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Hate speech part of SA culture

BY CLAIRE MATHIESON

WITH hate speech making South Africa's headlines for the past few months, a Catholic political commentator said that the problem is more widely spread than court cases would suggest—and this trend is set to stand for a long time unless we are willing to be open to discussion.

Fr Anthony Egan SJ of the Jesuit Institute South Africa in Johannesburg said that hate speech is not only tricky to prove but also difficult to define. It is a "slippery concept that can be used easily to silence criticism as much as demean others".

He defined hate speech as negative stereotyping "in order to generate a kind of blanket hatred for a person, persons or class of people".

The priest said that often hate speech is a sweeping statement that is "so general as to be nonsensical" while "promoting an agenda—hidden or overt—of hatred, even sometimes implicitly or explicitly inciting others to discrimination, contempt or violence". He said hate speech was a means to exclude or eliminate the other.

Hate speech is found along gender, racial, social, religious and sexual orientation lines, he said.

Fr Egan said it is not surprising that South Africa is seeing a large number of hate speech claims and cases. While it may be that the average South African is too sensitive, he said, that sensitivity is justified because of the country's history.

In addition, Fr Egan said, there are other factors that had contributed to the increase. "Elections: hate speech is often a cover that avoids real social and political issues. It plays up stereotypes and helps us to overlook real problems in society. Economics: competition over resources which we all want makes us look for strategies to exclude others from the 'cake'. Competition within a class for resources—jobs, welfare and so on—leads us to find rationales why we should get the goods and the other—whether race, gender or sexual orientation—should not. Competition between classes

has the same dynamic. In practice this moves both horizontally (within a class) and vertically (between classes)."

Other factors include education, high expectations post-1994 and religion.

"Religions are by nature exclusivist," Fr Egan said. "Hard-nosed and intolerant religion is a serious problem. No religions are free of this. As religious people we should be agents of toleration and compassion, perhaps even to the point of examining just how important some of our religious attitudes really are."

While the court case involving ANC Youth League president Julius Malema and AfriForum was called to decide the appropriateness of certain struggle songs, such as "Dubul' ibhunu" ("Shoot the Boer"), Fr Egan said such cases are inevitable. They will continue and are important "so long as they address real issues and not trivialities".

Fr Egan said that hate speech can be found in other social forums including music. "Censorship except in extreme cases probably won't help [to decrease hate speech]. Education is more useful: of haters and the hated."

The Church is generally against hate speech, the Jesuit priest said, "because it diminishes the dignity of people and can lead to violence", but "the problem is that the notion of hate speech is slippery".

The priest called on Catholics to reflect whether some Catholic practices are examples of discrimination, such as excluding non-Catholics and some Catholics from Communion, or gender discrimination. "Even the idea that our faith is the closest to the Truth might in different ways be seen [by some] as hate speech, or at least contributing to a culture where hate speech thrives?"

Like in court cases, Fr Egan said there was no easy answer to such questions.

"The problem here is whether we—individuals, organisations and institutions—have the courage to be really open. Too often we crawl under the blanket of rights and dogmatic certainties."



US First Lady Michelle Obama hugs youths after participating in a community service project at Vhuthilo Community Centre in Soweto. In an address at Moroka parish's Regina Mundi church she urged a crowd of more than 2000 to help shape Africa's future by combating corruption, building strong democratic institutions and working to improve the lives of the poor and sick. (Photo: Charles Dharapak via Reuters)

Catholic community inspired by Michelle Obama's visit

BY BRONWEN DACHS

FATHER Benedict Mahlangu OMI described Michelle Obama's address at Regina Mundi church in Moroka, Soweto, as a powerful and inspiring presentation, saying that the US First Lady "spoke from the heart for 45 minutes".

Visiting the Catholic church, Mrs Obama urged a crowd of more than 2000 that included hundreds of young women to help shape Africa's future by combating corruption, building strong democratic institutions and working to improve the lives of the poor and sick.

The iconic church, the largest in Soweto, was a refuge for anti-apartheid activists for decades. Bullet holes in the ceiling and the broken marble altar have been preserved and serve as reminders of the apartheid era.

Mrs Obama invoked the memory of leaders of the US civil rights movement and South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle to encourage young leaders, including 76 women from across Africa who were brought to Soweto to hear the speech and to meet her.

"It is because of them that so many of these young women leaders can now pursue their dreams. It is because of them that I stand before you as first lady of the United States of America, she said.

"All of you, the young people of this continent, you are the heirs of that blood, sweat, sacrifice, and love," Mrs Obama said.

She said her husband, President Barack Obama, is focused "on partnering with Africans who will shape their future by combating corruption, and building strong democratic institutions, by growing new crops, caring for the sick. And more than ever before, we will be looking to all of you, our young people, to lead the way."

"You can be the generation that ends HIV/Aids in our time, the generation that fights not just the disease, but the stigma of the disease," Mrs Obama said.

"You can be the generation that holds your leaders accountable for open, honest government at every level, government that stamps out corruption and protects the rights of every citizen," she said.

"True leadership often happens with the smallest acts, in the most unexpected places, by the most unlikely individuals," Mrs Obama said, noting that in Soweto on June 16, 1976 it was schoolchildren who led the uprising against apartheid.

That day police shot with live ammunition at youths seeking refuge in the church, which former President Nelson Mandela in 1997 called "the people's cathedral".

Before Mrs Obama's speech, Archbishop Buti Tlhalagale of Johannesburg told of his own experience in South Africa's struggle against apartheid, saying that Regina Mundi Church "has always been a place of protection and of hope".

As an Oblate of Mary Immaculate priest, Archbishop Tlhalagale was a prominent activist in the struggle. He was ordained to the priesthood just a few weeks after the June 16, 1976 uprising and also served at Regina Mundi parish.

The archbishop also reminded people that the struggle for human rights is not over in South Africa and that the Church has a crucial role in play in such work.

Fr Mahlangu said two young female parishioners, Ayanda Mbatha and Lungile Nkutha, told him afterwards that Mrs Obama's talk would influence the direction of their lives.

He said he told them: "Stand up now, I want to hear your voices."—CNS



Rory McIlroy tees off on the second hole during the final round of the 2011 US Open, which he won this month. The 22-year-old Catholic grew up in Holywood, a predominantly Protestant suburb of Belfast, Northern Ireland, and attended a non-denominational school. The UNICEF goodwill ambassador broke 12 records in his 16-under-par US Open victory, his first win of a major golf tournament. He is the youngest player to win the US Open since Bobby Jones in 1923. (Photo: Jeff Haynes, Reuters/CNS)

Social media will mobilise youth into action

BY CLAIRE MATHIESON

APORT Elizabeth Catholic who participated in the Global Youth Symposium in Britain has said that there is a growing realisation that social media are indispensable in reaching and mobilising youth.

Alexis Pillay of Sacred Heart parish in Kabega Park was chosen to be Amnesty International's delegate to the symposium, chosen from a 3-million-strong membership, to represent the organisation's interests with respect to the human rights agenda as it spoke to the theme of the symposium: "Meaningful Participation of Young People in International Decision-Making".

The symposium gathered 70 delegates from around the world.

"The delegates were marked by the fact that they were youth specialists in their areas of expertise: academia, private sector, NGOs, and civil society, the majority of whom themselves are young, ages ranging between 20-35 years," Mr Pillay said. The London symposium intended to "distil good practice and provide the foundation for internationally recognised and supported standards for youth participation in international decision-making".

Mr Pillay said as part of their preparation for their forthcoming trip to World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain, in August, all the pilgrims from Sacred Heart parish had embarked on various Amnesty International projects as they "wanted to forge a strategy for social engagement through their



Alexis Pillay represented South Africa and Amnesty International at the Global Youth Symposium in Britain.

affiliation with Amnesty International".

The symposium was therefore

appropriately timed with 2011 being the UN International Year of Youth, coinciding with World Youth Day.

Mr Pillay was chosen due to his involvement in youth activities in his parish and community, and his work with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Mr Pillay said one of the highlights of the symposium was the use of social communications.

"The event was streamed live around the globe while encouraging delegates and those outside that social space to gain access to the proceedings through Twitter, Facebook and a dedicated blog." He said it is clear the media is indispensable in reaching and mobilising youth.

"It is these global trends of which the universal Church is not

ignorant, evidenced in the growing popularity of World Youth Day. However, there is often a disconnect between the endorsement received from the universal Church authority and the local Church reality," he said.

Mr Pillay said any forward-looking parish would do well to integrate young people who "unfortunately may find themselves being voiceless and powerless in their own parish communities".

He said this was the biggest lesson learnt from the symposium and a way to motivate the youth into action.

"A well thought-out succession strategy and collaboration between older generations and younger generations needs to be planned to ensure the future vitality of the Church," he said.

Youth Cross launched Free State deanery

BY LEBOWA MAJAJHE

THE youth of the Vaal deanery gathered in unity at Our Lady of Perpetual Help church in Vereeniging, Gauteng, for the launch of the Youth Cross.

Some 250 young people joined Fr Vusi Sokhela, Johannesburg's vicar for youth, and Fr Yshmael Gbagove SMA in celebrating the launch.

Members of the Association of Catholic Tertiary Students and members of parishes in the deanery formed the choir that entertained the congregation during the launch.

In his homily Fr Sokhela explained to the young people that the presence of the Youth

Cross is a reminder that their time is coming, therefore they should persevere.

He said God wants young people who are hopeful and optimistic and who believe that anything is possible through prayer and determination.

He encouraged the congregation to be disciplined in their prayer-life because God's mercy is greater than our mistakes.

Ronald Thuntsi, chairperson of the Youth Deanery Forum, and Mamokete Musa gave a history of the World Youth Day Cross and its significance.

Br Thomas Pouya, who is studying to become a priest, encouraged vocations from the congregation

especially young people.

Pilgrims going to World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain, in August were introduced and given a blessing.

Ntate Mosala, chairman of the deanery pastoral council, said that the objective of the 2008 archdiocesan synod was to give a focus to young people. He added that he was happy that young people are taking the initiative in the archdiocese.

The cross will move to all parishes in the Vaal deanery. It will then make its way to the central deanery on July 2 where a send-off Mass for the WYD pilgrims will be held with Archbishop Buti Tlhalagale.

Small Faith Sharing Groups launched in Cape Town parish

STAFF REPORTER

IN line with Archbishop Stephen Brislin's plans for the whole archdiocese of Cape Town, St Ninian's parish in Kuilsriver has launched its Small Faith Sharing Groups (SFG).

According to parishioner Chris Collins, "St Ninian's parishioners have embarked on a journey of 'Prayer and Spirituality' through their commitment to participate in Small Group Faith Sharing Fellowship."

"This is truly a momentous occasion in the history of St Ninian's in its 40th anniversary year," he said.

The SFG meetings follow a set structure which will last no longer than 90 minutes. Attendees are encouraged to share, to listen, to pray and learn about the Catholic faith.

Parish priest Fr Thaddeus Oranusi told his parishioners that he was excited at seeing the development of the SFGs within the community of Kuilsriver. "It is my hope and prayer that the seed being sown here today will be nurtured, and its growth be extended

beyond our boundaries."

Mr Collins said the process leading up to the launch required extensive planning in terms of zone and area demarcation, leadership, registration of families, and training of individuals. "We also had discussions with existing group leaders to ensure that there is continuity," he explained.

As part of the launch, more than 25 parishioners were commissioned to lead the SFGs during a special Mass. Fr Oranusi also released 20 doves as a symbolic gesture of the Holy Spirit.

The first formal SFG meetings have been held with a common theme and reading specially prepared for all meetings. According to Mr Collins, zone leaders reported that a total of 20 SFG meetings were in session during the first week.

"Existing faith sharing groups are also part of the process. It is hoped that as more groups are started, more leaders will emerge," Mr Collins said.

"The journey has just begun, but we are indeed already blessed as we prepare to open ourselves to God's grace and favour," he added.

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Following his election as executive mayor of Johannesburg, Parks Tau, a Catholic, attended Mass at Holy Trinity church in Braamfontein. During Mass he and some of his councillors were given a blessing by parish priest Fr Russell Pollitt SJ. (Photo: Tumelo Meza)

Rural church leaders look at service delivery

STAFF REPORTER

CHURCH leaders, together with communities, can play an important role in securing decent service delivery, ranging from quality water, education, security and health services, a meeting of Christian leaders in the Free State found.

Twenty leaders from different churches in the eastern Free State, including Bethlehem, Ficksburg and Clarens met at John Paul II Centre in Bethelhem, Free State, to discuss social issues such as the recent protest marches around the area and the rest of Southern Africa.

The meeting was organised by the Sekwele Centre for Social Reflection, also in Bethelhem, which has been working with rural communities in the Free State for the past ten years, including those that have been protesting since 2004.

"We should march together with our communities in solidarity, regardless of race, to demand quality services and the end to cor-

ruption," said one minister at the meeting.

It was agreed that church officials "need to plan and organise with the community leaders...to always make sure that it is non-violent and peaceful, respecting the property and rights of others."

The meeting expressed concern that before the May 18 local elections, political parties imposed mayors and ward councillors against the wishes of the electorate. This has major implications for strengthening democracy in South Africa and could lead to a loss of confidence in the electoral process, the meeting heard.

Fr Mokesh Morar, director of Sekwele Centre for Social Reflection, asked whether ordinary citizens properly understand the strong link between the Integrated Development Plan of municipalities and the electoral system as set out in the Constitution.

One church leader said: "We need start to educating ourselves about the social issues and not stand aloof. We need more civic

education within our congregations. Some people might say we are talking politics in the church, but if our people do not have water, like in Ficksburg, that is a serious concern for us. We need to open our eyes to the suffering of our people, come together and see what we can do to bring about social change."

One participant complained about the ease with which taverns can be established, as well as the numbers opened next to churches and schools leading to young people frequenting these taverns. It was agreed that churches can get involved by opposing the licenses for taverns near schools and churches.

The meeting also noted a rise in satanism in many towns, even in schools. Participants stressed the value of regular ecumenical and interfaith prayer services at schools to combat that.

"However, we must keep in mind that religious education must start at home, with parents and the elders," a participant said.

Winter Living Theology course 2011 presenter

BY PETER KNOX SJ

THE presenter of this year's Winter Living Theology course will be Jesuit Father James Corkery SJ (pictured).

In five winter schools in Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, he will address the topic of the "Church in the Modern World" from the Council of Trent to the "Papacy of Benedict XVI".

56-year-old Fr Corkery is from Limerick in Ireland, and went to school first with the Salesian Sisters and then with the Jesuits. At the age of 18 he joined the Jesuits in Dublin and was sent for studies in Germany, Ireland and the United States.

For his licentiate thesis, he wrote on Leonardo Boff's theory of grace. For his doctoral thesis he wrote on the relationship between human existence and Christian salvation in the theology of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (who subsequently became Pope Benedict).

Fr Corkery is currently an associate professor of Systematic Theology at the Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy in Dublin, where he has taught for the past 20 years.

Fr Corkery has published *Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Ideas: Wise Cautions and Legitimate Hopes* (Paulist Press, 2009).

He has also co-edited a collection of essays entitled *The Papacy Since 1500: From Italian Prince to Universal Pastor* (Cambridge Uni-



versity Press, 2010.)

He will share some of the fruit of these two books in his lecture series in South Africa.

Fr Corkery has been involved in the government of the Irish Jesuits, has been superior of a number of communities, and represented the Irish Jesuits at the General Congregation of the Jesuits in Rome in 2008.

■ For more information about the Winter Living Theology lectures and workshops in your city visit www.jesuitinstitute.org.za or www.hopeandjoy.org.za or phone 011 482 4614.

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Also, there will be evening workshops for catechists and lay leaders held in different parishes across the cities—details to be announced.

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HOPE & JOY

The Jesuit Institute South Africa

A pilgrim's trek on foot (mostly)

BY JUDITH SUDILOVSKY

ANN Milner, 61, sensed she was being called by God, so she left her native England for the nearly 3 000km pilgrimage from Rome to Jerusalem.

"I wanted to do something good for the world and I felt I was being called to walk again," said Mrs Milner, who had also walked the Way of St James and from Rome to Assisi. "I have never been a walker, but I felt I was being called to do this for spiritual reasons. It feels like I am doing good. I am praying for specific people."

It took her nearly a year to get to Jerusalem, where she sought refuge in a convent because, having spent so much time on her own, she found the enclosed environment of the Old City intimidating.

Mrs Milner walked with a collection of written prayer requests from members of her parish in Hitchin. During her pilgrimage she stopped and prayed at every church and shrine she came across; she said some parishioners had requested that she place their written prayers in Jerusalem's Western Wall.

"In Turkey, I stopped and prayed outside mosques because I felt they were holy places," said the soft-spoken retired computer professional, Pax Christi volunteer and mother of two adult sons. "I prayed each day for peace."

Though originally she had planned to make the entire trek from Italy through Albania, Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Syria and Jordan on foot, the political realities of the region forced her to reconsider, and she stopped her foot pilgrimage at Ephesus, Turkey. She travelled by plane and bus to Israel.



Ann Milner, 61, set out in June 2010 to walk on a nearly 3 000km pilgrimage from Rome to Jerusalem. She is pictured in November 2010 south of Dubrovnik, Croatia. (Photo courtesy Ann Milner)

She made the pilgrimage in two stages, returning to England in mid-January to undertake an eight-day silent Ignatian retreat in preparation for the next part of her walking pilgrimage.

At one point, she almost felt compelled to give up the pilgrimage after a series of difficult events took place over a short period of time as she was approaching Ephesus. She was unable to extend her travel insurance; a child threw a stone at her; a man who had offered her a ride on his scooter almost attacked her; and she ran into a pack of particularly aggressive dogs.

"I had walked thousands of kilometres and never had experiences like that," Mrs Milner said. "But because all those incidents happened quite close together I got really unnerved. So I prayed and, in the end, I felt I could take precautions and continue, trusting in God."

She said one of her best experiences took place in Kavala, Greece, the port where

St Paul landed. She ran across what appeared to be an old Roman road and followed it to the port. Only afterward did she discover it might have been the road St Paul took.

In all, people responded "really brilliantly" to seeing her in countries with Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim traditions, and people would often stop and ask if she needed help, she said.

"They told me how wonderful it was and how brave I was," she said. "But I said I am not brave, I am trusting in the power of faith and Our Lord."

"People's prayers and faith kept me going," she said.

"I am just a small person; I am not part of an organisation, but I can do what I can do. I can pray and I can tell people what I have done and tell people about Pax Christi."

"I may be totally insignificant, but if just one person begins to pray for peace or becomes more open-minded because of what I have done, then it has been worthwhile."—CNS

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Pope: Psalms help us speak with God

BY SARAH DELANEY

POPE Benedict has said that the Book of Psalms from the Old Testament is a timeless and powerful "prayer book" that teaches Christians how to communicate with God.

The 150 "inspired songs" were originally gathered by the Jewish people, but were prophetic of the coming of Jesus Christ, the pope said at a general audience in St Peter's Square.

Indeed, he said, the prayers from the Book of Psalms were used by Jesus himself, "thus revealing their full and profound meaning".

The pope recently has discussed the importance of prayer in his weekly catechism

talks, concentrating on Old Testament figures and the relevance of their stories to contemporary Christians.

Pope Benedict said the prayers, or songs, manifested all the shades of human nature, emotions and faith, making them particularly relevant today for their ability to "teach us how to pray".

Everyone can relate to the complex and often contradictory expressions of the human condition found in the Psalms, the pope said, citing "joy and suffering, desire for God and feelings of unworthiness, happiness and sense of abandonment, faith in God and painful solitude, fullness of life and fear of death".

The pope said that the prayers in the Book of Psalms

showed the inseparable intertwining of supplication, laments and praise. Believers pray to God lamenting a condition but asking for intercession, knowing they will be heard by a good and merciful God. Prayers of praise are offered when supplications have been answered or confessions received with forgiveness, he said.

Many of the psalms are attributed to David, the king of Israel who, the pope said, "was a complex figure, an indefatigable seeker of God" and was someone who foreshadowed the coming and mystery of Christ.

King David, he said, "knew the value of supplication and of praise" in expressing his prayers.—CNS

Vatican diplomat calls on UN to investigate woman's forced conversion to Islam

BY SARAH DELANEY

VATICAN diplomat has called on the UN agency that deals with human rights to investigate the case of Farah Hatim, a 24-year-old Pakistani Christian woman who had been kidnapped, forced to convert to Islam and marry.

Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, the Vatican's representative to UN organisations in Geneva, said Ms Hatim's kidnapping and forced conversion are emblematic of abuse of freedom of conscience and religion in Pakistan.

He made his remarks in an interview with the Vatican missionary news agency Fides.

Fides has reported that Ms Hatim, a nurse, was kidnapped on May 8 from the city of Rahim Yar Khan by a Muslim man with the intent of marrying her and forcing a religious conversion.

Archbishop Tomasi said Ms Hatim's kidnapping was one of many similar cases and that freedom of religion was a critical problem in Pakistan.

He said that while the Catholic Church, Catholic humanitarian organisations and some state officials were working to obtain her freedom, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should look into

her situation.

One of the main problems, he said, was a Pakistani justice system that does not protect the rights of minorities.

Fides says that as many as 700 women, mostly Christian and Hindu, have been forced to marry and convert to Islam against their will.

Archbishop Tomasi said that the kidnapping of Ms Hatim and the other women constitutes "a violation of human rights, of the liberty of conscience and religion, an abuse of personal liberty and the freedom to live one's own life".—CNS

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Pope: Hedonism can kill morality

BY CAROL GLATZ

HEDONISM clouds people's judgment and risks annihilating morality, Pope Benedict has said.

It also fools people into thinking their real worth lies in their social or personal standing and their ability to control reality, he said during a one-day visit to the Republic of San Marino, a tiny nation completely surrounded by Italy.

Like many Western nations, San Marino today faces many difficulties and challenges, the pope said in his homily during a Mass held at an open-air stadium.

Such difficulties are caused most of all by "hedonistic models that cloud the mind and risk quashing morality altogether," he told some 22 000 people in attendance, which included people who came from surrounding Italian cities.



Pope Benedict arrives to celebrate a Mass at an open-air stadium in Serravalle, San Marino. About 22 000 people attended the Mass. (Photo: Giampiero Sposito, Reuters/CNS)

"The temptation has crept in that says man's richness is not faith, but his personal and social power, his intelligence, his culture and his ability to scientifically, technologically and socially

manipulate reality," he said.

Despite its deep roots in Christianity and that the population of about 31 800 is predominantly Catholic, even San Marino has seen religious faith and Christian values being usurped by other "presumed riches, which in the end, turn out to be inconsistent and unable to support the great promise of the truth, the good, the beautiful and the just, which, for centuries, your forefathers identified with the experience of faith", said the pope.

The crisis families are experiencing, too, is "worsened by the widespread psychological and spiritual fragility of couples", he said.

The pope called on the Church to promote a Christian way of life and asked all citizens to step up to the challenges of the present day by tapping into their country's "precious deposit" of Christian values and traditions.—CNS



People attend a prayer vigil in St Peter's Square at the Vatican in honour of Pope Benedict's 60th anniversary of priestly ministry. The pope was ordained on June 29, 1951, in Germany. (Photo: Katarzyna Artymiak, Catholic Press Photo/CNS)

BY CAROL GLATZ

THE Vatican will host an international congress to promote the use of adult stem cells as a safe, effective and ethical means to fight degenerative diseases.

The congress, to be held from November 9-11, will also feature speakers who support embryonic stem cell research", said Fr Tomasz Trafny, an official with the Pontifical Council for Culture. The Church is opposed to the use of embryonic stem cells since it involves the destruction of the human embryo.

The congress, organised by the Vatican's councils for Culture and Health Care Ministry as well as the Pontifical Academy for Life, is being held in conjunction with the international biopharmaceutical company, NeoStem.

The congress will be the culture council and the biotech firm's first major collaborative project since they forged an agreement in 2010 to work together to educate people about the benefits of adult stem-cell research.

The interdisciplinary congress will feature expert speakers from the fields of medicine, health and ethics.

Fr Trafny said that proponents of embryonic stem cell research will have an "opportunity to defend their position" and give their reasons for pursuing a field that is not only unethical, but has not yet produced any concrete benefits.

He said some governments may be investing money in embryonic rather than adult stem cell research because most government officials making these decisions are not medical experts and are influenced by others to choose which path to take.

That is also why the target audience for the congress will be people "who do not have a real scientific background" such as policymakers, lawyers, government representatives, bishops and journalists.—CNS

Berlin will need a big venue for pope's September Mass

BY SARAH DELANEY

SO many people want to see Pope Benedict celebrate Mass in Berlin in September that organisers are considering holding the event in the Olympic stadium which was originally built under Adolf Hitler, the papal trip planner said.

More than 50 000 people have requested tickets for the September 22 event, Alberto Gasbarri said. That puts the original Berlin site planned for the Mass, which holds up to 25 000 spectators, out of the running, Mr Gasbarri said.

The stadium, built to hold the controversial 1936 Olympics, holds up to 80 000 people—and if requests continue at the same pace, Mr Gasbarri said, "that will be too small as well".

In that case, another location will have to be found. The Olympiastadion, which was completely refurbished for the 2006



Berlin's Olympiastadion, seen in May before the German cup final, might be too small for a papal Mass.

FIFA World Cup, is just one option the Vatican is considering. A final choice will be made when Mr Gasbarri visits Berlin at the end of June.

Mr Gasbarri pointed out that Pope John Paul II had celebrated Mass in the Olympic stadium in 1996.

The September 22-25 visit will be German-born Pope Benedict's third trip to his home country since his election in 2005.—CNS

Angola overrun by new churches

REPRESENTATIVES of Angola's religious denominations have appealed for the creation of mechanisms to control the proliferation of independent churches and regulate their activities in Angola.

The proposal came in the final communiqué of the Forum on the Religious Phenomenon in Angola, promoted by the ministry of culture.

Conceição Saldanha, a delegate participating in the forum, said that currently there are more than 900 churches in Angola—and some of them do not dedicate their works to the salvation of souls.

Without disclosing the name of the churches, he said some of these religious congregations have been taking advantage of people's poverty and lack of education by preaching a supposed salvation by "miracles".

The proposal recommended that interreligious dialogue should be promoted.—CISA

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Towards good business

IN his 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth), Pope Benedict said that businesses cannot be ethically neutral: either they serve the common good in all they do, or they don't.

These ethics, the pope said, must be "people-centred", serving not only the stockholders, but all the stakeholders—including workers, community and consumers.

The pope in his encyclical demanded "a profoundly new way of understanding business enterprise", one that is rooted in the ethics of honesty and solidarity, and one which replaces the primacy of profit for the primacy of the person.

At a Church-hosted conference on business ethics, held in Rome in mid-June, Vatican secretary of state Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone stated the Church's position bluntly: "We need business leaders with a social conscience, leaders who see their work as part of a new social contract with the public and civil society."

Cardinal Bertone touches on a key issue: the social contract. All of our civilisation is predicated on the social contract—the mutual understanding that we abide by certain written and unwritten rules, and that its violation must produce consequences. The social contract is what stands between us and anarchy.

So when the Church leadership calls for a "new social contract", it is saying that in the free market system, the relationship between business, labour, consumer and society in general is broken.

When the pope places the foundations for that "new way of understanding business enterprise" within the Gospel, he is giving enterprises a blueprint that also makes temporal sense in the pursuit of the common good.

Corporations may well protest that through their philanthropic activities and social responsibility programmes they are contributing to the common good. While these may be commendable, if they are carried out for reasons other than publicity and satisfying quotas, they are not enough.

At the Rome conference, Professor Daniel K Finn, who teaches economics and theology in Collegeville, Minnesota, listed four fundamentals for genuinely ethical commercial activity, which require innovative engagement by business, government and civil society.

Firstly the moral behaviour of individuals and organisations must be modified, diminishing selfish impulses of greed and rampant consumerism. Secondly, the market requires some regulation and legal structure to "prevent the worst abuses". Thirdly, jobs must be created, not slashed, and those in need must be directly assisted by means that include vocational training programmes. Lastly, civil society must organise itself to help advance the different needs of society and push towards institutional reform.

Individuals may regard themselves powerless, but they can contribute to a more ethical commercial environment. It requires that they be well informed about where business is acting against the common good—whether it be environmental destruction by corporations or dishonest conduct by local producers—and about what they can do about it.

Pope Benedict in *Caritas in Veritate* counsels that consumers have an obligation towards business ethics themselves: "It is good for people to realise that purchasing is always a moral—and not simply economic—act. Hence the consumer has a specific social responsibility, which goes hand-in-hand with the social responsibility of the enterprise."

This means that consumers ought to be informed about the provenance of the goods they buy (for example, whether they were produced by a corporation that exploits its workers, or by a company that engages in price-fixing), and make their purchasing decisions accordingly.

More than that, consumers should be vocal about transgression by businesses. That starts by protesting when producers employ furtive tricks to exploit consumers and standing in solidarity with workers when their labour disputes have merit. Sometimes that might mean making personal sacrifices—a very Christian attribute.

Few things are as persuasive to business as consumers withholding their patronage.

The Church in particular can play a role on the parish level by raising awareness about the way we interact with business, and in mobilising against unethical behaviours in commerce.

In *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict pointed out that every economic decision has a moral consequence. This applies to the CEO of a multinational corporation and it applies to the consumer in the shop.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right to shorten or edit published letters. Letters below 300 words receive preference. Pseudonyms are acceptable only under special circumstances and at the Editor's discretion. Name and address of the writer must be supplied. No anonymous letter will be considered.

The Lord's Prayer put plainly

REFERRING to Fr Johan Strydom's letter of June 8, we could go much further in the "updating" of the "Our Father".

Many people whose mother-tongue is not English would like to

understand and pronounce it properly. (It seems very difficult to break away from archaic English).

My version would be: "Our heavenly Father, holy is your name. Make us accept your king-

dom and do your will as it is done in heaven. Feed us each day with Bread from heaven. Forgive us our sins as we forgive trespasses against us, and let us not give in to temptation but free us all from evil. Amen."

Bishop Ernest Baay SCJ,
Retired of Port Elizabeth

Doing penance

I FOUND it hard to work out if Chris Moerdyk was being serious, or whether had his tongue planted firmly in his cheek, when he bemoaned the restoration of compulsory Friday abstinence from meat in England and Wales (June 1).

His reference to "punishing butchers" and greens being the work of the devil incline me to think he was being facetious. This impression is strengthened by his professed view that penance is less necessary now than in the Middle Ages. Surely Mr Moerdyk cannot be serious.

Penance, self-denial and mortification—in various forms—are a staple of the Christian life, in every age. Are we less sinful now, than our ancestors? Are we holier, as individuals and as nations? Or is it simply that our sense of sin and of the need to do penance is so watered down in this day and age?

And does Mr Moerdyk really think that personal penance and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy are mutually exclusive?

Friday abstinence is a centuries-old tradition of the Church—long a kind of "Catholic badge", rendered effectively optional, though still encouraged, during the 1960s. The 1983 Code of Canon Law still requires it, though permits local hierarchies to substitute other forms of penance, in commemoration of Our Lord's Passion and Death?

In Southern Africa, we are permitted to substitute some other form of penance or self-denial, or perform works of piety or charity on Friday, if we choose to eat meat.

One wonders how many of us remember to observe Friday in any way. No compulsory Friday abstinence means that there is no unified witness, no common discipline, uniting us all in this regard.

For those who say that fish and chips is hardly a penance; well, perhaps this is true. But try being told one may not have that sausage, that steak pie, or that chop!

As for those who seldom or never eat meat, the English bishops have decreed that they must abstain from some other food that forms a regular part of their diet.

For this reason, I believe the

restoration of compulsory Friday abstinence from meat is a positive and encouraging move on the part of the English and Welsh bishops. May they be only the first of many bishops' conferences to do so!

Nicholas Mitchell,
Port Elizabeth

Moerdyk hit the nail on the head

I HAVE often wondered why parents cannot (or is it: do not want to) perceive that the main task of rearing God's little ones is to foster their independent thought and actions that become creative building blocks for the solid foundation of our inalienable contribution towards the Kingdom God so desires us to be part of.

Most parents (and misguided leaders) seem to only want small moulds of themselves.

Chris Moerdyk (June 8): as a mother, a retired teacher/lecturer of almost 30 years and a grandmother, by the fact of your lancing publication in honour of educational truths, I hereby pin to your courage and *joie de vivre* the winning rosette, first class, number one.

Felicity Brokensha, Cape Town

In communion, but anti-Vatican II

HAS John Lee (May 25) forgotten that not only the Fraternity of St Pius X is "living in the past" with the True Faith, but we can add to it various traditional orders that are in communion with the Holy Father. They have some similar problems with Vatican II.

At Easter, I had the opportunity to attend Holy Mass in the old rite in a church bought by a traditionalist Catholic near Zwartemeer, Netherlands. It was celebrated by an emeritus Sacred Heart missionary priest who stays on his own,

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ignored by his order and looking after some faithful who ask for "the past" sacraments.

Remember, what is current today is old tomorrow. Our Only True Faith and Religious Thoughts do not change, like the Protestants, otherwise we are in error.

In practice, Mr Lee, we can differ; hence "yours" face the people, "mine" face the altar and the cross.

John Reilmann, Johannesburg

Who's faithful?

KERRY Swift in his letter "Universal Church: whom to believe" (June 15) poses a rhetorical question, but I am wondering why it was asked in the first instance.

Perhaps John Lee (May 25) was referring to the same people that the pope in his *Summorum Pontificum* (2007) refers to.

For a primary example, consider the statement in the article on the new instructions regarding the Tridentine Mass issued by Ecclesia Dei: "The faithful who ask for celebration of the Tridentine rite must not belong to or support groups that contest the pope or the validity of the Mass and sacraments...in the ordinary [vernacular] form..."

How can people be referred to by the pope himself as "the faithful" while contesting the pope and/or any teaching on what is valid or invalid?

It is mind boggling when one considers that a movement like We Are Church SA, who want to address the other half of the message contained in the Vatican II constitution *Gaudium et Spes* ("the fears and anxieties" of all the faithful) are considered by some in the hierarchy to be "going against the teaching authority of the Church".

Yes, whom shall we believe?

Rosemary Gravenor, Durban

No song for Mass

AT a Mass I attended recently, the congregation sang "Happy Birthday" for a parishioner, just before the final blessing.

Are we not going to church to honour God? Where is the respect for the Blessed Sacrament? Does the happy birthday and clapping hands really belong in the Catholic Church?

Monica Heymeriks, Pretoria

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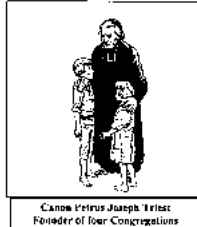
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Why the gospels are much like Skype

I REMEMBER as a child reading a futuristic description of a telephone. It would be half television set (black and white, of course) and half phone.

I was amazed at the possibility. My mother said she would never be able to make a phone call without visiting the beauty parlour.

Just since last Christmas, my extended family has discovered Skype. Skype is a way of making live video phone calls with a computer over the Internet. With an attached camera, you can chat face-to-face in living colour with anyone else anywhere in the world with similar equipment. What was science fiction in my youth is now a reality.

I want to make two points here, both related to our reading of the gospels. First, means of communication have vastly changed in 2000 years. Second, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Whether we are prayerfully reading one of the gospels on our own, or attentively listening to a liturgical proclamation of the Gospel, a well-informed, faithful reception of the Good News depends in part on our capacity to negotiate the vast difference in time and culture between ourselves and the human authors of the sacred text.

The gospels, however, are timeless, and each one communicates the Good News of Christ in its own way to every generation. What many modern readers of the New Testament sometimes miss, by being modern readers, is that the gospels are a unique form of literature. To be read as they were intended, we have to shed ourselves of some assumptions we usually make when we pick up a modern text and begin reading.

Today, when a modern reader takes up

one of the gospels, he or she could easily make the assumption that it is simply a biography of Jesus Christ. A common feature of many biographies is that they tell the story of a person's life, usually in a sequential manner and hopefully with studious care for historical accuracy. For sure, the gospels tell us much about Jesus' life, but a careful examination also tells us they leave a great deal out.

If we only had Mark and John, we would know nothing about Jesus' birth. If we only had Matthew, Mark and Luke, we might think Jesus had an active ministry that lasted only a year. If the gospels were biographies in the modern sense, we might wonder about the amazing differences between John and the other gospels. But each of the gospels has a special purpose that we don't encounter in modern writings.

This brings us to one very important way the gospels are more like a video phone call than they are like reading a contemporary biography from a library shelf. When we get to see a loved one's face and have a conversation together, a primary objective is to be with that person. We get to bask, as nearly as possible



Clifford M Yeary

Hearing the Good News



in this digital age, in the presence of the person we love.

Important information gets shared, for sure; otherwise, why not silence the speaker and microphone? With the gospels, the information we are given is absolutely vital to our life as Christians, but it is not given to us for the simple sake of having information about a historical person of great religious consequence. The information is vital because, when we respond in faith, we are brought into the personal presence of Christ.

As John says: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name" (20:30-31).

John's gospel is an invitation to share in the same life with Jesus that he revealed to his disciples. John's invitation to life in Christ is not unique.

We find it in all the gospels. Each offers the invitation in its own, special way, but for all their differences, their invitations are to the same Jesus who calls to all: "Come, follow me" (Mt 19:21; Mk 10:21; Lk 18:22).

■ Clifford M Yeary is an associate director of Little Rock Scripture Study in Arkansas. This article was originally published in the Arkansas Catholic, newspaper of the diocese of Little Rock. This concludes the series of 13 articles by Clifford Yeary and Catherine Upchurch that explored the four gospels.

Making excuses for evil

AT the risk of sounding pessimistic, I must admit that South African political elections depress me.

With every election that passes I get more convinced that South Africans are becoming increasingly alienated from each other, especially along race and ethnic lines.

Indeed voting patterns and political allegiances are becoming less fixed, increasingly based on issues—but still, a greater part of it is based on identity politics and nostalgia of the past. You find enlightened people holding multiple and overlapping political identities there and then, but the majority is not like that.

When we think deeper about it, our major failure is in finding or creating a collective meaning about the soul of our country, what is termed "nationhood". We talk about "truth and reconciliation", and then prefer to remain in our comfort zone where things are familiar, where we do not need to be challenged by the truth of reality.

Of course, most excuse themselves by saying it is not in their own power to change things, they can only do their best. Well, it is exactly our best that is lacking. If we did our best, evil would not reign supreme.

We see the resurgence of xenophobia, but what do we do beyond being horrified in front of our TVs? Have you noticed the growth rate of infant mortality, children dying of malnutrition and controllable diseases like diarrhoea, and so on? And what did you do about it?

Silence amidst unfair conditions is a moral disease of the so-called decent people, who do not want to be involved or radical.

The thing I like about Jesus, the Christ, is that he didn't fear to be radical. He whipped the money lenders in front of the house of prayer. He called Herod a fox. He would not be complicit in the hypocrisies of Pharisees, Sadducees and high priests, though he was aware it could spell his death. He even called one of his trusted friend, Peter, a devil.

It was the great Nazi camp survivor Primo Levi who said: "Every age has its own fascism and we see the warning signs wherever the concentration of power denies citizens the possibility and the means of expressing and acting on their own free will."

"There are many ways of reaching this point, and not just through the terror of police intimidation, but by denying and distorting information, by undermining systems of justice, by paralyzing the education system, and by spreading in a myriad subtle ways nostalgia for a world where order reigned, and where the security of a privileged few depends on the forced labour and the forced silence of the many."

Levi went to say the practice of making excuses for evil—especially one that buys our own convenience—"is a moral disease or an aesthetic affectation or a sinister sign of complicity; above all, it is a precious service rendered (intentionally or not) to the negators of truth".

Mphuthumi Ntabeni

Pushing Boundaries



We make excuses for evil when we keep quiet about something we know to be wrong just because we want positions of influence or wealth, or it would not be convenient to our sense of selves to admit and act on the truth. When we think the duty of reconciliation, and admitting to our complicity or gain from the operations of evil. When we do all of this we are rendering service to the negators of truth.

In my mind these are the reasons why we can't find each other in South Africa; somehow we render service more to the negators of truth than to the truth.

As I see it, we are heading for the dismal prospect envisioned by psychologists, where the so-called advance of human civilisation brings not happiness but an ever mounting tide of anger and guilt.

We will only end up with the elusive forms of absolution, because we negate truth.

We want a situation where it must be others who conform to our ways and not us to theirs. We are hostile and suspicious of foreign ways. Faults we find aplenty, not in ourselves but in others, and we are ready to excuse ourselves and judge others harshly.

The way to the Kingdom of God, as preached by Jesus, the Christ, is not this. It is by removing the beam in our eye before seeing the mote in others.

Michael Shackleton

Open Door



Was the Last Supper on Wednesday?

British scientist Colin Humphreys recently proposed from an ancient Jewish calendar that the Last Supper took place on the Wednesday of Holy Week, a day earlier than the traditional Maundy Thursday, and that the date of Easter can now be fixed. Please comment and explain.

Neville Gallichan

THE day on which the Church liturgically commemorates the Last Supper has been fixed as Maundy Thursday, as you point out. Yet there has been some debate about whether this day is historically accurate.

The problem arises from the gospels themselves. Matthew 26:17-19, Mark 14:12-16 and Luke 22:7-13 say that the supper was the Passover meal eaten on the evening of Thursday before Jesus' trial and execution on Good Friday. John 13:1-13 says that the Last Supper took place before the festival of the Passover, presumably on the Wednesday evening.

This anomaly has had many explanations. Perhaps the most simple is that John was using the solar calendar in which Wednesday remained Wednesday until midnight. On the other hand, the synoptic gospels followed the Jewish lunar calendar according to which a day began at sunset and ended at the next sunset. (Our Saturday vigil Mass imitates this, where we celebrate the Sunday liturgy on the Saturday evening.) So, when the Synoptics speak of Thursday, they are referring to after sunset on Wednesday, when the Passover would have begun.

Colin Humphreys, in his book *The Mystery of the Last Supper* published in April, does not agree with this. He ignores the differences between the Synoptics and John and claims that his research and an ancient Jewish calendar support the contention that the Last Supper took place on the Wednesday.

His findings are not likely to rock the world of scriptural scholarship. Biblical critics have frequently applied a number of ancient non-Jewish and non-Roman calendars, such as those of the Essenes, when trying to make sense of scriptural dates and times, including the day of the Last Supper.

However, a question that still puzzles the critics is this. Jesus was arrested on Thursday night and crucified on Friday before sunset. How is it possible that his separate interrogations by Annas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod Antipas and Pilate again, and then his lengthy lashing, mocking and crucifixion could have been squeezed into about 12 hours at the most?

Humphreys' proposition that the Last Supper was on Wednesday at least allows for more time for these events.

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A mission took place at the Church of the Resurrection in Table View, Cape Town, with missionary priests. Fr Siswe Zungu is photographed with Rita Foster and Mike Miller. (Submitted by Roberta Foster)



Chris Sharpe (right), a philosophy graduate of the Salesian Philosophical Study House in Tanzania, and Rafael Bembe (left), a 2nd year student of Salesian philosophy, reached the top of Mount Kilimanjaro. (Submitted by Clarence Watts)



IN FOCUS

Send photographs, with sender's name and address on the back, and a SASE to: *The Southern Cross, Community Pics, Box 2372, Cape Town, 8000* or email them to: pics@scross.co.za

Edited by: Lara Moses



Sr Ann Genevieve Lee MSH received her ring from Bishop Michael Coleman of Port Elizabeth at St Patrick's in Grahamstown during her final profession at the vigil Mass of the Assumption.



Itseng Mashadza and Kabelo Enele received their first Communion at St Patrick's CBC in Kimberley during the school's Ascension Mass which was led by Fr John Hubbard of St Mary's parish in Kimberley. (Submitted by Stienie Mangiola)



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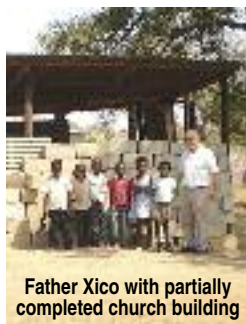
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A celebration of Golden Jubilee of Profession was held for Benedictine Sisters of St Alban's (pictured with staffs) Sr Michael, Sr Thoma and Sister Andrea at Little Flower convent in Eshowe. Pictured with Benedictine Sisters are Bishop Xolelo Thaddeus Kumalo of Eshowe and Fr Ruprecht Wolf. (Submitted by Patricia Swart)



The small parish of Jericho in Umzimkulu diocese, KwaZulu-Natal, had big reasons to be joyful as three parishioners received an apostolic blessing from Pope Benedict XVI for their hard work in the parish. Seen with their parish priest Fr Jaroslaw Antoni Kucharczyk are (from left) U Khumalo, Imelda Magcaba and A Barret. (Submitted by Teddy Magcaba)

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Can psychology and faith coexist?

How compatible are psychotherapy and the Catholic faith? CLAIRE MATHIESON asked two Catholic psychologists.

Is it possible that sometimes prayer does not provide all the answers? Is seeking professional help advised? And if one does so, does one have to find a Catholic professional?

These are some of the questions raised by those in need of counselling. Sometimes spiritual direction is appropriate, but sometimes psychotherapy is required. According to two Catholic psychologists both can coexist and both can contribute to a better life.

Fr Victor Kotze of Martindale parish in Johannesburg said he decided to study psychology when his parish opened a counselling centre. "One thing I really liked about being a priest was the counselling, so I decided to take it one step further and study towards a degree in clinical psychology," the priest said.

While some might suggest that faith direction is all one needs to live a happy life, Fr Kotze believes psychotherapy does have a place in a Catholic's life. "Even the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* states that religion must always take into account the insights of psychology," Fr Kotze said, adding that Catholicism understands the two disciplines are mutually beneficial and both vitally important.

"But it all depends on the individual and their needs," explained Fr Kotze, who is both a practising priest and practising psychotherapist.

Sharon Melrose, a Catholic psychologist from Cape Town, said her qualification as a psychologist is professional, while her "qualification" as a Catholic is a personal choice, and both can coexist and

work to the benefit of others.

"I am centred in my belief system, and as such have no desire to challenge those whose belief system differs from mine. As a professional, you are expected to be able to counsel individuals from all walks of life and from all different belief systems, from atheist to Buddhist, from Christian to Jew. Having true empathy calls for you to professionally immerse yourself in your client's world and accept their truth and their experiences, no matter how that may differ from your own," said Mrs Melrose.

Fr Kotze said it wasn't a question of going to a Catholic psychologist—that's not the most important thing. "The most important is going to a good psychologist. A good psychologist would never impose personal beliefs. A good psychologist will always respect one's religious beliefs."

However, Mrs Melrose said often people have a strong need for counselling within their own belief system. "Many Christian denominations have trained parishioners to be lay-counsellors in which the main focus may be for prayerful intervention. This certainly does have a place and many people find immense psychological relief from this process."

Mrs Melrose added as Catholics, we have the sacrament of confession, which really is "an opportunity to do honest reflections and share personal doubt, inadequacies and sin with Christ in the presence of a priest. This process often too serves to provide the individual with this same sense of psychological and spiritual relief." But, she added, this is what all psychologists offer regardless of one's faith.

Fr Kotze said Catholic counsellors are equipped to understand where Catholics are coming from, but when a problem escalates, it is more important to get to someone who is appropriately trained to handle such situations. It is more

important to get to a "good psychologist than a Catholic counsellor".

"Many priests today refer people to psychologists. A priest may realise the situation is beyond his competence and suggest professional help," said Fr Kotze. Depression is an example of something that should almost always be referred to a professional.

"In many instances individuals or a couple or family may be overwhelmed with their current situation and an objective discussion concluded by prayerful intervention may be enough. However, there are many instances where there is a very clear and definite need to delve deeper into the factors that are causing emotional and psychological distress," said Mrs Melrose.

FATHER Kotze said psychology does not offer advice. "It helps one explore their own life and discover their own solutions by trying to evoke their own personal wisdom."

He said that spiritual direction has God at the centre and scripture is used for guidance. "Psychology places the individual at the centre and is non-directive," he said. They are different and can coexist.

"Although I am a practising Catholic," said Mrs Melrose, "that does not mean that I only counsel fellow Christians. My clients are religiously, socially and culturally diverse."

Sometimes she has to ask for explanations and clarity regarding issues which are different to her own experiences. "This serves to give me more knowledge and insight, and allows me to understand their motivations and behaviours better."

She said her Catholic beliefs have assisted her life as a psychotherapist. "As a Christian, I am able to reach out to all who cross my path



Psychologist Sharon Melrose (forth from left) with students of Cornerstone, a higher education institute based on Christian values, where she teaches psychotherapy techniques.

professionally, knowing that my guidance comes from Christ. My training may have provided the theoretical knowledge, [but] my Christ gives me the insight to truly understand and reach out to those in emotional distress from wherever they are in their lives."

Mrs Melrose currently works at Cornerstone, a higher education institute based on Christian values where she teaches psychology to those who wish to enter into Christian ministry.

"Too often prayer has been the therapy of choice when an individual has in fact been suffering

from more serious psychological distress which has called for professional intervention in addition to prayer. By ensuring that those who enter the ministry are trained in psychology, it is hoped that the clergy will be in a better position to realise when something more than prayer is needed," she explained.

Fr Kotze said if someone was troubled—spiritual direction will offer them the answer according to the scriptures. But sometimes, the cure to one's problems is helping them discover their own answers. This is the role of psychology.

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Move over, Superman, here comes the pope

Popes, saints, apostles and Old Testament figures are among the subjects of Catholic comics in the Japanese manga style, as MARK PATTISON reports.

MOVE over, Spider-Man. Here come some new comic-book heroes.

Among this new breed of heroes are Pope Benedict XVI, The apostle St Paul and Old Testament figure Judith.

They are the stars of comic books done in a style older generations never saw in the comic-book racks growing up. The genre is called manga, a Japanese genre of cartoons and comic books, and Jonathan Lin, who runs Manga Hero, may well be the world's only publisher of Catholic manga comics.

A 32-page Pope Benedict manga comic will be distributed in August during World Youth Day in Madrid (as *The Southern Cross* reported on April 6).

Mr Lin said he expects to have 300 000 copies produced in Spain to meet demand. He hopes it will whet World Youth Day participants' appetites for a longer Pope Benedict manga to be produced later this year in the United States.

"I wanted to start my own business—something that could positively influence young people, who are especially influenced by media," Mr Lin said.

"I was talking to my parents. And my dad, who actually grew up in Japan, asked me: 'How

come there's no biblical manga?' And I was like: 'Oh, yeah, that's right. That's a shame.' There were only a couple written by Protestants and published by Protestants that basically converted the Bible into a manga series," Mr Lin said.

But it got him to thinking: "What stories are there out there that could actually work?"

The St Paul and Judith manga comics are already available for sale. Later this summer, Mr Lin will have produced a manga telling the parable of the ten virgins at the wedding feast from the gospel of Matthew.

There were "five who were ready, five who were not", he reminded, referring to the five virgins who were prepared with oil to light the way for the bridegroom, who symbolises Christ, and the other five who were running out of oil because the bridegroom was delayed.

Mr Lin explained the difference between manga and "traditional" comics.

"The manga art style is totally different than the Western comics tradition," he said. "The Japanese art style is more exaggerated—broadly defined hair, for example. Maybe big eyes. The framing of the scene can be quite different.

"The sense is that [in] traditional comic books of the '50s and '60s everything was quite linear. In manga the action may be more disjointed. Put it this way: The action sequences could all be happening all at one time, in one frame. Or you could have multiple scenes going on in multiple frames. This style has been adopted in Western graphic novels as



Jonathan Lin presents the cover of a manga comic book on Pope Benedict XVI. Mr Lin runs Manga Hero, which may well be the world's only publisher of Catholic manga comics. (Photo courtesy of Manga Hero)

well," Mr Lin said.

Mr Lin, 36, is a real estate broker and uses his earnings to provide seed money for his manga comics, which can be viewed at www.mangahero.com.

He was in Sydney for World Youth Day in 2008 and plans to be in Madrid to oversee the manga distribution of the Pope Benedict comic.

Still, Mr Lin does not do it all by himself. He recruited two writers from John Paul the Great Catholic University in San Diego, California. (The university also

supplied Lin with a grant to produce the 300 000 World Youth Day mangas.) And a full-time manga artist in Singapore does Mr Lin's manga artwork.

One of Mr Lin's writers, Gabrielle Gniewek, 21, plans to graduate in September with a degree in entertainment media. "When I got here, I really got into the whole Japanese manga thing," she said.

"I was searching for a job as a student to pay the grocery bills," Ms Gniewek added. "I was known as 'the Japanese girl.' I was in charge of the anime [a Japanese

style of animation] club at school" when Mr Lin posted flyers looking for a Catholic manga artist.

"They all knew who I was and what I was doing. I applied for the job and Jonathan came and interviewed me. He really liked what I did. He picked me up and we went on from there," Ms Gniewek said. "It's such a narrow, niche market that he was looking for a Catholic manga artist. I thought: 'Wow, this is right up my alley.' That, I think, was a little gift from God."

Matt Salisbury obtained an entertainment media bachelor's degree at John Paul the Great, then a master's in film and television producing. "I wasn't too familiar with [manga] as a genre, but when I looked at it, it was interesting," said Mr Salisbury, whose background is in screen-writing.

Although he had never written manga comics until Mr Lin brought him on, Mr Salisbury said, "I really enjoyed not having to worry about the budget of what you're portraying." He added he had written the first part of the Pope Benedict manga but then passed it on to Ms Gniewek when his career started heating up.

Mr Lin said it takes Manga Hero about three to four months to get a comic from the idea stage to the finished product.

"We have others being written—Joshua, and then we have another one on Pope John Paul II, Mother Teresa, St George. These are all in the writing stage," Mr Lin said. "And then we have an epic on David."—CNS

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Jerry Lodi OMI

OBLATE Father Jerry Lodi of Johannesburg died on May 30 at the age of 73.

Born in Johannesburg on August 5, 1937, he came from a Methodist family—he was the only one who became a Catholic. He attended school at De Wildt, and Lady Selbourne and completed his education in Lesotho.

He entered the novitiate in Villa Maria, Umtata, in 1959 and the Oblate Scholasticate at Roma, Lesotho, in 1960. He was ordained a priest at the Little Flower, Lady Selbourne, on

December 19, 1965.

Fr Lodi worked in many parishes—including Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Daveyton, Zondi, Orlando East, Mohlakeng, Botshabelo and Mabopane—before moving on to his great love of working with the sick, mainly at Chris Hani/Baragwanath hospital. His other great love was helping children to be educated.

He was a hard-working priest, a prayerful man with a sympathetic heart, who believed very much in the redemptive power of the sacrament of reconciliation.

Samson Katoka OMI



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invoke you, special patron in time of need. To you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg you to come to my assistance. Help me now in my urgent need and grant my petitions. In return I promise to make your name known and publish this prayer. Amen. RCP

O MOST beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruit vine splendrous of heaven, Immaculate Virgin assist me in my necessity. O Star of the sea, help me and show me you are my Mother. O Holy Mary, mother of God, Queen of heaven and earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to secure me in my necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. SH.

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GRATEFUL thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Mother Mary and SS Joseph, Anthony, Jude and Martin de Porres for prayers answered. RCP.

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Family Reflections

July 3: The Lord is kind and full of compassion.

As people grow into a mature old age they learn much from the lessons of life around them.

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If they have not been able to come to terms with their own life situations they may become bitter and hopeless.

Pray for and with the older people in the family that they may be accepting and happy in their old age.

Liturgical Calendar Year A

Sunday, July 3, 14th Sunday of the year
Zechariah 9: 9-10, Psalms 145: 1-2, 8-11, 13-14, Matthew 11 25-30

Monday, July 4, feria
Genesis 28: 10-22, Psalms 91: 1-4, 14-15, Matthew 9: 18-26

Tuesday, July 5, feria
Genesis 32: 22-32, Psalms 17: 1-3, 6-8, 15, Matthew 9, 32-38

Wednesday, July 6, feria
Genesis 41, 55-57, 42: 5-7, 17-24, Psalms 33: 2-3m 10-11, 18-19, Matthew 10: 1-7

Thursday, July 7, feria
Genesis 44: 18-21, 23-29, 45: 1-5, Psalms 105: 16-21, Matthew 10: 7-15

Friday, July 8, feria
Genesis 46: 1-7, 28-30, Psalms 37: 3-4, 18-19, 27-28, 39-40, Matthew 10: 16-23

Saturday, July 9, feria
Genesis 49: 29-32, 50: 15-26, Psalms 105: 1-4, 6-7, Matthew 10: 24-33

Sunday, July 10, 15th Sunday of the year
Isaiah 55: 10-11, Psalms 65: 10-14, Romans 8: 18-23, Matthew 13: 1-23

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Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: first Friday of the month at 09:20 followed by Holy Mass at 10:30. Holy Hour: first Saturday of each month at 15:00. At Our Lady of the Angels, Little Eden, Edenvale. Tel: 011 609 7246.

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Published independently by the Catholic Newspaper & Publishing Company Ltd, Cape Town

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The Southern Cross is a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa. Printed by Paarl Post, 8 Jan van Riebeeck Drive, Paarl. Published by the proprietors, The Catholic Newspaper & Publishing Co Ltd, at the company's registered office, 10 Tuin Plein, Cape Town, 8001.



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Website: www.scross.co.za • Digital edition: www.digital.scross.co.za



15th Sunday: July 10

Readings: Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalm 65:10-14; Romans 8:18-23 Matthew 13:1-23

IN Israel, and in many parts of Africa, "water" is a very telling image for the life that God seeks always to bring us, and therefore it has a ready connection with the idea of "growth".

The **first reading** for next Sunday speaks of the "rain and the snow" (the latter not, it has to be said, a common phenomenon in the Holy Land), which "come down from heaven and do not return there until they water the earth, and make it fertile and fruitful". The point, however, lies in what God is doing: "So shall my word be, which goes forth from my mouth, and does not return to me uselessly, but does my will, and brings about what I sent it for."

The connection of water and growth is there in the **psalm** also, as the poet praises God because "you visited the earth and watered it... God's stream is filled with water", and meditates on the effects of the divine irrigation: "Saturating its furrows, levelling its ridges, softening it with showers, you bless its growth."

Let us be the fertile soil for the Sower

Nicholas King SJ

Sunday Reflections



God is responsible for everything in the agricultural cycle: "You crown the year with your goodness, your paths drip with rain, and the meadows drip with it, the hills are clothed with joy." This is a lovely picture, and concludes with the singing of the meadows and pasture-lands, "clothed with flocks, the valleys bedecked with grain, they shout and sing for joy".

The **second reading** does not really use the agricultural metaphor, but it does meditate on what God has done in Christ, and its effect on all creation: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy in comparison with the glory that is going to be

revealed to us."

It uses the metaphor of "eager expectation" to capture how creation is, after being "subjected to futility", "going to be set free from the destructive slavery, to the freedom of the glory of the children of God". Paul underlines the sense of frustration, with an image of child-birth: "We know that the whole of creation is groaning together and in agony, down to the present moment."

We have not got there yet, but have been given a guarantee, "the first-fruits of the Spirit", as we "groan and wait for our adoption as sons and daughters, for the redemption of our body".

In the **gospel** we return to the idea of growth, though the only reference to water is in the sitting of Jesus by the Sea of Galilee, and indeed on a boat in the Sea, from which he addresses the crowds, using the still water of the lake to carry the sound to the masses assembled on the shore.

It is the beginning of the third of the five

great discourses that Matthew distributes throughout his gospel, the "parable discourse", and here it is the great image of the "Sower who went out to sow", with uneven results, depending on the soil into which the seed was sown. There is soil "by the road", where birds can easily eat up the seeds, then there is "rocky ground" where there is insufficient soil, and "thorns" which suffocate the growing plant, and, finally three kinds of soil that yield a hundred-fold, sixty-fold, and thirty-fold.

The story is left there, hanging in the air, and the next thing is that the disciples come and ask him what it all means. The upshot seems to be that "this people" have their hearts hardened, but disciples have the privilege of having it explained to them, and it is all a matter of how one accepts the generous sowing of God's word.

Our task, this week, is surely to pray that we shall be fertile soil, in which God can perform his fertile work.

Hopes and fears for George

A FEW weeks ago I was privileged to attend a breakfast function at St Peter and St Paul's church in George, in the very heart of the famed Garden Route.

I was interested to learn that this is South Africa's second-oldest Catholic church, having been built in 1842. Learning this did not *surprise* me, because George is one of those towns that are famous for all sorts of things, most of all its people—especially its Catholic people who, in my opinion, have re-written the book of hospitality.

George is also the most forward thinking town in the world because their Christmas decorations in York Street are all ready to be turned on in the middle of June.

My reason for being in George was to speak at a breakfast function for the men of George, arranged by the women of the parish of St Peter and St Paul.

The subject under discussion was how men could contribute to the Church in particular and society in general in this modern era in which many men find themselves having to be totally engrossed in the business of business in order to survive.

It was generally agreed, for example, that modern technology had made it a lot easier for men to be able to do things these days that in the past were either a tedious chore or a complete embarrassment.

Chris Moerdyk

The Last Word



This includes teaching children the facts of life, which for many years has been based largely on the mating habits of birds and bees.

I remember when I was growing up in the 1950s, my parents, and those of my friends and cousins, simply just opted out of any form of explanation regarding sex.

My education in these matters came from a friend of my older cousin who based his fount of knowledge of everything to do with human procreation on something he had witnessed going on in a motor car parked in a shady lane in the early hours of the morning.

But these days, modern technology has made it a lot easier for parents who find themselves trying desperately to explain things to children who probably know more about the subject than they do.

Nowadays, when a young boy asks his father how he came to be born, the computer-literate dad can answer in a language they both understand and which contains no direct sexual and anatomical jargon.

"Well, my son, this is how you got to

be born. Your mom and I first got together in a chat room on Yahoo. Then I set up a date via e-mail with your mom and we met at a cyber-café. We sneaked into a secluded room and googled each other. There your mother agreed to a download from my memory stick. As soon as I was ready to upload, we discovered that neither one of us had used a firewall and since it was too late to hit the delete button, nine months later a little pop-up appeared that said: You've got male!"

This is a prime example of the importance of all fathers understanding everything there is to know about computers.

On a more serious note, attending Mass at St Peter and St Paul and chatting afterwards at a wonderful dinner arranged by parishioners, it was clear that the things that worried the Catholic community in George were exactly the same as those that worry most parishes in the country—and that is the availability of permanent parish priests.

A new parish priest is just about to be appointed for St Peter and St Paul and a lot of the parishioners are quite rightly a little nervous. Will they get someone who throws his energy into serving the community? Or will it be one of those priests who have very little interest in getting involved in anything other than saying Mass?

All of which reminds me that I remain convinced of something that is becoming extremely important with regard to the training of priests. It is the attribute of understanding how to manage an organisation. It's not just being skilled in matters administrative and financial but also, most important of all, people skills and human resource management.

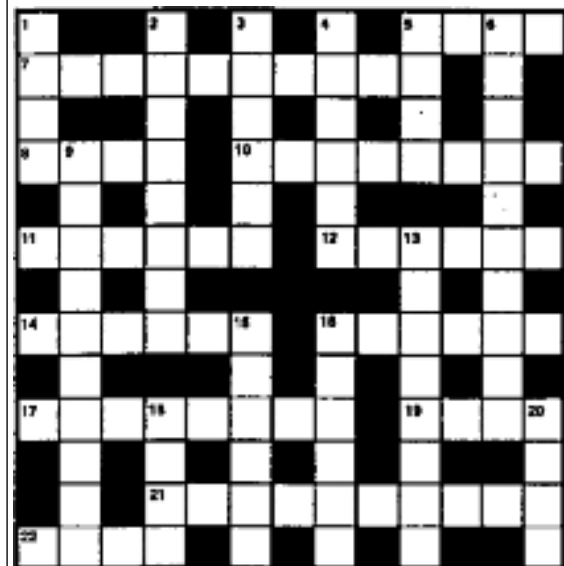
And how to empower people. I find it strange that our Church still practices old fashioned management techniques. It insists on parish councils and finance committees, yet even the most unskilled, people-unfriendly priests have a complete right of veto which often leaves parish councils feeling a distinct lack of worth.

Parishes are full of skills these days. These need not only to be used more efficiently; more importantly, they need to be trusted.

The good people of George are crying out to build a solid Catholic community. Hopefully they will be helped, and not hindered.

■ Visit the archive of Chris Moerdyk's columns, going back to June 2004, on The Southern Cross' website: www.scross.co.za/category/moerdyk/

Southern Crossword #451



ACROSS

- Samson's capital asset (4)
- What rocked Jerusalem at Jesus' death (Mt 27) (10)
- Ashen bucket by the sound of it (4)
- Heavenly water carrier (8)
- Wall paintings (6)
- Papal emissary (6)
- It may stand on a plinth (6)
- Young lover who could be Charming (6)
- It is romantically done on one knee (8)
- Immense like the heavens (4)
- Find nutty coin showing constance (10)
- In here you are in the red (4)

DOWN

- Retain the stronghold (4)
- Loyal supporter in the parish (8)
- Is equivalent to (6)
- Book for the organ keyboard? (10)
- ... the word of God (Lk 8) (4)
- Tins juices as acts of unfairness (10)
- Alter a duet and dilute it (10)
- Through my most ... fault (liturgy) (8)
- Giving relief (6)
- It gives the preacher a lift (6)
- Pat holds a hundred in formal agreement (4)
- They're in the playroom (4)

Solutions on page 11

Conrad



CHURCH CHUCKLE

YEARS ago in Ireland, there was a priest who was very anti-British. He became so notorious that the pope himself summoned the priest to Rome.

"Father," said the pope, "I want that there should be peace between the British and the Irish. I want you to swear that you'll never mention the British in public again." In obedience to the Holy Father, the priest made a vow never to speak badly of the British again.

The next Sunday was Easter, and the priest delivered his annual Easter sermon. He got to the part of the Easter story where Jesus says that one of Twelve shall betray him.

"St Andrew jumps up," the priest explained, "and says: 'Is it I, Lord?' and the Lord says: 'Nay, Andy lad, it's not you. Sit down now and dunna worry. Eat your supper.' Then St John gets up with tears in his eyes and cries: 'Is it I Lord?' and the Lord says: 'Nay, Johnny me boy, it's not you. Sit down now and dunna fret yourself. Eat your supper.'"

"Then that dirty dog Judas Iscariot slowly rises to his feet. And he looks the Lord right in the eye and says: 'Cor blimey, guv. Yer think it's me, mate?'"

Send us your favourite Catholic joke, preferably clean and brief, to The Southern Cross, Church Chuckle, PO Box 2372, Cape Town, 8000.