

Worth quoting . . .



*Give me a good digestion, Lord, And also something to digest.
Give me a healthy body, Lord, With a sense to keep it at its best.
Give me a healthy mind, Good Lord, To keep the pure and good in sight,
Which, seeing sin, is not appalled, But finds a way to set it right.
Give me a mind that is not bored, That does not whimper, whine or sigh.
Don't let me worry over much, About the fussy thing called 'I'.
Give me sense of humour; Lord, Give me the grace to see a joke,
To get some happiness in life, And pass it on to other folk.*

Sir Thomas More (1478 - 1535)

*"Each time a man stands up for an ideal,
or acts to improve the lot of others,
or strikes out against injustice,
he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope...and crossing each other
from a million different centres of energy and daring
those ripples build a current that can sweep down the
mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."*

Robert Kennedy speaking to a group of young South African students,
June 1968



**From Kate Fogarty reflecting on the 2007
Marist Mission Assembly in Mendes, Brazil:**

*"For all of us who love the Champagnat
charism, and believe that it brings great
gifts to our world, it is time to do our
discerning, and to take courageous and
even audacious steps further towards the
prophetic edge, so that for our Church, in
our time, we bring Champagnat's vision,
the Gospel vision, of 'every child known
and loved' that one step closer to reality."*

**From Michael Hansen - looking back on Black
Saturday from a Gippsland perspective:**

*Our teenagers may haunt the shopping
plazas and hang loose on the threshold
of adulthood, but when something
happens that touches the edge of their
understanding and defies the logic of
simple cause and effect, it is not to the
glass and polished halls of indulgence
they turn. Like us all, they too face
towards God because God is our way of
speaking of the very depths of our being
and because God is compassionately
engaged in our life and knows us.*

*Is this not the message our Marist
schools have been labouring for
generations to instil? We are loved and
love equally.*

Devil in the detail of state-charity deals

Christopher Pearson • June 06, 2009 • Article from: The Australian

*PETER Saunders was until recently the director of social policy at the Centre for Independent Studies, one of Australia's leading think tanks. Regular readers of this column will remember him for his battles with the doctrinaire lefties in Catholic charities such as the Society of St Vincent de Paul and his critiques of tax-and-spend churn and middle-class welfare. Although he has returned to Britain, he's still contributing to local debate, this week in the shape of a CIS symposium, **Supping with the Devil?**, which he helped edit and for which he wrote the main essay.*

Book Review: *Supping with the Devil?*

The book explores the developing relationship between the federal government and the non-profit church and charitable sector, which in the Howard years began to take up contracts to provide welfare as well as health and educational services. The pioneering example was the Job Network, set up when Amanda Vanstone shut down the Commonwealth Employment Service because the then government was persuaded that a combination of business and non-profit agencies could do a much better job for less money than a bunch of demoralised public servants.

The benefits for the government in such an arrangement are clear. Historically, churches and charities have tended to be much closer to the people they serve than were CES bureaucrats and enjoyed a far higher reputation. They're generally idealistic and highly motivated. Their organisations have distinctive philosophies and charisms they've been fine tuning, often for centuries. They're not constrained to behave like public servants and they often aim to nurture the whole man rather than be one-dimensional service deliverers. As well, private welfare agencies often have other arms and outreach programs to catch people who may otherwise fall between the cracks.

The benefits for the not-for-profit sector are also clear. First and foremost it gives it

unprecedented access to government funding. Saunders says, in the case of the Job Network, public money accounts for half the turnover of the non-profit service providers. Among other things, it means they can extend the scale and effectiveness of their operations, improve their services, recruit better qualified staff and undertake specialist research, often for the first time.

In the late 1990s the Job Network nearly came unstuck because officials in the department of employment found the idea of an arm's length agency of government unsettling. Often they wanted, as a matter of habit, to nitpick over all the minor freedoms from micro-regulation that made the non-profit agencies cheaper to run and more effective than the CES in the first place.

They also wanted to keep the agencies on the shortest and most prescriptive possible contracts so they could be got rid of quickly if anything looked like going wrong.

It has always been clear, however, that bodies on short contracts are apt to spend most of their time worrying about securing the next one rather than concentrating on the job in hand. According to the then minister, Tony Abbott, it took a lot of head-banging inside the department before officials began to think of their relationships with agencies primarily as partnerships.

But the notion of partnership, a sensible approach on the Government's side if it wants to make sure that its policies are being carried out, is where the problem of supping with the devil arises for the non-profit sector.

As Saunders says: "Taking government money runs the risk of weakening their independence and compromising their political autonomy. Over time, they can even lose sight of the original purposes the organisation was set up to serve: the so-called mission drift."

Perhaps the most spectacular local example of a charitable enterprise in receipt of substantial public funding suffering from mission drift is the Catholic school system, although the extent to which government money, rather than wider sociological factors, has been responsible for the drift is a vexed question. In any event, in a demographic sense, the system clearly no longer fulfils its responsibility to the children of many poor Catholic parents. Undoubtedly, in a catechetical sense, it no longer fulfils its primary responsibility to turn out students with a thorough grounding in their faith, as the plummeting mass attendance figures for people over 17 attest.

What the Government has ended up funding is (with some honourable exceptions) a second-rate private system that allows a sizeable number of parents of modest means to escape the clutches of public education. In the process it also provides the church with an income stream that helps prop up the institution as a whole. I'm not referring here to the higher reaches of creative accounting but, for example, to the lay administrators and clerical staff whose salaries are paid by schools but who have wider duties.

In the course of the next few decades, as church attendances keep on falling, I expect that Catholic education will be the focus of furious public debate. Some will hope the system can be reformed; some

will argue that it is beyond reform and would be best closed down so that resources can be concentrated where they're more urgently needed. Others, along with a Panglossian majority of the Catholic Bishops Conference, will say all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

Saunders says the dominant model for government funding of services by non-government agencies in Australia is corporatist in character and thus particularly apt to cause problems of mission drift. "This is not so much a problem for businesses, for they take on contracts in order to make a profit and, provided the commercial arrangements are appropriate, they should have no ethical problem delivering what the customer (in this case, government) wants.

"But non-profits have their own *raison d'être*. Very often they are faith-based organisations driven by strong ethical and theological principles, which they do not want to see compromised, still less abandoned. In this context, contracting to carry out services defined by politicians is almost guaranteed to cause friction, for government and the third (non-profit) sector are most unlikely to share common objectives and moral principles."

One of the other essayists in *Supping with the Devil* is Peter Shergold, who was the secretary of the department of employment, workplace relations and small business in the late 90s. He points to the problems caused by a growing administrative burden on third-sector agencies, the tendency to expand the scope of activities just to attract more funds and their over-reliance on government as a source of revenue.

There is also, he thinks, an asymmetry of power when it comes to negotiating contracts with governments. However, he doesn't share the fear of many activists that contracts can be used to silence opposition, pointing to the likelihood of adverse

publicity for any government that fell out unreasonably with service providers (which generally enjoy far greater popularity).

He also stresses that organisations in partnership with government, rather than at arm's length, develop informal channels of influence that can, at best, be useful rather than compromising.

An alternative model to corporatism is what Saunders calls "supported mutualism", which is supping with the devil but bringing a very long spoon.

In Rob Simons's essay it is fleshed out, using the example of the Smith Family, which made a deliberate decision "to stop tendering for government grants and to concentrate its efforts on its 'Learning for Life' program (which seeks to improve the literacy and education levels of children in deprived areas)".

"It still receives some government funding," Simons says.

"It gets discretionary grants to support the activities that it is already running; it gets some specific program funding to provide services, such as mentoring, that fit its ongoing programs; and it participates in a brokerage role in the Government's Communities for Children program.

"Overall, though, three-quarters of the Smith Family's income still comes from donations and bequests, and only 14 per cent of it comes from government.

"The result is that the Smith Family has maintained its independence. They use government funds to 'grow their mission', for the money follows the activity rather than the other way around." •



People can improve with age. Even the most severe characters will mellow. Often people run into an old teacher or employee who, at the time they were in regular contact, seemed fierce and unbending. Years later, they seem much milder. This leaves the question as to whether it is you or they who have changed. Most of the time, probably both of you have.

St Columba of Iona, who lived in the second half of the sixth century, is an example of someone who softened. Columba was Irish. As a relatively young man, he was involved in a clan conflict which led to the death of thousands. Appalled by his own actions, he removed himself to the Scottish Island of Iona where he imposed harsh penances on himself. But gradually he learnt a lesson which has eluded many leaders in history: that no act of violence, however destructive, can be redeemed by a further act of violence, even against yourself.

Iona slowly became the place of prayer and gentle hospitality which it remains today, a shelter in a harsh climate, an ancient place worth travelling to discover.



**Iona Abbey
Isle of Iona, Scotland**



McGirr, M. (2004) 'Finding God's Traces'. Jesuit Publications

REFURBISHMENT AT MITTAGONG

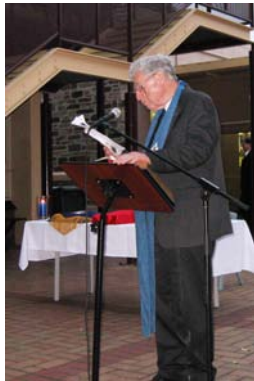
On the recent Vocations Weekend at Mittagong, Br Michael Ackers gave the visitors a tour of the renovations currently under way at Mittagong. For those who are familiar with the former novitiate, extensive renovations are under way at the old site. The entire second storey has been gutted and the builders are in the process of creating a series of motel-style rooms which will all open off a central corridor and look out from a window of the former veranda. A new gathering hall and discussion rooms are being built behind the main building and the Marcellin wing is being extended also. The walkway adjacent to the chapel will be renovated for wheelchair access and the far end will contain restaurant and cellar door sales.



Postscript to the SHC 'Stables' story

The function went well, despite the chill. The twilight liturgy was attended by about eighty people, mainly old boys of a very mature age, all very chatty and greatly interested.

After the liturgy all adjourned to the Debourg Centre for a generous and tasty supper where, amid historical exhibits, the reminiscences continued for quite a time.



Mgr Rob Egar officiates at the Ceremony



Brother Columbanus receives the first brick from Peter McCabe, College Business Manager.



Our deceased and their families

- **Mrs. Nora Caddy**, who taught at Immaculate Heart College, Preston, in the late "60's" and who died on 11th June
- **Michael Donovan**, Business Manager at St. Aloysius' College, North Melbourne, and a former Board member at Assumption College, who died suddenly on 16th June

For those who are unwell ...

- **Noel Granger**, cancer patient; cousin of Br Kevin Langley.
- **Melanie Meehan**, cancer diagnosis; prayers through Mary MacKillop continuing. Wife of Br Linus' nephew, Matthew.
- **Sister Claire O'Brien** sism, accident injury; Merrylands NSW. Known to Brothers who have worked in the Solomons. [See Nletter April 09 p37]
- **Tom Lambert**, first lay Principal Mitchell Park.
- **Brother Charles Howard**, Sydney.
- **Brother Kevin Hogan**, Netley

And also for ...

- Our **Jubilarians** celebrating significant religious milestones this month:
 - Br Ronald Fogarty** - 75 years
 - Br Austin Stevens** - 70 years
 - Br Richard Spain** - 60 years
 - Br Stephen Bugg** - 50 Years
- **Anne Dooley** - being received into the Melbourne Mercy Congregation on Thursday 2nd July. Anne will then begin her Novitiate programme and live in community in Essendon.
- Blessings to come from our **General Chapter** in Rome - September 2009



Volume 40 * Number 6 * July 2009

CONTENTS

PAGE

- 3 From our Provincial
- 4 Province News
- 5 Editorial
- 6 The Community of MAPC
- 7 Refugee Tutoring at Aquinas College
- 8 Farewell to the SHCS 'Stables'
- 9 CC Sale's 'Holy Person in Residence' program
- 10 Ron Rolheiser: "*Priestly and Affective Prayer*".
- 13 SHCMS Fund Raising for Project Compassion
- 14 Paul Chalkley commissioned to lead MYAM
- 16 Alice Springs Community reports
- 18 Lomeri Novices follow a course on Marcellin Champagnat
- 20 Thoughtful quotations
- 21 Book Review: *Supping with the Devil?*
- 24 Mittagong being refurbished
- 25 *Please Pray for ...*

"I called the swine flu hotline ... but all I got was crackling."

"I hear that the first symptom is that you come out in rashes."

"Swine flu, however, does not worry the pigs because they're all going to be cured anyway."

"Swine flu has now mixed with bird flu. Scientists say they will find a cure when pigs fly."

