when the multiplication of devotions called for visual expression, the clerics and the laity turned to Catholic repositories. Often the managers and salesmen from Pellegrini's and Dwyer's acted as consultants suggesting the type of image which had proved popular elsewhere and which, because it was mass produced, was

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<sup>110</sup>*Southern Cross*, 24 November 1950, p. 5.

<sup>111</sup>André Rousseau, 'Encore l'art sacré', *Le Figaro*, 4 August 1951, p. 8, cited William S. Rubin, *Modern Sacred Art and the Church of Assy*, New York, 1961, p. 11.



Figure 14. a) The production of devotional images, a scene from the statuary workshop of Pellegrini and Co., c. 1950. *Pellegrini and Co Presents this Souvenir of their Diamond Jubilee, 1890 - 1950*, p. 16. Courtesy Mr Ron Johnson.



Production of liturgical requirements, (b) vestements and (c) church plate, in the workshops of Pellegrini and Co. c. 1950. *Pellegrini and Co Presents this Souvenir of their Diamond Jubilee, 1890 - 1950*, p. 26 and p. 28. Courtesy Mr Ron Johnson.



also inexpensive. There is no evidence that the decorations within Churches at this time were regarded as more than aids to piety or reminders of Christian doctrines.<sup>112</sup>

In 1950 the family firm Pellegrini's celebrated 60 years of business in Australia. A company booklet produced for the anniversary noted that the chain of shops in Australia had been founded by brothers from Lucca in Italy to provide Australian Catholics with 'the necessary religious articles for the practice of their devotions'.<sup>113</sup> Established initially in Melbourne and spreading to the other capitals including Perth in 1932 and Adelaide in 1936, the brothers were succeeded by sons who had maintained strong connections with similar industries in Italy. The firm's work gradually expanded from the manufacture and decoration of statues to encompass every aspect of church furnishing and printing. In 1947 the director, Umberto Pellegrini, was awarded a papal knighthood; an indication of the congruence between his work and the institutional view of how church interiors and Catholic homes should be supplied. The company records are not extant, and the brief company history of 1950 is an internal document celebrating the family tradition and success. It does not provide any detail of the philosophy which informed the choice of suppliers or the style of goods provided. A good deal of attention is given to the updating of machinery in the statutory, church-plate and printing works, perhaps an indication the priority for Pellegrini's was replication, on the assumption that priorities in piety were well established and directed from above, and abroad.

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<sup>112</sup>Rosemary Crumlin, 'An Investigation of Some Aspects of the History of the Blake Prize for Religious Art, 1949 - 1975', MA Thesis, Monash University, 1985, p. 11.

<sup>113</sup>*The House of Pellegrini, Souvenir of their Diamond Jubilee*, Sydney, 1950, personal copy of Mr Ron Johnson, WA., p. 11.

Letters held with the papers of Archbishop Prendiville give an insight into the level of direction which the church gave when artists were commissioned for a particular work. Writing to a convent in Rome, where paintings for Perth had been completed in the past, the Archbishop's secretary provided precise details about the size and composition of the picture required for a Perth parish.

The oil painting is to be 7'9" x 5'9" and is to depict the Crucifixion, including the central figure of Our Lord and the two thieves. It is suggested that the penitent thief be brought prominently into the picture, as it is intended to inscribe a brass plate with the name 'The Penitent Thief' below the picture.<sup>114</sup>

One local artist who was commissioned to model two three foot statues of St Thérèse expressed a mild dissatisfaction with the standard effort and negotiated a longer time than usual to complete the work. His letter reflected a concern that statues be well-crafted, but he was silent on the question of how to interpret Thérèse. His reference to the saint by her institutional pet name of 'The Little Flower' apparently set the scene for the accepted figure in Carmelite habit with crucifix and roses.

The general run of small statues of 'The Little Flower' are but sorry attempts at craft, and I feel sure that something better is needed. So with that in view, I would like to devote a month on them.

If Your Grace can afford this time I feel sure that the statues will repay you for the waiting.<sup>115</sup>

While the dominance of such imagery in church interiors meant that the continuity of the church was upheld through changes in spirituality, the

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<sup>114</sup> Phillip Jackson (secretary to Archbishop Prendiville) to Rev. Mother Superior, Casa Sant'Elena, 27 February 1940, Prendiville Papers, Box A12 29/2, ACAP.

<sup>115</sup>E. Kahler, sculptor, to Prendiville, 9 January 1941, Prendiville Papers, Box A12 13/3, ACAP.

Sulpician images were incongruous for those members of the church who were seeking to moderate their anti-modernist reputation. The use of traditional iconography to express the spirituality of Catholic Action and commitment to the Mystical Body was characteristic of the tension between the passive and active facets of Catholicism. There were some variations from the institutional norm in keeping with the church's efforts to embrace the modern world. In contrast to the sentimental and flowery images popular amongst the stock at Pellegrini's, the Catholic Guild for Social Studies established in Adelaide in 1932 offered prayer cards which showed black on white woodcut prints, not of the Sacred Heart, but of Christ the Worker. The style reflected the influence of English artist Eric Gill, who like the Guild's founders, Paul and Margaret McGuire and other early Catholic Actionists, was persuaded by Chesterton and Belloc that the church was at a high point in the middle ages. The Melbourne *Catholic Worker* shared this taste for simple line drawings, though it is difficult to determine whether this was an aesthetic preference rather than a choice motivated by production costs. However, the *Record's* use of similar graphics to accompany some articles with a liturgical or Catholic Actionist flavour perhaps indicated that the style was associated with particular preoccupations.

In general the representation of religious themes in Catholic churches remained separate from developments in Catholic thought and in the art world. Some attempts were made to integrate the two. An ecumenical committee of religiously-oriented art enthusiasts, which included the Jesuit priests Peter Kenny and Michael Scott, established the Blake Prize for religious art in 1951. The prize was intended to stimulate 'a thoroughly contemporary presentation of religious truth, which involved both some attempt to penetrate into the ultimate meaning of theological thought and also the ability to convey creative inspiration in a manner that is meaningful to the perceptive viewer as well as to

the artist himself.<sup>116</sup> The committee's efforts coincided with recognition of some religiously inspired artists by the churches, and gave an impetus to the expression of religious themes, but on the whole the new work was peripheral to the on-going tradition of Catholicism.

The public prayer of Catholicism was one of the keys to Catholic identity and an important means by which lay Catholic people interacted with the institutional church and negotiated their spirituality. The highly structured ritual and powerful symbols of the mass or service of benediction, conducted in an especially designed environment, shaped and reflected the ways in which lay people sought to express their role within the church. The eucharist in particular was acknowledged by priests and people as a significant way in which Catholics could express their relationship with God. At mass the Catholic community celebrated the Body of Christ. The host became the body of Christ as the Catholic community named itself as Christ's body. Within a culture which encompassed a highly emotive emphasis on the reality of Jesus's presence transubstantiated on the altar, there was also a tradition of ecclesiology which held that to receive the eucharist was to embody Christ and to share the Christian mission.<sup>117</sup> As Catholics in WA and SA were encouraged to become more conscious of their part in a community of prayer, some also began to explore what membership of the Mystical Body meant in the modern world.

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<sup>116</sup>Felix Arnott and Michael Scott, founders of the prize, in Foreword, Hilde and Hans Knorr, *Religious Art in Australia*, Melbourne, 1967.

<sup>117</sup>F. X. Lalor, 'The Mystical Body of Christ', *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, pp. 166 - 70.

## Chapter 8: Catholic Action

The story of the development of an active lay apostolate within Australian Catholicism is largely the story of Catholic Action, and of the efforts by bishops, priests and people to clarify the meaning of this concept for Catholics in Australia. Catholic Action, loosely defined as 'the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church's hierarchy'<sup>1</sup>, depended for its success on acceptance of the idea that lay people were a vital part of the church. In an institution firmly committed to hierarchical organisation the novelty of this notion required some re-thinking, and for bishops, priests and people the adjustment caused confusion. Catholic Action has attracted some attention in Australian historical writing as the forerunner of Catholic efforts to influence the trade union movement and the Australian Labor Party.<sup>2</sup> It is also significant in the history of Australian spirituality as an innovation in the concept of discipleship and it is from that perspective that Catholic Action will be examined in this chapter.

In the twentieth century international Catholicism was confronted by the need to respond to the conditions of the industrial world. Pope Leo XIII had placed the social problems of ordinary workers on the agenda of the church in 1891 with his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. The devotional, other-worldly Catholicism examined in section II of this thesis was one strand of a response to the issues of the modern world. Implicit in Leo's encyclical was another strand

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<sup>1</sup>Pope Pius XI's classical definition of Catholic Action was implicit in the 1922 encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei* and was developed in later writings.

<sup>2</sup>See for example, B. A. Santamaria, ' "The Movement": 1941 - 60 An Outline' in Henry Mayer, (ed), *Catholics and the Free Society: An Australian Symposium*, Melbourne, 1961, pp. 54 - 103; T. L. Suttor, 'Catholicism in Australian Politics Since Federation', *ibid*, pp. 33 - 53; Gerard Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, Sydney, 1982; Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society and Catholic Social Militancy in Australia 1929 - 1939*, Kogarah, NSW, 1986, pp. 118 - 120; Max Charlesworth, 'Australian Catholic Intellectuals: the *Catholic Worker* and the "Movement"', in Brian Head and James Walter, (eds), *Intellectual Movements and Australian Society*, Melbourne, 1988, pp. 274 - 88.

which called for direct action in the world. Catholic Action developed in the 1920s, and specifically from about 1931 in Australia, as part of a commitment to become involved with the world in order to change it. The emergence of this strand of spirituality was marked by dispute and debate over what was to be appropriately regarded as 'holy'. The activities that evolved, or were reinforced, within the Australian church in response to the call to Catholic Action were diverse, if not contradictory, in their aims, and were generally piecemeal. The efforts to encourage Catholic people in Australia to a sense of apostleship were marked by confusion over what forms of lay participation were appropriate, and what kind of Catholic presence was best suited to 'the world'. Opinion diverged over active and passive models of spirituality, and the related issue of lay autonomy and clerical control. As support veered between established sodalities focussed on the next world and new groups with methodologies centred on this world, the developing lay apostolate fostered and reflected diverse understandings of the nature of the church and the role of Christians in the world.

Within this confusion in WA and SA some important hallmarks of Catholic Action began to emerge. Underwritten by a vision of church as the Mystical Body of Christ, there was an increasing awareness that action in the everyday world was the foundation of a God-given vocation to lay life. If lay people were to be responsible for the world and the church they needed to understand and analyse the surrounding environment with access to informed opinion, so the formation of study circles, Catholic libraries and the encouragement of intellectual enquiry became a priority within lay spirituality. Part of this study centred around the New Testament as Catholics were encouraged to read, reflect on and discuss the gospel stories and parables together, as the basis for their new sense of discipleship. The shape of religious activity changed as this reflection and discussion occurred in small groups of lay

people who worked in similar occupations. The small groups met with a priest chaplain who was expected to be able to identify with their everyday life, while remaining a spiritual mentor.

The spirituality of Catholic Action in Australia stands in some contrast to devotional Catholicism. It is possible to consider these different approaches to being holy as reflections of the contrasting styles of masculine and feminine spirituality. As section II has shown, devotionalism reflected the strength of the repressed feminine within the church in a sentimental and passive concern for the next life. In a more positive mode the feminine emphasis on a holistic approach, making connections between parts, was seen in the well-developed network of the communion of saints and the deeply personal sense of Jesus and his mother, and the favourite saints, making an impact on individual lives. A feminine recognition of the value of ambiguity in life was present in devotionalism's acceptance of an imperfect present world and of human beings who fell short of the ideal and were frequently sinful. The Catholic Action style was different. Within a relational, and feminine, model of the church as the Mystical Body, Catholic Action provided an avenue for lay men and women to express their spirituality in a masculine mode. Intellectual endeavour was affirmed and the Catholic Action method was extremely 'left-brain' or masculine in its focus on the need to understand the detail and specificity of particular situations. A dualistic interpretation of the church and the world was reflected in the drive to gain a clear understanding of how reality was different from the Christian ideal; this understanding was to form the basis for action to transform that reality. Catholic Action identified the world as part of the spiritual realm, and, as lay people were encouraged to make their principles clear to others in their workplaces, where Catholics often felt isolated from the church, they discovered a sense of autonomy and a capacity for individual

judgement in spiritual matters.<sup>3</sup> The initial masculine impetus of Catholic Action went some way to redressing an imbalance in lay piety within the twentieth century church. The conflict, suspicion and confusion which surrounded its development can be attributed, in part, to the clash of spiritual styles, or the struggle to integrate the instrumental and expressive modes within the church, in order to allow room for a more adult lay faith.

There was considerable confusion over the nature of the lay apostolate in Australia, which was fuelled by competition on the international Catholic scene between two distinct notions of 'Catholic Action' itself. In broad terms the two contrasting styles were typified on the one hand by Catholic Action in Italy, perhaps more clearly devotional, and on the other by Catholic Action in Belgium, the action-based model eventually adopted in Adelaide and Perth. The first claim to the title was held by the Italian model which had its origins in movements to defend the church as early as 1863 during the pontificate of Pius IX. Its priorities were to encourage Catholics in the traditional practices of their faith and especially to protect the interests of the Pope and the church by fielding Catholic candidates in political elections.<sup>4</sup> This style of Catholic Action remained dominant in Italy. Its activities were defended by Pius XI in his 1931 encyclical *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* and the Vatican concordat with the Mussolini government of the same year. However, it was the distinctive style of the Belgian movement, established by Canon Joseph Cardijn, which Pius XI championed most vigorously. The Belgian group, recognised under the title *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* (JOC) in 1925, was centred on enabling workers

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<sup>3</sup>There is a discussion of the masculine and feminine in spirituality in the Introduction, which draws especially on Richard Rohr and Joseph Martos, *Why Be Catholic? Understanding Our Experience and Tradition*, Cincinnati 1989, pp. 55 - 67; see also James B. Nelson, *The Intimate Connection: Male Sexuality, Masculine Spirituality*, Philadelphia, 1988.

<sup>4</sup>*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, p. 262, cited David Kehoe, 'Catholic Action: Seedbed of the Melbourne YCW, 1933-39', chapter 2 in *History of the Melbourne YCW, 1939 - 1958*, unpublished draft ms, p. 5.

to analyse and reflect on their world of work and home in the light of Christian principles, and to act on the conclusions they reached. The Jocist groups were underwritten by a belief that the best apostles for young workers were other young workers, and that a powerful commitment to discipleship would be engendered through action based on the workers' response, in faith, to the real issues of everyday life. The Jocist method of forming a lay apostolate became synonymous with 'specialised Catholic Action' or simply 'Catholic Action'.

The concept of Catholic Action was considerably blurred in Australia by the retention of the Italian title for what was in effect a completely different phenomenon in Belgium. As David Kehoe has noted,

[It] caused great confusion in the minds of the uninformed Australian laity for at least the next thirty years. It led them to believe that any action by a layman was Catholic Action.<sup>5</sup>

Increasingly the Vatican understood the term to refer to the specific methods of the Jocists. While the JOC movement itself was constantly in tension over its dual commitment to the proletariat and the institutional church,<sup>6</sup> Pius XI had a high regard for Father Cardijn, and incorporated Jocist principles into his encyclical on the industrial world, *Quadragesimo Anno*. Pius XII did not add explicitly to the body of social teaching which had so clearly aligned Pius XI with the Jocists, but the later pope's support for the church as Mystical Body was read in Perth and Adelaide as support for an active lay apostolate. In these cities, in the midst of diverse and contradictory interpretations and misunderstandings of his method, Cardijn's model remained the norm.<sup>7</sup> Lay

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<sup>5</sup>Kehoe, 'Catholic Action' p. 7.

<sup>6</sup>Oscar L. Arnal, 'Toward a Lay Apostolate of the Workers: Three Decades of Conflict for the French Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (1927 - 1956)', *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 73, 1987, pp. 211-27.

<sup>7</sup>In a study of Catholic social thought in Sydney during the 1930s Bruce Duncan has referred to a perceived shift in Vatican policy under Pius XII. Catholic leaders in

activists increasingly regarded the JOC as the most appropriate model of Catholic Action because they hoped its method would prove effective in implementing the growing body of Catholic social teaching and evangelizing ordinary working people.

Catholic Action in the Jocist style was essentially differentiated from other church activities of lay Catholics by the emphasis on apostolic formation through action in their everyday world. Sodalties, and groups which blended piety and charitable work, such as the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Legion of Mary, assumed that Catholics left school fully equipped as Christians, with a body of belief that simply needed to be polished and protected in order to see them through life in the adult laity. The model of faith was passive and static. The perception of the mission of the laity was that, whatever their life situation, adult Catholics expressed their faith in the same way as their children, through participation in appropriate parish activities. Faith was to be applied in daily life, but took its real form and content from 'the church'. In contrast, the Catholic Action model stressed a sense of discipleship that not only required adult faith to be active in the areas of the world far beyond the immediate domain of the institutional church, but insisted that the events of that secular life should interact with and shape a response in the spiritual world of Catholic people. Catholic Actionists did not see faith formation as a project which culminated at the last page in the book of apologetics, but as an on-going programme of apostolic development through action.

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Sydney had heard reports in 1939 that clerical control as in the Italian model would be preferred over the Belgian form of lay autonomy. This expectation curtailed the lay leadership in Sydney, but it seems to have had little impact on Melbourne, Adelaide or Perth. Bruce Duncan, *From Ghetto to Crusade: A Study of the Social and Political Thought of Catholic Opinion Makers in Sydney During the 1930s*, PhD thesis, Sydney University, 1987, p. 283.

The Catholic Action emphasis on formation was extraordinary enough in itself, but quite remarkable in that the method of formation was through action. The tradition of the Australian church, so much concerned with the struggle for Catholic schooling, assumed that faith development was primarily a matter of good instruction in the church's teachings. Not surprisingly the rare individuals who were interested in adult faith development in Australia took it for granted that formation was led by study. So, although the pioneers of Catholic Action in Australia underscored the social encyclicals, emphasised a lay apostolate, spoke the Jocist vocabulary, and appreciated that Jocist spirituality called for analysis of the realities of the world, it was some years before they realised that the heart of the Jocist method of formation was the experience of putting faith into action.

*The Belgian model of Catholic Action: Cardijn's vision for the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (JOC)*

In order to understand the Jocist spirituality and its adaptation in Australia, it is important to look at the model which Cardijn developed. The JOC was established in the context of Europe before World War I where discussion of youth and the industrial world was running hot in many circles. Socialism was gaining in political strength in France, Italy and Germany, and British workers were voting for labour representatives.<sup>8</sup> In an environment of increasing fear at the falling birth-rate, and hopes for better provisions for the welfare of children, young people were seen as one of the keys to changing or preserving the values of the existing social order. Organisations abounded to provide activities and cultivate the ideological allegiance of workers.<sup>9</sup> As the son of a

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<sup>8</sup>Dick Geary, *European Labour Protest 1848 - 1939*, London, 1981, pp. 90 - 133.

<sup>9</sup>For example, Jungen Reulecke, 'Männerbund versus family: middle class youth movements and the family in Germany in the period of the First World War', in Richard Wall and Jay Winter, (eds), *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare in Europe*,

coal merchant and a domestic servant born in 1882 in Brussels, Joseph Cardijn knew from his own experience as a seminarian of the gulf that separated the institutional church from the life of the factory workers who had been his friends. He did not accept the assumption, implicit in much of the church's work at this time, that the workers were evil. Rather, his first-hand knowledge that the workers were not fundamentally different from those who lived 'good' lives within the 'church', led to his conviction that the fault lay with a system which exploited the workers.<sup>10</sup> In order to find a way for the church to compete with the secular workers' movements Cardijn studied the conditions of workers and the methods of workers' organisations in Germany, France and England, from trade unions and socialist labour movements to Baden-Powell's Scouts.

In 1912, when Cardijn was appointed curate to the working-class parish of Laeken, he began to bring the young workers of the parish together on the basis of their common experience. His efforts to get to know his parishioners prefigured the determinedly practical enquiries of his later youth leaders - 'Where do you work? How much do you earn? What are the conditions there? How many children do you have? What are their prospects? What do you fear?'.<sup>11</sup> These questions were significant additions to the more standard ecclesiastical enquiries about the reception of sacraments and donations to parish activities and led Cardijn into a more direct programme of encouraging lay people to an active role as Christians in their own milieu.

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1914 - 1918, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 439 - 52; John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society, British Youth Movements 1883 - 1940*, London, 1977; Tim Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, London, 1989, pp. 390 - 423, 567 - 577; Friedrich Heer, *Revolutions of our Time, Challenge of Youth*, London, 1974, especially pp. 55 - 63.

<sup>10</sup>Michael de la Bedoyere, *The Cardijn Story*, London, 1958, especially pp. 11 - 12; Edmund Arbuthnott, *Joseph Cardijn Priest and Founder of the Y.C.W.*, London, 1966; Joseph Cardijn, *Laymen into Action*, trans. Anne Heggie, Melbourne, 1964, pp. 27 - 45.

<sup>11</sup>David Kehoe, 'The Origins of the Young Christian Workers', chapter 1 in *History of the Melbourne YCW, 1939 - 1958*, unpublished draft ms, p. 17.

Cardijn's method of apostolic formation privileged the life experience of the workers themselves. Within the parish his duties as curate included the care of a young working-girls' guild of about thirty members. Cardijn grouped the young women, who were mostly between 13 and 16 years old, into study-circles on the basis of age, occupation and economic class, and began to develop with them a method of study and action by which young workers could effectively review and respond to situations in their own lives. The method, which came to be known as the 'Enquiry Method', and later as the 'Review of Life', was a clear, three-stage process of 'See, Judge and Act'. Cardijn encouraged the members of the study circle - needlewomen, workers from the chocolate and cigarette factories, laundry women and nurses<sup>12</sup> to observe and analyse the situation around them, to 'see' the world in which they were living. The young women reflected on their reality in the light of the scripture, 'judged' the situation against Christian values, and determined what could be done to make their lived experience more in tune with the gospel. The third stage of the programme was to 'act', to take the steps which would lead to a more just situation. Many of the first actions centred around establishing trade unions, producing a newspaper for the expanding club and organising educational and recreational excursions. The traditional resources of the church were also brought into play to foster the apostolic spirit of the working women, and they participated in monthly days of recollection, annual retreats, weekly communion and vigils before the Blessed Sacrament.

Cardijn's blend of enquiry, prayer and action made for a distinctive style of lay group. Significantly for Australia, where Cardijn's methods were understood initially to revolve around study circles, the method was quite

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<sup>12</sup>*Jeunesse Syndicaliste*, July 1922, cited Bedoyere, *The Cardijn Story*, p. 44.

different from any which valued intellectual effort as an end in itself. The first manual of the groups made it very clear that study was a prelude to the main concern of action.

The study circle does not exist for its own sake: its only meaning is in terms of action and organisation. The Apostle said: "Faith without works is dead". We must also declare that 'The study circle without works is a dead study circle.' The study circle is not just a teaching business. It communicates a faith, a faith enthusiastic for social, moral and religious action and organisation...<sup>13</sup>

Cardijn went on to describe the manner in which a sense of discipleship would grow through the method grounded firmly in the workers' own reality.

In the study circle you do not begin with abstract definitions about society, wages, work, trade unions. ...No, a thousand times, no! You tell, and tell again, of experiences lived, of events, quite concretely, in a living fashion. Precise questions about the life and the work of young workers have to be asked. ...Little by little [the study circle] members acquire a religious and social mentality. They learn to speak, to act, to direct, to organise, to command. Thus the study circle is the cradle of the action and the organisation which, bit by bit, will take in the whole working youth of a parish, a district, a region.<sup>14</sup>

The 'Enquiry method' inverted many expectations of the lay role in the church. There was a strong emphasis on lay responsibility for the running of the group, and while the priest was accorded special status - and sometimes in Cardijn's case acted with almost autocratic spiritual authority - the movement was founded on the belief that the best apostles of workers were other workers. The aim was always to take the church to the heart of the industrial world. Not

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<sup>13</sup> *Manuel de la J.O.C.*, cited Bedoyere, *The Cardijn Story*, pp. 77- 8.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

unexpectedly, in the period after World War I, when the Jocist movement was consolidating the work undertaken in secret during the Nazi occupation of Belgium, the movement was viewed with suspicion by the Belgian hierarchy as a dangerous Catholic form of socialism.<sup>15</sup> The conflict between Cardijn's JOC and the other Catholic youth movements was in part a split over questions of authority, and in part over the issue of identifying class differences within the church. Many priests were deeply suspicious of the lay autonomy they saw developing in the day-to-day running of the JOC, and especially cynical of the separation of factory workers from the mainstream youth organisations.<sup>16</sup> In 1925 the JOC survived being banned by the bishops in Belgium because Cardijn appealed directly to the pope for endorsement.<sup>17</sup>

The methods and aims of the JOC, known in English as the Young Christian Workers, became familiar to Pius XI through regular contact with Cardijn and the pope's writings echoed Cardijn's phrases. The influence is especially clear in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* produced in 1931 to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII's Worker's Charter. In outlining the method by which the church would evangelise the working class the pope enshrined the Jocist form, of lay people working as apostles to other lay people, as the essence of Catholic Action.

The Jocist programme, which the encyclical identified as an ideal way of implementing the social teachings, was a cohesive method of formation through action and reflection. Cardijn's method did not shy away from criticism of the

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<sup>15</sup> Arnal, 'Toward a Lay Apostolate of the Workers', p. 218.

<sup>16</sup> Arbutnott, *Joseph Cardijn*, pp. 22 - 3; William Bosworth, *Catholicism and Crisis in Modern France, French Catholic Groups at the Threshold of the Fifth Republic*, Princeton, 1962, pp. 103 - 120.

<sup>17</sup> For example International YCW Team, 'A Prophet Arises Among the People', *Action - Accion - Action*, September 1967, p. 11; Bedoyere, *The Cardijn Story*, p. 67; Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and community, An Australian history*, Kensington, N.S.W., 1985, p. 385.

existing social order and emphasised the dignity of the young lay people and the value to be placed on their own experience. Cardijn wrote of the Jocist movement as one committed to a spirituality that pervaded the everyday, which, while radical in its actions, was founded on the traditions of the church.

For an immense number of Christians, religion is only a private affair, something apart from their daily work. It should be its spirit, its motive power, its transformer, its supernaturalisator. This is the purpose of religion, religion that ought always to be singing the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, a public confession of faith, a credo, a preface to the glory of the Trinity. Religion is a whole life which, like the host, should be consecrated to God...It is for you to make your day a continuing Mass.<sup>18</sup>

Cardijn was a charismatic leader, remembered for the absolute commitment he brought to his work and expected from others. Paul McGuire, the prominent South Australian Catholic whose early understanding of Jocism was crucial to the development of Catholic Action in Australia, remembered Cardijn as 'one of the most amusing men I have ever known'.<sup>19</sup> McGuire recalled Cardijn as a saint, and, using the Catholic label for a representative of the 'good', re-negotiated stereotypical notions of other-worldly piety to pay tribute to the compelling energy of Cardijn's personality.

He had all the marks [of sanctity] including the most intense sense of fun. ...[I]f he wasn't a saint, one's never appeared. He almost mixed the qualities of St Francis Xavier, the enormous, you know, 'mission attack', with the qualities, that intense sense of humour, of St Francis of Assisi.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Cardijn, paper to Semaine Sociale of Rheims, 1933, cited in Bedoyere, *The Cardijn Story*, p. 49.

<sup>19</sup> Paul McGuire interview with Noel Adams, ABC Radio, 'Now in Retirement', broadcast 6 July 1969, tape held Mortlock Library of South Australiana.

<sup>20</sup> Interview, Paul McGuire with Noel Adams.

However, while direct contact with the personalities and experiences of the established movement was the most effective way to gain an understanding of the Jocist method, there were only a few Australians who had such an opportunity in the 1930s and they were scattered around the country. Dominic Paul McGuire and his wife Frances Margaret Cheadle McGuire had returned to Adelaide in 1932 after five years in London where they had been part of the intellectual Catholic circle around Chesterton and Belloc, and had been exposed to the Chesterbelloc philosophy of Distributism and the methods of the English Catholic Evidence Guild.<sup>21</sup> The McGuires were key figures in introducing a Jocist understanding of Catholic Action to Australia, especially after 1937 when Paul McGuire combined work as a freelance news correspondent in Europe with a study of European Catholic Action, which included personal contact with leading Jocists.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, and following suggestions from Paul McGuire about his itinerary, Fr Harold Lalor, the newly ordained West Australian graduate of the Roman seminary, Propaganda Fide, travelled through Europe and America in 1939, with Archbishop Prendiville's support, to study Catholic Action groups and gain some first-hand experience of their methods.<sup>23</sup> On his

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<sup>21</sup>Margaret McGuire letter to Father Morrison, 28 June 1953, Catholic Guild for Social Studies, Box 137, ACAA; also interview with Judith Raftery, 10 April 1985, cited J. Raftery, 'Catholics and Social Issues in South Australia in the 1930s', unpublished paper, Flinders University of South Australia, p. 12; interview with author, North Adelaide SA, 23 May 1988, notes held by author. For background on the Catholic Evidence Guild as an example of lay Catholic activity see Debra Campbell, 'The Catholic Evidence Guild: Towards A History of the Laity', *Heythrop Journal*, vol. 30, 1989, pp. 306 - 324.

<sup>22</sup>The McGuires were also active in promoting the Jocist apostolate in the United States. Paul McGuire's lecture tours to the United States are examined in M. I. Zotti, *A Time of Awakening: The Young Christian Worker Story in the United States 1938 to 1970*, Chicago, 1991, pp. 5, 17 - 20, 247, and 'The Young Christian Workers', *U.S. Catholic Historian, Labor and Lay Movements: Part Two*, vol. 9, 1990, pp. 393 - 6; Mary Herman Corey SND, 'The Young Christian Students: Historical Reflections of Foundations in Toledo', *ibid*, pp. 441 - 5, 447 - 9, also mentions Margaret McGuire's role as a workshop leader; Steven M. Avella, 'Reynold Hillenbrand and Chicago Catholicism', *ibid*, p. 366; Christopher Kauffman, *Faith and Fraternalism: The History of the Knights of Columbus, 1882 - 1982*, pp.333 - 6, cited Duncan, *From Ghetto to Crusade*, p. 271.

<sup>23</sup>Lalor - Prendiville correspondence, Prendiville papers, Box A11, ACAP; Paul McGuire's influence noted Lalor to Prendiville, 17 December 1938, Box A11 file 190/7, ACAP.

return to Perth, Lalor found a small group of young men, including Keith Spruhan and Kevin Byrne, who as members of the Chesterton Club were interested in the development of the lay apostolate. In Melbourne in 1936 Kevin Kelly, a young public servant, student of French and member of the Campion Society, had opened a correspondence with Fr Robert Kothen, Cardijn's assistant in Belgium, and received a series of JOC publications outlining methods for the formation of young workers.<sup>24</sup> The McGuires were in touch with Kevin Kelly, and the Chesterton Club looked to the Melbourne Campions for inspiration, but the networks were loose, informal and ineffective. The developments on the local scene did not necessarily wait for clarification from overseas, or appreciate the insight of experience. Language barriers, the disruption to correspondence caused by the threat of war in Europe, and the problem of communicating new concepts without being able to draw on the direct experience of young workers all took their toll. By 1938 Kelly was writing to Belgium to ensure that the international movement did not recognise the faulty notions of Jocism issuing from the new Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action;<sup>25</sup> and the group in Australia most in tune with Cardijn's vision, the Adelaide Catholic Guild for Social Studies, which the McGuires had founded, was being made an 'auxiliary' to the Australian bishops' efforts to promote Catholic Action. The cohesive Jocist programme was translated to Australian Catholics in a piecemeal way which bred confusion.

### *Catholic Action translated to Australia*

The development of the lay apostolate, and the implementation of the social encyclicals, had been on the periphery of official Catholic thinking in an Australian church pre-occupied with the practical problems of building schools

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<sup>24</sup>Kehoe, 'Catholic Action', p. 17.

<sup>25</sup>Duncan, *From Ghetto to Crusade*, p. 272.

and churches. But, as Bruce Duncan has argued, the Spanish Civil War and an increasing fear of Communism in Australia focussed the attention of the bishops when the Melbourne Campions, through Archbishop Mannix, presented the Episcopal Conference with a proposal for a national body to co-ordinate lay activity.<sup>26</sup> The Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action was established in September 1937 to oversee Catholic Action groups around the Australia, using the language of Jocism. However, far from implementing a comprehensive programme of Catholic Action across the country, the internal inconsistencies and contradictions in the Australian interpretation of the principles of Catholic Action came to the fore. Before the Secretariat was functioning, Sydney's Archbishop Gilroy, perceiving a potential loss of diocesan autonomy in a national body, announced a diocesan-based Catholic Action structure based on Italian premises. Perth and Adelaide were linked to the National Secretariat which continued to affirm the Belgian model. In an environment where 'Catholic Action' was often misunderstood, local groups in both dioceses evaluated the Melbourne developments in the light of their own priorities for the lay apostolate.

In Adelaide, formation for Catholic Action was initially assumed to be an intellectual enterprise. The Catholic Guild for Social Studies was established by Paul and Margaret McGuire and the Dominican priest Father James O'Doherty in 1932, with the aim of making effective apologists of ordinary Catholic people. A lively organisation which provoked unease and excitement amongst Catholics in Adelaide, the Guild's immediate origins were not, as might be expected, in a study circle or sodality, but in a drama group. Fr O'Doherty had drawn together the Calaroga Players to perform plays, 'for the most part "thrillers" in period

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<sup>26</sup>Duncan, *From Ghetto to Crusade*, pp. 206 - 9, 216, 234 - 40.

costume'<sup>27</sup>, which he had written to highlight the Catholic world-view. After a performance of one such play, 'Spy', Paul McGuire, who wrote popular detective stories, suggested that the group could provide an avenue for Catholics in Adelaide to discuss Catholicism and civilisation. In discussions which followed between a dozen interested people,<sup>28</sup> it was decided to offer a four-part programme of spiritual and devotional activities, study, recreation and social action. The Catholic Guild for Social Studies set up its programme as 'a school for Catholic Action and a training ground of the lay apostolate',<sup>29</sup> and used the social encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, together with Belloc's *The Servile State* and Chesterton's *History of England*, as a basis of study. Meetings were held in the Calaroga Hall once a fortnight and more frequently, and idyllically, 'on the banks of the Torrens during the lunch hour'.<sup>30</sup>

Paul McGuire's writing on Catholic Action, based on his meetings with Cardijn and observation of Jocist groups in England and Europe, was among the first work published in English on Jocism.<sup>31</sup> In the months following the Australian hierarchy's official acknowledgement of Catholic Action, the *Southern Cross*, the *Record*, the *Melbourne Advocate* and other Catholic publications carried McGuire's exposition of the principles of See, Judge and Act.<sup>32</sup> He

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<sup>27</sup>*Chronicle of the Dominican Community North Adelaide*, special entry 1948 recalling the foundation of the Catholic Guild for Social Studies in 1932. See also Margaret M. Press, *Colour and Shadow, South Australian Catholics, 1906 - 1962*, Adelaide, 1991, pp. 96 - 8, 154 - 5; Judith Raftery, 'Catholics and Social Issues in South Australia in the 1930s', *passim*.

<sup>28</sup>Two priests: Fr O'Doherty, Fr Wilfrid Ryan SJ; four converts: Mr Harold Wylde, Mr Pat Auld, Miss B. Leworthy and Mrs Margaret Cheadle McGuire; four members of the Calaroga Players: Mr Hugh McEwen, Mr J. Tyler, Mr J. Taggart, Miss Leonore Walsh; and Mr Paul McGuire.

<sup>29</sup>Proposed outline, no date, Catholic Guild for Social Studies, Box 137, ACAA

<sup>30</sup>*Dominican Chronicle* 1948, reflection on the foundation of the CGSS.

<sup>31</sup>Duncan, *From Ghetto to Crusade*, p. 271; Kehoe, 'Catholic Action', p. 32.

<sup>32</sup>*Southern Cross*, 1 October 1937, p. 17; 8 October 1937, p. 17; *Advocate*, 23 September 1937, p. 4; 30 September 1937, p. 4; 7 October 1937, p. 4.

identified the Jocist method as a programme of practical action, more likely to get results in the modern and, regrettably, pragmatic world than the intellectual approach.

[I]t is hard to believe that there is much to hope for now from intellectualism. It is not so much the fault of the intellectuals as of a world which has drifted away from them, denied them their social functions, left them apart. But the young Jocist, trained in his own movement, is another proposition. He is of this modern world, his whole outlook is intensely realistic. And his mind is steeled. Ask a Jocist what he is doing. ...In short, strong sentences he can tell you exactly what he is trying to do, exactly how he tries to do it. He *knows*. He is master of his situation. Men who see their ends and means as clearly as the Jocists see their ends and means are men who can win the world.<sup>33</sup>

Such clear sighted recognition of the pitfalls of trying to meld intellectual discussion into action was not only unusual in the development of Catholic Action in Australia, but also an insight which disappeared from McGuire's longer work on the lay apostolate. In 1939 Sheed and Ward published a collection of essays on the lay apostolate edited by the English priest Father John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire. The title, *Restoring All Things, A Guide to Catholic Action*, had the flavour of a textbook, and McGuire's reputation as a well-informed commentator on Catholic affairs promised a clear and cogent statement on the lay apostolate. However, *Restoring All Things* brought together a range of contributors, all clerics with the exception of McGuire, who looked at Catholic Action from diverse perspectives. Rather than developing an unequivocal explanation of the Jocist brand of Catholic Action favoured by Pius XI, the essays considered Catholic Action in relation to theological and institutional themes and in particular national contexts. Rather than a systematic treatment of Jocism as

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<sup>33</sup>*Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, 1 October 1938, p. 320.

new and distinctive, *Restoring All Things* led readers to assume that existing Catholic organisations could, with a little adjustment, take on a Jocist flavour. Only readers who were already relatively well-informed would have seen the potential for revolution in the Jocist method.

*'Catholic Action': shifts of understanding of the term in Perth*

Something of the haphazard evolution of the term 'Catholic Action' in Australia can be gleaned from the changing usage of the term in Perth. The *Record* offered a number of interpretations of Catholic Action to its readers. In the early thirties it took the view that Catholic Action was not an innovation but 'as old as the Church itself'<sup>34</sup>, and, like Sydney, advocated traditional sodalities rather than new activity as its most appropriate expression. Initially then the *Record* reflected a view of Catholic lay people as substitute priests and nuns, rather than as church members with characteristics of their own. On various occasions the title of Catholic Action was applied to the Catholic Scouts movement,<sup>35</sup> the Hibernian Catholic Benefit Society,<sup>36</sup> lay retreats, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the Newman Society for university students, Catholic young men's and young ladies' clubs, the sodalities and the Third Order of St Francis.<sup>37</sup> The main criterion for the definition Catholic Action in the *Record* at this time appears to have been 'activity of lay Catholics approved by the church'.

However, by 1935 the *Record*, under the editorship of the layman and Catholic activist Keith Spruhan, was calling for a more rigorous evaluation of the various lay groups in the light of the principles of Catholic Action. In a strong editorial headed 'What is Catholic Action?' there was a call for change,

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<sup>34</sup>*Record*, 23 April 1932, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup>*Record*, 16 April 1931, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup>*Record*, 31 October 1931, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup>*Record*, 23 April 1932, p. 10.

and an emphasis on the teaching role of the church to prepare lay people for a new, but at this stage still largely unspecified, role.

Catholic Action meant the admission of the laity to a share of the Apostolic labours of the Church... 'apostolic' means one sent to fulfil a commission. ...And the primary commission of the Church is to teach, and in its fullness Catholic Action admits the layman to share in this primary function of the Church's work.<sup>38</sup>

The same editorial condemned the notion that Catholic Action was a 'pious hobby' and advocated spiritual and intellectual training for the laity and real co-operation between the clergy and the laity in implementing the specific programmes which Catholic Action would require. The view that all activity of lay Catholics was Catholic Action was firmly quashed.

...what is the position of Catholic Action here and now? Are existing lay organisations within the Church in this state carrying on Catholic Action properly so called? ...Both [Catholic social clubs and benefit societies] are good in so far as they go, but they are not necessarily Catholic Action. The practical test which members and officials can make is this: Does our organisation provide for the adequate spiritual training demanded by Catholic Action and, secondly, does it provide intellectually for a Catholic to obtain a full and thorough knowledge of his religion?<sup>39</sup>

The need to refine the criteria for Catholic Action was becoming apparent. It was at this time that Father Harold Lalor wrote to Archbishop Prendiville, his friend and sponsor in his seminary training, outlining his concern at the ignorance of Catholic Action in the English speaking world. He was clear about the distinction between the Italian and Belgian models, and could

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<sup>38</sup> *Record*, 2 November 1935, p.14.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

inform the archbishop of the Vatican view that even though Cardinal Pacelli, the Secretary of State and future Pope Pius XII, approved of Jocism, 'a movement like Jocism would hardly be introduced into Italy, for various reasons, not the least being diplomatic...'.<sup>40</sup> He proposed to clarify his understanding of Catholic Action and bring back to Perth the expertise to encourage the laity into an active, Jocist-inspired, role in the church.

Too many seem to be talking of Catholic Action without knowing exactly what it is, and unless they get the spirit of Catholic Action no effective work will ever be done, and that spirit, to me at least, seems to demand a re-orientation - above all in the nuclei of leaders - something pretty radical.<sup>41</sup>

At least part of the urgency with which he viewed this task was inspired by the desire to protect the Australian church from the threats of the modern world, and in particular, Communism.

...Certainly something must be done soon - the Church's forces must be organised in the face of the present upheaval, they lose too much in effectiveness otherwise. And not the least danger in Australia is Communism, with a superorganisation that is whiteanting the Commonwealth far more effectively than many people realise. A glance through the Australian files at the Russicum here in Rome would stagger our people - and priests from Australia, and the West too, can still come over and confidently deny any penetration at home. Of course it is not on the surface, but you don't want them to crucify a few priests and nuns, burn a few churches and massacre a few of the bourgeoisie before admitting they're a menace - and a grave one...<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Harold Lalor to Archbishop Prendiville, 4 January 1938, Prendiville Papers, Box A11 File 4/7, ACAP.

<sup>41</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>*ibid.*

In Adelaide, Paul and Margaret McGuire offered the church exceptional insight into the lay apostolate as it was developing overseas. As Judith Raftery and Margaret Press have shown, the foundation of the Catholic Guild for Social Studies reflected the impact of these remarkable individuals,<sup>43</sup> and the spirituality of the Catholic Guild for Social Studies formed part of a distinctive approach to God, shared by Catholic Action groups in Perth and discussed later in this chapter. A close focus on the development of Catholic Action in Perth yields a different picture, perhaps more typical of the Australian situation in general, of a church working from second-hand information, and assuming, at least initially, that Catholic Action would evolve from established lay associations.

*Catholic Action Evolving as an Intellectual Apostolate: the Newman Society and the Chesterton Club*

The stumbling manner in which the evolving concept of Catholic Action slowly came to the attention of Australian Catholics is clearly evident from the early history of Perth's Newman Society, an association of Catholic graduates and undergraduates at the University of Western Australia. As an organisation of Catholics already grouped according to that slippery class indicator, level of education, on the grounds of furthering the 'intellectual apostolate', the structure of the Newman Society appeared well suited to the study and discussion of local situations which so often formed the first stages of Catholic Action. The educational development of Catholic apostles was clearly listed as one of the

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<sup>43</sup>Judith Raftery, 'Catholics and Social Issues in South Australia in the 1930s', also Judith Raftery, *Till every foe is vanquished: churches and social issues in South Australia, 1919 - 1939*, PhD thesis, Flinders University of South Australia, 1989; M. Press, *Colour and Shadow, South Australian Catholics 1906 - 1962*, Adelaide, 1991, pp. 96ff, 99, 154, 211 - 13.

Society's objectives when potential members were approached at its foundation in 1924.<sup>44</sup>

However, the Newman Society provided formation for the lay apostolate more by luck than by design. The activities of the first decade reflected the general interest of both its members and the institutional church in providing a Catholic network of students and graduates, and a protective Catholic gloss on university life. The Society held social functions, including an annual ball, to raise funds for a residential college, established the annual celebration of University Sunday, and hosted speakers for monthly lectures. These activities were regularly attended by more than 60 members, but the absence of an overriding programme of formation is evident in the diffidence and ambivalence surrounding the Society's aims and activities. Rather than regarding the study of social teaching as an exciting prelude to social change, in the Jocist manner, the secretary's report to the Annual General Meeting of 1932 indicated that, in the Society's experience, serious discussion needed to be justified by dancing. 'Catholic Action' was not part of the Newman vocabulary at this time.

[It is] difficult to find activities that interest the majority of members, which do not require specialised preparatory study and which come within the field of the Newman Society...[that is] ...Catholicity and problems affecting it on the *intellectual* side...No other practical form of activity is discernible to take the place of lecture meetings. These have proved consistently, if moderately, successful - provided they are followed by dancing.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Father McMahon and Gregory Gowans, letter of invitation to the inaugural meeting of the Newman Society, Newman Society Box C2, file 4/1, ACAP.

<sup>45</sup>Annual Report 1932, *Minute Book of the Newman Society of W.A.*, Newman Society Box C2, ACAP.

The discussion group or 'study circle', advocated in *Quadragesimo Anno*<sup>46</sup> was rejected by the Newman Society for two reasons. One was that members felt 'that study circles and debates would not be completely successful as they implied the students' nightmare - swot',<sup>47</sup> and the other was that discussion was discouraged by the chaplain, Father J. T. McMahon, who apparently saw it as the first sign of dissent.<sup>48</sup> However, some members spoke out in favour of discussion groups. At the Annual General Meeting in 1931 Miss Pat Kinane suggested that the Society should 'encourage free discussion on apologetics, so far as is practical and useful'.<sup>49</sup> The minutes record that Father McMahon 'thereupon decided' that lectures on apologetics would be given by members of the clergy who would also direct any discussion. In 1932 the Society recalled this as an unfavourable reaction to discussion groups.<sup>50</sup> A considerably softened report of the meeting given in the *Record* expanded on the proposed lectures and re-affirmed the Newman Society's commitment to intellectual instruction, noting that 'this is the Newman Society's distinctive function, that which distinguishes it from being a mere mixed friendly society as it were'.<sup>51</sup>

The process of introducing discussion groups to the Newman Society was a slow one. The topics of the first talks were within the traditional moral and sectarian concerns of the church. The inaugural lecture by Dr Sullivan on 'The Laws of the Church regarding Marriage' was on common ground with the social concerns of many members. The *Record* reported that Patricia Kinane organised a study circle to 'receive extra instruction' from the speaker and went on to warn against argument.

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<sup>46</sup>*Quadragesimo Anno*, paragraph 20.

<sup>47</sup>*Newman Minutes*, 5 October 1932.

<sup>48</sup>*Newman Minutes*, 14 April 1931.

<sup>49</sup>*Newman Minutes*, Annual General Meeting, 14 April 1931.

<sup>50</sup>*Newman Minutes*, 5 October 1932.

<sup>51</sup>*Record*, 18 April 1931, p. 12.

Be it understood ...that study circles assembling after each lecture are coming together for instruction and guidance in further study. There is no intention of running a debating class on religion, and those who wish to debate had better remain away.<sup>52</sup>

Later topics, such as travel recollections of 'Bombay' and 'America', 'The Church and Science', 'Australian poetry' and 'Cardinal Newman and the Oxford Movement' did not lend themselves so well to group discussion and the study circle apparently lost momentum.<sup>53</sup> However, even though the Newman Society's understanding of the intellectual apostolate did not show any links to the concepts of Catholic Action, it did provide a forum for members who, on their own initiative, examined the church's social teaching. In October 1932, Dorothy Tangney, a founding member of the society, by this time a teacher and later a Labor Party MP, spoke on 'Capital, Labour and the Church'. She examined

how the Church is affected by the struggle of these two forces and ...its attitude to Communism, Socialism, the Labor Party, capitalist extremism and the like topics.<sup>54</sup>

The Newman response to the social encyclicals was not action, but the ready acceptance of a resolution on Tangney's prompting to dedicate one meeting a year to discussing *Rerum Novarum*. There was no mention of *Quadragesimo Anno* and, general resolutions notwithstanding, it was four years before the Newman Society heard another lecture on the social teachings.

As the 1930s Depression deepened, a push for more rigorous Catholic Action in Perth took its inspiration from the Melbourne's Champion Society and

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<sup>52</sup>*Record*, 6 June 1931, p. 9.

<sup>53</sup>*Record*, 6 April 1932, 8 June 1932, 7 July 1932, 7 June 1933, 10 October 1933.

<sup>54</sup>*Newman Minutes*, 5 October 1932.

the 'aging young men'<sup>55</sup> of the *Catholic Worker*. The Chesterton Club held its first meeting on 31 July 1935, gathering together Catholic lay men of 'commitment and intelligence'<sup>56</sup> to explore Catholic thought. Like the Campions, the Chesterton Club used lectures and discussion groups to prepare members for Catholic Action. In particular the writings of G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and other members of the Distributist school were promoted as the basis for a revived Catholic presence in Australia. The group began to report on its activities to readers of the *Record* in 1937. Keith Spruhan, editor of the *Record* and leading member of the Chesterton Club announced that the group aimed, to discover how the Catholic laity might be induced to take a more active part in the Church and how various plans for Catholic Action might be effected and financed.<sup>57</sup>

The Chesterton Club saw itself very much within the Church's tradition of intellectual pursuit of knowledge. It dedicated itself 'to every form of Catholic Action, but especially those of an intellectual and cultural nature'.<sup>58</sup> It held that apostolic work required people 'informed on Catholic teaching and imbued with the Catholic spirit'.<sup>59</sup> With this aim in mind the club was centred around the Veritas Catholic Lending Library, housed in the same building at 36 Pier Street in Perth. The library, which had been operating since 1933,<sup>60</sup> amalgamated with the Chesterton Club in 1936, and with the enthusiastic support of new members moved up from the basement to better rooms in the Pier Street building and began to increase its holdings. As the Chesterton Club came to understand the programme of change implicit in Catholic social

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<sup>55</sup> Kehoe, 'Catholic Action', p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Interview, Mr Francis Grogan, Cottesloe WA, 27 January 1984. Tape held by author.

<sup>57</sup> *Record*, 23 January 1937, p. 13.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Record*, 15 October 1933, p. 10

philosophy, the concept of Catholic Action promoted by the *Record* broadened to include the possibility of action for social change.

The Chesterton discussion meetings, although 'consciously and deliberately pro-Catholic',<sup>61</sup> were not designed as permanent retreats, but, like the best aspects of the Newman Society, as the means of better informing lay people of Catholic thinking on social issues. In contrast to the Newman Society, but in keeping with the lay initiative characteristic of other Catholic Action groups, the clergy did not take a directing role in the Chesterton Club. The oral memory of the group down-plays the role of priests so diligently reported in the *Record* of the time; Frank Grogan does not remember clerics taking part at all, 'except perhaps very occasionally, as visitors'.<sup>62</sup> As such a visitor in December 1936, Dr McMahon gave one of the club's fortnightly lectures. His topic was 'study circles'. From a position markedly different to his stance within the Newman Society in 1932, McMahon outlined the developments in the United States where participation in study circles trained the laity to be leaders in the church.

The understanding that Catholic Action was founded on intellectual enquiry had prompted the change in Father McMahon's approach to study circles. In an address to the Newman Society, reproduced prominently in the *Record* under the title 'What is Catholic Action?', McMahon argued for study circles as the means to prepare for an advanced form of apologetics.

Past generations have been content to remain on the defensive but we are now called to carry on an intellectual warfare into the very heart of the enemy's camp - we must be aggressively Catholic. But this matter of oral teaching demands the teacher be qualified. And this brings

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<sup>61</sup>interview, Mr Francis Grogan, Cottesloe WA, 27 January 1984. Tape held by author.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*

us to the consideration of what intellectual equipment is needed for the modern crusade of Catholic Action. It should be obvious that between these two matters of spiritual and intellectual preparation there is an essential and vital link. They must not be departmentalised, either in thought or in effect. St Bernard's epigram is actually a truism: 'Study without prayer is folly, prayer without study is presumption'. Nor is the intellectual aspect of Catholic Action merely individualistic. It should, according to the mind of the Pope, be carried out corporately and under the direction of the Bishops. Hence our crying need of the study club movement devoted to a thorough-going analysis of those questions upon which the Catholic philosophy has bearing. This covers just about every conceivable avenue of thought precisely because it is a Catholic philosophy.<sup>63</sup>

Significantly, McMahon's understanding of being 'aggressively Catholic' did not necessarily imply change at the level of wider society. The question of how consciously the laity should aim to change the world remained a point of contention. As in the split between Belgian and Italian models, disagreement between Sydney and Melbourne, centred on what constituted apostolic action. In October 1936 McMahon spoke to the 'Catholic Men's Luncheon Club', a more broadly based group than the Newman Society, and clearly trod on a few well-informed lay toes with an unguardedly narrow definition of Catholic Action. He was respectfully taken to task by a Dr Webster, an advocate of social change through Distributism.

It was true in one sense, as Father McMahon had pointed out, that the young lady who buttered a scone at a parochial tea party was engaged in 'Catholic Action' but there was still a special sense in which these words were first used. Pope Pius X, in 1905 (sic) said that there should be one object to which Catholic Action should be

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<sup>63</sup> *Record*, 11 July 1936, p. 3.

specially devoted, namely the practical solution of the social question according to Christian principles.<sup>64</sup>

Against such a hope for Catholic Action the promotion of study circles was a relatively simple and safe option. In a climate where the pope was expecting priests to assist ordinary Catholics to discuss their beliefs, the former fear of study circles as potentially subversive had become a gentle promotion of 'discussion, not debate'. Speaking to the Chesterton Club, McMahon noted that the lay participation in such groups was a foundation for a strong apostolate where the 'priests were there to help, not dominate'.<sup>65</sup>

Any doubts about the value of study circles to 'the Catholic position' would have been finally allayed by familiarity with the Senior Study Circle which operated at the Christian Brothers' College, Perth, in 1937. This group produced a fortnightly publication, *St Malachi's Journal*, named in honour of their little known school patron and containing voluntary contributions from the students 'representing hours of individual work',<sup>66</sup> which were discussed in the extra-curricular group during the following week. By the end of 1937 the student reviewer in the college's annual magazine could report that the popular newspaper-style articles had given a Catholic perspective on a variety of topics, including the conflict in Spain which was preoccupying Catholic activists in Australia.

The Spanish war has been discussed from every angle, reasons have been advanced that show what is wrong with the present social system and emphasise the Catholic Church's remedies for modern social evils...Positive Catholicity, an urge to be militant in the cause of the Faith

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<sup>64</sup>*Record*, 3 October 1936, p. 8.

<sup>65</sup>*Record*, 26 December 1936, p.11.

<sup>66</sup>*Christian Brothers' College , St Georges' Terrace, Review of the Year, 1937* p. 14; copies of the *St Malachi's Journal* are not extant.

and indifference after school years were subjects of very instructive and interesting articles.<sup>67</sup>

The mechanics of distributing the publications which promoted Catholic views provided an interesting indicator of Perth's non-doctrinaire philosophy of Catholic Action. Traditionally the 'Catholic viewpoint' on particular issues of concern had been made available to the laity through the pamphlets of the Catholic Truth Society which the Society of St Vincent de Paul sold through displays in the porches of parish churches. At the beginning of 1937 the Society also authorised each parish to appoint a member to distribute the Melbourne-based Catholic Action publication the *Catholic Worker*.<sup>68</sup> Both these tasks were seen to be closely related to the promotion of an intellectual apostolate, and the Vincentians were aware that the Chesterton Club saw them as falling within their province. However, the distribution of Catholic literature was also valued by the St Vincent de Paul, and in September 1938 when the Particular Council heard of suggestions that the Chesterton Club become more directly involved, the Council refused to give ground to the new group. In an unusually undeferential stance the meeting resolved

that in the event of a new organisation being formed to control C.T.S pamphlets, his Grace be informed...that conferences of the Society would continue to act as in the past.<sup>69</sup>

Confusion ensued and the Society recorded somewhat bitterly that sales dropped 'as expected'. However, the crisis passed as the traditional society retained control of the pamphlets. In a compromise move two members of the Chesterton Club were appointed to a C.T.S. 'board' and the Society was satisfied

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<sup>67</sup>*CBC Review*, 1937, p. 14.

<sup>68</sup>*Minutes Book of the Particular Council of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul*, 23 April 1937.

<sup>69</sup>*Minutes of St Vincent de Paul*, 23 March 1938.

that 'the Brothers in charge have a free hand in the conduct of this branch of the Society's work'.<sup>70</sup> This conflict illustrates both a shift in the view of Catholic Action that was moving the spotlight towards activities designed to nurture *Quadragesimo Anno's* 'real apostles...trained and enkindled with the fire of the Heart of Christ',<sup>71</sup> and an unwillingness in Perth to risk the familiar past by moving too far too fast.

At a broader level the Chesterton Club continued to see Catholic Action as an apostolate of the intellect, a perspective that was widely shared and reflected the educated middle-class background of many of the founders of Catholic Action in Australia. In a special supplement in 1937, the *Catholic Worker*, carried an article on the Catholic libraries around Australia which identified the network of intellectual groups as the foundation of Catholic Action in a hostile world.

Although our pagan environment does very little to promote clear thought, the Catholic Revival is making more than satisfactory progress in Australia today. In each of the five capital cities of the mainland, there is now the nucleus of a Catholic intellectual movement.

Libraries that cater for those who read contemporary fiction and travel literature along with the huge output of Catholic books dealing effectively with modern problems, have made a most important contribution to Catholic thought, and have really laid the solid foundations of Catholic Action. Without such libraries it would have been almost impossible for young people to acquire together a sound knowledge of Catholic principle and the technical knowledge necessary to the transformations of the Australian environment.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>*Minutes of St Vincent de Paul*, 28 October 1938.

<sup>71</sup>*Quadragesimo Anno*, paragraph 143.

<sup>72</sup>Supplement to the *Catholic Worker*, 6 February 1937, p. 4.

The model of Catholic Action behind the library network incorporated the Cardijn commitment to peer group ministry and assumed that borrowers would act as apostles in their secular spheres. The libraries were expected to be open to all, to embrace workers as well as students. However, the model of formation-through-study also assumed that apostles would be predisposed to critical thinking and likely to join a study circle. This contrasted with Cardijn's principle that study and critical appraisal would flow all the more effectively when lay people worked from their direct experience of involvement in the world. The Australian libraries were described as the linchpin of intellectual formation.

Step into any one of these libraries some of which are as yet quite small, others already big institutions, and you will see young men and women talking and arguing, unconsciously at work creating the beginnings of what are really informal Catholic universities.

Workers and students search the shelves, read the magazines, get the conversational equivalent of their reading and go out to office, factory and university well-informed, a match for any antagonist, and in many cases in a position to create an interest in things intellectual among citizens Catholic and non-Catholic.<sup>73</sup>

The Australian confusion over the term Catholic Action was evident when the article labelled the existing groups with their blend of Jocism and discussion group practice as 'specialised', a term reserved for exclusively Jocist groups.

Each library is associated informally as a rule with some such specialised movement. ...With its pioneer work in the history of culture, sociology and economics, the Catholic Guild of Social Studies, Adelaide, and its special creation, the Fisher and More Library, a specialist library, has set an example to all Australia. In Perth, the Chesterton Club, Bookshop and Society, have together in

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

spirit and geniality set out to outstrip the Eastern States...Considering all things Australia is already on the way.<sup>74</sup>

However, the intellectual base for Catholic Action did not go unchallenged. Instead of supporting the evolutionary intellectual model of Catholic Action, some sections of Perth's Catholic population began to regard Jocist principles as the basis for a social revolution. In 1940 Perth's Secretariat of Catholic Action, to which Fr Lalor had returned and which was headed by Kevin Byrne, a talented public servant with a broad background in Catholic activities,<sup>75</sup> began to publish a *Catholic Action Bulletin*. This was an in-house newsletter produced in response to requests from existing discussion groups for guidance on how to turn themselves into cells of Catholic Action. The newsletter was not available to the general public but explicitly aimed to 'meet a vital need among those militants on whose shoulders lies the heavy burden of pioneering in these early days'.<sup>76</sup> In the absence of other documentary records of the activities of the Secretariat, the *Bulletin* is an especially valuable source.

Under the banner headline 'This is the Christian Revolution' the newsletter's first issue answered claims still circulating in Perth that traditional piety amounted to Catholic Action. On the contrary the *Bulletin* argued vigorously that Catholic Action was a new requirement of the laity to work together to combat the evils of the world. Assuming a readership committed to Catholicism, and faithful to Rome, the editors wrote in the spirited style of questions for the public platform, replete with the military metaphors

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> The ANSCA established secretariats in as many dioceses as possible. The Perth Secretariat was one of only five, out of 23 established, that was headed by a lay Catholic. Colin Jory, *The Campaign Society and Catholic Social Militancy in Australia 1929 - 1939*, Sydney, 1986, p. 95n.

<sup>76</sup> *Catholic Action Bulletin*, 13 April 1940, n.p.

of World War II, seeking to enthuse others and establish Catholic Action as an essential aspect of lay membership of the church.

The High Command has issued an imperious call to the laity to mobilise for this new campaign and has indicated with precision the methods which must be used. Catholic Action is a revolutionary development and responsible thinkers have not hesitated to say that to find a parallel in history for this movement, we must go as far back as the rise of monasticism.

Why has such a movement in the Church suddenly become so necessary in the twentieth century? Why such highly organised activity in the service of Christ?

Briefly, because the enemies of Christ are organised, and they are powerful because they are organised. The Communist Revolution, the militant atheists, the super-State, the financial oppressors, are all highly organised. God-less education, the press, the cinema and the radio are organised. Are then the children of this world always to be much wiser in their generation than the children of light? Or shall we be apostles and realists for Christ and do likewise in his name?

Rome has spoken. There is no argument.<sup>77</sup>

The *Bulletin* explicitly resisted the emphasis on study and argued that Catholic Action depended on the interest of ordinary individuals, committed to the apostolate, but not necessarily dedicated to an intellectual project. Knowledge and understanding of the world were seen as pre-requisites for effective apostolic work, but the co-ordinating group was sceptical about the necessity of 'arduous courses of study'<sup>78</sup> and placed more emphasis on the action for social change which would flow from an enthusiastic group.

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Catholic Action Bulletin*, 11 May 1940, n.p.

It is our opinion that in many parts of Australia, the emphasis has been laid somewhat TOO heavily on the necessity of Study in the formative work of Catholic Action. This may sound heretical and we wish to be clearly understood.

Knowledge is most certainly an essential. We shall not be able to do anything about the reconstruction of society until we have in our midst a body of men and women who know exactly what is wrong with the world they are living in.

...[But] At the moment we are dealing chiefly with parochial discussion groups, composed of young men and women who are keen to train themselves for the apostolate of Catholic Action, but not so situated as to be able to burden themselves with long courses of study. ...The idea that Catholic Action is for the student alone would frighten many away. Our plan should be to create interest, to arouse enthusiasm. We will do this by making group meetings as bright and attractive as possible. Any person of ordinary intelligence, provided he or she has the necessary interest [in the lay apostolate], can be a most effective member of a group.<sup>79</sup>

The Perth Secretariat was explicitly committed to Jocism and explained the method of 'See, Judge, and Act' as the key to linking the idealism of working for change with the realism of practical effort.<sup>80</sup> Jocism was seen as part of a spiritual quest for the Christian conquest of the world.

With the Grace of God we are determined to renew the face of the earth. Our aim is bold, ambitious, reckless, foolish if you like, but foolish with the foolishness of Christ. WE ARE IDEALISTS ...WE MUST ALSO BE REALISTS ...BUT

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<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup>*Catholic Action Bulletin*, 13 April 1940, 27 April 1940, 11 May 1940, n.pp.



Figure 15. Mr Harry Child leads the contingent of Young Christian Workers and the National Catholic Girls' Movement at a youth rally in Perth in the late 1940s. Courtesy of Mr James Stewart.



Discussion in small groups at the first state conference of the YCW in Western Australia, Aquinas College, 1949. Courtesy of Mr James Stewart.



Members of the NCGM and YCW on a combined picnic at Lake Leschenaultia, WA, c. 1949. Courtesy of Mr James Stewart.



WHERE ARE WE TO START? ...OUR METHOD: SEE - JUDGE  
- ACT.

SEE: ...Even the small circle in which we live and move, we have never observed and studied carefully as we must study it now...

JUDGE: When we have discovered the facts, when we know the actual state of affairs in the world around us, we must judge these facts and discover what is wrong with them....

ACT: We shall not be content simply to discover and study the abuses in the modern world. Our movement is not primarily a movement of study and documentation. It is a movement of action. It is Catholic Action. We are not studying for the sake of studying. We aim at knowing the modern world, not for the sake of knowing it, but for the sake of changing it.

...We are starting a revolution - a peaceful revolution in the lives of men. We aim at bringing men and women to a Christian way of thinking, speaking and acting with regard to everything in life.

...Catholic Action will fight paganism on millions of little fronts. Your battle-front in this holy war is your 'milieu'. Will you retire or will you attack?  
The answer lies with you!<sup>81</sup>

The *Bulletin* provided Catholics in Perth with instructions in Catholic Action methods that were intended to remain true to Jocist principles; however, in the movement from theory to practice, fundamental aspects of the method slipped out of view. While their general statements continued to mirror the Belgian model, the Secretariat's timetable for group meetings rearranged the Jocist method so that the process gave much less priority to the reflection on personal experience in the light of the gospel. The suggested timetable devoted

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<sup>81</sup> *Catholic Action Bulletin*, 27 April 1940, n.p.

the first twenty minutes of the meeting to 'spiritual' matters: group prayers, and either a commentary on the gospel or the mass, or a talk by the chaplain. Five minutes for 'business' relating to the Secretariat and ten minutes for 'questions' followed, when the group members reported on any discussion they had had about their faith, and then an hour was to be devoted to the discussion of a particular topic. Various ways of handling this section were suggested. In a confusing move, one proposed option was the Jocist inquiry method itself, which the *Bulletin* simply noted it had insufficient space to explain. The suggestion indicated that some members of the Secretariat were aware that the model they were offering was not true Jocism, but their lack of clarity on the issue of method left to chance the Jocist requirement that members critically examine their own experiences and seek to understand them. The meeting then moved to 'action', not necessarily to consider the implications of the discussion but to spend ten minutes in which leaders were urged to 'Give your members something to do.' The meeting closed with prayers for the conversion of Australia and supper. The potential for complete disjunction between the prayer and reflection of the group, the discussion and the planning of action, parodied rather than reflected the Jocist method. Clearly the Perth groups were isolated from examples of Jocism in action and struggling to identify the essence of the method.

In 1938 Margaret McGuire had remarked that 'we have no active C.A. units in Australia yet. Our groups are simply in the very initial stages of formation'.<sup>82</sup> During his American speaking tour Paul McGuire outlined two phases of Catholic Action; he predicted that the 'formative' stage would involve at least three years of personal Catholic development and study before groups

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<sup>82</sup>M. McGuire to Fr Goodman of Sydney, 10 October 1938, cited Duncan, *From Ghetto to Crusade*, p. 259.

moved to the truly 'apostolic' phase.<sup>83</sup> In a rare display of humility the *Catholic Action Bulletin* concurred that the Perth groups were in 'the discussion-group phase of Catholic Action...through which we must progress'.<sup>84</sup> The movement towards the Jocist method continued in fits and starts. In 1941 Margaret McGuire wrote to Archbishop Beovich indicating that she had been asked for her suggestions for revisions of Enquiry Programmes which the Junior Catholic Women's League had derived from the See, Judge and Act model of the Jocists.<sup>85</sup> She noted that the programmes, designed in Europe, were not suited to young women in Australia.

[They] were not concrete enough, ...[did] not attack the difficulties of the milieu and needed adapting to suit the mentality of the British mind.<sup>86</sup>

The revisions simplified and adapted the European material until Mrs McGuire, in consultation with Bob Santamaria and Frank Maher of the National Secretariat of Catholic Action, was

finally reduced to preparing the very ABC of the method - an enquiry on 'Conversation - What people talk about'.<sup>87</sup>

The modifications were not made to cater for a less able female mind, but to ensure the programme would be practical and accessible to Australians. The Guild's strong consciousness of its links with English groups allowed the McGuires to gloss over the Belgian beginnings of the Jocist method they were implementing. Margaret McGuire's comments on the successful trial of the method in Adelaide indicated that the young women of the JCWL were seen as

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<sup>83</sup>Paul McGuire, 'Preparation for Catholic Action', *The Sign*, October 1938, pp. 140 - 143, cited Mary Herman Corey SND, 'The Young Christian Students: Historical Reflections on Foundations in Toledo', *US Catholic Historian*, vol. 9, 1990, pp. 444 - 5.

<sup>84</sup>*Catholic Action Bulletin*, 8 June 1940, n.p.

<sup>85</sup>Margaret McGuire to Archbishop Beovich, 10 January 1941, Catholic Guild for Social Studies, Box 137, ACAA.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*

representative of young Australian Catholics in general. The generalisation to men and women on the basis of women's experience was most unusual.

[The experimental Enquiries] prove the suitability of the method for Australian young people ...I am satisfied that nothing is so suitable as the method ; the girls themselves were astonished at the results, they said it gave them a firmer grasp of the Apostolic idea than all the Guild work they had done for years.<sup>88</sup>

As Catholic Action groups in Australia experimented with methods of living out a lay mission in the church some common assumptions were developing about what it was to be 'apostolic'.

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

### *The Spirituality of Jocist Catholic Action in Australia*

Even while Jocism was not completely understood, or yet to be fully implemented, the spirituality of its Australian founders in the early groups in Perth and Adelaide was distinctive. Catholic Action was underpinned by a vision of church as the Mystical Body of Christ in which ordinary people had a vital responsibility for the life and vigour of the institution. In reclaiming the inclusive notion that the church was a community not to be separated from the life of the world, the lay movements looked to medieval Catholicism to provide a model of social order. As intellectual groups drew on English writers of the Catholic revival and honoured English and European saints as role models, a spirituality with foundations broader than Ireland became evident. The model of holiness included an emphasis on cheerfulness and action in the world and was perceived by committed Catholics as a practical and down to earth way of living their faith in the secular sphere.

### *The Mystical Body of Christ*

Catholic Actionists found their emphasis on the vital responsibility of lay people in the bringing Christ to the world was affirmed and reinforced by the concept of the church as the Mystical Body of Christ. St Paul's analogy of the church as a body with Christ as its head was a recurrent theological theme for the leadership of the Catholic Action groups around the world. As Debra Campbell has pointed out in her work on Catholic laity in the United States, the conviction that the church was a living organism, in which all members participated in the life of grace and had a vital and distinct part to play in the

functioning of the whole, was a powerful impetus to the lay apostolate.<sup>89</sup> Founded on the conviction that baptism conferred an equal mission on all, the concept of the Mystical Body was a co-operative model of church. Hierarchical in so far as Christ was the head of the church, and the pope, bishops and priests were his institutional representatives, the Mystical Body was essentially a relational model in which the interaction of the church's members with each other and the world was paramount. Emphasising an approach to God generally characterised as 'feminine', the thinking on the church as 'Mystical Body' stressed the immanence of God in the world and highlighted the importance of the incarnation of Christ.

*Restoring All Things*, the guide to Catholic Action co-edited by Paul McGuire and Fr John Fitzsimons in 1939, assigned major importance to the revival of the doctrine of the Mystical Body and gave a solid outline of its theology. The first chapter, by the Dominican priest Fr M.P. Chenu, entitled 'Catholic Action and the Mystical Body', rejected the model of church as absent from the world and argued for Catholics to recognise the social demands of Christianity on the basis that the church as Mystical Body was required to continue the incarnation of Christ.

There was once a time when the Christians recoiled before the magnitude of...social phenomena, especially those of the world of labour...They were frightened by the force of these social structures, and attempted, more or less consciously, the experiment of sanctifying the individual *against* the social structures which, in reality, made up their life, even going so far as to condemn these structures for being responsible for all misdeeds....This was more than an error of tactics; it was a structural fault because it was an error of doctrine. It attempted to

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<sup>89</sup>Debra Campbell, 'The Heyday of Catholic Action and the Lay Apostolate, 1929 - 1959', in Jay P. Dolan et al., *Transforming Parish Ministry, The Changing Roles of Catholic Clergy, Laity and Women Religious*, New York, 1990, pp. 226 - 8.

set the religious psychology of these men over against the very matter of their existence, as though the Christian life was not one with the laborious content of their human life and could only subsist by barricading itself against this labour which was incapable of redemption and joyful sanctity. It was a sin against the reality of the Incarnation.<sup>90</sup>

As part of his rejection of anti-modernist piety which did not engage with the world, Chenu explicitly condemned charitable works that accepted rather than challenged the structures of society. The doctrine of the Mystical Body challenged the dualism implicit in a church that worked in enclaves, and refused to embrace society. Catholic Actionists were told that involvement with the everyday world was the foundation of their life in Christ.

As a result of this defensive attitude with its spiritual protectionism there was a grave risk of losing the spirit of conquest and of reducing the apostolate to 'good works'. What is the use of the yeast if it is not put into the mass?...In Catholic Action is the restoration of [the] apostolic sense in the Christian soul. It is the yeast thrust once more into the middle of the mass. It is the divine life elevating the whole of human life without rejecting anything, the Incarnation continued in the Mystical Body of Christ. Work, business, firms, trades, offices: everything must be brought into the Christian life. The whole of human civilisation is the subject matter of Christianity.<sup>91</sup>

Lay people involved in Catholic Action were expected to nurture the Mystical Body by promoting Christian values in their social sphere.

Catholic Action as a group of employers or workers who take it upon themselves to sanctify their milieu and to be

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<sup>90</sup>Fr M.P.Chenu OP, 'Catholic Action and the Mystical Body', in P. McGuire and Fr J. Fitzsimons, (eds), *Restoring All Things, A Guide to Catholic Action*, London, 1939, pp. 11 - 12.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 12 - 13.

the nucleus of a 'state of grace' in their work...is a section of the interior life of Christendom, of the Mystical Body growing to full stature.<sup>92</sup>

As Catholic Action groups in Australia began to talk about how they might contribute to the Mystical Body the term itself took on different nuances. The Perth records of the National Catholic Girls Movement show that the concept of an equal mission conferred at baptism was unfamiliar and slow to evolve. The NCGM was a broadly-based movement and, rather than drawing people together on the basis of an established common interest or previous formation, it was promoted by the National Secretariat as the mode of Catholic Action for all young Catholic women roughly between the ages of 14 and 25. In the records of the few parish groups whose minutes have survived, the term 'Mystical Body' was mostly used when an obedient lay secretary recorded the exhortation of the chaplain that members remember their responsibility to the church. For example, in the 1947 minutes of the Leederville Branch the concept of the Mystical Body of Christ formed a rather incongruous coda to discussions of social functions and arrangements for sporting activities. The concept of the lay apostolate which followed was one of a hierarchically imposed duty, undertaken lovingly perhaps, but without an awareness of a link in the ecclesiology of the Mystical Body between an earnest regard for spiritual welfare and zeal for social change.

...Also to practice badminton, as Highgate have (sic) challenged us to a game to be held in the near future.

Father then gave us an outline of Baptism and its effects it bears on us (sic). It makes us members of Christ's Mystical Body, therefore makes us likened to Christ - which means holy. If we love Our Lord - it follows we must love our neighbour also, and have the welfare of

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<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15.

their souls at heart. The pope has ruled that as we receive the Sacrament of Baptism, it automatically compels us to fulfil our most important task and obligation - to practice wholeheartedly Catholic Action. It is a challenge, one we cannot evade - we must live our Catholic lives to the full.<sup>93</sup>

The Catholic Action leadership in Perth had taken up the theme of the Mystical Body with alacrity as 'the truth particularly demanded by our generation'<sup>94</sup>, and also negotiated its meaning in terms slightly different from both Chenu and the NCGM. For example, a front page article of the issue of August 1940 reflected on Christ as head of the Mystical Body. As one would expect in a polished piece of writing from a specialised group the argument was more sophisticated than in the minutes of the NCGM. It is also hardly surprising to note that Chenu's notion of a laity finding redemption through Christian action in the world had been moderated to a more institutional understanding in which access to the life of grace came through the sacraments. Significantly however, in all these accounts the theological compulsion to go beyond a personal piety to action remained strong. The *Catholic Action Bulletin* stressed the divinity of Christ and the other-worldly context of his perfect human life in traditional terms, and then drew on the doctrine of the Mystical Body to argue this transcendent Christ was not distant from his followers, but intimately linked through the life of grace in the church and immanent in the world.

We pause to consider reverently that it is this Christ of personal divine life and of transcendent human perfection to whom we are united in the Mystical Body. ...The effect of this is at once evident. God is no longer living His divine life in some remote heaven. He is not a king casually dropping a coin into the outstretched hand of a beggar, or flinging a gift to his son playing on the floor of

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<sup>93</sup> *Minute Book of the Leederville Branch of the National Catholic Girls Movement*, 19 February 1947.

<sup>94</sup> *Catholic Action Bulletin*, 7 September 1940, n.p.

the royal nursery. He is as near as we are to ourselves. He has united His divine life with our human life. ...We have at our disposal the divine capacities of Jesus Christ, who saw His Father with direct vision and loved Him with a perfect love. And unless we deliberately cut it off, the stream of life keeps flowing endlessly from Christ the Head to us, the members of His Mystical Body.<sup>95</sup>

The model of the Mystical Body became the basis on which Catholics were urged to work for the 'spiritual reconstruction of society' as the Christian alternative to 'Capitalism', 'Marxist Communism' and 'Dictatorship'.<sup>96</sup> The conviction that here was a doctrine on whose basis Catholics could transform the world underpinned a process of education in the importance of the concept throughout the 1950s. The concept of 'The Young Christian Worker and the Mystical Body of Christ', which was dealt with so tentatively in the NCGM of 1947, was chosen as the subject the National YCW conference in 1948 attended by 150 priests and laity.<sup>97</sup> A series of notes on the Mystical Body for chaplains to use in their talks to groups was produced, with national approval, by two Perth priests, Fr Jim O'Brien and Dr Edmund Sullivan, key figures in the development of the Jocist groups in Perth,<sup>98</sup> and local groups continued to emphasise the concept. When Catholics gathered in annual processions to honour Christ the King, a feast which the Jocist movements had early identified as 'the Catholic Action feast', the theme of the Mystical Body of which Christ was the head was implicit in the commitment to a social model which would transform the world.

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<sup>95</sup>*Catholic Action Bulletin*, 3 August 1940, n.p.

<sup>96</sup>*Catholic Action Bulletin*, 17 August 1940, n.p.

<sup>97</sup>*Minutes of the Perth Priests' Committee, Young Christian Workers Movement Australia*, 25 November 1948.

<sup>98</sup>*Priests' Committee*, May 1952, November 1952, February 1953, May 1953. Unfortunately copies of their programme are not extant.

By 1962 the concept of the Mystical Body was central to a notion of church which stressed the solidarity of church members without the defensiveness of the ghetto. In that year Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Mater et Magistra* was the focus of a South Australian campaign to familiarise Catholics with the social teaching of the church, and the Mystical Body was central to the Jocist call to reflection and action inherent in the encyclical. Explaining the basis of the lay apostolate in an address reproduced in the *Southern Cross*, Archbishop Beovich used the concept of the Mystical Body of Christ to reinforce and explain the commitment ordinary Catholics could feel to the church in its apostolate of social change.

And as individuals where do you get your strength? your feeling of not being alone?...You get your strength in the Church. Christ's Mystical Body...As members of the Church you are a team, you are not isolated. The church is your spiritual reservoir and therein you renew your strength.<sup>99</sup>

#### *A Spirituality of the World: the Medieval Model*

While Christ the King and the Mystical Body became part of general Catholic parlance as the lay apostolate gained increasing attention, some Catholics had a well developed content for the social paradigm of the Mystical Body which was quite distinctive. The social philosophy of G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and the associated Distributist school was a powerful influence on the thought of early Catholic Actionists in Australia as elsewhere.<sup>100</sup> Margaret McGuire has observed of the Catholic Guild for Social Studies that

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<sup>99</sup>Archbishop Beovich, Notes of 1962 address, Newman Institute and Christian Life Movement, Box 23, ACAA; *Southern Cross*, 22 August 1962, lead article.

<sup>100</sup>For example, Campbell, 'The Heyday of Catholic Action and the Lay Apostolate', pp. 223 - 6; Avella, 'Reynold Hillenbrand and Chicago Catholicism', pp. 360 - 3; O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, p. 381 - 2; Jory, *The Champion Society*, pp. 7, 25. As Bruce Duncan points out, there were distinctions between these thinkers which were generally not picked up in Australia, *From Ghetto to Crusade*, p. 186. For an overview of the social thought of Chesterton and Belloc see

we were dyed-in-the-wool Chestertonians; a lot of the material we were using was activated Chestertonianism.<sup>101</sup>

In Perth, Keith Spruhan explained to the *Record's* readers that by taking the name of G.K. Chesterton the club chose to commemorate 'all that is best in the modern aspect of the Catholic Crusade'.<sup>102</sup>

In an interesting link with the devotional piety promoted at this time, Distributism was shot through with nostalgia for an idealised medieval community. The Distributists wanted a world where people lived peaceful rural lives in a society of small landowners. Ownership of property, especially land and such small industry as was compatible with rural life, would be distributed as widely as possible.<sup>103</sup> Both big government and big business were seen as oppressive and the Distributists called instead for a return to an agrarian society with peasant ownership and worker control of small industries. Perhaps even more important for Australia than the specific programme of small agricultural holdings, which were even more impractical in Australian conditions than in a fertile English countryside,<sup>104</sup> were the populist values at the heart of the Distributist philosophy. The Chesterbelloc concern for equality and dignity of all people was a solid foundation from which to work for a better

Jay P. Corrin, *G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc: The Battle Against Modernity*, Athens, Ohio, 1981.

<sup>101</sup>Margaret McGuire, interview with Judith Raftery, 10 April 1985, cited Raftery, 'Catholics and Social Issues in South Australia in the 1930s', p. 13.

<sup>102</sup>*Record*, 23 January 1937, p. 13. Chesterton had been lauded in the *Record* from well before his conversion to Catholicism as a serious philosopher of the contemporary world, eg *Record*, 13 March 1922, p. 12 (article reprinted from the *Irish Rosary*).

<sup>103</sup>Ian Boyd, 'Chesterton and Distributism', *New Blackfriars*, vol. 55 1974, pp. 265, 267.

<sup>104</sup>As F. Grogan, keen member of the Chesterton Club and agricultural scientist, knew at the time. Interview, Mr Francis Grogan, Cottesloe WA, 27 January 1984. Tape held by author.

world. Significantly, the proposed model of society was one in which religion was integrated into public life in the medieval manner.

The difference between the Chestertonian intellectuals and others who promoted medieval devotions was that the Chestertonians did not propose to retreat to medieval practices in the midst of industrial capitalism, but aimed to revolutionise the total society and return to the life of the guilds where faith was fused with every aspect of existence. Christopher Dawson, a prominent Distributist and writer, described the medieval world to which they aspired.

One of the most remarkable features of medieval guild life was the way in which it combined secular and religious activities in the same social complex. The guild chantry, the provision of prayers and masses for deceased brethren, and the performance of pageants and mystery plays on the great feasts were no less functions of the guilds than were the common banquet, the regulation of work and wages, and giving of assistance to fellow guildsmen in sickness or misfortune and the right to participate in the government of the city.<sup>105</sup>

Thus, while strictly orthodox, the intellectual view of medieval spirituality and society was not completely congruent with that favoured in mainstream parish life. In contrast to the other-worldly parish approach with its emphasis on the power of the institutional church, the Catholic Guild for Social Studies and the Chesterton Club found an agenda for social change in the vision of a restored Christendom. This was a spirituality potentially much more militant than Catholicism's devotional strand. Reinforced by the revival of Catholic literature, of which Chesterton and Belloc were a prominent part, the quest for a Catholic culture in the world had some strong similarities with ghetto

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<sup>105</sup>Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, Garden City, 1958, p. 173, cited Karl Keating, 'Guilds, Rural Life and Enclosure' *Chesterton Review*, vol. 4, 1977 - 8, pp. 67 - 8.

Catholicism. The crucial difference was the confidence with which the Catholic revival movement approached the world. Writers and thinkers such as Chesterton, Belloc, Fr C.C. Martindale, Sigred Undset, Jacques Maritain and François Mauriac, published by Sheed and Ward, were part of a strong Catholic sub-culture, but one which constructed itself far more as critic of the existing order than as a defensive ghetto.<sup>106</sup>

### *Catholic Action and Holiness*

The pattern of Catholic Action variations on the dominant church themes were evident in the choice of patrons and prayer of the Catholic Guild for Social Studies. Patrick O'Farrell has noted that the Melbourne Champions, for all their choice of an English martyr as patron, lived a Catholic double life with minds nourished by British thought and souls exercised with Irish prayers.<sup>107</sup> In Adelaide the Catholic Guild for Social Studies also drew strongly on English rather than Irish Catholicism, but the McGuires made determined efforts to integrate established Catholic practice into the life of the Guild, stamping it wherever possible with the print of their intellectual interests. The McGuires saw the Guild as 'a way of life' which would be steeped in Catholic belief in the same way as Chesterton and Belloc contended that the medieval world had been permeated. In the four-part plan of the Guild the 'Spiritual and Devotional' headed the list of Guild priorities ahead of 'Intellectual', 'Recreational' and 'Active'. It is important to note that even in reflections in 1953 the concept 'spirituality' was more strongly linked to 'devotion' than to the other areas, even though the Guild had seen all four of its facets as equally religious, and as

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<sup>106</sup>See also Alden V. Brown, *The Grail and American Catholicism, 1940 - 1975*, Notre Dame, 1989, pp. 174 - 5; Campbell, 'The Heyday of Catholic Action and the Lay Apostolate', p. 227; Arnold Sparr, *To Promote, Defend, and Redeem: The Catholic Literary Revival and the Cultural Transformation of American Catholicism, 1920 - 1960*, New York, 1990.

<sup>107</sup>O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and community*, pp. 381-2.

equally the means to the end of public Catholic witness and social conversion.<sup>108</sup> The notion that spirituality could be something other than active was so unfamiliar to Australian Catholics that even when the practice of the CGSS pointed to a broader definition, the members of the Guild articulated the concept in the traditional way.

The details of the Guild's philosophy belied the separation of spirituality into one area. Membership of the Guild was expected to involve a serious commitment to study and action which was to be marked by Christian attitudes amongst the members and would be sustained by the devotional life of the group.

People taking up the work [of the Guild] should be prepared to regard it seriously and give it a prominent place in the order of their lives. ...The discipline [of study] may require a good deal of mutual charity and forbearance, and each individual whatever his prior qualifications may be or whatever he may imagine them to be, should approach the work with the humility that is a necessary condition of any scholarship, and not least any Catholic scholarship.

This implies very definitely that there should be prominent in the life of the Guild and of the Guildsman a special devotion. It is suggested that at certain intervals we should corporately unite in Saturday afternoon retreats: prayer should precede study and follow it: and before all meetings members should join in reciting the Creed and invoking the aid of our Patrons.<sup>109</sup>

The Guild prayer leaflet, which honours the co-patrons St Thomas Aquinas and Blessed Thomas More, was produced with Archbishop Spence's imprimatur. It shows Catholic intellectuals in Adelaide operating according to

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<sup>108</sup>M. McGuire to Morrison, 28 June 1953, ACAA.

<sup>109</sup>Outline, Catholic Guild of Social Studies, ACAA.

the models of the institution while seeking to move their devotional life closer to the sources of their intellectual interests. Like the CGSS chaplain, Fr O'Doherty, Aquinas was a Dominican and the traditional patron of scholars. In seeking the patronage of the 'Angelic Doctor' the Guild was well in tune with the opinion and training of the hierarchy. Thomistic philosophy had been revived under Leo XIII and formed the centre of Catholic higher education for much of the twentieth century. Some commentators regarded the Jocist method itself as a derivative of Aquinas' recommendations for prudent conduct.<sup>110</sup> The index to Father Sheehan's *Apologetics and Christian Doctrine* simply noted that there were too many references in the text to Thomas Aquinas to list them all. In reproducing the 'Prayer of St Thomas before Study', and the 'Litany of St Thomas of Aquin' the CGSS prayer leaflet was simply making explicit an admiration shared by the hierarchy for the 'incomparable scribe of the Man-God'.<sup>111</sup> Other prayers within the collection struck a new tone, and acknowledged the specific mission of the laity and the God-given vocation to an active apostolate. These prayers were marked by a self-assurance and sense of missionary zeal which contrasted with traditional prayers of the laity for personal holiness. In the 'Prayer before Retreat or Study' Guild members located themselves within the 'Truth of the Church' and prayed in the traditional way for those outside the church. The prayer did not end there, however, but called on the Holy Spirit to grant them a new understanding of the church's traditions and the will to act on their belief. A final invocation to Mary under traditional titles honouring her wisdom and discipleship completed the dextrous re-shaping of established custom.

O Holy Spirit, Thou art the Spirit of Truth. Yet how vast  
are the numbers deprived on the Faith. O shine in their

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<sup>110</sup>Avella notes that Fr Donald Kanaly introduced Jocism to good effect in this way in Chicago in 1938, 'Reynold Hillenbrand and Chicago Catholicism', p. 364; Zotti cites Francis Wendell OP as using a similar method, *A Time of Awakening*, p. 263.

<sup>111</sup>Litany of St Thomas of Aquin, Catholic Guild for Social Studies prayer leaflet, c.1932. Copy held by author.

hearts and save them from error. Grant that we, whom God hath called to the lay apostolate, may be given the spirit of understanding and knowledge. Grant that we may bring new things out of the treasures of the Faith.

In the great conflict between Truth and error mayest Thou prevail, that the Kingdom of Truth may be established.

Arouse us from indifference. Stir up our lagging will to service. Grant that we may become worthy instruments of the Divine Grace. Amen

Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Good Counsel, Queen of Apostles, pray for us.<sup>112</sup>

In its second patron, Thomas More, the Guild was honouring a most atypical member of the canon of saints. In 1931 the cause of Thomas More's sanctification was still moving through its final stages, having languished under papal suspicion of the English Catholic Church for four hundred years. Many of the Irish clergy in Australia continued to suspect English Catholicism and societies which adopted English Catholics as role models long after the cloud lifted from More at the Vatican.<sup>113</sup> While Sir Thomas More was canonised in 1934 primarily as a martyr of the Henrican Reformation, the prayer of the Catholic Guild of Social Studies also honoured him as an accomplished, fatherly lay man (though reference to his two marriages and actual children was omitted) and a buoyant personality who remained true to his conscience.<sup>114</sup>

The Australian interpretation of Catholic Action valued a cheerful approach to God. Paul McGuire paid tribute to Cardijn's humour on more than

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<sup>112</sup>Prayer before Retreat or Study, Catholic Guild for Social Studies prayer leaflet.

<sup>113</sup>Jory, *The Champion Society*, p. 34; O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and community*, p. 382.

<sup>114</sup>Commemoration of Blessed Thomas More, CGSS prayer leaflet.

one occasion, and called on Chesterton to also witness to the 'merriment of the saints'.<sup>115</sup> On occasion laughter became a weapon for the Catholic Guild for Social Studies as when the tension at a public meeting on the Spanish Civil War was completely diffused, and the credibility of the Communist address entirely destroyed, by the systematic giggles and guffaws of the Guild.<sup>116</sup> The McGuires' circle was no place for a wan and wistful separation from the world, or for dry intellectual contest, but instead sought to promote a vigorous sense of delight in God's world and the possibilities for change. The *Catholic Action Bulletin* in Perth also praised the personal holiness of the Jocist movement and noted the lively style of faith that pervaded the groups established overseas. The *Bulletin* linked to the distinctive Catholic Action devotion to Christ the King.

Catholic Action is making saints in every corner of the world. ...How shall we describe the spirit of this movement? What for instance is the spirit which pervades the Jocist crusade...What lies behind the natural lightheartedness, the transparent joy and amicability of the Jocist apostles? It is their supreme optimism - or, lest that be too vulgar a word, it is their serene confidence in the success of the movement. They are conquering crusaders because they live by Faith and Hope.<sup>117</sup>

The sense that there was a slightly different Catholic culture operating within Catholic Action circles is borne out by the oral evidence. Mrs Margaret Reagan remembers a certain novelty attached to Guild activities and an awareness of its origins in the theatre group that gave a vibrancy to Guild

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<sup>115</sup>Paul McGuire interview with Noel Adams, also P. McGuire, 'Some Characters of the Catholic Renaissance', *Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, 1 October 1938, pp. 318 - 9.

<sup>116</sup>Margaret McGuire, in discussion with workshop group, '1991 - Turning Point National Forum', Adelaide, 6 October 1991. See also Press, *Colour and Shadow*, p. 98.

<sup>117</sup>*Catholic Action Bulletin*, 13 April 1940, n.p.

meetings.<sup>118</sup> The blend of orthodox Catholicism coupled with the Guild's particular culture was continued in the choice of patrons for the small groups. The 1936 annual report listed among the saints who sponsored the Guild not only the institutionally authorised Xavier, Bosco, and Vianney, Our Lady of Good Counsel and Blessed Edmund Campion, but also the twentieth century Dominican scholar from England, Bede Jarrett. In 1953 Margaret McGuire also recalled groups named with a similar mix for St Joseph, John Fisher, Thomas More and Engleburt Dollfus, the Austrian Chancellor who had been heavily influenced by *Quadragesimo Anno*.<sup>119</sup> There are also subtle indications of variation in such things as the scholarly precision with which St Thomas Aquinas was addressed as St Thomas of Aquin and in the woodcut and black ink style of religious art the group promoted.

In their efforts to promote different models of holiness, and to encourage a total Catholic culture, the Guild reflected the notion implicit in the theology of the Mystical Body, that Catholic Action could accomplish a complete and integrated transformation of society.

### *The Gospel Imperative to Act*

For many participants the spirituality of Catholic Action was distinguished most clearly from other Catholic groups by its emphasis on Christ as a model in the gospel. The meetings of small leaders' groups followed a structure which set aside 15 minutes for a gospel discussion to be led by one of the group. The lay leader was not expected to display any particular spiritual

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<sup>118</sup>Interviews, Mrs Margaret Regan with author, Adelaide SA, 31 March 1990. Tape held by author. Also Mrs Margaret McGuire with author, North Adelaide SA, 23 May 1988. Notes held by author.

<sup>119</sup>Catholic Guild for Social Studies Annual Report 1936; letter Margaret McGuire to Morrison, 28 June 1953, Catholic Guild for Social Studies, Box 137, ACAA.

initiative in this role; more often than not discussion followed the questions supplied by the National Secretariat and was prepared in consultation with the chaplain of the group. Nevertheless the practice provided a forum in which lay people developed and shared their reflections on selected passages of scripture. The gospel discussion stemmed not only from a belief that Catholic Actionists needed to be able to base their decisions on the gospel model of Christ, but also that they could best deepen their understanding through sharing their perceptions as peers. In an undated instruction to early chaplains in Perth, priests were warned that although they could offer spiritual direction to the leader preparing for the meeting, the gospel reflection itself was not an occasion for a sermon, but a group session in which lay people applied the gospel to their lives 'in ways much more telling than any we could suggest to them'.<sup>120</sup> The author of the notes, writing to and on behalf of chaplains, acknowledged that real understanding of the gospel was a rare thing among young Catholic people, whose main experience of the bible was often limited to the selected passages they heard read in the highly structured environment of the Mass. The Jocist vision was of young people so familiar with the whole story of Christ's life that the values he embodied could be consciously translated into their own everyday lives.

We may be permitted to remark here that our young people never think of making Christ the centre of their lives. They frequently think of religion as a number of commandments, don't do this etc, and a certain number of rites at which one must assist - Mass, Holy Communion. They know only those parts of the Gospel read at Mass and have the vaguest ideas about the earthly life of Christ. We can realise then how necessary the Gospel exercise is and that, without it, the militants have no foundation for a really deep interior life.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>*The Gospel in the JOC*, n.d., ACAP.

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*

The gospel discussion section was introduced into the meetings of the Leederville branch of the NCGM in order to broaden the formation of the general group. The lay president outlined the purpose of the discussions in 1949.

Joan explained that the gospel discussion was part of the spiritual work of the Leaders Group and that in future we would conduct a discussion at the general meetings. The gospel text chosen for this meeting was 'The Procession of Palms'.<sup>122</sup>

Rather than following through a particular theme or reading a chosen evangelist or epistle in its entirety, the discussions focused on selected texts which provided a vignette of the Christian life and highlighted traditional virtues. The NCGM followed the customs of the institution in its scriptural exegesis; but it broke new ground in expecting lay people to apply a personal understanding of the scripture to their lives.

This weeks (sic) discussion was 'The washing of the Feet'. The main points in the discussion were Humility and Charity. We are to apply this gospel meditation to our own lives.<sup>123</sup>

Discussion was conducted on 'Children love one another'. We are God's children and He watches over us. It was pointed out in the early days how the Christians loved one another. We should also love one another and help one another.<sup>124</sup>

In 1952 the Young Catholic Student's Movement at St Aloysius College in Adelaide not only recorded the central place of the gospel discussion in the group, but also noted the advantage of examining the scriptural passage in

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<sup>122</sup>*Minute Book of the Leederville Branch of the National Catholic Girls' Movement*, 25 April 1949.

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, 23 May 1949.

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*, 15 August 1949.

context. The student reporter noted that the strategy of reading the whole chapter helped a process of reflection which did not necessarily come naturally to Catholic schoolgirls.

The most important part of the meetings is the Gospel Discussion, in which an incident in Our Lord's life is discussed by the girls, and all the lessons gleaned from the meditation beforehand and during the discussion are applied to our own lives. By the Gospel Discussion we try to know Our Lord better, so that we can imitate and love Him more in our daily lives. In the activity groups we have found that reading the whole chapter containing the text helps the girls in understanding and discussing it, which some have found difficult partly through insufficient thought and partly through the timidity at expressing their views.<sup>125</sup>

The programmes of gospel reflections which the Australian Catholic Action movements used show some of the tensions which characterised the development of the movement in Australia. The approach to the scripture remained prescriptive and partial, while members were also encouraged to interact more fully with the gospel. Readings from the New Testament, initially selected for their emphasis on discipleship, but later suggested to mirror the liturgical seasons of the institutional church, were a starting point for reflection which members were to apply to their lives. Rather than expecting that young people would reflect on their current concerns and experiences and choose appropriate gospel passages to deepen their awareness of the Christian spirit, priests and leaders of the movement hoped that the broad universal messages of the selected passages, guided by questions relating the message to the concerns of the movement in Australia, would spark connections with lives of the groups' members.

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<sup>125</sup>Young Catholic Students' Movement Annual Report', *St Aloysius' College Annual*, Adelaide, 1952, p. 25.

The programme of readings designed in 1945 to introduce school students to Catholic Action used selections from scripture to encourage an apostolic spirit among members. The passages were reproduced with questions to accompany them in a series of six meetings, with a separate sheet of commentaries available for the discussion leaders. An examination of the annotations which the students were offered provides important insights into the model of discipleship at work in Catholic Action. The third meeting used St Luke's story of the shepherds at the Nativity as its focus. The commentaries are typical of the Jocist model and reveal that the students were expected to understand these 'First Followers' as an encouragement to formation through action.

The students were reminded of the setting of the story with a eucharistic allusion to 'Bethlehem (a Hebrew word meaning 'house of bread') about five miles south of Jerusalem'<sup>126</sup> and the commentator was prompted with details that located the scene against Australian experience.

Palestine, was a rough, dry and, in most parts, barren country. The shepherds lined (sic) out with their flocks (small by Australian standards), led them from one patch of grass to another, from one well to another and kept off the wild beasts at night.<sup>127</sup>

The programme reproduced the Douai translation of Luke 2:8-20 and asked six questions to focus students' attention on the issues of mission implicit in the story. Given that the YCS aimed to be a mass movement, and draw in those who might otherwise be excluded from the institution, it was telling that the first question went some way to undercut notions of religious respectability.

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<sup>126</sup>*Young Catholic Students' Movement, Programme for Second and Third Terms, 1945*, Melbourne, c.1945, p. 5. Catholic Action collection, ACAP.

<sup>127</sup>*Gospel Commentaries*, c.1945, Catholic Action collection, ACAP.

Substituting the secular term 'leader' for the ecclesiastical 'lord', the programme asked:

To what type of people did God send a special messenger to tell of Our Leader's arrival?<sup>128</sup>

The commentary pointed to the disreputable reputation of shepherds.

The pious Jews look down on the wandering shepherds, thought them rogues, pilferers. A Pharisee would be unwilling to buy wool from a shepherd for fear it was off a stolen sheep. Yet the shepherds of this incident must have been good men: 'men of good will.' Christ chose these despised, uneducated men to be the first to come to Him. Why?<sup>129</sup>

The 'why' is left hanging, and the possibility of a radical critique of 'respectability' is not pursued; but the questions go on to encourage awareness of the innate goodness of the shepherds, in their 'natural reverence' and prompt response to God's message. In answer to the question, using Jocist terminology, 'Did they contact others?', the commentary encouraged students to see that in a small local environment like that of a school, the shepherds were immediately apostolic in letting their neighbours know what they had seen.

Will the person who is always saying 'to-morrow' or 'some day next week' be a messenger for Christ?  
Shepherds spread their news and their own joy (v. 17, 18) among their own people around Bethlehem.<sup>130</sup>

The philosophy of formation through action was heavily underscored in a question emphasising their quick action, and the commentary took an example of skill increasing through practice to stress the importance of learning about the apostolate through involvement.

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

Did the shepherds wait until they were perfect Christians before they started to influence others?

They started straight away. In C.A. we are trained largely by action just as you learn to write essays and draw maps by writing essays and drawing maps. Will you succeed immediately? What were your first attempts at writing and drawing like?<sup>131</sup>

The 'Good News' was equated firmly with 'our Y.C.S.M. ideals' and students were asked to consider their local opportunities to influence other young people. A traditional gender differentiation and a concern with morality were both apparent.

There are many other students in our school, young people who live in the same street. How many do you know? How many do you ever speak to? How many are your friends? If you do make friends do you gradually get them to see things as a Catholic should? They talk about films - the girls about boys and clothes; the boys about girls and sport. Can you make them see the Christian point of view on these matters?<sup>132</sup>

The emphasis on action and influencing others remained constant through texts as various as the conversion of St Paul, the demoniac in the synagogue and the Magnificat.<sup>133</sup> The Perth records of the National Catholic Girls Movement, the official Catholic Action organisation for girls, show that gospel discussions were held at nearly every leaders' meeting. The details of the discussion were seldom recorded, and neither the oral sources nor the written documents show any particular pattern in the choice of texts. However, by 1952 the members

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>133</sup> Acts 9: 1-10, in *Young Catholic Students' Movement, Programme for Second and Third Terms, 1945*; Mark 1: 21-29, Luke 1: 46-55 in *Young Catholic Students' Movement Gospel Discussions 1955*

of the NCGM Diocesan Council had sufficient confidence in their judgement of the place of the gospel discussion and the needs of the Perth movement to suggest adaptations of the national programme. The proposed changes included selecting passages which would focus on a central notion in the developing spirituality of Catholic Action, the theme of the church as the Mystical Body of Christ.

It was generally felt that the idea of having questions was good, particularly for groups whose Chaplain could not be present at the meeting or could not see the leaders about the Gospel between meetings. The opinion was that the questions were often irrelevant. For the coming year it was suggested that there be a series of texts on the Mystical Body in the first part of the year.<sup>134</sup>

The discussion of scripture by ordinary Catholic people, endeavouring to discern the message of the gospel for their lives in quasi-autonomous groups was seen as an important way to nourish the Mystical Body of Christ.

Catholic Action introduced new tones into the spiritual landscape of Australian Catholics. The mission of the laity was founded on a belief in the church as a community of believers each with specific functions, a Mystical Body. Such a framework valued the relational and co-operative characteristics of the archetypal feminine. In contrast, or complementarity, the style of spirituality which emerged as Australian Catholics sought to live out their membership of the Mystical Body was more in tune with the masculine. The picture which emerges is one in which intellectual enquiry was valued for the insight it could give to specific situations, where a vital sense of changing the world was arguably at the core of every action, and where action itself was seen as an important part of each Catholic's response to God. In the context of a call to Catholics to consider themselves active members of the church, it is important

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<sup>134</sup>*Minutes Book of the National Catholic Girls' Movement Diocesan Council, Perth, 1 September 1952*

to consider gender in two ways. One approach to the material shows varying views of men and women at work in the spiritual culture of Catholic Action, while another angle of consideration points to the firmly masculine leanings of the Jocists' sense of apostolate.

*Catholic Action: A Sphere for Men, and Some Women*

In a church and society where it was often assumed that intellectual endeavour was the field of men, it required something of a cultural leap for Catholic women to take their place in groups which privileged study as the prelude to social change. In the year the Chesterton Club began to meet in Perth, a telling short story appeared in the *Record*. The protagonist, a young man, related the story of his involvement in a study circle to a friendly priest. His view that a study circle was no place for a woman was excused as the result of ignorance, but ultimately supported by the narrative voice.

Then the women wanted to join us. Believing as I still do that woman's place is in the home, I refused to let them...I fought them every inch of the way...I was a little shy of women, and perhaps a little afraid. The battle raged for months, but, you know Father, when a woman's made up her mind it's no use opposing her...

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The story reveals a perception of the study-circle as launching pad for other activity, and identifies vocations to the priesthood, rather than to any particular style of lay leadership or involvement with the church, as a worthwhile result of the formation. For women the expected and acceptable result was a supporting role in the domestic sphere.

Several of our members have joined the priesthood and those of us who remain have gradually been absorbed into the different branches of Catholic activity

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<sup>135</sup>*Record*, 10 October 1936, p. 21.

...'And what of the women?...were they not absorbed into the different avenues of Catholic movement?'

'Yes, Father, they were. They married the men.'<sup>136</sup>

Like the Campion Society in Melbourne, the Chesterton Club was open to men only. The oral history of the society shows no recollection of women members, although women were able to borrow from the Veritas Library and to attend some of the Chesterton lectures. A fleeting reference in the *Record* of 11 January 1940 to a meeting of the Chesterton Women's Circle at the home of Mrs Cowain at 123 Glendower Street in Highgate provides a tantalising but faint hint that there was a feminine counterpart to the Chesterton Club.<sup>137</sup> However, its activities, membership and very existence appear to have escaped attention. In Perth the intellectual prelude to Catholic Action was assigned to the world of men.

The notion of separate spheres even pervaded the Jocist spirituality where, although the conviction that each Christian had a personal mission meant that the lived experience of each individual was valuable, it was still expected that men and women would properly deal with different areas of reality. Cardijn's clerical appointment to the Girls Club in Laeken had meant that the Jocist movement had begun with women, against the weight of social and church custom. Early accounts of the movement made much of the new feminine dignity the young women displayed in taking responsibility for the group, 'a kind of

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Record*, 11 January 1940, p. 16. In February 1939 Archbishop Prendiville had replied to a letter from a Mrs Cowan (sic) of 32 Kadina St, North Perth, thanking a Ladies Study Circle for the copy of prayers they had selected for their use, assuring them of his prayers and advising that they should follow the usual procedure for the approval of prayers by approaching their chaplain, Father Hussey of Highgate. Mrs Cowan's letter is not extant. Archbishop Prendiville to Mrs Cowan, 23 February 1939, Box A12 File 30/1, ACAP.

metamorphosis accomplished simply by Cardijn's respect for them and pride in their gifts'.<sup>138</sup> Initially in Australian Catholic schools girls involved in Jocist groups outnumbered boys by roughly two to one.<sup>139</sup> The success of the YCS was closely linked to the level of support the new group received from the schools concerned. Thus, while the high proportion of girls did not in itself indicate a gendered response to Jocism amongst the students concerned, Jocist organisers commented on the influence of different styles of management at the schools run by women and men. Superiors of girls' schools were generally thought to be more flexible about school activities and to provide the movement with more administrative back-up than those at boys' schools. The teaching brothers in particular had a reputation for being concerned to maintain their authority and regarding the new movement with suspicion. In 1943 Frank Maher of the National Secretariat wrote to Archbishop Beovich that

Our real trouble with the Brothers Schools is that they regard the Catholic Action groups as something to be run by a brother in the school and therefore directly under the supervision of the school authorities.<sup>140</sup>

In 1945, Adelaide's director of Catholic Education, Fr W. Russell, who wrote to defend the brothers claiming that they would support the movement once it was shown to be worthwhile, did not dispute the brothers' lack of support in the initial stages.

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<sup>138</sup>Bedoyere, *The Cardijn Story*, p. 44.

<sup>139</sup>Statistics recorded for all of Australia in 1947, YCS, Box 182, ACAA.

	Boys	Girls
Adelaide	6	13
Armidale	1	1
Ballarat	-	1
Hobart	3	10
Melbourne	11	22
Perth	1	1
Port Augusta	-	2
Australia	46	102

total groups: 148; total number of leaders: 1600, of general members: 5000

<sup>140</sup>Letter from F. Maher to Archbishop Beovich, 3 June 1943, Box 182, ACAA.

As your Grace is well aware it is much more difficult to introduce any new ideas or movement into the Brothers' schools than it is into the Sisters' schools. However once the Brothers are convinced of the value of this improvement the YCS will have no more enthusiastic supporters.<sup>141</sup>

The openness on the part of the girls schools to new notions of spirituality, and, perhaps, a greater willingness to find time within a school programme for activities not linked with examination success and subsequent public careers, meant that more young women than young men were exposed to Jocism at school in the 1940s. However, while young women were encouraged to work for a Christian society, there was a powerful assumption on the part of the organisers that their concerns would be different enough from those of the young men to prevent them working together.

One striking example of the notion of separate spheres was the parallel programmes drawn up for the separate groups by the Perth Secretariat of Catholic Action. In the fortnightly editions of the Catholic Action Bulletin one of the two centre pages was dedicated to 'Christian Marriage: Programme for Girls' Groups' and the other to 'Atheistic Communism: Programme for Men's Groups'. Perhaps some young men read about marriage and some young women read about Communism, but the resource material prepared for the local group meetings clearly reflected an expectation that gender would shape a different apostolate.

The minutes of the National Catholic Girls Movement in Perth reveal the bishops had very traditional expectations of the young women involved in official Catholic Action. For example, in 1949 the Diocesan Council recorded as its own a definition of Catholic Action offered by the movement's chaplain,

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<sup>141</sup>Letter from Fr W. Russell to Archbishop Beovich, 14 March 1945, Box 182, ACAA.

Doctor Edmund Sullivan, in which the details of women's activity was confined to the home.

Doctor...said that the aim of Catholic Action is the re-Christianising of social life. Each specialised movement is concerned with its own section of society. In the case of the NCGM we are concerned with girls and young women. Doctor also said that one of the principal aims of the NCGM is to see that our members are fitted to be good wives and mothers.<sup>142</sup>

The preparation of the laity for marriage, and the implicit reinforcement of the traditional expectations of women in marriage, was a central feature of both the NCGM and the YCW. Enquiries on 'company keeping', 'purity', 'love', 'divorce' and 'attitude to children' were all part of an effort to encourage Catholic family life.<sup>143</sup> The 'Pre-Cana Conferences' encouraged engaged couples to view their marriage as a vocation, and to prepare seriously for their commitment to each other and the church. While breaking new ground by involving lay people in the process of educating others about a sacrament, the programme did not stretch the established understanding of the roles of men and women in marriage.

In Adelaide Margaret Cheadle McGuire's leading influence in the Catholic Guild for Social Studies provided a remarkable role model for other young women. The McGuires were seen as an extraordinarily active couple, who, having no children, exercised their Christian mission beyond the family in an unusually public way.<sup>144</sup> While the CGSS seems to have been founded on a partnership of enthusiasm between Paul McGuire and Fr O'Doherty OP, the

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<sup>142</sup>*Minutes of the Diocesan Council of the National Catholic Girls' Movement, Perth*, 14 March 1949.

<sup>143</sup>*Ibid*, 1951.

<sup>144</sup>Interview, Mrs Margaret Reagan, Adelaide SA, 30 March 1990. Notes held by author.

running of the Guild involved Margaret McGuire as a leading protagonist, and she took up her particular role as Director of Studies with gusto. Acknowledged as an expert on Catholic Action in her own right she spoke to groups about the nature of the lay apostolate and conducted courses within the Guild as well as planning the programme of studies and arranging teachers to deliver these courses. Within the broad outline of two foundation courses on 'Social History' and 'Social Science' a number of topics were proposed: one undated plan included a general option topic of 'Christian Feminism'. It is not clear whether this was actually offered or what the content might have been, but the proposal in itself indicates a spirit of adventure within the Guild.

In a letter to Margaret McGuire in 1943, when work with the Royal Australian Navy had taken the McGuires away from Adelaide, and the Guild had lost most of its other members to the war effort as well, Fr O'Doherty described a meeting which had attempted to revive the CGSS. He gave a picture of the Guild and the McGuires in action as he remembered from a few years before. Margaret McGuire emerges in a very traditional role, the only woman with a high profile among an otherwise male cast of notables.

Looking around the room as we swilled tea and chewed biscuits...Though it was like old times, it was very different. You were not bustling round with a tea pot or talking animatedly to a group of girls. Paul was not seated on a table, swinging his legs, and 'coming down to tin tacks'. Ted [McGee] was not with us to quietly pour cold reason on the unduly enthusiastic...One sadly missed...the eager enthusiasm of John Smith, the quiet seriousness of Frank [Preston]...<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>Fr O'Doherty to Margaret McGuire, 27 September 1943, archives of St Lawrence's Priory, North Adelaide.

However, the Guild did not expect women to simply serve tea, and O'Doherty lamented that the introduction of the episcopally sanctioned national movements to Adelaide in 1942 had replaced the Guild's solid core of study and reflection leading to action with softer options. The intellectual prelude to Jocist style Catholic Action which O'Doherty valued was highly analytical, concerned with gaining an accurate view of specifics and committed to action for change. As such it conforms clearly to the instrumental, or masculine, approach to God. Significantly O'Doherty was especially uneasy at the introduction of folk dancing to Adelaide Catholic Action. Folk dancing was a feature of the programmes of the Grail, a Catholic women's organisation brought to Australia from the Netherlands in 1937 which ran summer programmes of apostolic formation for young women at its Sydney and later Melbourne base.<sup>146</sup> Referring sceptically to the nationalisation of Catholic Action, O'Doherty explained the impact of the officially sanctioned groups in Adelaide.

When Catholic Action(?) (sic) was established in 1941 I told my Cabra group girls that they would have to join the Movement or decide whether they went on as they were. In any case I explained that I could no longer run them as I had a group at the Education building every night of the week.

Most of my Cabra girls went into the Girl's Movement. Most of them subsequently drew out - they could not bring themselves to do Dutch folk dances: they wanted something more solid. Early this year they contacted me: would I restore them to group status and run them at some place in the City to be decided upon? My reply was that I could not run them as a JCWL [Junior Catholic Women's League] group since JCWL was Catholic Action and I had no status in 'that Land of Promise' (of course I did not say

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<sup>146</sup>Sally Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism, Catholic Women's Struggles for Self-Expression*, Sydney, 1985.

quite that!) I did suggest they should come into the Guild as a Guild group. ...They decided to do so.<sup>147</sup>

O'Doherty's disparaging remarks were at one with the suspicion of overseas Jocists for the Grail's spiritual style. Alden Brown has cited examples which describe the conflict between Jocism and the Grail in the United States in terms of a clash between masculine and feminine styles of spirituality. The Grail held that the Jocist emphasis on the particular was 'a masculine tendency which limited the range of the apostolate and obscured its spiritual foundations'. In contrast 'female lay apostles were to be personalists and universalists'.<sup>148</sup> Observing the Jocist ideal of Christianising the existing social order by moving quickly to put concrete social and economic theory into action a Grail leader noted that, 'This satisfies their practical masculine mind...but I cannot imagine it could ever satisfy a woman's heart.'<sup>149</sup> The view of the apostolate presented in *Restoring All Things* attracted specific criticism, and discussions were held with John Fitzsimons, co-editor with Paul McGuire, which did not resolve the issues. The Jocists argued that taking workers out of their environment, encouraging them to reject modern society, in both its trappings, like lipstick, and its economic foundations, exemplified by office work, was creating an eccentric Catholic ghetto rather than dealing with the realities of city life. The Grail argued that Fitzsimons ignored the extent of the transformation that the world required, and the difficulties of remaining a whole-hearted Christian in an environment of 'soap operas, ...vitamin pills, and ...white flour'.<sup>150</sup> The encouragement of distinct apostolates among workers, students, and other

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<sup>147</sup>O'Doherty to M. McGuire, 27 September 1943.

<sup>148</sup>Brown, *The Grail Movement*, p. 99.

<sup>149</sup>Account of the visit to Holland of Louisiana priests from intellectual Catholic Action groups, 'Visit from the Fathers Bourdelan and Gremillon to Holland, June 1954', Part II, p. 3, Archives of the American Grail, cited Brown, *The Grail Movement*, p.94.

<sup>150</sup>'Discussion with Father Fitzsimons on Lay Apostolate', 9 March 1947, typewritten notes, Archives of the American Grail, cited Brown, *The Grail Movement*, p. 50.

special groups seemed to be a commitment to an urban industrial world, not open to the Grail's vision of complete cultural overhaul, and rejecting 'the organic units of society: the family and the human community as ultimate goals'.<sup>151</sup>

In the Adelaide version of this conflict it was neither the full Grail programme nor developed Jocism which were at issue. However, the principles of the divergence were broadly similar. Australian Jocism still aimed 'to take modern life to pieces and study it part by part',<sup>152</sup> and was both impatient with forms of lay activity which worked in less instrumental ways to change the social order, and suspected by them of being less than spiritual. O'Doherty's account also indicated something of the confusion and personal disappointment that resulted from the piecemeal introduction of Catholic Action in Australia. Hierarchical mismanagement of the people's movement caused considerable suffering. In such a context the lay women O'Doherty dealt with made choices about the style of group they wanted and opted for intellectual enquiry in an organisation further toward the fringe of the institutional church than officially sanctioned Catholic Action. O'Doherty went on to express his approval for their enthusiasm, complementing the 'really fine type of girl - average age about 21 or 23' not for their womanly femininity but for being 'as keen as mustard'.<sup>153</sup> Such a tone was hardly surprising in a letter to Margaret McGuire which addressed her very much as a colleague and friend in the struggle to enliven Australian Catholicism. O'Doherty concluded with a flourish which aligned him with the lay movements against a meddling institution and affirmed his belief in a rationally founded faith as the basis for social change.

God send to Australian Catholics instruction in  
fundamentals and then courage to be Catholics, first, last

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>152</sup> *Catholic Action Bulletin*, 27 April 1940, n.p.

<sup>153</sup> O'Doherty to M. McGuire, 27 September 1943.

and all the time. It is pretty hopeless! What is needed is the butchering of a few Bishops and priests - preferably Bishops.<sup>154</sup>

However little sympathy masculine-style spirituality received from the bishops, or however daunting the task of recovering the masculine might have been for women in an institution which affirmed the stereotypical view of the feminine as passive, Catholic women were not entirely absent from the efforts to take Catholic values to the social sphere. Adelaide's Newman Institute, which Ted Farrell headed at Archbishop Beovich's invitation, was a lay organisation in the intellectual tradition established as a diocesan alternative to the Catholic Social Studies Movement.<sup>155</sup> The Newman brief was to educate Catholic people in current issues so that the church could make an intelligent response to the secular world, integrating faith and life.

[The Newman Institute] will ensure that we possess a Catholic laity equipped intellectually to play their part in every avenue of national life. ...The task of the Institute is to ensure that on the highest plane Catholics do not learn their religion from one source and their economics, politics, social and educational ideas from another. Truth is one and a Christian education manifests itself in every branch of intellectual activity.<sup>156</sup>

Women participated in these classes along with men, and while there is no record of the gender distribution of enrolments, records of student occupations include some traditionally feminine roles and also point to a diversity in social status. Farrell's notes list 'ironworkers, plasterers, carpenters, engineers, University graduates, school teachers, clerks, managers, chemists, housewives,

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<sup>154</sup>O'Doherty to M. McGuire, 7 September 1943.

<sup>155</sup>Press, *Colour and Shadow*, pp. 213 - 4; David Shinnick, *Journey Into Justice*, Adelaide, 1982, p. 21.

<sup>156</sup>Notes on 'Continuing Education: Formation of the Newman Institute, 1948', Newman Institute and Catholic Life Movement, Box 23, ACAA.

electricians, employers, telephonists, nurses'.<sup>157</sup> In 1953 in Perth, when almost all the social energy of Catholicism was being directed against Communism, at least one lay woman drew on her commitment to Catholic Action to call for other women to join the men in taking action in their unions. While in WA, as elsewhere, the Catholic Social Studies Movement was an all-male concern,<sup>158</sup> this letter to the *Record*, signed from 'A Child of Mary', implied that women as well as men ought to respond to the spiritual impetus which led to anti-communist activity.

In [spiritual effort] I doubt if the majority of our girls could be found lacking...however, the real weakness lies in the failure of most to appreciate the power of the vote which can be theirs merely by belonging to a Trade Union. ...How about it girls? Will we throw in our lot with the battle of the ballot box now, bearing in mind the words of the Holy Father 'I forbid the layman to be inactive', or will we sit back and reflect when our freedom has vanished 'I didn't do a thing about it'?

Yours etc. , Child of Mary.<sup>159</sup>

To call for Catholic Action as a Child of Mary was to cross a great divide in lay spirituality. The personal, and feminine, piety of the established sodalities did not always expand easily into the masculine Jocist emphasis on social action. Oral history records that Catholics were aware of the contrast between the spirituality of Catholic Action and that of the sodalities, with Jocist leaders convinced of the apostolic ideal that 'you were making a difference in your little community'.<sup>160</sup> The contrast sometimes caused conflict. In the

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<sup>157</sup>'Newman Enrolments', *ibid*.

<sup>158</sup>Interviews, Mr Robert Rabbitt, Roslyn Park SA, 19 March 1990; Mr Arnold Drury with author, Seaton SA, 29 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

<sup>159</sup>*Record*, 20 August 1953, p. 9.

<sup>160</sup>Interviews, Archbishop James Gleeson, Adelaide SA, 27 March 1990; Mrs Eileen Heinrich, Prospect SA, 20 March 1990; Mr Brian Moylan, Adelaide SA, 29 March 1990; Mr David Shinnick, Adelaide SA, 28 March 1990. Tapes held by author.

early days of the NCGM at Victoria Park parish the new movement was regarded with such suspicion by the chaplain of the Children of Mary that members of the NCGM leaders group were simply banished from the sodality. As one member observed, 'My name was skipped over on the roll. No explanation. I had become a non-person'.<sup>161</sup> This 'made Catholic Action all the more exciting', and the group continued with the support of the parish curate as chaplain, rather relishing the clandestine flavour of coming through the side door of the presbytery for gospel discussions and meetings as part of the leaders' formation programme. Others speculated that they had been encouraged to join because they mixed with people on the fringe of the church, and had contact with people outside the 'little circle' normally devoted to sodalities.<sup>162</sup> The organisers of official Catholic Action were anxious to ensure that the institutional church backed the new movement as firmly as it maintained the traditional sodalities. For example, in 1943 Ken Mitchell of the National Secretariat, wrote to Archbishop Beovich who chaired the episcopal committee with responsibility for the Young Catholic Students, outlining the need to clarify the relationship between the YCS and the more traditional Sodality of Our Lady, promoted by the Jesuits. The issue was presented in administrative terms without explicit acknowledgment of the distinct spiritual styles of the two groups. The absence of a rigorous regard for Jocism is also evident in the assumption that the obedient offer of Fr Finn, the Jesuit proselytiser of the sodality, to simply shift allegiances could well be taken up, even though he was not familiar with Jocism.

Fr Finn has been warned that the Sodality can only be an auxiliary of Catholic Action ...I think that there is certainly a job that the Sodality can do in the schools, but its whole relation to the YCS needs careful examination, and some specific spheres of action should be defined.

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<sup>161</sup>Interview, Mrs Maureen Menagh, South Perth WA, 17 April 1990. Tape held by author.

<sup>162</sup>Interview, Mrs Eileen Heinrich, Prospect SA, 20 March 1990.

Fr Finn is perfectly ready to accept whatever decision authority may make; and even if the Sodality were stopped altogether he had expressed himself as being willing to divert his energies to the YCS.<sup>163</sup>

By 1947 the distinction between the two styles of spirituality was clearer. The YCS annual report, perhaps having to contend with confusion generated by the earlier fuzzy thinking, defined the YCS, in contrast to the sodalities, as a movement of social action.

It is not a pious society or a means of *personal* spiritual formation. It is a movement for training in responsibility and action ...so that the products of our Secondary Schools may be capable of seeing, judging and acting when they come up against really serious problems in the outside world.<sup>164</sup>

Furthermore, it often appeared that the distinction in status between the NCGM and YCW as 'official Catholic Action' and the sodalities and other groups, as 'auxiliaries to Catholic Action' was not made on the grounds of an intrinsic difference in method, but rested on a simple choice made by the bishops. The disregard for the Jocist aspects of the Catholic Guild for Social Studies in Adelaide, and its relegation to auxiliary status indicates that the ease of making a hierarchical decision outweighed the more complex possibilities of discerning the philosophical basis for the choice. This meant that the distinguishing features of Catholic Action were often blurred.

The lay apostolate in Australia drew from many different sources, and wore its coat of many colours in a variety of styles. Catholic Action did not stand in isolation from existing movements and practices within Catholicism, but

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<sup>163</sup>Letter from Ken Mitchell to Archbishop Beovich, 6 December 1943, YCS, Box 182, ACAA.

<sup>164</sup>Rev. C. Maine SJ and K. W. Mitchell, *Young Catholic Students' Report of the 1947 Enquiry*, YCS, Box 182, ACAA.

developed as complement and response to their traditions, often differentiated haphazardly and without precision. Founded initially on an intellectual exploration of the role of Catholicism in the modern world, the writings of Chesterton and Belloc as well as papal social teachings and the reports of groups overseas were important stimulus to a growing sense of mission among ordinary Catholics. The tradition of the study circle remained an important element and the analytical style of Jocism in Australia helped to distinguish Catholic Action from other lay groups which fostered a more exclusively personal piety. The sources reveal the masculine characteristics of Catholic Action, and its concerns with the instrumental aspects of faith. These qualities were also underpinned by the feminine awareness that the church depended on the lively commitment of its members. The liturgical life of the church, devotion to special saints and personal prayer guided by institutional forms all took on a new dimension as key ways of expressing the common life of the whole Catholic community. The concern to take Catholicism into the world could only be entertained on the assumption that each Catholic would function as an integrated part of the Mystical Body of Christ. The new patterns of Jocist Catholic Action became more evident as lay people within the institution discovered that they were citizens of the church with Christian responsibilities in the world. The spirituality of the lay apostolate rested on the masculine principles of analysis and action and the feminine principles of integration and accommodation. The challenge for Catholic Action was to achieve a balance between these two, and to effectively offer the traditions of the church in new fashions appropriate to the age.

## Conclusion

In January 1986 120 Catholic students from tertiary institutions around Australia gathered in Perth for a five day conference. They were associated with two groups: the Tertiary Catholic Federation of Australia, which held in its archive, if not in memory, its origins as the 1934 amalgamation of Newman Societies; and the Tertiary Young Christian Students, also an Australia-wide network, established in the 1970s by students committed to the Jocist method of 'See, Reflect, Act'.

These were young, middle-class people interested in one way or another in exploring their Catholicism at a national forum at the end of the summer holidays, who had travelled the breadth of Australia, mostly in buses, to be part of a crowd which included the children of previous conference go-ers now pursuing romances of their own: not the sort of meeting one would expect to be troubled by ideological divisions. Such national gatherings even had a reputation among the more cynical as flippant annual talk-fests with nothing much to offer faith or life. Previously the two organisations had met separately, but a few students in Perth who had found ourselves in the unusual position of being members of both groups persuaded the decision-makers that the venture should be combined. The Perth planning committee had hopes that this would be a different conference, an occasion when lay Catholics could discuss (or discover) their mission in the church and wider society and move away from the experience with a clearer vision of how they might live that out. Surely a laudable goal, surely a reasonable task, surely an aim that could be achieved by

drawing on the riches of analysis in TYCS to mobilise the enthusiasm of TCFA?  
Evidently not.

The conference planners, curiously bonded together like survivors of a natural disaster, still occasionally meet and mutter, 'What were we thinking of?!'. After five days of relative horror, in which 'conservative' and 'radical', 'political' and 'pious' were the most polite labels attached to two (or was it ten?) divisions within the group, the students retreated to their corners, and the beach, to complete evaluation forms recording their inability to make sense of each other and their diverse traditions. It hadn't been an out and out catastrophe. Some students had grappled with complex issues and found the deliberately challenging programme of talks and small group discussion good grist for the mill of formation. But no one had really enjoyed the experience. The comments were revealing:

'Nobody really sang at this conference.'

'Too much political content.'

'My best time was at the beach.'

Perhaps next time the conference planners reminisce it would be fair to suggest we had prepared a tough, analytical process, visionary in its goals, but one-sided in its content: a masculine programme which had neglected the feminine need for community celebration and frank acceptance of differences between people. It would be interesting too to suggest to the disaffected students who grumbled their way back across the Nullarbor that at least part of the reason the meeting was not to their taste was that friendly campus groups, where faith was personal and emotive, offered limited preparation for addressing wider issues: a feminine spirituality that shied away from the

masculine tasks of intellectual assessment and action for change. Perhaps the internal tensions of the 1986 conference can be explained in part as a clash of spiritual styles.

This thesis has looked at the dynamics of some of the spiritual heritage of those lay student groups and suggested that the balance between intellect and emotion, dogma and devotion, instrumental and expressive modes has been both all important and elusive in the history of Australian spirituality. The students of 1986 were not the first group to experience confusion and frustration as styles of spirituality met within the institution of Catholicism but did not quite mesh. As the examination of religious culture in this thesis has shown, Australian Catholics have found their way through a multi-faceted spirituality drawing on a range of symbols which frequently called them to embrace paradox and ambiguity in the bid for a variety of certainties. That there was tension within the tradition is hardly surprising.

In this study of the ways in which ordinary Catholic Australians have understood God in their lives, the years between 1922 and 1962 offer evidence of shifts and change. Devotional Catholicism offered an expressive spirituality, rich in affective overtones, and emphasised a God who was loving and accepting. But in the midst of the gentle and feminine spirituality Catholics found a cloying sweetness, and a denial of the real problems of their time. An instrumental spirituality of answers did not provide the solution to the need for balance either, although certainly the intellectual concern to find certainties through instruction, and later, discussion in study circles, did offer a countervailing trend and a limited avenue for masculine spirituality. Within the cloak of traditional church practices Catholic Actionists began to explore the notion of

the lay apostolate with increasing confidence. These groups began self-consciously to address questions of how lay Catholics, who had always been 'in' the world if not quite 'of' it, might best negotiate the Catholic tradition and intelligently link faith and life.

As expressive and instrumental strands of spirituality were woven together, the religious culture of Catholic Australia came increasingly to encompass and encourage a sense of mission among lay Catholics. It is hardly a startling discovery to announce that the Australian Catholic church has always had a laity, but when church commentators consistently imply that apostolic Catholics sprang fully formed from the womb of Vatican II, and when Australian history so carefully hides the light of spirituality under the bushel of buildings, or assiduously separates religion from the real issues, it is also important to acknowledge the complex interactions of the laity with the culture of Catholicism.

This thesis has selected key features of the spiritual landscape of the twentieth century in Catholic Australia and explored the possibilities of connections between them, setting each with the other to highlight patterns of belief which formed a context for the lives of a significant number of Australians. Each feature in and of itself could well sustain further research: the dynamics of individual cults, the nuances of liturgy and public prayer, the growth of a 'lay apostolate' are all separate and vital points of entry to the wider story of Australian spirituality. They have been examined here, from an overarching perspective, for the way in which they reflect a particular spiritual style, but this clearly cannot be the end of the story. Much more remains to be explored among the diverse and diffuse sources relevant to the

history of lay spirituality in Australia. The experience of non-Irish Catholics, the particular spirituality of the country, close studies of lay associations and of the normal and ugly people in them as well as further efforts to understand the leading personalities of the lay apostolate, are all obvious avenues for further research against which the findings of this survey can be tested. As historians explore new evidence and hone their skills to give new readings of old signs it is becoming evident that the ground of the Australian past is also a landscape of the spirit.

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