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Andrew Nash on an American defence of Newman as an historian

Ella Preece on daily celebrations of Our Lady



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Dear Lord, help me to spread thy fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with thy spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may be only a radiance of thine. Shine through me, and be so in me that every soul with whom I come into contact may feel thy presence in my soul.

Bl. John Henry Newman

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It is the basis of all other freedoms

In this issue we highlight a topic of grave importance: religious freedom.

Within living memory, this would not have been very much of an issue in Western countries. Britain, in particular, was conscious of a pride in offering true religious freedom, and of having fought a major world war in part to see that freedom upheld and sustained. It was not an absolute freedom. Resting on a recognition of a Christian heritage it assumed that this had created an understanding of the need for goodwill and tolerance, not least through the bitter experience of persecution of Christians by other Christians in earlier centuries. The message was "Freedom under the law" – street processions and the like could be subject to restrictions where they might lead to violence or confrontation that could disturb the peace. There was also a general sense that courtesy and common sense should restrain animosity.

Restrictions on religious freedom – and open persecution of Christians – belonged for much of the 20th century to the Communist empire of the USSR and its satellite states. The savage horror of the Gulag, the torture and imprisonment of Christian writers, priests, teachers, and faithful believers – hallmarked the USSR from its earliest days. There were more Christian martyrs in the 20th century than in all previous centuries combined. This was Nero's savagery on a huge scale.

We can thank God for Communism's demise – and pause for a moment to ponder on the role that the heroic Christians of Eastern Europe played in that. And we can – and must – look at what is happening in Moslem countries and place the heroic Christians there at the heart of our prayers. We should also look at what is happening in the West, where there is no savage persecution but where we should note certain trends.

Today

We have no gulag in Britain or in other Western nations. We have become used to having opportunities for Christians to promote the Faith publicly and to use the vast opportunities of the mass media to do so. We are used to open debate and the free exchange of opinions. We are used to having churches in public places with notice-boards announcing Masses, events and services. We are used to the popularity of Catholic schools and to and a general recognition of Church events such as First Communion celebrations and parish fetes.

But something is changing. Today, as Bishop Peter Elliott notes in his special feature written from Australia, we are witnessing something new emerging. There is a real and sinister sense in which officialdom in the West is attacking the Church and the rights

of Christian to voice and teach the Christian message, especially as it concerns love, marriage, and the transmission of life. We must face this with common sense, resilience and wisdom.

Truth and freedom

The Church is not asking for special privileges. As Pope St John Paul the Great put it "The Church proposes – she does not impose".

The great Pope recognised that the Church needed to seek forgiveness for past actions on this, in order to face the future with clean hands. The Church had sometimes used coercion or violence, and at the start of a new millennium this needed to be addressed. "We forgive and we ask forgiveness. We are asking pardon for the divisions among Christians, for the use of violence that some have committed in the service of truth, and for attitudes of mistrust and hostility assumed towards followers of other religions."

The issue here was about truth: the Church has been given the mandate to preach the truth about God and about humanity, about Christ as the Word made flesh, God tabernacled among us. This mandate comes from Christ and can never be abandoned. Nor are there any shortcuts – and attempts to use State power to coerce or bully people into formal acceptance of Church teachings will not fulfil the mandate or present an authentic face of Christ to the world.

At the solemn ceremony in St Peter's, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, gave voice to this, lighting a candle signifying sorrow and a fresh start: "Even men of the church, in the name of faith and morals, have sometimes used methods not in keeping with the Gospel,"



Vulnerable?

Some commentators felt that the Church was making herself vulnerable by doing this. Surely the Church's enemies would exploit these expressions of sorrow and use them for their own purposes? But as Fr Avery Dulles noted in a thoughtful commentary published at the time: "Our aim cannot be to appease the implacable foes of the Church, who will complain no matter what is done. But the fear that they will take advantage of our repentance should not deter us from doing what is morally required of us. While hostile critics will be dissatisfied, many persons of goodwill will be appreciative." (Fordham University 1998). This proved rather prophetic.

Pope Benedict in Westminster

Cardinal Ratzinger, as Pope Benedict XVI, tackled a linked issue – the relationship between the Church and state power. Speaking in our own country, in the most famous Parliament building in the world, he emphasised that religion has a role to play in public life, as part of a wholesome discourse:

"Each generation, as it seeks to advance the common good, must ask anew: what are the requirements that governments may reasonably impose upon citizens, and how far do they extend? By appeal to what authority can moral dilemmas be resolved? These questions take us directly to the ethical foundations of civil discourse. If the moral principles underpinning the democratic process are themselves determined by nothing more solid than social consensus, then the fragility of the process becomes all too evident – herein lies the real challenge for democracy."

Dialogue

He made no claim on the part of the Church for state imposition of Church teaching, but called instead for a fruitful dialogue in which all seek the common good, on a shared understanding that simply accepting a general consensus based on no principles is unsound.

"The central question at issue, then, is this: where is the ethical foundation for political choices to be found? The Catholic tradition maintains that the objective norms governing right action are accessible to reason, prescinding from the content of revelation. According to this understanding, the role of religion in political debate is not so much to supply these norms, as if they could not be known by non-believers – still less to propose concrete political solutions, which would lie altogether outside the competence of religion – but rather to help purify and shed light upon the application of reason to the discovery of objective moral principles."

Authentic

Pope Benedict excluded any call for a structured bond between Church and State, but presented the Church's role in its authentic place, as the upholder of truths without which no society can flourish. Where the Church has used the power of the State to impose doctrinal orthodoxy, her own integrity has been compromised. She must speak not from a position of power but from one of freedom: with this in mind, he highlighted concern about the way in which Christianity is too often marginalised, even in countries priding themselves on their tradition of tolerance. Religion, he noted, in a useful phrase is "not a problem for legislators to solve, but a vital contributor to the national conversation". Dialogue between faith and reason should take place freely at every level of national life: "In this way, such basic rights as religious freedom, freedom of conscience and freedom of association are guaranteed".

We are not asking for any favours, but for that freedom which a healthy society needs. To use that freedom properly and wisely, Christians need to be active: this is no time for retreating into an artificial sense of enclosure from the wider world. We have duties and responsibilities. William Wilberforce succeeded in abolishing the slave trade by tireless and dedicated Parliamentary work, rooted in his own sincere and prayerful Christian life and – as noted by Pope Benedict – provides a useful example of how a Christian can and should act in the public sphere.

Freedom

Pope Benedict XVI and his predecessor Pope St John Paul spoke about religious freedom with a particular wisdom gained through witnessing at first hand the Church experiencing persecution at the hands of State power, in Nazi Germany and in Communist Poland.

2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the election of Pope St John Paul in 1978. He was the first Pope since the early years of the Church to come from a country where the Church was oppressed: all the first 32 Popes were martyred and he almost joined their number. One of his first acts as Peter's successor, at the start of what was to prove a long and fruitful pontificate, was to affirm the principle of religious freedom. In a letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations he stated: "religious freedom...is the basis of all other freedoms and is inseparably tied to them all by reason of that very dignity which is the human person."



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From the Aims and Ideals of Faith Movement:

Faith Movement offers a new synthesis of faith and reason, explaining the Catholic faith in the evolutionary perspective of modern science.

Reflecting on the unity of the cosmos, we can show the transcendent existence of God and the essential distinction between matter and spirit. We offer a vision of God as the true Environment of men in whom "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28) and of his unfolding purpose in the relationship of word and grace through the prophets which is brought to its true head in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Lord of Creation, centre of history and fulfilment of our humanity.

Our redemption through the death and resurrection of the Lord, following the tragedy of original sin, is also thereby seen in its crucial and central focus. Our life in his Holy Spirit through the church and the sacraments and the necessity of an infallible magisterium likewise flow naturally from this presentation of Christ and his work through the ages.

Our understanding of the role of Mary, the Virgin Mother through whom the Divine Word comes into his own things in the flesh (cf. John 1:10-14), is greatly deepened and enhanced through this perspective. So too the dignity of Man, made male and female as the sacrament of Christ and his church (cf. Ephesians 5:32), is strikingly reaffirmed, and from this many of the church's moral and social teachings can be beautifully explained and underlined.

Reclaiming feminism for Christianity

Mary Kenny explores the truth of the relationship between women and the Church



Earlier in the spring of this year, the former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, mounted an attack on the Vatican, and the formal structure of the Catholic Church. She said that it had become "a primary global carrier of the toxic virus of misogyny" and "a bastion of patronising platitudes to which Pope Francis has added his own quota". If the Vatican is a nest of misogynists, some of them were probably muttering subsequently that hell hath no fury like a woman scorned: Mary had been rebuffed by the Vatican in her efforts to contribute to a Rome conference on the status of women in the church. (Though it was probably more because of her "unorthodox" role in supporting same-sex marriage in Ireland than because she is a woman.)

Institutions

Almost every institution I have known during my lifetime has been, if not downright misogynistic, then male-dominated, with the exception of the Irish Countrywoman's Association and the Women's Institute. Wait - there's another exception: the convent school at which I was educated. The entire order was run by women at every level, from the mission fields of India to the (very capable) accounts department in Dublin. As a young feminist in the late 1960s, I was puzzled by the assertion which I found in both British and American literature that "the only choice" that women had in life was to be married and to have children. But I had been surrounded by consecrated virgins who seldom mentioned marriage as a woman's aim in life - while they never stopped mentioning the importance of passing exams. The favoured schoolgirl in our class was the one who always came top in everything, especially maths.

The entire order was run by women at every level, from the mission fields of India to the (very capable) accounts department in Dublin

Education, trade, arts, pubs, clubs

Out in the real world, to which I was soon propelled, all public institutions were indeed "male bastions", from the BBC to the political establishment, from education to trade, from the arts to pubs and clubs. On the occasion when I went off to interview the author

Kingsley Amis at the Garrick Club, I was - as were all other females - obliged to ascend to the bar by a special ladies' back staircase. Women were disallowed from using the main front stairs. When I got to share a glass with Kingsley he expressed misogynist views that were not particularly uncommon among men of his generation: "Women are trouble!" he harrumped. "Never let them into the institutions - they'll make trouble!"

Feminists

As young feminists we strode forth to disprove this, and to show that we were entitled to our rights in public life. Society had been too much separated along the lines of men controlling the public sphere, while women usually dominated the sphere of family and private life - or, as we would have put it, were "relegated" to home and family. Many anthropologists would have made this observation universally: males and females in virtually all societies have been separated according to sex-specific roles. In some societies, women have had to do the back-breaking work in the fields, while menfolk sat under the olive tree and discussed the state of the world (I actually saw this in Albania when it was still under Communist rule).

Christianity

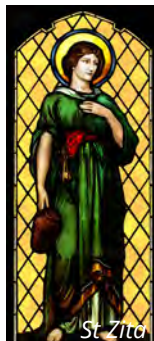
And yet, it is reasonable to suggest that Christianity, from its inception has sought to advance the status of women: it had a feminine and maybe even a feminist sensibility from the start, and it is not surprising that, from the Roman matrons to the contemporary evangelical missions in less developed countries, it has usually been women who were the first to become Christians.

from the Roman matrons to the contemporary evangelical missions in less developed countries, it has usually been women who were the first to become Christians.

It is a constant theme in feminism that the voices and the lives of women are hidden from history, and yet, if you want to find women's voices and accounts of women's lives in the past, you will find them in the lives of the saints. And whereas most historical biography of the past focuses on the upper classes, on kings and emperors or outstanding military commanders, the lives of the saints quite often shine a light on entirely humble people.

Stories

Here, for example, at the very end of the alphabet is St Zita, a domestic servant, born in Lucca in Italy in 1218. She became a household maid at the age of twelve, working for a wealthy weaver's family, and remained a serving maid all her life. But her exemplary character and care for the poor won her respect at her death aged 50, she was popularly regarded as a local saint and a patroness of maid-servants.



This is a story of a young woman whose life would have gone entirely unrecorded were it not for the fact that she was revered for her holiness and the care that she gave to her community. At the other end of the social scale we have Brigid of Sweden who was born into a noble family and retained that status: but hers was also a remarkable life and gives us much insight into the power and command that was sometimes available to Christian women. They travelled so much! They gave counsel to kings and popes. (Mary McAleese did make the point that St Catherine of Siena, in the 14th century, took a major role in guiding papal counsels.)

The Church attracted women from the start

Christianity has been, arguably, less misogynistic than many worldly institutions since it attracted women from the beginning, insisting on the value of each individual life and thus on the spiritual equality between all. True, some of the early fathers, being very fearful of sexuality - whose excesses, perhaps, they associated with the decadence of the Roman Empire - were somewhat bombastic about the temptations that women's sexuality represented to them. But holy women continually arose in the canons of Christianity - think of Hildegard of Bingen, or Julian of Norwich - and it is a feature of Catholic churches and places of worship that the feminine is always present, from the BVM to St Theresa and St Therese, from St Rita (a particular French and Italian favourite) to St Bernadette (a frequent presence in Irish grottos).



Feminism today

Feminism today is sometimes seen as a materialistic movement with an aggressive attitude to abortion and a contemptuous view of men, but the Victorian roots of modern feminism were strongly influenced by Christianity, and many of the early feminists were committed Christians. Among the Suffragette generation, and the education pioneers which preceded them, a striking number of early feminists were Christians - and not unusually, from clerical families. Millicent Fawcett was much influenced by Josephine Butler, a strong Christian who campaigned, successfully, against the prostitution of women and the selling of young girls (and got the age of consent raised from 12 to 16). The American founding feminists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were Christian campaigners for the abolition of slavery.

pioneering American feminists like Susan B. Anthony were wholehearted opposed to abortion campaigners, affirming that it diminished women to advocate the destruction of the unborn.

In the US today, Feminists for Life – feminists who champion the pro-life cause – have shown that the pioneering American feminists like Susan B. Anthony were wholehearted opposed to abortion campaigners, affirming that it diminished women to advocate the destruction of the unborn.

Christian women's achievements

Christian missionaries helped to free women in China from foot-binding, and they opposed the infanticide of girl babies which, alas, had a long history in China. Irish nuns set up dedicated Chinese orphanages to save the girl infants abandoned by the roadside (baptising many of them Brigid). In Africa, Christian missionaries were opposing Female Genital Mutilation in the 1920s, much to the ire of the founder of modern Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, who fiercely criticised them for “meddling” in native practices. But surely they were right to “meddle” in this cruel cutting of young girls.

The role that nuns like the Ursulines – founded by St Angela de Merici in the 15th century – played in the education of women is now seldom acknowledged, though it became the template for the campaigns for girls’ education in the 19th century: nor of the pioneering work that nuns did in health care – Florence Nightingale was within an ace of becoming a Catholic so that she could join the nursing sisters that she had seen in France. Holy women were opening refuges for deserted wives, or wives cruelly treated by violent men as long ago as the 12th century.

Relationship

There’s much in contemporary feminism which is hostile to Christianity, and other forms of faith, and perhaps because of that an adversarial relationship has developed. But that doesn’t mean to say that many of the ideas within feminism are opposed to Christianity: many of the ideas of feminism came from Christianity.

Rather than castigating the Holy See for transmitting “the virus of misogyny” should we not reclaim the traditions of Christian feminism, discuss them, develop them - and own them?

Mary Kenny was a founder member of the Irish Women's Liberation Movement in 1971. Her most recent book is: "Am I a Feminist? Are You?" (New Island, Dublin.)

When the State attacks the Church

Bishop Peter J. Elliott looks at State oppression of Christians in history and today



Behind the war against the Church, from Nero to Kim Yong-un, is the perennial and more complex problem of the relationship between the Church and the State, an unresolved two-thousand year saga of loss and gain. Turning from that vast topic, I focus on the experiences of persecuted Catholics which reveal the methods used by various States to attack, control or even destroy the Church. In several case studies I share recent memories of my own to help make sense of a cruel drama that is still unfolding, with menacing trends.

However, when examining State attacks on the Church, we should always remember, honour and celebrate the courage of our persecuted brothers and sisters. From them we learn three simple lessons. We adapt. We witness. We survive.

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1 Slovakia

Before it was toppled by the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the hard-line Communist regime ruthlessly persecuted the Church in Czechoslovakia, concentrating on Slovakia, the Catholic partner in that unhappy union of two disparate peoples. The main target was the clergy. In Slovakia they carried the historical burden of wartime collaboration with Hitler, when the small country was ruled by a priest, Msgr Jozef Tiso, who was hanged for war crimes in 1947. Some honour him as a national hero; others revile him as a collaborator.

I lived in the Czechoslovakian Collegio Nepomuceno in Rome from 1984 to 1986, before the Communist regime collapsed. I learnt that there were two lists of candidates for the priesthood: the official government list, a quota designed to limit the number of clergy, and a longer illegal list of unapproved candidates, many of whom fled to the Collegio Nepomuceno, but at the cruel cost of never being able to return home.

Hearing the story

A few years later, in happier times, in a Vatican delegation I visited the restored nation of Slovakia. On the trip North from Bratislava to the national seminary in Spis Kapitula, our driver was a young priest. On the way he told us his story.

After training secretly for the priesthood, the Bishop insisted that his ordination be carried out in a hidden way. One evening he presented himself at the Bishop's apartment, knelt down and was ordained with the laying on of hands and the anointing. All the while the television blared away and the police officer sitting in a car on the other side of the street could only record a brief visit, not knowing that the man who left the apartment was now a priest.

Each day he would celebrate Mass on a table in his bedroom, using a medicine glass for the wine, and without vestments. Then he went to work as an administrative clerk in a factory, where the manager looked the other way. In the evening he ministered as a priest in safe houses.

Secret priests

I learnt more about these safe houses when a delegation of shabbily dressed men and women came to the Vatican and visited the Pontifical Council for the Family in about 1990. They knew no Italian but had good English so I was directed to listen to their story. They were secret priests, like the man I have described, and religious sisters who lived in a hidden convent. After working in offices and factories by day, they would go to a specific house in the evening. The priest would hear confessions while the nuns catechised children or gave natural family planning guidance to women. Mass was celebrated followed by a meal shared by the families who had gathered secretly.

I was moved by their account which sounded like the earliest era of our Church, the time of the domestic churches. I told them I hoped they would continue this ministry, but now that freedom had come they made it clear that they wanted to use public churches, live in parishes and convents and, note this, dress as priests and nuns. One had to sympathize with their wish to return to normal. But I hope that they did not lose something precious, for it was how they survived under persecution.

I was moved by their account which sounded like the earliest era of our Church, the time of the domestic churches.

2 Romania

In Romania I witnessed a different situation, after the fall of the dictator Ceaucescu. He maintained tight control of a compliant Orthodox Church while he persecuted a non-compliant Catholic minority, Roman Rite and Byzantine Rite. The government used Orthodox clergy as agents and spies, as I had already discovered in 1968 while studying in Oxford where two of them operated in three Anglican theological colleges. The Communists severely restricted the Catholics and impeded ecumenical cooperation by encouraging Orthodox anti-Catholicism.

In 1996, again as part of a Vatican team travelling in central Romania, I visited a parish, consisting of three stories and an attic. After lunch, the clergy showed us how it functioned after the Communists confiscated it and relegated the priests to the ground floor. Inside door frames and skirting boards wires went up to the attic, where a harmless old man could pull a switch and listen to any conversation in any apartment, paying

special attention to the priests. He sent his weekly report to the local Party officials. This was control by scrutiny, but that is now made much easier through better technology.

When we reached the seminary in Iasi, we found a huge square apartment block. At the centre, with balconies overlooking it, was a spacious chapel. It had been built illegally in the last years of the Ceaucescu regime, a concealed seminary, now functioning freely with plenty of students of the Roman Rite and the Byzantine Rite. Relations with the Orthodox were still chilly, but are now much warmer.

3 The Chinese puzzle

When we turn to China we find another technique, the creation of a Catholic Patriotic Association, a Church subservient to the Communist State and no longer under the Pope, while Catholics loyal to the Pope formed an Underground Church. Unlike Slovakia, where the two levels of the Church carefully functioned as one, the Chinese State successfully split Catholics into two separate communities, one favoured, the other oppressed. Divide and conquer.

My sources, which are recent, indicate that the split between the two communities is less acute and that in some ways there is a kind of merging between Patriotic and Underground Catholics. When I was in the Delegation of the Holy See at the Beijing UN Conference on Women, 1995, I had to issue precise warnings to Catholics in NGOs not to try and contact the Underground Church and not to go to Mass in a "Patriotic church". On the one hand you would become a menace to underground Catholics; on the other hand you could be used for propaganda photographs.

Complex

Cardinal Zen, former Bishop of Hong Kong, went to Pope Francis to warn against a Vatican-China deal selling out faithful Catholics in the interest of a diplomatic resolution of the problem. The Pope has recognised some bishops from the Patriotic Church and accepted the resignation of two underground bishops. This has provoked different reactions. While the internal Catholic situation is supposed to have improved, for all people of faith the wider situation is fragile and complex. We hear that persecution is more intense with "religious affairs" now handed over to a department with an Orwellian name, the United Front Work Department. As the State intends, it remains a Chinese puzzle.

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4 Islam

Persecution in Islamic nations presents another form of State attack on the Church, that is, when this war is driven by another religion with a totalitarian mind-set. Here we find a spectrum of situations, from Saudi Arabia, where all religions apart from Islam are absolutely banned, through the Emirates, where churches are kept in compounds,

in a religious quarantine, to the selective persecution of larger communities such as the Copts in Egypt or the Christian minority in Pakistan, with uncertain levels of toleration in a more pluralist context such as Lebanon. Thousands of Christians have been driven out of Iraq and Syria. Yet history records that in all these Middle Eastern countries and across North Africa we were well established long before Islam invaded in the sixth and seventh centuries.

5 And North Korea

Nevertheless, the range of Islamic pressures on Christians cannot match the worst persecution which prevails in the “hermit state” of North Korea. At this stage our information is incomplete and fragmentary. The constitution of North Korea speaks of freedom of religion and, before the Korean War, Pyongyang was a major Christian city. Today the situation is very complex. Visitors are shown a functioning Catholic church in the capital but without a priest. Officially there are about 8,000 Catholics in North Korea with an unknown higher number of unregistered members of the Church. Let us keep them all in our prayers.

Discrediting the Church

To lead into the situation in the United Kingdom and my own country, Australia, I indicate another effective way to attack the Church, that is, to use moral scandals to destroy the credibility of the Church among her people and in the wider community. In Nazi Germany, in the Rhineland in 1935 and 1936, some Franciscans and other religious were put on public trial for alleged sexual misconduct. The aim of the State was first of all to discredit the Church in one of the most Catholic regions of Germany, more precisely to break the authority of priests and keep children away from them, while directing children into the kindly arms of the morally impeccable Hitler Youth... After the War, in Communist Poland, the sins of clergy were also raked up during phases of persecution.

Today in Australia

Anti-Catholic elements in the media in my country continue to exploit the recent *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* against the Church. In my state, Victoria, one small political group has taken up this cause. The Victorian Sex Party (yes, that was its name) has miraculously morphed into the Reason Party, with an anti-Catholic agenda directed against privileges regarding the taxation of charities. Of more concern is the anti-Catholic bias among the Greens which seems to be fuelled by Cultural Marxism. In Australia, the Greens seek a secularist State apparently including the elimination of all religion-based schools. While that is not the policy of the major Parties and has no political traction, we should never underestimate the plans of those who seek to restrict us.

In Australia, the Greens seek a secularist State apparently including the elimination of all religion-based schools. While that is not the policy of the major Parties and has no political traction, we should never underestimate the plans of those who seek to restrict us.

Catholic schools

However, some commentators point to the hard-won government aid to our schools as another weapon to control the Church, that is, by making the Church dependant on the State. But in Australia this works two ways, at least at present when the main Parties watch out for an emerging Catholic parents' vote. What is of concern is the intrusion of ideological programs into schools, such as the “Safe Schools” project and the LGBTQI gender agenda. If we accept government aid, are we bound to secularist or neo-pagan curricula? This dilemma is much the same in the United Kingdom.

Staying Alert

This is why the Australian Conference of Catholic Bishops is monitoring threats to religious freedom. Some are quite surprising and worrying. Recently, Bishop Robert McGuckin of Toowoomba, an astute canon lawyer, argued that proposed “treason laws” could turn all Catholics into potential spies because we can be deemed to be subjects of a foreign power, the Vatican. Accompanied by a lawyer, he has spoken for the Church at the parliamentary hearing on the Foreign Interference Bill. This is where people of faith feel the repercussions of the tense international situation, the war on terror, the rise of nationalist Russia and imperialist China.

the Australian Conference of Catholic Bishops is monitoring threats to religious freedom.

“A spy for the Vatican”?

Defining Catholics as representatives of a foreign power has always been the paranoid motive for Chinese Communist persecution. Bismark used the “foreign power” of the Vatican in his struggle against the Church in Germany, the *Kulturkampf*. Hitler, an apostate who hated and feared the Church, obsessed about the Vatican. Above all, Queen Elizabeth I used treason trials to persecute Catholics in England, which set the course for centuries of persecution.

In this mindset, any Catholic becomes “a spy for the Vatican”, a threat to state security. In the age of the war against terror and much cyber spying we are often told that we must give up various civil liberties. Is that to include our freedom of religion?

Redefining the Freedom of Religion

In this regard a more subtle attack has begun. The cultural Marxists and the hard-Left want to redefine the Freedom of Religion. They prefer to speak of “freedom of worship”. But that is what Communists, Fascists and Nazis allowed. “Yes, you can go to church, synagogue, mosque or temple, but that is all we will permit, after all religion is a delusion in your head.”

What is ruled out is:

- freedom to express beliefs in public,
- freedom for believers to associate apart from worship,

- freedom to pass on religious faith in the home,
- freedom to run faith-based schools and universities,
- freedom to run hospitals where a strong pro-life ethical code prevails,
- freedom to serve the poor, the suffering and marginalised without relying on a socialist system, and most importantly,
- freedom, when required, to challenge and oppose the State on moral grounds.

Securing Freedom of Religion

How then can we make the Freedom of Religion secure? We have been warned about the pitfalls of defining civil liberties too precisely, that is, by legislation in Acts of Parliament and Charters. At the same time we should not trust legislation that graciously includes “exceptions”, “exemptions” or “concessions” for “religious people” because these can be taken away the next day. In the current uncertain situation I would favour settling for the status quo, embodied in the Constitution of my own country, parliamentary prudence in the United Kingdom, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and other accepted international instruments. But we must guard and define what freedom means, always watching efforts to control and manipulate locally, particularly through non-elected judges, government departments and tribunals. Moreover it seems wise to emphasise *freedom of conscience* to demonstrate how religious freedom is lived by persons.

Concordat?

However, there is another way, a *concordat*, that is, a formal diplomatic agreement between a nation and the Holy See, recognising and listing the mutual rights and functions of the Catholic Church and a specific State. But the 1933 Concordat between the Third Reich and the Holy See turned out to be trap, a brutal restriction and a weapon of persecution. Having studied that historical event and its dire consequences, I would warn that, in the wrong hands a concordat becomes a means of control, buying the Church off with financial subsidies and promises which soon evaporate, followed by the carrot and stick method, playing on our fear of losing privileges even as these are taken away one by one.

A concordat also has to be administered by a government department that involves itself in a close scrutiny of the Church. Here we should be wary of any government bureaucrats and experts who take too much interest in the Church, because that does not necessarily indicate respect, often quite the opposite. So if a “Ministry for Religious and Cultural Affairs” were ever established in Whitehall or Canberra, we should know that we are in real trouble.

Rejoice

Nevertheless, whatever may befall, however we may be pressed or afflicted, Jesus Christ bids us rejoice: “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account” (Matthew 5:11). As always - We adapt. We witness. We survive.

Life, dignity, and eternity



James Tolhurst looks at what we mean by “dying well”

It has been said that of the two certainties in life, death and taxes, only the first is never to be mentioned at the dinner table. We shroud death with all sorts of euphemisms which serve to divert attention from the reality.

Yet death is the one thing that we can be sure of. It is true that “Death is certain: the time and manner are uncertain. Whether by a long disease or by some unexpected accident.”

That prayer expresses the sentiments of the Confraternity of *Bona Mors* (the Society for Happy Death) founded by Fr. Vincent Caraffa SJ in Rome in 1648. It was a time when the world was continually ravaged by cholera, typhoid and plague and death was a familiar experience for most families. There was also capital punishment. An essential part of priestly work is and was consoling the dying and the bereaved but Fr. Caraffa felt that there was a need of a society to prepare for death : learn every day the art of dying well.

A bi-product of our healthy living, combined with growing disbelief pushes the idea of death into the background because we are like the rich merchant in the parable who said to his soul, “You have ample goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, be merry.” He was called a fool, for “so is he who lays up treasure for himself , and is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:18ff).

We can put off the prospect by relying on opiates to induce a state of euphoria to take away the fear, and hope that we can be admitted to a Hospice. But nothing can take away the impact of death when we are made to face the truth – for doctors are forbidden to use euphemisms any more.

Suicide

So, there is *Dignitas*. Assisted suicide at a centre in Switzerland, guaranteed to have you depart this life at a time and place of your own choosing. Marketed as a tidy, modern way of departing this life.

It has a growing subscription list of people willing to pay upwards of £8000 for the complete package, which includes the one way ticket to a flat in Zurich. It is seen as a relatively clean alternative to hanging oneself or throwing yourself in front of a train. But however you look, whether with the assistance of a doctor or administering Nembutal to yourself, it is suicide. We can ask why this has become one of the main causes of death among us (every 94 minutes a day; and the highest proportion among the young) and see it as the result of the rise of personalist ethics. St. John Paul II has drawn attention to

the growth of *proportionalism* and *consequentialism* with the former “focussing rather on the proportion acknowledged between the good and bad effects of that choice” and the latter “on the rightness of a given way of acting solely from a calculation of foreseeable consequences deriving from a given choice.” Either way it is one’s personal conscience finding excuses to justify one’s choice: ‘I am the complete master of my fate’. Yet St. Paul would say in his love, God “gives to all men life and breath and everything” (Acts 17:25). At the very depths of our being divine power is continually at work, answering our cries of anguish, the same Pope reminds us.

Reverence

But just as our reverence for that gift of life is not something selfish, to be disposed of like rubbish, when we get tired of it, so we must consider how our life affects others. We have obligations to friend and family and to society in general (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nn. 2281.2325). Our actions always have an impact – for good and for evil, and “the evil that men do lives after....”

Faced with the growing attraction of suicide, we need to promote the idea of death as something we should be prepared for. We should have a certain honesty, for in a true sense we are hurrying towards eternity. St Richard Gwyn would say on the eve of his execution, “I do but pay the rent before the rent-day”. St Thomas More said to the Duke of Norfolk on Tower Green, “The only difference between you and me, my friend, is that whereas I will die today, you will die tomorrow.” St Teresa of Avila would say, “My Lord, it is time now for us to be together; now is the time to go.” Perhaps it is only the greatest of martyrs and saints that have that equanimity, but there should be a calm acceptance which includes suffering, at the heart of our Christian faith. We should be inspired by the end-of-life example of St John Paul. We need to bear in mind what Our Lord told his apostles as his life was coming to an end, “In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?” (John 14:2). We should want our death to be like that of the patriarch Jacob when he was reunited with his son Joseph, “Now shall I die with joy because I have seen your face” (Gen. 46:30).

We should have a certain honesty, for in a true sense we are hurrying towards eternity.

There is also the fact that the priest who attends a dying person bestows the sacrament of the anointing of the sick but has in addition the solemn privilege of saying these words, “In virtue of the faculty given me by the Apostolic See I grant you a plenary indulgence and *full remission of all your sins.*” He also says this commendation, “Go forth, Christian soul, out of this world, in the name of God the Father Almighty who created you; in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of the living God, who suffered for you; in the name of the Holy Spirit who was poured out upon you. Go forth, faithful Christian. May you live in peace this day, may your home be with God, with Mary, the virgin Mother of God, with Joseph, and all the angels and saints. May peace be yours this day and your home in holy Sion.”

Prepare

The Confraternity of *Bona Mors* was designed to prepare people beforehand for their death. St. Gregory Nazianzen expressed this perfectly, “Take us also to yourself in your

own good time, once our allotted span of life has been completed. May the fear of the Lord make us prepared and yet unperturbed, so that at our death we shall not be drawing back and loath to depart, not dragged and torn from this life as men enthralled by the world and the flesh, but rather going out readily to the life of eternal happiness in Christ Jesus.” (*Oratio* 7,24) St Ambrose would say the same, “Do not be afraid of the word death: rather in the blessings which follow a happy death. What is death after all but the burial of vice and the flowering of goodness?” (*On the Blessing of Death* ch. 4,15). But because the time of death is uncertain, we ought to live a life worthy of immortality. It has been said “Live as you intend to die, for you will die as you live; for death is often nearer than you imagine.” It is salutary for us to have a fear of leading a sinful life, instead of regarding heaven or even purgatory as a human right. Apart from being part of our Christian faith, it will make us conscious of our own unworthiness and a reminder to live for that moment when we will meet the Lord who is also our judge.

The Confraternity of Bona Mors was designed to prepare people beforehand for their deaths

Immortality

We should not run away from the idea of dying but rather cultivate a supernatural attitude, thinking of the immortality which follows and ready for “every manifestation of God’s will; freed from the terror of death. For what man who lives in a foreign country would not hurry to return home?” (St Cyprian *On Mortality* 18,4) St John Paul in one of his last statements said, “Death has revealed that there is a beyond, that there is a life in this land which is unexplored by man called eternity.” (*Letter to the Aged* n.15, 1 October 1999).

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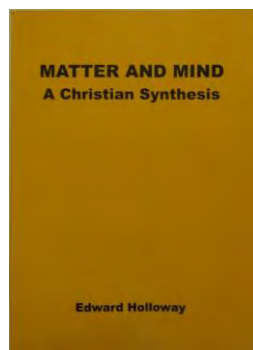
In Poland there is the ceremony of putting a veil on the dead person, with the words, “Lord and Father, may he/she now behold you face to face: having departed this life, may their face contemplate your beauty.”

Wisdom from St Thomas More

But joined to this we ought to think in terms of uniting our death to God in the same way we offer each day to him. St Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists, says, “those who offer their death to God make the most perfect act of divine love possible, because by cheerfully accepting the kind of death which God is pleased to send them, when and how God sends it, they are just like the holy martyrs who died for the sake of the faith and out of love for Jesus. So then, let us live our life only to advance in divine love. The level of our love for God at the time of our death will be the level our love for him throughout our happy eternity.” St Thomas More would pray, “God, grant me the ardent desire to be near you; not to be free from the miseries of this sad world...nor for my own profit, but simply and solely for the love of you.” So let us learn every day the art of dying well : *Bona Mors*.

Fr. James Tolhurst is a priest of the diocese of Southwark and has worked as a parish priest and as a hospital chaplain

The admonitions of Bona Mors formed part of Night Prayers at his Jesuit school.



MATTER AND MIND A Christian Synthesis by Edward Holloway

Edited and with an Introduction by Roger Nesbitt

427pp, £15.00

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Interview

The challenge of the classroom

Joanna Bogle interviews Father Matthew Pittam



Fr Matthew Pittam is a priest of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham. His book *Building the Kingdom in the Classroom: A school Chaplain's diary* has caused considerable interest as a frank and fascinating account of life in a modern Catholic secondary school. FAITH magazine had difficulty catching up with him as he is a busy man – but it was well worth it.

We asked him first why he had written the book.

"I thought that there was a place for something about ministry to young people in our Catholic schools. I feel that two extremes exist: one where people are overly optimistic about Catholic Schools and see things through rose-tinted spectacles. and on the other, those who seek to dismiss Catholic education completely. I wanted to write something which celebrated our schools but which also does not shy away from the considerable challenges and concerns that many have.

"I am passionate about work with young people, but also recognise that there is much to be done to ensure that schools are Catholic in more than just name only, which sadly many are becoming. I also wanted to write something which could encourage others to think about either teaching or school chaplaincy as a vocation. The Catholic life in our schools will only grow if we have fired-up Catholics, with a strong sense of vocation, staffing them."

Catholic schools

Why are Catholic schools so popular? They are often over-subscribed.

"Parents appreciate the values and outlook of a Catholic school. Pastoral care is also something which is distinctive in many of our schools and there still exists in many a strong sense of community. A high proportion of Catholic schools also have high levels of attainment academically."

"We live in a highly consumer age and education does not escape this. Parents (and young people) approach education with much more of a consumer mind-set than ever before. This certainly becomes manifest in the way in which parents approach the choice of schools. It is no longer given that children will attend the local school. Parents consult league tables and Ofsted ratings. In that sense there is less loyalty to a particular school (or faith tradition) which may have been a much more significant factor in the past."

"This is certainly evident in my local town, where the Catholic school closed because of falling numbers and poor attainment. This was following a long spiral of decline assisted by the strong pull of local Grammar Schools (We still have selective schools in this area). Catholic parents chose the selective schools over the Catholic school and over time the Catholic life and character simply ebbed away. So we sadly shouldn't assume that the Catholic element is the primary attraction of our schools."

Priesthood

Fr Matthew initially trained as a social worker, with a strong sense of a call to help people who suffered from mental health problems. What drew him to the priesthood?

"Social work did provide fulfilment, and I am actually still a registered social worker and do some work there. However over time I began to discern that there was more - that God wanted me to care for the vulnerable but in a way which social work couldn't. I knew in my heart that we only reach our fullness when we are growing in communion with God.

"In due course I was ordained in my Anglican diocese and served in a working class parish in the suburbs of Coventry. This was a good and positive time but from the Catholic tradition within the Church of England, I always really looked to the Catholic Church. When the Ordinariate came into being I realised that the Church was making an invitation which should not be refused and so I responded in trust."

Freedom?

Do we, as Catholics, have full freedom to teach the Faith in modern Britain? There is a sense in which we feel rather vulnerable.

"I do think that our freedom to teach the truths of the Christian faith are potentially under threat. We have strong leverage as the 2nd largest provider of education in England and Wales. But we need a strong lead from our Bishops and the Catholic Education Service. Catholic schools have a more important vocation than ever to provide a prophetic message - an alternative to the prevailing materialistic, consumerist and secular values.

"The moment when we start to compromise is really the time when we should be asking serious questions about the future of our schools. We are custodians of a legacy. Many of our schools were hard-won through great sacrifice and determination in the face of some opposition. We need some of that pioneering spirit and determination today."

And the future?

"We face very challenging times: up against a prevailing culture which does not value religion or the place of the Church, or understand it. Many young people's lives are so complicated and family life is often fragmented. Catholic schools (or even parishes) cannot compensate for what is lacking in family life. Creative youth work, schools, engagement

with social media will all help but if we do not evangelise and seek transformation in family life then our young people will continue to grow up with a secular and material world-view which sees no place or relevance for faith"

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The Ordinariate

Finally, we asked Fr Matthew about the Ordinariate. Has it fulfilled the hopes that were placed in it on its foundation? He pondered this and then illustrated his comments with a thoughtful list.

"It is a disappointment that fewer Anglican clergy than hoped have showed an interest in the Ordinariate. Many I knew for years, who were at the forefront of the Anglo-Catholic movement, continue to remain wedded to the CofE. I think that there are complex and contradictory reasons why many remain:

- Money and Security. C of E clergy are fairly well provided for. A house, generous stipend (In comparison to a Catholic priest) and non-contributory pension are all part of the package. It is a huge thing to walk away from that, especially when clergy have to provide for a family.

- Loyalty. A number of friends who remain in the C of E have a great deal of loyalty to their parishes, the Anglo Catholic movement and a sense of Anglicanism. There is also a concern from some that to seek ordination in the Catholic Church is to deny their Anglican Orders and ordination

- Status. Anglo Catholics are often big fish in a small bowl. Vicars still have some status in a parish and to leave all this is a big concern for some. I knew one priest who didn't become Catholic because he was in a large and fairly important parish and didn't wish to become a curate again.

- Sexuality. A number of Anglo-Catholic clergy are in same-sex relationships thus: a stumbling block to those who would wish to seek ordination in the Catholic Church. There are also Anglican Clergy (including some traditionalist bishops) whose marriages would be considered irregular by the Catholic Church and so would prevent ordination.

- bricks and mortar- Many Anglicans are wedded to their buildings and would struggle to leave a building and community which has been so significant in their lives. Some of the laity who were received with me seven years ago found this one of the hardest sacrifices to make."

Joanna Bogle is Editor of FAITH magazine

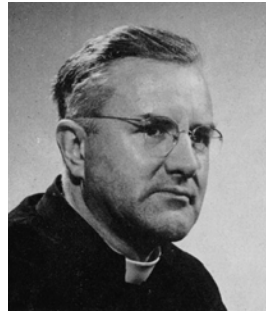
Fr Matthew's book *Building the Kingdom in the Classroom: a School Chaplain's diary*, is published by St Paul's Books, £11.99p

Holloway on...

John Henry Newman and the Church as Communion in God

Part I

EDWARD HOLLOWAY



Newman was one of those spirits both blest and cursed, who could tolerate no mediocrity. His piercing intellect, at once analytic but capable of brilliant synthesis, cut through every trace of unconscious humbug—in others but most of all in himself. “England”, said some graffiti scratched on a window of my room at St. Mary’s Hall Stonyhurst when a student, “is the paradise of little men and the purgatory of great ones”. John Henry Newman was not one who could drift contentedly along with the crowd as folk drift up to the Common to view a Fair; perhaps Vanity Fair, life’s own scene. He had more than mind; he was gifted with a sensitive and loving disposition. The first great formative experience of Christian Communion for him was a close and loving family circle. Men like Newman are destined to be cynics or saints; for Newman the compass needle of the Church’s judgement is swinging to the greater and much rarer achievement.

Communion as a quality of loving

At Oxford he developed in the experience of Christian friendship as more than a bond of nature. It became for him and unto others the formative loving of a mutual discipleship in Christ. It is not surprising that after the usual agonizing which marks all the big decisions of his life he offered himself for Holy Order. His *Parochial and Plain Sermons* need to be read to gauge the intense personality of the man. He was no mere academic, being too warm and too greatly human to stay beached simply on that strand. It has been many times remarked that Newman did not preach so much as deeply and earnestly converse a meditation to himself and with his people. It seems to have been at Littlemore, as Vicar of St. Mary’s, that Newman came to mature both in his profound appreciation of human nature, and also in the need

The first great formative experience of Christian Communion for him was a close and loving family circle

Newman becomes aware, with a certain alarm, of the conscious and unconscious pride of the human mind, and the willfulness of the fallen will.

for more, in the concept of the Church as a Communion, than he had taken from his Evangelical days, and the company of deep and earnest companions among such friends. Newman becomes aware, with a certain alarm, of the conscious and unconscious pride of the human mind, and the willfulness of the fallen will. His letters show us that even in his Oxford days Newman recognised the arrogance of the gifted mind, and the power of secularism already threatening the Church of England from the Liberal, rationalist movement at the universities. On the parish, he found in all sorts of conditions of people, especially those who he could recognise as *manifestly less spiritually perfect*, the same corrosive pride of human opinion set against the word of the Word of God.

Tensions of orthopraxis and orthodoxy

It is in his priestly ministry that he begins to question with some disquiet that priority of orthopraxis, right doing and living, over orthodoxy, right faith and doctrine, which the Evangelical mind unconsciously presumed. He found himself emphasizing the authority of Christ, the *divine* authority, to inculcate and to defend the fulness of the Christian inheritance, the Christian tradition. He begins to meditate that church order, and church authority, especially episcopal authority, is more than a useful external scaffolding which supports, but from the outside the building up of the Church of the Invisible Kingdom, the communion of holy souls, the chosen known only to God. Newman began to see that the emphasis upon orthopraxis, good will, and the minimalizing of orthodoxy, the rule of faith, was in fact the philosophy of the priority of the will over the intellect, and that such a path, without the corrective of an authority and an intellect superior to the will of man, would slowly but surely disintegrate the unity and the fulness of Christian truth.

The church horizontal vs. the church vertical

Today we are at the very end of that road of personal opinion, and personal interpretation of the Mind of God. It has passed beyond the reliance upon one’s own opinion of the meaning and worth of the Bible, whether as book or as a tradition. The very being and Divinity of Christ is now subject to a Christian’s own evaluation of who He was, what He was, and what is the content of the “divine” itself. Today, in all Christian Communion, the emphasis in pastoral life and equally in the liturgical prayers is upon “love”; upon love, courage, service and very rarely upon *truth* as the Light of God. This was not the emphasis of Jesus Christ. It was the *Word*, the Personal term of the divine Self-Knowledge, who was made flesh and was the *Light* of the world. Before Pilate too, our Lord’s answer to “So you are a King then?” was “Yes: I am a King, for this was I born, this I came into the world that I should give *witness to the truth*; everyone who belongs to the truth listens

A desert is a horizontal landscape, and so is the soul of man without the clear delineation of the truths which alone give form, vigour and beauty to Christian love.

to my voice" (John 18.37). It is not only in the non-Catholic Churches that this emphasis upon *the truth* has been deliberately laid aside. In the pastoral life of the Catholic Church too, there is a weary emphasis upon "love" without any clear identity of the nature and characteristics of Christian loving. It is the Church Horizontal without any corrective of the Church Vertical. A desert is a horizontal landscape, and so is the soul of man without the clear delineation of the truths which alone give form, vigour and beauty to Christian love.

Structure and Communion in the Church

Newman, so far ahead of his day in his thinking as well as the quality of his loving, came to see and to seek always more earnestly the divine, the higher, the transcendent truth which enobled the Christian intellect and gave truth and beauty to Christian love. Such an authority must go beyond the individual, and so the mind of Newman turned to the role of the churches among themselves as a Communion of teaching, of love, and of the certain formation of the soul. Almost at once he saw the role of the bishop, as the centre of unity—life, witness, truth, and love. The bishop must be, from his office, the centre and guarantor of the truth of Christ. He must be more than that. Newman had never seen office in the church as similar to office in the state or in the military forces. From his very temperament he had learned that Christian care is also a formation in the true and the good. Christian care is to another spirit what the sun is to the earth, a principle of both light and warmth, truth and love. Both must be together. Warmth without light generates growth without form and without fruit. Light that is cold illuminates a landscape, but no seed springs. The bishop to his people must be in a Communion of teaching and loving which holds the community of the diocese together. The authority of a parent is derived from his or her position as source and origin of life. A father teaches and loves, but authority is part of the very fruitfulness of both teaching and loving. A priest teaches and loves, but without an authority derived from his ministry of Order, there is no final, formative power. A bishop teaches and loves, rules and unites; but without an even greater *authority of source* as Father in the spirit, he is no different from any officer in state, or in commercial management.

How he discovered "The Fathers"

Newman was well aware that it was the life of Christ that lived within the Christian community, in every aspect from the cradle to the summit of the Church. The life and love of Christ moves upon us in mother and father, in priest unto people, bishop unto his priests and his flock, bishop unto bishop in the Communion of the Church "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic." The centre of this relationship must be in the life and love of Jesus Christ. The authority of Jesus the Christ must also reside within this Communion of Christian love,

If the corrosive willfulness of human opinion is not to destroy the very nature of Christ's revelation and Christ's communion with men, then the certainty of Christ's authority must be as native to the Church, as it is to the office of father and mother in the Christian home.

this *koinonia* of the human family around the Person of God Incarnate. If it were not so, Jesus, and his radiation through men membered to each other and to Him, would have less power to persuade, command and form the mind and heart than did a human father. If the corrosive willfulness of human opinion is not to destroy the very nature of Christ's revelation and Christ's communion with men, then the certainty of Christ's authority must be as native to the Church, as it is to the office of father and mother in the Christian home.

So Newman was now engaged, quite feverishly as his letters and comments show, in the reading of the Fathers of the Church. He had seen for himself, almost as by personal revelation, what it must take in a bishop to hold the wayward heads and hearts of a flock. As he read the Fathers, all that he consciously and unconsciously sought he found in abundance. He found more than authority in the word; he found also the source of that authority in the life of the Christian Communion, around the Liturgies of Baptism and the Eucharist. He found the insistence on the word of the bishop, and the word of the bishops before him, deriving from apostolic continuity with the apostles themselves, and they with Christ, the enfleshing of God in person. He had found the meaning of Sacred Tradition as one with the Book, but the Mother of the Book.

Mystery as Deep and Reverent Communion

He found, as he read the beautiful musings of the Fathers, the sacraments as acts upon men of the Body of Christ, not symbols just or effective signs, but very acts of God Incarnate. Newman had found the meaning, as he says openly in his letters, of *Mystery* as deep and reverent communion with the Person of Jesus Christ: communion in wisdom and faith, communion in love and obedience, communion in repentance and healing. For *Mystery* means more than the unfathomable. *Mystery* is the knowing and loving upon a mother's breast: the knowing and the loving of a child-mind, which does not comprehend all, but grows in comprehension and in fulness of joy as it grows in wisdom, age, and grace. The psalmist, inspired by the Holy Spirit had said the essential long before John Henry Newman or any great soul before him had struggled to such recognition of *Mystery* as the Communion with God perceived in love: "O Lord, my heart is not proud nor haughty my eyes. I have not gone after things too great, marvels beyond me. Truly, I have set my soul in silence and in peace. As a weaned child on its mother's breast, even so my soul. O Israel, hope in the Lord: hope now and for ever!" (Ps. 131).

Mystery and Magisterium

So the bond of Christian Communion was a living link, building up much as the molecules do in the human body, from organ to organ, function to function, but ever integrated, always aspects of one truly bodily and living unity. There were no organic breaks, there was nothing secondary or

So the bond of Christian Communion was a living link, building up much as the molecules do in the human body, from organ to organ, function to function, but ever integrated, always aspects of one truly bodily and living unity

incidental in the union of this common life. He perceived it and comments on it in the writings of the Fathers concerning the communion of their office with the people, and the communion of all, through the bishop with the Living Lord. Mystery, as Newman now realised, is reflected also in Magisterium. If the Church is a communion of the life and feeding of Christ, if the “feed on Him in your hearts” meant anything as an exhortation before the Holy Communion of the Eucharist, then it must be the divine mind and the divine good that ruled the mind and opinions of man. Newman has discovered, first from the Fathers, and then as he admits from the unique authority and prestige of Rome, the infallibility of the Church as teacher of the meanings of Christ. It certainly was not the infallibility of the Pope which drew Newman into the Church Catholic and Roman: it was the infallibility of the Church as the body, truly living and thinking body, of Christ. Of this body the Holy Spirit was the soul and the guide through the apostolic office. He has some beautiful passages in meditation upon this perception.

It certainly was not the infallibility of the Pope which drew Newman into the Church Catholic and Roman: it was the infallibility of the Church as the body, truly living and thinking body, of Christ

Newman on “The Pride of Life”

Newman’s power of synthesis, ability to project forward the *consequences* of thoughts and acts, allowed him also to project forward the consequences of disintegration, of human breakdown of the unity of the Divine. He had a profound grasp of the consequences of original sin in man as a lesion of nature and placed the heart of concupiscence where it should be, in the *pride of life*: above all in the willfulness of arrogant opinion, of “I’ll think and do as I like; as my *own* conscience tells me”. This becomes that which is anti-the Christ (1 John. 1:16-17).



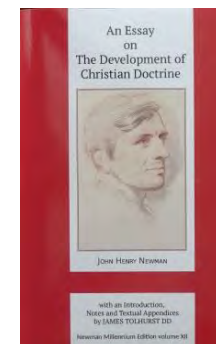
Discernment

He has a passage in the *Difficulties of Anglicans* which shows his devastating discernment as a thinker and as a spiritual director. It can be given here only in shortened form. For its full impact it must be read in the original: “The very moment the Church ceases to speak, at the very point that she, that is God who speaks by her, circumscribes her range of teaching, there private judgement starts up; there is nothing to hinder it. The intellect of man is active and independent: he forms opinions about everything; he feels no deference for another’s opinion, except in proportion as he thinks that other more likely than he to be right; and

He had a profound grasp of the consequences of original sin in man as a lesion of nature

he never absolutely sacrifices his own opinion except when he is sure the other knows for certain. He is sure that God knows, *therefore if he is a Catholic, he sacrifices his own opinion to God speaking through His Church* . . . But again, human nature likes not only its own opinion, but its own way, and will have it whenever it can, except when hindered by physical or moral restraint. So far then as the Church does not compel her children to do one and the same thing . . . they will do different things; and still more so when she actually allows or commissions them to act for themselves, gives to certain persons or bodies privileges and immunities, and recognizes them as centres of combination, under her authority and within her pale. . . the natural *tendency* of the children of the Church as men, is to *resist* her authority. Each mind naturally is self-willed, self-dependent, self-satisfied; and except so far as grace has subdued it, its first impulse is to rebel. . . in matters of conduct, of ritual, of discipline, of politics, of social life, in the ten thousand questions which the Church has not formally answered, even though she may have intimated her opinion, *there is a constant rising of the human mind against the authority of the Church, and of superiors, and that, in proportion as each individual is removed from perfection.*” (Vol.1, pp.301-2)

Abridged from the Editorial in the March/April 1988 issue of Faith magazine. Fr. Holloway was reflecting on The Church ... a Communion: In the Preaching and Thought of John Henry Newman (Gracewing, 1988) by Fr. James Tolhurst. Part II will be published in our next issue.



An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine

by

John Henry Newman

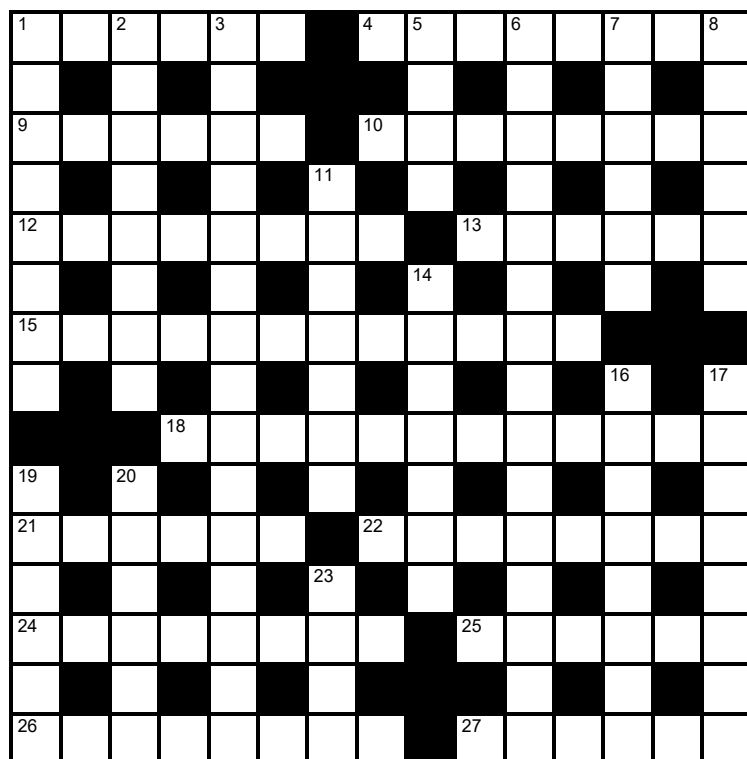
edited by James Tolhurst DD

One of the most ground-breaking and influential theological works since the Reformation, it traces how early Christianity developed into Catholicism and has been described as doing for theology what Darwin later did for biology. In this first ever critical edition, the changes Newman made between his original 1845 text and his revised 1871 version are traced, together with an introduction explaining his development theory, footnotes to Newman’s historical and theological references, and a textual appendix.

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GRACEWING

CROSSWORD 12 by Aurora Borealis



We invite you to complete this crossword. The clues in bold involve general religious knowledge - the others are cryptic clues with secular answers.

A copy of George Weigel's *The Fragility of Order* will go to the sender of the first correct solution opened from all those received by August 31st 2018. Entries may be the original page or a photocopy and should be sent to:

FAITH Crossword no 12

45 East St Helen Street
Abingdon OXON OX14 5EE. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR FULL NAME AND POSTAL ADDRESS.

The winner of Crossword 10 is Amanda Hill of Surrey.

Across

1. Chatter about one buccaneering type (6)
4. London guide contains every other block after bad prison (8)
- 9. Saint of Padua (6)**
10. Boot gang in mix-up, downhill all the way in this (8)
12. Island finished, think about it (4,4)
13. Rowan, perhaps, dropped into empty seat, gets to road (6)
- 15. A division of the Christian church (12)**
18. At home, is able to fall, furious (12)
- 21. Portuguese Marian shrine (6)**
22. Bursting rayon net has fish caught in it (8)
24. Burnt coal split by youth left to make part of engine (8)
25. Leash gets in a tangle with end of collars. Bother. (6)
26. Friar's dance provides source of goodies (4,4)
27. Property found in middle of best gallery (6)

Down

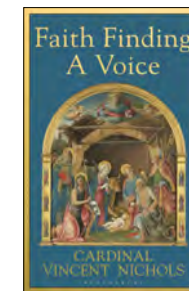
- 1. The use of Biblical hymn texts in worship (8)**
2. Shaking group includes cattle with neither head nor tail (8)
- 3. The Decalogue (3, 9)**
5. Look round parking: ring (4)
6. About thirty weeks is a very long time! (1, 5, 2, 7)
7. Bird goes after end of October: feel sad (6)
8. A dozen, I thought, should provide a high point (6)
11. Head, reserve seat (4, 3)
- 14. Sainly daughter of Kind Edgar of England (2,5)**
16. Banks are falling over themselves for state (8)
17. Start exploring your old line - east north east - to discover gas (8)
19. Bit of wood, say, away from work with gash (3,3)
20. Kind of script found in capital 'I' calligraphy (6)
23. Animal specialist gets duck to say no! (4)

Book Reviews

A voice of hope

Faith Finding A Voice, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Bloomsbury, 224pp, £17.99 (hardback), £11.69 (paperback).

reviewed by Pia Matthews



Cardinal Nichols' new book, *Faith Finding A Voice* is a natural extension of his earlier book *Hope In Action* (2017), and it weaves new writing in with previous material from his homilies, lectures and speeches. If only one word was available to sum up the riches of this new book, then that word would be hope. Not of course hope as optimism, but theological hope. Theological hope is realistic about the true state of affairs in the world and our society, but it also is a natural passion for and a striving towards a future good. Hope is a spur to action and it directs us towards God. Hope sees all things in the perspective of the kingdom.

Action and thought

Nichols wants to challenge his readers in two ways: in action and in thought. He explains that the context for this challenge comes out of his reflection on *Evangelii Gaudium*, the 2013 Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis on the joy of the Gospel and evangelisation. The influence of the Pope's exhortation can be seen in some of the themes chosen by Nichols. The Pope talks of sharing the joy of the gospel and the Church's mission in the light of challenges in the modern world. The Pope considers in particular the social dimension of evangelisation in terms of peace, the common good and dialogue, and the formation of spirit-filled evangelizers. Similarly Nichols picks up on social questions, on the search for justice, peace and the common good, dialogue especially inter-faith dialogue, and the formation of

evangelizers through education for life, and through the ministries of the people of God whether lay, clerical or living a consecrated life.

A listening heart

However it is significant that from start to finish Nichols gives his book a Trinitarian feel. Indeed, all the current realities that Nichols explores are placed within a Trinitarian dimension. This is important to note. Nichols recognises the necessity of studying subjects such as politics, law and sociology in order to understand the world and find a basis for action: this is part of the project to develop 'a listening heart'. Nevertheless, as he points out, reason and faith work together. The true reality is to allow Christ to be born in us every day so that we act for him. The acknowledgment that action is first and foremost God's work rescues social action from simply doing good. And action that is God's action can never be in vain.

Trinitarian focus

This Trinitarian focus is found in the structure of the book and in one of the inspirations for Nichols: the altarpiece of the Nativity with Saints by the fifteenth century artist Pietro Orioli (the cover of the book only shows the main painting without its predella, but the complete altarpiece appears in one of the illustrations in the middle of the book). In Part One Nichols treats of the mystery of God revealed as Father, Son and Spirit. Chapter 1, The

Lure of God, reflects on the attraction of God that is a call to meet God both in the silence of our inner life and in our grace-filled action for the kingdom. Tellingly Nichols adds that this is not a striving for an experiential knowledge of God for its own sake, rather it is so 'we may be filled with his Word and be changed'.

In Chapter 2, The Mystery of Christ, Nichols uses art to refresh our often wearied approach to public life as he gives his extended reflection on the Orioli altarpiece in conjunction with thoughts from Elaine Parsons and Father Richard Parsons. Once again this is a Trinitarian reflection on art, beauty, salvation and living in the world where all events and the saints are under the watchful gaze of the Father. The fact that this is an altar piece serves as an opportunity for Nichols to reflect on his own priestly experience. Chapter 3, The Holy Spirit: Community and Creation, continues with Orioli's picture and the making of missionary disciples who are not only open to hope and new possibilities but also open to the working of the Spirit. Nichols draws on Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato si* to call attention to the glory of God in the world and our ethical tasks of protecting creation and promoting the dignity of all.

Radical view of education

If Part One is a meditation on God's work in our inner life, the three chapters of Part Two prepare us to be missionary disciples. Drawing on personal experience Nichols shows his keen interest in education where the goal is to form people who appreciate their uniqueness, who are independently minded and confident and who have an awareness of community, justice, tolerance and dialogue. Here, rather than being a restriction, faith plays a significant role in helping people to become not better consumers or people unencumbered by others, but people who are in relationship with the world, with others and with God. As Nichols sees it, true education helps us realise that our identity and dignity as human beings rests on our sense of self-transcendence. This leads to what Nichols calls a radical view of

education which relies on developing the virtues and is at the service of the common good, committed to the flourishing of all, and respectful of human dignity. Faith finds a voice especially in universities where people are encouraged to engage with others and to listen to the 'heartbeat' of the age with faithfulness to the Word as expressed in scripture, tradition and the magisterium.

Regenerating the mercy of God

The four chapters of Part Three develop the themes of the sacredness of our Christian heritage, the promotion of religious freedom, and the way in which inter-religious dialogue can connect to a shared spiritual and ethical quest while at the same time respecting each religion's own specific character. In particular Catholic social teaching fed by prayer and the Eucharistic community, becomes a vision for hope as Christians act as a conscience for society that is in need of redemption. In Part Four Nichols looks specifically at Catholic identity: through the papacy, the episcopate, the presbyterate, the diaconate, the consecrated life and the people of God. Nichols sees in each of these areas of life our mission together as Church, a mission that arises from divine communio in the Trinity, and that has its origin in prayer and contemplation of scripture. He understands the corporeal and spiritual works of mercy as practical ways to re-establish and regenerate the mercy of God's ordered creation.

Ultimately, he says, the evangelizing mission can be expressed in terms of the divine mercy of God who draws all of broken humanity to him. As Nichols explains, we are not created for futility. Every person has a destiny and since the hope for humanity is based on the victory of Christ, this hope will not be in vain. Faith finding a voice is a voice of hope.

Dr Pia Matthews lectures at St Mary's University, Twickenham and St John's Seminary, Wonersh.

The synthesis St. Thomas might have made?

Aquinas and Modern Science - A New Synthesis of Faith and Reason

by Gerard M. Verschuuren, Angelico Press, 233pp, £14.50

reviewed by Mark Higgins



For those acquainted with the ideas of the Faith Movement, the words 'New Synthesis' undoubtedly evoke a whole stream of thoughts, but when those words are tagged with 'of Faith and Reason', the reader is most definitely caused to sit up and pay attention. How will this work compare or contrast with Fr Holloway's classic, *Catholicism- a New Synthesis?* - a book which endeavoured to draw together a harmonisation of the full Catholic Faith with modern science, underpinned by a new realist, existentialist, and only partly Thomistic, ontology? How will Verschuuren, himself a Geneticist with a further PhD in Philosophy of Science, bring about a synthesis of Faith and Reason? Will his project, like Fr Holloway's, be a revision of St Thomas, discussing the areas in which the Angelic Doctor's philosophical lens for viewing and explaining reality is no longer helpful, or will it be more along the lines of an accommodation or re-vindication of St. Thomas against the backdrop of modern science?

Connecting the dots

Fairly quickly into the work it is clear that the author is taking the latter option, and whilst at the very end of the book there is an almost reluctant admission that St. Thomas' philosophy is indeed imperfect (p.233), the greater part of the work is a re-presentation of the metaphysics of St. Thomas alongside modern science, and, in a number of occasions a re-

claiming of credit for the great Dominican as the originator, or at least a valuable contributor, towards a number of important theories/discoveries in modern science and the social sciences. Certainly, there is clearly a need to dispel the great myth of scientific darkness prior to Isaac Newton or perhaps René Descartes, and this book is very successful towards that end. It is also highly interesting to connect some of the dots from Aquinas' writings to say, the scientific method (p.84), modern cosmological theories (p.115), Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle (p.122), Neuroscience (p.191) and even modern economics (p.212), even if perhaps in some cases there are more dots to be passed over than others.

A crash course in Thomistics

Going through the book, the first three chapters offer a clear and concise demonstration of the metaphysical categories of Thomism, why metaphysics is unavoidable, and an explanation of the Four Causes. The author states towards the beginning of the book that one of his purposes is to offer scientists, and indeed anyone not particularly acquainted with the 'Aristotelian-Thomistic' metaphysical synthesis, as it were, a crash course in the subject, and he certainly achieves this. Towards the very end of the work there is a further 'crash course', this time in St. Thomas' contribution in the diverse fields of sociology, ethics, politics and economics.

Unfortunately, I felt this presentation was in fact too brief and lacked the depth of the earlier treatment of St Thomas' ontology, and, to a lesser extent epistemology, which was much more satisfying. Perhaps the author should have left the social sciences, and indeed, moral philosophy, for another book, I think most readers would have preferred the final few chapters to continue with the natural sciences rather than moving into the human field almost as an after-thought to the main subject matter of the work.

Intricate explanation

The most innovative feature of Verschuuren's philosophical offering, and that which constitutes the central chapters of this publication, is his application of the Thomistic 'Four Causes' (or five, if we include 'the exemplary cause') towards a number of facets of modern science, particularly genetics, evolution, and neurology. In the chapter devoted to genetics, the author is clearly in his home territory and not only offers a thoughtful consideration of how the Aristotelian causes might apply within genetics, but also a fairly intricate explanation of the biochemistry underpinning genetic inheritance. The exploration of evolution and neurology is clearly not as scientifically rigorous as the aforementioned section, but the same attempt to suggest how St. Thomas would engage in a dialogue with these arenas of modern science is made more or less as successfully.

Rediscovering prime matter

Verschuuren is absolutely confident that St. Thomas would have accepted the science of evolution, that he would have incorporated it into his thinking (p.148), and most definitely would have rejected Intelligent Design as contrary to Almighty God's general utilisation of secondary causes in the function and development of the universe which demonstrates his supreme intelligence and providence. Perhaps the most unfortunate feature of

this book is that we don't find any hints at the creative adaptation St. Thomas would have taken to ensure that his metaphysical understanding of reality would more adequately reflect the more connected and dynamic reality that modern science has brought to light. Instead the author follows two approaches, held in what seems to me a fair degree of tension. On the one hand he assures the reader that the metaphysics of St. Thomas are above and beyond science, untouchable by their new discoveries (p.87), but on the other, he occasionally lifts the shield and, as it were, concretely relates points of physical contact between the metaphysics of St. Thomas and the methods or even findings of scientists. One example of this in a chapter of the book on cosmology was the suggestion that physicists could be discovering, *mirabile dictu*, prime matter, as a way of explaining how gravitational waves operate under the constraints of the Thomistic denial of *actio in distans* (p.115).

Evocative of a directing mind

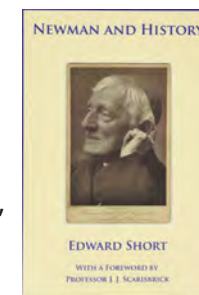
In spite of limitations there is still a lot to commend this title to a reader of *Faith*. The book is well researched, and the writing style is accessible yet academically rigorous, it also contributes to the field of apologetics, dispelling myths from within Church history and passionately defending the intellectual contribution of St. Thomas towards advances in Western Civilisation. Finally, whilst we don't find a reconsideration or critique of Aquinas (even ensoulment is not touched upon), there are a lot of important connections made more generally between faith and modern science, demonstrated by the copious quotations taken from important contributors within science: evolutionary biologists, physicists, and geneticists, who have come to appreciate through their fields that the universe is outstandingly ordered, regular and even evocative of a directing mind.

Fr Mark Higgins is a priest of the Archdiocese of Southwark.

A combative American defending a great Englishman

Newman and History by Edward Short, Gracewing, 376pp, £20.00.

reviewed by Andrew Nash



To be deep in history' said Newman, 'is to cease to be a Protestant.' His groundbreaking *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* is essentially a re-reading of the history of the early Church, freed from the presuppositions of the Protestant mindset. It was a key insight of Newman's that people interpret evidence in accordance with their 'antecedent reasoning', and nowhere was this truer than in Gibbons' famous *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Gibbon interpreted the rise of Christianity through the lens of scoffing disbelief and provided justification for what came to be termed the Whig interpretation of history. This still shapes the broader historical narrative in today's media and *bien pensant* culture in which Catholicism is always a retrograde force, grudgingly giving way to enlightened modernity.

Looking the facts in the face

In the opening chapter of *Newman and History*, the American writer Edward Short shows how Newman made an incisive critique of Gibbon which revealed his antecedent assumption that God does not play any part in the events of history and purely human causes can be assigned for the rise of Christianity. Short brings out how Gibbon's animus against Christianity

distorted his judgement. In particular, he was unable to enter into the reality of early Christian martyrdom, whereas in the *Grammar of Assent* Newman saw it as a key cause of the extraordinary growth of the Church. In this densely written and closely argued chapter Short marshalls not only Newman but also later Catholic historians such as Belloc and Christopher Dawson to demolish Gibbon and his rationalist and Whig successors. He concludes, 'Who looked the facts of Christianity in the face? The rationalists who convinced themselves that the facts only merited scorn? Or John Henry Newman, who urged that they take into account what he nicely called "the hypothesis of faith, hope, and charity"?' (p.79).

A prophetic voice

Short develops the debate further in his second chapter, 'Newman, Superstition and the Whig Historians'. He gets to the heart of the matter by quoting the celebrated passage in the *Apologia* in which Newman summarises the evils of human life and history ('a vision to dizzy and appal'), a passage which, Short says, explodes the Whig faith in progress and rationalism. For Newman, 'human history was defined not by the Glorious Revolution or the prejudices of Whig magnates

but by the creature's rejection of his Creator' (p.113). In this detailed and well-documented account of the limitations of the rationalist nineteenth century historians, Newman emerges as enabled by his conversion to Catholicism to expose the prejudiced assumptions which warped their interpretation of history.

Juicy pickings

These two opening chapters are perhaps the most substantial pieces in this volume in which Short has brought together a number of pieces about various aspects of Newman and history. But there is plenty more of great interest. As Professor Jack Scarisbrick says in his Foreword, this collection of essays 'is not so much to be read straight through from cover to cover as "cherry picked"' (p.vii), and there are certainly some juicy pickings.

In 'Newman and the Liberals', Short makes a convincing case against the liberal academic Frank Turner who argued that Newman was never interested in defending Christianity against rationalism but just in opposing the Evangelicals. Turner has been answered by a number of Catholic defenders of Newman, but he has other 'acolytes in the liberal academy' (p.135) against whom Short directs his considerable powers of forensic dissection and often withering argument. He clearly relishes a fight and doesn't pull his punches. I wasn't convinced that all his attacks were aptly aimed, but he is good on such critics as the one who thinks that 'only university historians can write reliably about Newman, and since those sympathetic to Newman are not all university historians their work by definition cannot be sound.' Short comments, 'Of course, this is risible effrontery' (p.200). But this isn't just rhetoric – Short has demonstrated by quotations and painstaking references just

how mistaken such liberal critics are about Newman: they often quote him selectively or misunderstand the intellectual currents of his time. A review by Short, reprinted in this volume, of the 2015 *Receptions of Newman* in which the various writers tried to argue that Newman was really a liberal, is entitled bluntly 'Travesties of Newman'. A 'deeply misguided collection' is Short's verdict (p. 129), after he has effectively skewered the various arguments put forward.

Ahistorical criticism

Sometimes Short can't resist sideswipes (for instance against *Amoris Laetitia*) which are not always directly relevant to the subject in hand; and English readers may find his style more robustly combative than we are used to on this side of the Atlantic. However, there are certainly liberals who continue to try and enlist Newman among their ranks, despite the definitive scholarship of writers – most prominently and decisively Ian Ker – who have demonstrated how wrong this is. Attempts to depict Newman as a liberal in the modern sense are, as Short says of Turner's attack, ahistorical. Newman was in fact liberalism's most nuanced critic, and that is why it is so important that he is read and correctly understood today. There is no substitute for reading Newman's actual texts, and Short is generous in his quotations, so this is a book which takes us right into Newman's writings as well as debating with critics.

Hope and charity

The volume is not all combative. Lovers of C.S.Lewis will much enjoy the chapter on his and Newman's conversions. And Short is not a writer who goes in for doom and gloom. His essay 'Signs of

Contradiction, Signs of Hope' (originally a talk at Westminster Cathedral), highlights 'two of [Newman's] most attractive attributes: not only his readiness to oppose his contemporaries, when he was convinced that they needed opposing, but his great respect for that indispensable theological virtue, hope' (p.206); and it ends with the late Fr Henry Tristram's account of how Newman 'shared with the Saints one preeminent gift ... of kindling in the minds of others the sense of God's nearness' (p.220). In a chapter praising Fr Roderick Strange's *John Henry Newman: A Portrait in his Letters*, Short brings out the deep charity which motivated Newman's 'Christian correspondence' and makes the reader want to browse again the many volumes of Newman's *Letters and Diaries*.

This is a rich and rewarding book – there are other chapters I don't have space to mention – and it isn't all heavy stuff. Short is

clearly an Anglophile and a lover of English literature: he makes connections with Gissing, George Eliot, Hopkins, Chesterton and even the 'Jorkens' stories ('some of the most enchanting ever written'), to name just a few of his many references. So the controversial element is well-seasoned. There are still intelligent Catholics who do not 'get' Newman. Sometimes they have negative preconceptions about him or they just find his prose too difficult in the age of Twitter and the soundbite. Short is an erudite, witty and readable guide to Newman, never afraid to take on his critics and always giving us a sense of the breadth and depth of this great Englishman and – soon, we hope – great Saint.

Andrew Nash's critical edition of Newman's Essays Critical and Historical, Volume I, will be published later this year by Gracewing.

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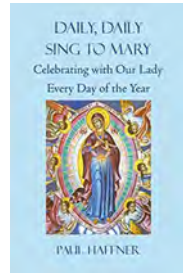
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Days discovering Mary

Daily Daily Sing to Mary - Celebrating with Our Lady Every Day of the Year

by Paul Haffner, Gracewing, 615pp, £20.

reviewed by Ella Preece



Writing for the centenary of the Visions at Fatima, Fr Haffner has taken the opportunity to put together a collection of events, varying from apparitions and miracles to finding of images of Our Lady, in which Mary has revealed or reminded us of the important message Christ gave to us through His death and resurrection. Based on the Marian calendar composed in the eighteenth century and inclusive of up to date events, Fr Haffner has dedicated each day to Our Lady.

The book is clearly written: each day has about a page and a half dedicated to reflection on the day. The passages are informative, covering the significant details of the event, tying in some catechesis or message from Mary, and are occasionally supported by a comment from Scripture, the Church Fathers or Popes. It offers the chance to discover Mary in some of her lesser known capacities as well as reminding us of the significance of more commonly known occasions such as Fatima and Lourdes.

Unbiased

The book allows the reader to be drawn into the universal nature of the Church, sharing in the small miracles - for example Our Lady of Zell or Mary, Mother of God of

Zhyrovichy - and take from them support in our own lives. The book seems to me unbiased in its accounts, giving only an account of what is known. This is notable particularly in the account dedicated to Our Lady of Medjugorje which can be a controversial topic. Fr Haffner states its basic message but is very clear to state that 'Pope Benedict XVI set up a commission to examine the apparitions [...] noting a clear difference between the beginning of the phenomenon and its development' which has taken on further research.

Fresh insight

Because of the variety of entries, each day gives you a fresh insight into Mary, bringing us closer to Christ; and because it is more informative it enables the reader to take from the event aspects that can also apply to their own lives. This book is good for those desiring to deepen their devotion to Mary, to those wishing to know more about her interactions with people throughout history and the world. It is also good for families showing how our Faith is still rich and enduring, that God is still with us as Mary's apparitions are a sign of His great desire to draw us back to Himself.

Putting herself in the middle

Devotion to Mary is an aspect of our Faith that brings great benefit in many areas: it helps us to understand our relationship with God better, how we should live our lives as guided by Christ, how we can understand the Church and its guidance. She is also the closest person to Jesus' heart and therefore a great friend, comforter and Mother to us in our personal prayer life. From the moment she said 'Yes' to God, Mary became the mother for all. She realised that the Incarnation was not just for her benefit and salvation but for that of all humanity. As a mother Mary puts herself between her son and mankind, placing before Him their needs. 'She puts herself "in the middle," that is to say she acts as a mediatrix.' The miracles and messages Our Lady continues to remind us of Christ's message and guidance to us. She demonstrates that though the message of truth may be difficult or dangerous one must stand firm and not be tempted to make the message easier or water it down.

Total abandonment

Just as the Church can hope to seek a deeper understanding of Christ's message by continuously contemplating Christ's works and words, so too can we draw from Mary's example. We can strive to have that unflinching faith in times of difficulty, that total abandonment to God in trust. We can ask Mary as our mother to intercede for us. We can honour her as God honoured her in the beginning, by participating in feast days dedicated to her. By doing this

we will grow in a deeper understanding, knowledge and love of God in whom we hope to have eternal life. This book can help nurture devotion to Our Lady, particularly following 100 years of Fatima when we were encouraged to pray the rosary and meditate on some of the most significant aspects of Jesus' life.

Sure hope and solace

Pope Pius XII wrote about his desire that the faithful would be 'stirred' with piety towards Mary and that by meditating on her example they would be 'more and more convinced of the value of a human life entirely devoted to carrying out the heavenly Father's will and to bringing good to others.' As members of the Church we are all called to play our part in evangelisation and to recognise the role of Our Lady in this great mission. Mary as the symbol of the Church will 'shine forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come, as a sign of sure hope and solace.'

I would recommend this book to all wishing to know more about Mary and her apparitions/messages, those wishing to develop or spend a year in devotion to Our Lady, and families wishing to take a fresh look at Mary guiding us to God. However, it is not a systematic theology book and could not be recommended to anyone wanting answers to specific questions.

Ella Preece is a home-educating mother of three, whose hobbies include archery, juggling and general adventuring.

The FAITH Movement: Summer 2018

The FAITH Summer Session
(for ages 18-35) and

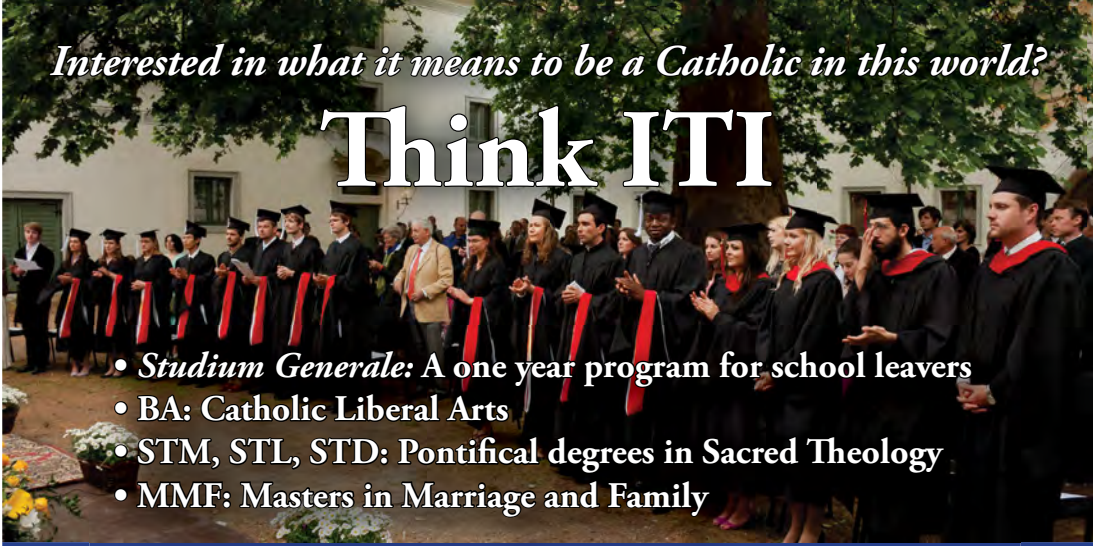
The FAITH Break (for ages 11-15)

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FAITH Break, Monday Aug 6th - Thursday Aug 9th 2018: an exciting four days for 11-15 year olds combining both faith and fun activities in a relaxed holiday setting. The week is structured around getting to know God and each other and includes Holy Mass each day, talks about the Catholic Faith, discussions, prayer, quizzes, art and craft, games, sports and a visit to Chessington World of Adventures. Fr. Michael Dolman St John the Baptist Catholic Church Castle Hill, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4TT Telephone 01538 703503

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