

Council seem to be the disappearance of Latin and the turning of the altars towards the people. Those who read the relevant texts will be astonished to learn that neither is in fact to be found in the decrees of the Council."

These phenomena highlight the confusion that continues to bedevil the Catholic Church regarding liturgical reform and the gulf that often exists between what the Council mandated and what was later implemented in its name by experts. Other well-established practices such as standing for Communion, receiving on the hand and the proliferation of Extraordinary Ministers have no basis in Vatican II, even if many Catholics assume they are among the liturgical fruits of the Council.

Fr U.M. Lang, a young priest-scholar of the London Oratory makes the focus of this compact, accessible book the orientation of the priest as he celebrates Mass. He presents the results of the latest research, examining the relevant historical, theological and pastoral arguments regarding Mass said facing the people, or Mass said "facing East" (that is, priest and people facing in the same direction towards the altar).

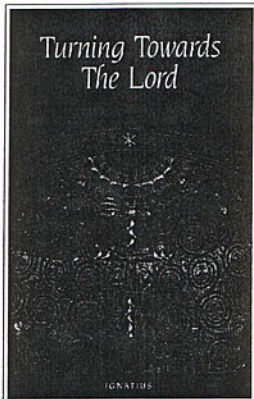
#### Dominant tradition

Fr Lang presents a strong case for the "facing East" position being the dominant tradition of the Church's Liturgy from the earliest centuries, with the "facing the people" option the exception rather than the rule. Only since Vatican II has the latter taken over as the prevailing practice.

In this writer's view, this radical change has had mixed results, with the turning of some priests into individual performers rather than God's instruments, and the blurring of distinctions between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Fr Lang concludes with a sensible compromise: the Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Communion Rite and Concluding Rite should be celebrated facing the people; but with the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and in particular the canon, "it is more than fitting that the whole congregation, including the celebrant, be directed towards the Lord, and that is expressed by turning towards the altar ...".

*Turning Towards the Lord* is refreshingly free of polemics, allowing the facts to speak for themselves. It



is highly recommended as a reference for those Catholics wishing to get their facts straight about the Liturgy, as well as for those with specialised liturgical responsibilities.

#### A CHRISTIAN APOCALYPSE:

The Sexual Abuse crisis in the Catholic Church, 1884-2004

(Tamanaraik Press, Melbourne, 2004, \$34.95 p&p included from Tamanaraik Press, PO Box 12792, a/Beckett Street Post Office, Melbourne, Vic, 8006, tel (03) 9480-2119)

Reviewed by David Williams

The sexual abuse crisis is the most severe challenge faced by the Catholic Church in English-speaking countries over the past twenty years, among other things, making the task of evangelisation much more difficult.

The Catholic Church is a prominent, visible, high-profile target and, in so far as the Church is known, the public is aware that its clergy are expected to be celibate. In addition, Church leaders regularly proclaim strong moral principles — often on issues concerned with sexual morality — and in a demanding way.

When priests or vowed members of religious congregations molest children their behaviour confronts every expectation the public has of Catholic clergy. There is widespread community anger, and a withering of respect for the Church, especially among the less committed and the young. Understandably, many writers — especially in the

United States — have explored child molestation by clergy from most angles. There is perhaps not much more to be said. However, the reverberations of, and the repercussions from the abuse scandals have not faded into history.

In his new, well-informed book, Dr Barry Coldrey covers familiar territory from an Australian perspective and from the standpoint of a member of a religious congregation which has been affected by the tragedy. This is a book for Church leaders, lay and clerical; it is not a read for the sensitive or the faint-hearted.

Many topics are canvassed: the problem of clergy abuse through the ages; a modern crisis time-line; the developing situation since 1984 (worldwide and in Australia); the explosion of 2002 in Boston, USA; and a sense of some problems being solved and some areas where more attention is required. The book faces some embarrassing realities, frankly but without rancour.

#### Denial

It seems clear that almost every movement on the part of the hierarchy to deal with the problem of sexual abuse of minors has been reactive. Mr Richard Sipe faced this painful fact in a major address to the National Convention of Survivors of Sexual Abuse by Priests, Denver, Colorado, on 12 June 2004:

"In the US, victims of abuse, lawyers, the press, civil and criminal justice, in addition to public outrage have been the forces that pushed — really shamed — the American bishops and the Vatican to reluctant action. The hierarchy of the United States has given no evidence that there is even one among them who will really stand and be counted for justice and ministry to all of those who are abused by clergy [and] who violate their celibacy. We have no Bishop Romero!"

Moreover, within many religious congregations and among ordinary priests and brothers, denial in its various shades and manifestations, is influential. Church leaders — sometimes well and thoroughly briefed — have to deal on a daily basis with priests and brothers whose knowledge is less than their own.

However, the Church has survived other crises, and will survive this disaster. Survival will be easier, and recovery quicker if Church leaders are well-informed on the issues.

The book is recommended, particularly as a resource for Church leaders. □