

# faith

September and October 2013  
Volume 45 Number 5  
Price £4.50

PROMOTING A NEW SYNTHESIS  
OF FAITH AND REASON

## ***Lumen Fidei* and the Faith of the Church**

Editorial

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Fr Paul J Keller OP

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Katie Peterson Warner

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David Mills on the secular world's obsessive search for alien life forms

Gregory Farrelly on the moral implications of three-parent IVF

William Oddie on Pope Francis's campaign to rid the Curia of the Devil and his works

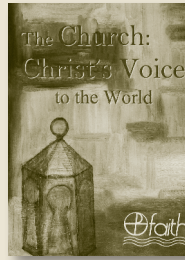
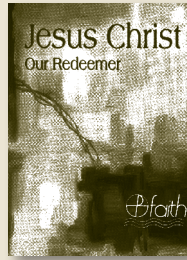
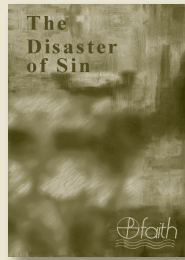
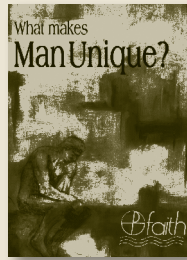
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**Subscriptions and Faith-Keyway Trust Publications Office** Sr Roseann Reddy, 104 Albert Road, Glasgow G42 8DR, subscriptions@faith.org.uk  
UK £25/year, Europe (inc Eire) £29/€37/year.  
Surface Mail overseas £28/\$56/€36/year.  
Air Mail overseas £33/\$66/€42/year.  
Student rate £17/\$34/€22/year.  
Single copies £5 inc. p&p. Bulk orders £3.50 plus p&p.  
Published by the Faith-Keyway Trust, registered charity No. 278314.  
Printed by Tudor Printing 01772 633098, ISSN 1356-126X.

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September and October 2013  
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# *Lumen Fidei* and the Faith of the Church

## Editorial

### “Jesus Christ – the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8)

Every journalist loves a sensational story: they sell newspapers. But sensational stories need drama, and drama needs conflict. Hence, ever since the election of Pope Francis the media, and even certain factions within the Church who have their own agenda, have tried to fabricate some sort of conflict between Pope Francis and his predecessor Benedict XVI.

If not stated outright, it is at least implied that Pope Francis is somehow rolling back the Benedictine era and distancing himself from his predecessor. The most substantial piece of evidence presented for this case would seem to be Pope Francis’s setting up of a consultative body of eight cardinals to oversee the revision of *Pastor Bonus*, that is, the Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia. It is true that this is a new initiative of Pope Francis, but in prioritising the issue of reform of the Curia he is surely only putting into effect the manifest desires of Benedict XVI. The other evidence cited is altogether more trivial. Pope Francis is more likely to speak “off the cuff” rather than sticking to written texts. Pope Francis’s style of preaching is less cerebral and more direct than his predecessor’s. Pope Francis has chosen not to live in the papal apartments. Pope Francis wears vestments that are different from those worn by Benedict XVI. Pope Francis’s shoes are a different colour from his predecessor’s. When catalogued coldly in this fashion one begins to notice the sheer superficiality of the evidence adduced.

#### Continuity Between Benedict XVI and Pope Francis

The publication of Pope Francis’s first encyclical, *Lumen Fidei*, unequivocally underlines the continuity between the two pontificates. Although Pope Francis has put his name to it, this encyclical was begun during Benedict’s pontificate. In fact Francis himself candidly admits:

*He [Benedict XVI] himself had almost completed a first draft of an encyclical on faith. For this I am deeply grateful to him, and as his brother in Christ I have taken up his fine work and added a few contributions of my own. (LF 7)*

There are what one might call obviously Ratzingerian themes and tropes running throughout this encyclical. It repeatedly quotes St Augustine, perhaps Benedict XVI’s favourite theologian. It also makes reference to Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky, both of whom are quoted extensively in Benedict XVI’s earlier writings. And in the final, and very beautiful (so beautiful it bears quoting), encomium of the Blessed Virgin the parable of the sower is applied to Our Lady:

*In the parable of the sower, Saint Luke has left us these words of the Lord about the “good soil”: “These are the*

*ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience endurance” (Lk 8:15). In the context of Luke’s Gospel, this mention of an honest and good heart which hears and keeps the word is an implicit portrayal of the faith of the Virgin Mary. The evangelist himself speaks of Mary’s memory, how she treasured in her heart all that she had heard and seen, so that the word could bear fruit in her life. (LF 58)*

This very distinctive reading of the parable can be found in Ratzinger’s writings going back as much as 30 years.

Other commentators will argue that some of the encyclical’s themes sound very much like issues that Pope Francis has already touched upon in speeches and homilies early in his pontificate. But, however interesting one might find a game of ascribing certain passages to one pontiff rather than the other, this is not really the issue. That Pope Francis has sanctioned a document that he freely admits was “almost completed” by Benedict XVI is a significant blow to the narrative of rupture between the two pontificates. Pope Francis’s decision can only be read as emphasising the continuity between himself and his predecessor.

Nonetheless, we would want to add a subtle but important qualification. It would be a mistake to imagine that Pope Francis were somehow endorsing the policies of his predecessor as perhaps the incoming leader of a political party might wish to be seen as the anointed successor to this or that great political figure. When Pope Francis read the “almost completed” draft of *Lumen Fidei* one does not imagine that he thought to himself: “Yes I want to endorse Ratzinger’s position on X, Y and Z.” Rather, he thought: “The Successor of Peter, *yesterday, today and tomorrow*, is always called to strengthen his brothers and sisters in the priceless treasure of that faith which God has given as a light for humanity’s path” (LF 7) (italics added).

The successor of Peter strengthens the faith of his brothers and sisters by consistently giving voice to the Catholic faith. Pope Francis saw the mind of the Church expressed in the text of *Lumen Fidei*. He recognised that it was authentically Catholic and therefore, as the Successor of Peter, he gave his name and the weight of his authority to this document because it teaches the Catholic faith. And that’s what the Pope does: he teaches the Catholic faith.

For all that there may be differences of style, personality and nuance, there is a continuity between Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. But it is shallow and worldly to see this continuity as the fruit of a meeting of minds between Jose Bergoglio and Joseph Ratzinger, men with different



## “That’s what the Pope does: he teaches the Catholic faith”

temperaments, from different cultures, different continents and perhaps different priorities. The continuity between their pontificates is the continuity of the Catholic faith.

We think that this insight provides a key to a fruitful understanding of *Lumen Fidei*. This encyclical should be read primarily neither as Benedict XVI’s swansong, nor as Pope Francis’s manifesto, nor even as some sort of show of unity between the two. Primarily this document is a magnificently Catholic expression of our magnificent Catholic Faith.

### ***Lumen Fidei*’s profound ecclesial Catholicity**

The encyclical runs to almost 20,000 words. So, manifestly, a short editorial cannot hope to provide an exhaustive exposition of its entire content. We would like simply to home in on certain passages that underline its profound ecclesial Catholicity.

Chapter One of *Lumen Fidei* begins: “Faith opens the way before us and accompanies our steps through time. Hence, if we want to understand what faith is, we need to follow the route it has taken, the path trodden by believers, as witnessed first in the Old Testament” (LF 8). Its analysis of faith begins not with an abstract speculation on the conditions of possibility for the act of faith, but rather with Abraham, “our father in faith”. This is a conscious methodological decision. There are two assumptions behind this starting point. First, faith is God’s initiative. Therefore we must find an instance of God taking this initiative and look at what happened. Second, faith is a reality that exists within time and space. It would be absurd for a zoologist to start reasoning *a priori* about the properties of certain animals; a zoologist must go and observe the animals he is studying. So too we must go to the reality of faith in its givenness and see what it is.

Having read the encyclical this starting point might seem obvious, but actually for those of us who live in the UK it takes on a particular value. Our culture is intensely hostile to Catholicism. It is routinely ridiculed in the media. And of course the past 40 years have seen real turmoil in the Church. The sheer confidence simply to assert our identity is heartening. We are here. We have our own patrimony and traditions and we need neither to explain nor to apologise for this. We have a right to be here. Whether or not this is the encyclical’s intended message, it is, nonetheless, implicitly an encouraging affirmation of our Catholic identity. And we should take this encouragement to heart.

The Church has a valuable contribution to make in the UK. Our parishes, our schools and our charitable institutions propose, sometimes in a modest but nonetheless real manner, a valid alternative to the values of our society. They offer a vision of faith, of healing and of wholeness that our society needs. We must not be cowed by the aggression or the strident voices of those pushing a secularist agenda.

The analysis of Abraham’s faith continues:

*A final element of the story of Abraham is important for understanding his faith. God’s word, while bringing newness and surprise, is not at all alien to Abraham’s experience. In the voice which speaks to him, the patriarch recognises a profound call which was always present at the core of his being.*

And the encyclical states that the God who calls Abraham “is the origin and mainstay of all that is” (LF 11). Since Abraham and “all that is” have their origin in the same God, the Pope seems to imply that Abraham’s experience of a call is the common experience of humanity. Again this is important. Man experiences this “profound call” as “always present at the core of his being”. This means that faith is essential to us as human beings. In the Faith movement we often quote the patristic dictum that expresses the same idea: “Birds fly, fish swim and man prays.” The inalienable reality of man’s spiritual nature means that Catholicism is not an esoteric, minority interest; it proposes a way of responding to this call that we all experience at the core of our being. Again this is a heartening affirmation of the value of faith – and one which the besieged Church in these isles needs to hear.

“We have our own patrimony and traditions and we need neither to explain nor to apologise for this. We have a right to be here”

The description of faith moves on through the faith of the People of Israel and arrives at Jesus, in whom faith finds its final fulfilment because “Jesus is the complete manifestation of God’s reliability” (LF 15). Hence Jesus is the one in whom we can place our faith. However, at this point the encyclical makes the following observation:

*This fullness which Jesus brings to faith has another decisive aspect. In faith, Christ is not simply the one in whom we believe, the supreme manifestation of God’s love; he is also the one with whom we are united precisely in order to believe. Faith does not merely gaze at Jesus, but sees things as Jesus himself sees them, with his own eyes: it is a participation in his way of seeing. (LF 18)*

Not only do we believe in Christ but we participate in him: we are united to Christ. And in being united to Christ we are united to the community that Christ gathers around himself. “And just as Christ gathers to himself all those who believe and makes them his body, so the Christian comes to see himself as a member of this body, in an essential relationship with all other believers” (LF 22). Faith entails being part of Christ’s body – being part of the Church. And so the encyclical draws the conclusion that “faith is

## *Lumen Fidei* and the Faith of the Church continued

necessarily ecclesial” (LF 22). This is what we mean when we talk of the encyclical’s profound ecclesial Catholicity. *Lumen Fidei* vindicates not just what we might call the “Jesus message” but also the living reality of the Church. Our society needs not just the proposal of the Catholic faith. It needs the Church. The Church is not an afterthought. That same faith which answers the deepest yearnings of the human heart leads us necessarily to the Church.

In chapter three of *Lumen Fidei*, which deals with the transmission of the faith, the theme of the Church emerges again. The Church is called “the mother of our faith”.

*The transmission of the faith not only brings light to men and women in every place; it travels through time, passing from one generation to another. Because faith is born of an encounter which takes place in history and lights up our journey through time, it must be passed on in every age. It is through an unbroken chain of witnesses that we come to see the face of Jesus. ... Faith’s past, that act of Jesus’*

*love which brought new life to the world, comes down to us through the memory of others – witnesses – and is kept alive in that one remembering subject which is the Church.* (LF 38)

Amidst all the turmoil in the Church, which might tempt one to become cynical towards the institution, this is a beautiful and timely reminder for us that the Church is so much more than just an institution. She keeps the memory of Jesus alive because she is alive. She is a “remembering subject”. For all the flaws of the Church’s human members *Lumen Fidei* makes absolutely clear that we believers, and in fact the whole of humanity, need the Church because through her “we come to see the face of Jesus”.

Without the Church we do not have access to Christ. We see again this encyclical’s profound ecclesial Catholicity. In the end Pope Francis simply teaches us we must love the Church because “the Church is a Mother who teaches us to speak the language of faith” (LF 38). ☪

# faith

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## Inviting Authors

**Faith magazine invites readers to submit articles with a view to publication.**

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- Articles may be of a speculative nature or of pastoral interest but they must be faithful to the Church’s magisterium. Ideas for articles can be emailed to the editor, who is happy to discuss their suitability.

Articles should be emailed to:  
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# Hearts Upward!

By Fr Paul J Keller OP

Father Paul Keller is assistant professor of sacramental theology at Mt St Mary's of the West Seminary, Cincinnati, and is also the author of *101 Questions & Answers on the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing*. His new book, *A Lenten Journey with Jesus Christ and Saint Thomas Aquinas*, is forthcoming. In this short but thought-provoking article he meditates on the dialogue at the beginning of the Preface to the Eucharistic prayer.

When, for the *Roman Missal*, the translating committee came to the dialogue between the priest and congregation at the beginning of the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer, the question was raised about how to translate *Sursum corda* from Latin to English. As it stands, the current translation will remain for the foreseeable future: the priest will continue to say: "Lift up your hearts," the response to which is: "We lift them up to the Lord."

The question about the translation of *sursum corda* draws our attention to the real meaning of that phrase: literally *sursum corda* would be translated "hearts upward" or "up hearts." Such phrases sound awkward in English, and thus the decision to keep the present translation. Yet perhaps a meditation on the literal meaning of that Latin phrase may help us to enter more deeply into the great prayer of the Church as the priest begins the Eucharistic Prayer.

The dialogue between the priest and respondents at the beginning of the Preface dates to the first Christian community, Father Josef Jungmann SJ tells us in his book *The Mass* (p 201). The Preface, he says, is to be understood as a "speaking before" or *praedicatio* (preaching) in two senses: "as praise of God and as proclamation before the community of the faithful" (p 202). The multiple options for Prefaces in the new *Missale Romanum* are meant to show the rich variety of the Church's meditation on the multiform aspects of the mystery of our redemption.

We prepare for this prayer when the priest greets us with the ancient and biblical words: "The Lord be with you." We respond: "And with your spirit." "*Sursum corda*," he says, and we answer: "We lift them up to the Lord." In ancient times, the priest lifted his hands upwards while saying "*sursum corda*" and the people responded likewise, also raising their hands aloft with their "We have lifted them up to the Lord." The gestures gave added emphasis to the event, but more so, the physical raising of the hands was meant to be the exterior sign of the interior intention to focus on God alone.

The priest continues: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God," and we pray: "It is right and just." In this wonderful exchange in preparation for the Preface and Eucharistic prayer, we are reminded at every Mass about the great act which will take place in our midst. It is no time for anything other than serious contemplation of God, for He Himself will become present on the altar. Thus, at the end of the Preface, we always respond with the three-fold *Sanctus*, entering, as we do, into the Holy of Holies with all of heaven,


as Isaiah saw. The injunction to "lift up your hearts" means, then, that we should place all our attention on God, on heaven where He dwells, that we should realise that we are entering into the eternal liturgy where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us, even as He gives eternal glory and worship to His Father (cf Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7).

"Up hearts," or "Lift up your hearts," is the moment when we put away every other thought so as to focus all our energy on the one and most important act of any given day: the worship of God through our participation in the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ renewed on our altars.

“‘Lift up your hearts’ means ... that we should place all our attention on God”

The *sursum corda* helps us to remember how it is that we participate with the priest in this sacrifice. As *Sacrosanctum Concilium* teaches: "By offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they [the faithful] should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all" (SC 48).

This little phrase is, in a certain sense, the summation of the purpose of our lives: to be always in God through Christ, as the Scriptures themselves attest. "Let us lift up our hearts and hands to heaven," we read in Lamentations 3:41. Similarly, Saint Paul urges us to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth," he says (Col 3:1-2).

"Hearts upward!" we might remind ourselves at Mass, and by doing so we could truly begin to live our heaven on earth! 

# Catholics Come Home: You Can Help More to Follow

By Katie Peterson Warner

Katie Peterson Warner is manager of communication and evangelisation, Catholics Come Home.

You may have heard it said before that the second largest group of Christians in the world next to Catholics is fallen-away Catholics. Well, Catholics Come Home®, a non-profit media apostolate based in the United States, is working to reverse that trend.

Pope John Paul II continually exhorted the Church to begin a “new evangelisation”. He realised that the old methods needed refreshing, stating: “This vital field of action for the Church requires a radical change of mentality, an authentic new awakening of conscience in everyone. New methods are needed, as are new expressions and new courage” (John Paul II, Discourse to the 19th General Assembly of the Council of Bishops’ Conferences of Latin America and the Caribbean, 9 March, 1983).

Inspired by the Holy Father’s call to a New Evangelisation, Catholics Come Home is reaching out to inactive Catholics with inspiring TV commercials and an interactive website to welcome them home. Busy schedules and the lures of our secular world are causing many to drift away from God, Church and their family of faith. Catholics Come Home evangomercials™ extend a gentle, open invitation to rediscover the Sacraments, the Mass, and the graces that come with being a part of God’s family within a parish community.

Catholics Come Home employs mass media outreach effectively to create a highly successful Catholic evangelism effort never before seen – and the results are astonishing: “Six months after the CatholicsComeHome.org media campaign ended, a comprehensive analysis was conducted, which revealed the average increase in Mass attendance (returned Catholics, new converts) was 12 per cent, even though population growth in the Diocese of Phoenix was flat during that period. This equates to an increase of as many as 92,000 souls who came home!” says Ryan Hanning, director of adult evangelisation, Diocese of Phoenix, Arizona. Since that initial launch campaign in Phoenix, Catholics Come Home campaigns have run in 35 dioceses and archdioceses in the US and Canada, in addition to three national campaigns, reaching more than 200 million viewers and helping to bring home to the Catholic Church more than 350,000 souls.

## Personal Stories

Far better than numbers are the personal stories of those souls who have reignited their practice of the Catholic faith. Mary B from Trenton, New Jersey, reached out to us to share her story:

*It was just a few months ago that the “Catholics Come Home” campaign had begun to catch my attention. The website was intriguing and had enough information to*

*encourage me to visit often. I especially loved to watch the evangomercials. I was a born again Evangelical Christian who had finally realised that the Catholic Church was my home; it is vibrant, relevant and deeply steeped in Christian tradition. The journeys I had made through the other denominations were nice places to visit but I couldn’t manage to make them a permanent home. The website, book and Facebook page “Catholics Come Home” have been instrumental in guiding me back, in guiding my family back. The Bible tells us: “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God” and I have done that. The seeking has brought me back to the Catholic Church and my family with me.*

*I am joined with the body of believers, and in the Catholic Church I have found that we are continuing the work that the early Church and the apostles had begun. Returning was easy: I walked into the rectory office, explained that we were moved by the “Catholics Come Home” campaign and would like to return. To my surprise there was no questioning, no condemnation or accusations, there was simply...welcome back. You can go home again and it is my heartfelt desire for people to come to know Jesus Christ and His Gospel, to place their faith in Jesus and experience Him through the Catholic Church. Thank you for the invitation; this Catholic has come home.*

Thomas M from Vancouver, Canada, was deeply affected after reading *Catholics Come Home: God’s Extraordinary Plan for Your Life*, the new book by Tom Peterson, founder and president of Catholics Come Home. With the help of the evangomercials and Peterson’s book, Thomas came home after 25 years of suffering outside the Church with various afflictions, and now experiences God’s healing grace through His Church.



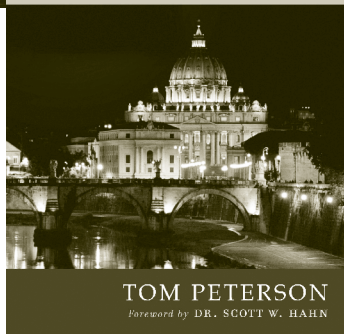
Perhaps one of the most intriguing aspects of Catholics Come Home is its ability to reach and touch people of all ages. Countless young adults have relayed their own stories of coming home after seeing the ads on television and visiting the website.

Adrian grew up an atheist and spent his young life arguing against the Christian faith. After years of being “afraid to learn something he couldn’t accept”, Adrian felt he needed to find that “something” that was missing in his life. In May 2009, Adrian saw a CatholicsComeHome.org evangomercial. As he watched the “Epic” ad, he felt God was personally calling him home. “The most powerful line hit me,” Adrian told us. “We



# CATHOLICS COME HOME

God's Extraordinary Plan for Your Life



are Catholic. Welcome home.' I felt something warm, comforting, and powerful. I felt like God had guided me to this commercial."

After watching the commercial, Adrian visited the website and started to

learn more about the Catholic faith. Sure enough, he found himself uncovering the truth that he had been searching for. "History was proving to me that the Catholic Church was the one true faith," he said.

On Easter 2010, Adrian, with his wife and children, received the sacraments and became full members of Christ's one, holy, Catholic Church in their home state of Colorado. "Months ago, I was an atheist trying to convert people out of the faith," Adrian says. "Today I have returned to the Church, and now I am learning apologetics and defending the faith!"

Adrian's story brings to the forefront another Holy Spirit-driven benefit of Catholics Come Home: its appeal to more than just fallen-away Catholics. Around 25 per cent of the visitors to CatholicsComeHome.org are non-Catholics, and during both diocesan and national campaigns, our office receives a barrage of emails from Protestants, atheists, and others inquiring about the Catholic Faith. As Catholics, it is our mission, given to us by Christ, to evangelise the world. The invitation to "come home" is extended to everybody. The Holy Spirit is clearly behind the work of this apostolate. When we ask people why they come home, they tell us: "Because you invited me." The answer to how to get lapsed Catholics back into the Church is to *invite them home!*

## What Can I do to Help?

So what can *you* do to invite souls home?

First of all, **pray, pray, pray** for the souls of those who are away. Also keep in mind that the Bible tells us how we should (and shouldn't) share our faith:

**2 Timothy 2:24-25** "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth."

**1 Peter 3:15** "Always be prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence...."

**1 Corinthians 13:2** "And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."

**"Today I have returned to the Church, and now I am learning apologetics and defending the faith!"**

**Visit CatholicsComeHome.org** and explore the wealth of resources we have there to help you share your Catholic faith with others in a charitable, inspiring way. We also have a great shop section, featuring Tom Peterson's powerful and engaging new book, *Catholics Come Home: God's Extraordinary Plan for Your Life*. In it, he offers incredible stories of inspiration and hope for people in all walks of life to experience an adventure with God.

**Speak candidly about your Catholic faith.** Recall the mottos of Blessed Mother Teresa and Blessed Pope John Paul II: focus on faithfulness rather than success, and be not afraid!

## Become a convincing disciple of Christ's Catholic Church.

With regular participation in Mass (weekly yes, but even daily), receiving Holy Communion in a state of grace, praying the Rosary, reading the Bible and good Catholic books, regularly partaking in Eucharistic Adoration, fasting, and doing works of mercy for others, we grow in our faith. We begin to exude Christ's light and love in the world.

**Encourage people to return to the sacraments** – starting with Confession. Living the Catholic faith begins with Reconciliation. We serve a God of second chances – actually, a God of unlimited second chances! The sacramental graces and mercy found in the confessional are often the best means of starting over and heading home. We are all prodigal sons and daughters who need to come home to the loving arms of God, Our Father. In living a sacramental life, we begin to realise the joy that comes from knowing, loving and serving God, and *nothing* in this world can fill our hearts the way Christ can.

Tom Peterson, before reverting to Catholicism and founding Catholics Come Home, found that without realising it, he had become addicted to the business power, wealth and control that came with being a successful executive. He explains: "I became selfish and strayed off the path of faith. We all are looking for happiness in all the wrong places. But as St Augustine described so well: 'Our hearts are restless until they rest in God.'"

**Bring Catholics Come Home to your diocese.** Britain has an estimated five million Catholics, yet only a million attend Mass regularly. Could Catholics Come Home work in the UK? Absolutely. The message of Catholics Come Home is meant for *everyone*. We recently expanded our apostolate's reach internationally, and we received an overwhelming response to the ads when they aired in Vancouver, British Columbia. Canada's rates of practising Catholics are significantly lower than in the United States, and atheistic and secularist hostility toward practising Christians is high, yet Catholics Come Home was able to extend the invitation to "come home" to tens of thousands of souls there.

The fact that so few in Britain practise the Catholic faith regularly is all the more indication that Catholics Come Home


## Catholics Come Home: You Can Help More to Follow continued

would be a great asset there, too. It is already a practice of ours to tailor our commercials to different cultures, so that they relate to the people there. Evangomercials that would air in Britain would be unique to British culture.

In addition, we would encourage the diocese or archdiocese we are working with to develop unique efforts to accompany the commercials to aid in reaching out to the British people. If you are interested in seeing Catholics Come Home in your area, you can reach out to your diocese.

**Support the important work of Catholics Come Home.** We need the spiritual and financial help of faithful Catholics to

invite their own brothers and sisters home. Benedict XVI once said: "If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful, and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed."

It is time for all of us to do our part in this New Evangelisation. The time for inviting Catholics home and reigniting our own faith is now. Tomorrow is too late. God is hungry for souls and has an extraordinary plan for all of our lives. Catholics are coming home to live out this adventure, and you can help continue the trend. 

### Catholic Women of the Year 2013

**The four Catholic Women of the Year for 2013 have been chosen. In this Year of Faith, the theme is that of upholding and passing on the Catholic Faith. The Catholic Women of the Year for 2013 are:**

**Mary Maguire**, of Bury, Lancashire, who with her husband Kevin has built an orphanage and school for children in Kenya. They raised the money, built the house, and now care for 60 children, spending half of each year in Kenya. When in Britain, they work full-time raising the £70,000 required to run the orphanage and the new school that they have recently opened for 350 children alongside. The Good Life Orphanage has transformed the lives of some of Africa's poorest children.

**Mary Cahill** of Jersey, Channel Islands, who founded Jersey Catholic Youth, establishing a youth ministry that ranges from "Praise and Play" for toddlers to Confirmation groups, and a "Spirit on the Rock" Festival for people in their teens and twenties. She has taken groups to World Youth Days in Cologne, Sydney and Madrid, to Taize, and to Pope Benedict's visit to mainland Britain. She and her husband David run the Oasis House of Peace retreat house, and this autumn they will be helping to run a Mission to the whole of Jersey with the Sion Youth Team. Mary was nominated by the Jersey groups of the Catholic Women's League, who say: "We are truly blessed to have some one of Mary's enthusiasm and endeavour in passing on the faith to the young people of our Island."

**Rosaline Egan**, who is 93 and still active hosting a weekly tea for people who need company, taking home-made soup to those who cannot cook for themselves, making toys and clothes for new babies, and being an active supporter of the

Union of Catholic Mothers in the Westminster diocese. She makes young people welcome, encouraging them to read and to share her passion for literature and poetry, and has given talks in the parish about her work in Churchill's wartime headquarters in London.

**Marjorie Parker**, who has worked as a head teacher and as a parish catechist. She has also given her time as a street pastor helping to keep local streets safe, and as the organiser of regular events and lunches for elderly people. She has helped with the establishment of bereavement counselling and projects for refugees and vulnerable people, and has opened her own home as a refuge for people in need. Marjorie was nominated by the Family Life ministry of the diocese of Leeds, who said that her life is one of "conscientious and cheerful abundance as she evangelises wherever she is, by living the commandment to love".

In addition, the Catholic Women of the Year committee is giving a special certificate of honour this year to the wives of Ordinariate clergy. Usually the award is not given to groups but to specific individuals. An exception has been made this year after the wives were nominated in a letter noting that they have "bravely supported their husbands on the path to Christians unity: in the process they have surrendered financial security and family homes while having to support their families at a time of great stress and uncertainty. They are an often forgotten but nevertheless vital part of fulfilling the vision of the Ordinariate."

The Catholic Women of the Year Luncheon will be on 11 October at the Thistle Hotel, Marble Arch, London. Funds raised will go to the Maryvale Institute for scholarships for training catechists.

Further information: Joanna Bogle 0208 942 5009 or Janette Woodford (chairman) 01920 469427.



# Real Healing for Real Grief

By Sr Andrea Fraile

Sr Andrea Fraile of the Cardinal Winning Pro-life Initiative outlines the work of Rachel's Vineyard, a support programme for the forgotten victims of abortion.

"The day that my baby died I realised that I had died, too." So said Maria, one of millions of women worldwide who suffer in silence while the pain and the grief of an abortion experience gnaws away at the core of their being. While the political machinery trundles on and propaganda on reproductive rights reaches fever pitch – and while abortion, though not "ideal", continues to be touted as the only reasonable and responsible solution this society has to offer in the face of unplanned pregnancy – women without number who believed the propaganda are now living a radically different version of the carefree life they were promised.

## The Hidden Effects of Abortion

Although mainstream psychiatry is fairly sceptical, an increasing number within the profession acknowledge the damaging effect of abortion on mental health and maintain that the symptoms relating to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are commonly identified in the assessment of post-abortion women. PTSD is not a thing, like a virus or a tumour, but rather a label given to specific groupings of psychological symptoms; and while it is true to say that not every woman who has had an abortion suffers from PTSD, a majority do display relevant symptoms.

For clinical diagnosis of PTSD, symptoms must be identified in each of these three categories: hyperarousal, intrusion and constriction. In *hyperarousal*, the "fight or flight" defence mechanism we all have is over-sensitised and manifests itself in a general tendency to be always on the look out for threat or danger. Symptoms include panic and anxiety attacks, angry outbursts, hyper-vigilance and difficulty falling or staying asleep. Various connectors that trigger the memory of a past abortion, such as the death of a loved one, sounds (like that of a Hoover, recalling the sound of the suction during the procedure) or even weather, can induce these symptoms unexpectedly.

*Intrusion* is about reliving the traumatic experience in different ways, for example by having recurring thoughts about the abortion or aborted child, or having flashbacks, nightmares or intensely depressive reactions around the time of significant anniversaries. Repeat abortions, paradoxically, and replacement pregnancies are additional symptoms of the same thing. In many instances, the recreating of the trauma takes on a disguised form, as in risk-taking behaviour or suicidal tendencies.

In *constriction*, an opposite phenomenon occurs in that any circumstance, sight, sound, smell etc that can be associated with the trauma is studiously avoided. In post-abortion trauma this might include avoidance of family gatherings where young children are present, withdrawal from relationships, especially from those who were involved in the abortion decision, suppression of one's feelings to the point

of being unable to recall all or part of the procedure, drug and alcohol abuse and, the ultimate constrictor, suicide. All of the above symptoms are classic traits that women – in our families, in our churches, in our workplaces and schools – experience in the deepest recesses of their stricken souls while we pass by unknowing.

## Rachel's Vineyard: A Path of Healing

But there are courageous souls in this world who acknowledge this forbidden grief and have devised and established a way in which such grief can find expression and be genuinely healed. Rachel's Vineyard retreats are an initiative created and driven by Theresa Burke, assisted by her husband, Kevin. Burke was a fledgling psychologist when she was instructed to lead a weekly support group for women with eating disorders. Throughout the course of one particular session, a woman in the group made reference to an abortion she'd had. Among other things, she spoke of flashbacks, and her extreme agitation when her estranged husband left spiteful messages on her answering machine calling her a "murderer". This resonated with the experiences of a number of other women in the group until one of them – also post-abortion – lashed out angrily and defensively, saying that the abortion was the best thing she could have done to regain control of her life after a man had so badly messed it up.

After weeks of discussing every kind of emotive issue, from stress and self-esteem to difficult relationships and sexual inadequacy, no topic had caused such a violent reaction. The incident made a deep impression on Burke, who could quite easily make a connection between the eating disorders the women spoke of and the abortions they systematically did not speak of. She flagged this up to her supervisor, a psychiatrist, who told her in no uncertain terms to leave the subject of abortion well alone; that the woman who mentioned abortion in the first place was not experiencing flashbacks but merely a psychotic reaction to the medication she was on. That incident, along with her supervisor's subsequent reaction to it, was the catalyst that resulted in Theresa Burke establishing Rachel's Vineyard retreats in 1994.

## We are not alone: others suffer with us

The point of these retreats is, first of all, to reveal to post-abortion women that although they feel a tremendous sense of isolation, they are not alone. The mere fact of connecting with people who understand is already an important step. Secondly, they are allowed to grieve the loss of their child. It is naturally understood that words of condolence, no matter how small or unoriginal, from friend or stranger, comfort us because they allow us to see that we are not alone: others know how we feel. The post-abortion woman has in all likelihood never heard anyone say: "I'm sorry for your loss." And yet she grieves the death of her child. Thirdly, by owning the part they played in the abortion experience and learning

## Real Healing for Real Grief continued

to forgive, they are offered real hope that their wound can not only be healed but also be a tremendous grace.

### Who Can Participate?

To whom are Rachel's Vineyard retreats directed? I have made constant reference to women, but the retreats are open to everyone. The truth that "no man is an island" becomes tragically poignant when a child is aborted, as grandparents, aunt, uncles and siblings try to come to terms with their loss. These often participate, as do healthcare professionals who have suffered spiritually and emotionally over many years.

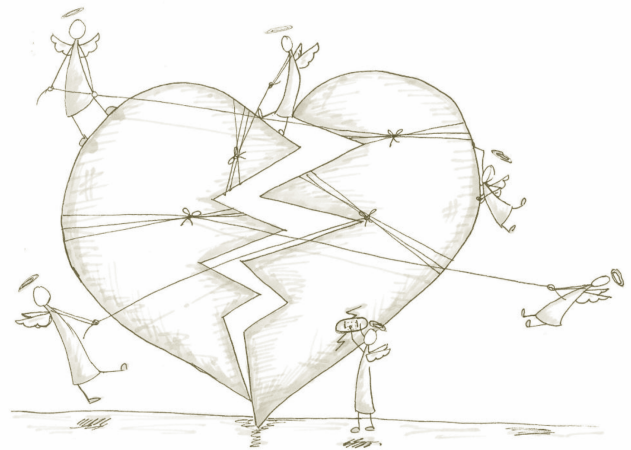
Special mention must be made, however, of the fathers of these children, who are most earnestly encouraged to attend. Some may have had no part to play in the abortion decision their spouse or partner made years previously, but they are living with the consequences of that decision and may want to accompany their partner in seeking healing as a couple; other men go to seek healing for the wound at the heart of their own abortion experience. Whether the man actively encouraged an abortion or stood by and allowed it to happen, his identity as father, and therefore as protector and defender of his family, is radically wounded.

### What Happens Over the Course of the Retreat?

Why a weekend retreat and not simply a series of counselling sessions? Because so often in one-hour counselling sessions, a therapist can only get so far before it's time to finish, and a woman who has been brought close to the root of her emotional pain then has to leave the room and go back to her everyday life: it is deeply unsettling and can draw the process out for years. In addition, the retreat provides a safe environment with a trained counsellor and professional psychologist so that, should she need any immediate help, it can readily be provided.

But then it need not be an either/or, and one-hour counselling sessions have their place. They can be a useful means of exploring various destructive behaviours and the emotions that lie at the heart of them. Many people participate in a Rachel's Vineyard weekend towards the end of a series of counselling sessions and find that, because of that previous groundwork, they engage more fully in the retreat. There is no hard and fast rule.

It is scientifically demonstrable that memories of traumatic experiences remain in specific, non-verbal parts of the brain (not in the left frontal cortex, where reasoning occurs). As a result, traditional talk therapy can be ineffective and this is why Rachel's Vineyard retreats are sensory based: connectors to trauma are sensory, so the healing must be too. It seems that no one understood this better than God who, knowing that in our humanity we relate to each other by sense, sent His Son to us that we might know that our God is not far away but enters fully into the length and breadth, height and depth of our human experience. A trusting knowledge of the healing power of *God*, not man, is the



kernel of the whole thing: Rachel's Vineyard is utterly Christ-centred. In Catholic retreats (there are inter-denominational ones, too), there is Adoration all weekend and the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation – a priest is present throughout the whole weekend.

In every retreat, Catholic or not, Scripture plays an essential part in the healing process. Gospel passages are meditated on through the medium of role play – from the woman caught in adultery, when Jesus bends down and looks straight into the eyes of the (self-)condemned woman and says: "Who condemns you? ... Neither do I" (John 8:1-11), to the healing of blind Bartimaeus, to whom Jesus says: "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:46-52).

Retreatants are invited to carry a stone with them everywhere they go, as a symbol of their own condemnation – to the dining room, the bedroom, the bathroom. It is under no circumstances a punishment, and they can let it go whenever they want, but it is an opportunity for them to reflect on what it is they are carrying around with them. It might be their guilt, their alcohol addiction – whatever it may be, it is often something they wish to hold on to as a way of memorialising their baby. Memorialising is good, but the object of the exercise is to seek out healthier ways of doing so.

“Whether the man actively encouraged an abortion or stood by and allowed it to happen, his identity as father, and therefore as protector and defender of his family, is radically wounded”

Afterwards they are invited (everything is by invitation; there is no coercion at any point) to tell their own abortion story, to connect the pains of the past with the present; and in the telling of these stories, damaged relationships with God, with the unborn child, with family members and the Church are also addressed. Maternal/paternal identity is also looked at since trauma can often be expressed through neglect or over-



## “Symptoms relating to post-traumatic stress disorder are commonly identified in the assessment of post-abortive women”

protectiveness of existing children. And then a beautiful part of the weekend arrives when participants are invited to envisage their unborn child or children. Where are they now? Safe and happy in the arms of Jesus (“for whom all men are alive”). And now these broken mothers, fathers, grandparents can reclaim the truth that, actually, they never stopped loving their unborn children. At the abortion event they might have said: “I don’t love you, I don’t want you”, but it was a lie, and now they have the chance to reclaim, too, the meaning of their child’s life: he or she is safe, in heaven, and powerfully interceding on their behalf before the throne of God.

The weekend ends with a memorial service in which letters they have written to their unborn children are read out and their children symbolically laid to rest. At this stage I am always reminded of the widow of Nain (Lk 7:11-17) or, before her, the widow who looked after Elijah (1 Kgs 17:17-24). Both of these have endured the death of their sons and, with them, any hope for the future. Both passages of Scripture go on to tell us that Jesus and Elijah respectively “gave him to his mother” once he had been restored to life. Rachel’s Vineyard allows women to truly think about their children now, not as wasted lives and missed opportunities, but as living beings with whom they can look to the future with hope. The child they had lost to abortion turns out to be the saint in heaven who will lead them to Christ.


The retreatants’ loved ones are invited to come along to the memorial service, followed by a sumptuous lunch, the banquet of the prodigal son. This can be a very effective

means of breaking down the feelings of isolation that persist when returning to daily life.

### The Work of Rachel’s Vineyard

Since 1994, more than 600 retreats have been held annually, reaching thousands of women across 47 states of America and 17 countries. In Britain and Ireland, retreats take place in Leeds, London, Cork and Derry; and there have been a few in Ayrshire and the Highlands. In an outcome study that was carried out in the US five years ago, 242 women were asked to what extent their PTSD symptoms had improved after attending a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat. They were asked to rate their experience on a scale of -5 to +5, where -5 to -1 indicated a worsening of the symptoms, 0 indicated no change, and 1-5 indicated an improvement. The average response was 4.75. Many of those who have been healed have gone on to help others through subsequent retreats, and the retreats themselves are on the increase.

Jesus said that He had come that we might have life and have it in its fullness (Jn 10:10) and there are so many who need His healing touch to bring them to life again. Let us all, wherever we are and whatever we do, acknowledge this silent wound, this forbidden grief, and spread the word that death does not have the final word. There is hope.

If you, or someone you know, is broken through abortion, contact Marene on 07505 904 656 (email: [Rachelsvineyard.leeds@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Rachelsvineyard.leeds@hotmail.co.uk)) or Bernadette on 087 8592877 (email: [noramalone15@yahoo.com](mailto:noramalone15@yahoo.com)) for information. 



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# Dog Food, De-Evolution and the De-Divining of Man *By Keith Riler*

Keith Riler is the pen-name of a financial analyst who has written for this magazine, *First Things*, the daily internet publication *The American Thinker*, *LifeNews* and *Texas Right to Life*. In this article he argues against reductionist accounts of what it is to be human.

As my Labrador grows, food restocking occurs ever more frequently. On a recent trip to Petco, I assisted an arthritic elderly gentleman with his bag of dog food. This was no big deal and nothing to brag about, just a simple, natural, common and right thing to do. It later occurred to me that this is exactly the sort of thing Thomas Nagel would cite as being inconsistent with the survival of the fittest storyline.

Put differently, the materialist neo-Darwinian conception of nature is almost certainly false and those who hew to its reductionist tenets would strip us of what makes us human.

## Thomas Nagel

That the materialist neo-Darwinian concept is false is the subject of Nagel's 2012 book, *Mind and Cosmos*. The book is not a religious book, nor a default to a divine explanation. It simply points out that there are things about man, critical things, which are not explained by the merely physical, reproductive fitness, adaptive needs narrative.

Specifically and according to Nagel, our consciousness, cognition and value are incompatible with evolutionary naturalism in its materialist form.

Nagel further suggests that it would be good "if the secular theoretical establishment, and the contemporary enlightened culture which it dominates, could wean itself of ... [its] Darwinism of the gaps... the approach is incapable of providing an adequate account, either constitutive or historical, of our universe."<sup>1</sup>

Ouch. Nagel is an atheist and a New York University professor of philosophy, but these desirable postmodern credentials have not insulated him from the ire of evolutionism's faithful, which ire has been directed at the heretic with Torquemadian passion:

A month after the book was published, a group of prominent atheist scientists and philosophers – including Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Alex Rosenberg – held a conference about "Moving Naturalism Forward" in which Nagel's book was identified as a source for much distress and derangement. *The Guardian* gave the book the title of "Most Despised Science Book of 2012" and *Prospect* magazine felt compelled to defend Nagel's sanity.

As Tocqueville observed: "The majority has enclosed thought within a formidable fence. A writer is free within that area, but woe to the man who goes beyond it."<sup>2</sup> Or, as Mel Brooks sang: "The Inquisition, what a show!"

That those who cling to evolutionism would strip us of what

makes us human may seem far-fetched and conspiratorially minded, but try to view the suggestion less as an accusation of coordination and more as a simple statement that ideas matter.

Nagel's three reductionist evolutionary incompatibles of subjective consciousness, cognition and real value (good/bad and right/wrong) manifest themselves in our common experiences of meaning, purpose, fraternity, courage, optimism, love, honesty, loyalty, justice, sympathy, beauty, fidelity, self-sacrifice and concern, among other things. These things "transcend the imperatives of biology."<sup>3</sup> They make no contribution to our reproductive fitness yet are important, perhaps the most important, human tendencies.

Nagel points out that lions have evolved in such a way that a female lion becomes receptive to a male's advances soon after that same male has killed her offspring. Us, not so much. Human mothers would have a tendency to reflect longer and deeper about such a man.

Faced with these wonderful facts of human life (charity, beauty, etc), evolutionary reductionists default to subjectivity, assume that our impressions of value are illusory and see moral reasoning as a sophisticated mechanism to get what we really want (a free decoder ring to anyone who, without laughing, can explain my Petco experience in these terms).

Said differently, faced with two mutually exclusive conclusions – (a) evolutionism is true and therefore moral realism is false, and (b) moral realism is true and therefore evolutionism is inadequate – reductionists choose (a). The real-world results of this choice are relativism, the nihilistic despair of chance and the joylessness of being a cellular mass, an accumulation of mere chemical reactions.

## The Impact of Materialism

Consider that most creeds have both leader-bishop-theologians and faithful who, although less well-versed, still live out the implications of their faith. Across society we see the impact of the materialist creed and its rejection of our transcendent qualities as untrue. Although the creed is professed by elites, it is lived by the less fortunate and its results are real.

Evolutionism's fruits include the loss of virtue, an incoherent aesthetic culture and a rejection of our human nature. Consider, as a small sample, the collapse of marriage and female dissatisfaction; the rejection of beauty and deconstruction of art; abortion; and our growing hopelessness and loss of a sense of American exceptionalism.



## “Perhaps the materialist theory is incomplete”

First, we may not be cub-eating lions, but we do have cougars [a term which, for the benefit of readers not familiar with North American slang, refers to an older woman seeking a sexual relationship with a younger man]. The sexual revolution and the impermanence wrought by no-fault divorce have produced unprecedented loneliness and the phenomenon of sad, bar-crawling post-divorcee moms. The “paradox of declining female happiness” has been well documented and is traced to the sexually autonomous ethos and its ditching of fidelity, perseverance and marital fortitude. With new-found freedom has come new-found dissatisfaction, for which promiscuity has not been an antidote.

Second, the artistic equivalent of choice (a) above is the sophomoric, oft-heard and thoroughly modern question “Who’s to say what’s art?” As the American poet and essayist Mark Signorelli has written: “Once it became common to doubt or to deny that man had any essential inclination toward beauty or truth, the purpose of making objects intended to unite beauty and truth in various ways was no longer evident.”

Therefore, and consistent with the rejection of every standard norm of artistic creation, as art we get urinals, smeared paint, found junk, literary nonsense, mutilated bodies, amorphous blobs and excrement. The modern artist finds himself “possessed by a horrible freedom ... undermined by any higher purpose than choice itself.”

“According to Nagel, our consciousness, cognition and value are incompatible with evolutionary naturalism in its materialist form”

Third, the assumption of our being just a clump of chance biological cells has no clearer spawn than abortion. Pro-choice euphemisms like “pre-embryo,” “foetal tissue,” and “ball of cells” are materialistic and reflect fully the diminishment of human life as chance – easy come, easy go. However, widespread revulsion to the horrors of Kermit Gosnell’s abortion clinic in Philadelphia is an encouraging proof that common sense still rejects the reductivist model (even if only when hit over the head with it).

Finally, it seems more than ever that modern American society is “an experience in dissatisfaction, a wager on the benefits of discontent”.<sup>4</sup> Consistent with the despair of chance, there is a new and growing hopelessness and a draining of American optimism. We see this in both the aimlessness of popular culture and the actively managed withdrawal of American international influence. This widespread sense that we have lost our prospects reflects a bad trade of confident teleology for acedia.

### The De-Divining of Man

Evolutionism’s clingers-on are leading us down a path of de-evolution, stripping us of the good and the beautiful. This theory-consistent return to individualistic animalism brings us to rivalry. As Blessed John Paul II predicted in *Evangelium Vitae* (20):

*[P]eople inevitably reach the point of rejecting one another. Everyone else is considered an enemy from whom one has to defend oneself. Thus society becomes a mass of individuals placed side by side, but without any mutual bonds. Each one wishes to assert himself independently of the other and in fact intends to make his own interests prevail.*

This is the de-divining of man and it is the project of those who hold the idea that there is no more to reality than what the most developed science describes. The desire for a theory of everything is understandable and a natural outgrowth of the human consciousness, cognition and value that Nagel describes; but so is humility. Perhaps we’re just not there yet. Perhaps the materialist theory is incomplete.

Obviously, we can do a lot more damage forcing reality to fit into a reductivist model than being patient enough to require that the theory describes reality. Ideas matter and evolutionism’s forced result is evolutionary back-tracking, putting us on the path to being less human.

St Paul teaches us that now we see God “in a mirror dimly, but then face to face”;<sup>5</sup> but the reductivist model blacks out the mirror completely. It is unclear whether these efforts are deliberate, to make the theory work, or simply self-fulfilling prophecy; but the result is a de-divining of man by way of the removal of all that makes us created in God’s image.

So today move the ball forward and be a counter-evolutionist. Do something good and nice, just because it’s the right thing to do. ☪

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*, p 127.

<sup>2</sup>Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Part V, Chapter 14.

<sup>3</sup>Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*, p 125.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Frankel, *The Democratic Prospect*, p 17.

<sup>5</sup>1 Cor 13:1

# Fatima and the Conversion of Russia

By Joanna Bogle

Joanna Bogle is the author of several historical biographies. Her latest is *Courage and Conviction*, about Bridgettine nuns who hid Jewish refugees in Rome during the Second World War. She is active within the Association of Catholic Women, chairs an ecumenical Christian group running a nationwide Schools Bible Project, and was appointed a Dame of St Gregory by Pope Benedict XVI. In this article she reflects on the message of Fatima and the current situation of the Catholic church in Russia.

One of the first people to congratulate Pope Francis on his election as successor of St Peter was a spokesman for the Russian Orthodox Church, with a message of great goodwill. It's a measure of how much things have changed in Russia over the past two and a half decades, following the collapse of Communism, that his statement did not seem particularly remarkable. Just think about it: for most of the 20th century Christianity in Russia was persecuted, the Orthodox Church was often a tool in the hands of the Soviet government, and relations between Catholicism and Orthodoxy were either tense or frozen in the ice of Cold War realities. But here was the Orthodox Church enthusiastically hailing a new Pope – and in due course it was announced that the State Duma representative Sergei Naryshkin would be attending the inaugural Mass in Rome.

Next year, 2014, will see the centenary of the start of the First World War, the war which shaped the 20th century. Millions of young men were killed, thrones were toppled, and Communism was established in Russia in what was to become a 60-year regime involving misery on a massive scale, with famine, secret police, concentration camps and the ruthless stamping out of any attempts at opposition.

The same year will mark another notable anniversary, for it will be 30 years since Blessed John Paul consecrated the world, including Russia, to Mary's Immaculate Heart, as requested at Fatima, ushering in the collapse of Communism five years later, and the great wave of conversion to Christianity that has since swept the country.

## The Situation in Russia

Today, Russia's churches – many of which had been turned into museums of atheism under Communism – are in very active use, and are often packed. Visitors from the West are impressed, but also sometimes almost embarrassed: people are praying, lighting candles, and venerating icons with an intensity that is tangible. The new enthusiasm for the Christian faith is not without its tensions: Catholic/Orthodox relations in this heartland of Orthodoxy have not been easy. But Russian Orthodox leaders were among the first to pay gracious tributes to Pope Benedict on his retirement and these were followed by the expressions of warm goodwill towards Pope Francis.

Of course there is a certain amount of politicking in all this. In a bizarre twist of history, the Russian newspaper *Pravda*, which used to be the mouthpiece of Soviet atheism, now attacks America for restricting religious freedom, citing Obama's Affordable Care Act and the problems it is causing for

Catholics. Russia's Christianity is very much bound up with Russian pride and Russian identity, and politicians in Russia know how to capitalise on this: they can pick up on the public mood, and denouncing America suits them very well. A current campaign has focused on the need to ban the adoption of Russian orphans by American couples: *Pravda* has been running stories about how these children may end up in lesbian or homosexual households. Promotion of same-sex marriage by President Obama has provided plenty of scope for anti-American speeches and feature articles.

Russia's grim Soviet-era housing, high rates of abortion and of alcoholism and substance abuse, crime syndicates controlled by the Mafia and widespread corruption – all these help to make Christianity deeply attractive. The tenderness of motherly care in Mary, the knowledge that there are saints in heaven praying and interceding and a sense of God's justice and mercy all combine to offer something that speaks to the soul with a ring of truth and of hope.

## The 'Fatimists'

Evidence of Russia's conversion is causing a problem for one specific group that most Russians probably don't know about: the diehard "Fatimists". These are the campaigners – American-led but with a wedge of support in Britain – who insist that Blessed John Paul did not carry out the consecration, and that both he and Pope Benedict lied about Fatima and that the truth of the whole story has been kept from us by a sinister group of plotters with whom successive Popes have colluded.

When the Church published Sister Lucia's letter revealing the final secret in 2000 the Fatimists were dismayed, especially when its original was included in a Vatican document and displayed on the internet. Hand-written on old-fashioned four-fold notepaper, it revealed an extraordinary vision that the children had seen, involving a "Bishop dressed in white" whom they took to be the Holy Father, who was shot and fell to the ground as he climbed over a ruined city filled with corpses. Small wonder that Blessed John Paul, shot in a crowded St Peter's Square in 1981, recognised himself as the Pope in this vision: the vast numbers of Christian martyrs of the bloodstained 20th century were epitomised here, with Mary's plea for prayer and penance echoing authentically across the ruins of so many cities in two world wars and other conflicts.

The Fatimists have found the going a bit difficult in recent years: evidence of Russia's conversion, which Mary promised would happen after the consecration, is now overwhelming. Mary did not give a timescale to events. Reconciliation between



**“Russia’s churches – many of which had been turned into museums of atheism under Communism – are in very active use, and are often packed”**

Orthodoxy and the Catholic Church will be slow, but it will clearly mark the fullness of conversion. Blessed John Paul, the “Fatima Pope”, went to the shrine in Portugal in 1982 to give thanks for his miraculous survival after the shooting, and the bullet that should have killed him is now in Mary’s crown on the statue there. His visit was not without incident.

A Lefebvrist priest – members of the Society of St Pius X have long been fervent supporters of the Fatimist conspiracy theories – tried to stab him while he was at the shrine. He was wounded but the attack did no lasting damage, as the priest was overpowered before he could plunge the knife in deeply. Pope John Paul, man of courage, carried on with the ceremonies and it was only later that the blood on his inner clothes revealed that he had indeed been wounded in the attack.

“The diehard Fatimists ... insist that Blessed John Paul ... and Pope Benedict lied about Fatima”

Today, in the former USSR, a great Catholic cathedral has been built in honour of Our Lady of Fatima in Kazakstan. The bishop of the diocese, Bishop Athanasius Schneider, is known for his devotion to the Eucharist – and this places the Fatimists in a tricky position. Much of their time is spent denouncing modern liturgy, and they ought to be among this Bishop’s supporters. But they are reluctant to support a Bishop whose actions have so obviously rendered void their assertions that nothing in Russia changed after 1984 and Blessed John Paul’s consecration.

The Fatima visions of 1917 were among the most extraordinary and poignant of any Marian event at any time in the Church’s history. The reference to Russia – very puzzling to three country children in Portugal, who had never been to school or studied any geography books – stood out starkly in Mary’s message. For decades, Catholics prayed for Russia. When a Polish Pope was elected, a Slav from a country under Russian domination, there was a sense of something stirring in history – and then it all came to fruition. There were human political events – brought about through Gorbachev, Reagan and Thatcher – but essentially the events of the final two decades of the 20th century were about great spiritual realities.

With the canonisation of Blessed John Paul, the saga will in a sense reach its climax. The conversion of Russia will continue, as must our prayers and penances, and events will continue to roll on.

Probably the conspiracy theorists will roll on, too. Some tried to campaign against Blessed John Paul’s beatification; some spent a lot of energy trying to read into Pope Benedict’s words at Fatima all sorts of coded hints at untold secrets. They have long been asserting that these two Popes were liars – the argument runs that they were both in the grip of a great

conspiracy from which they were unable to extricate themselves (Freemasons, all that sort of thing) and that only the Fatimists’ own websites and pamphlets can be trusted to tell the real story.

This looks set to run and run. There will always be people ready to lap up conspiracy theories. “Oh, don’t read the Vatican website – that’s been tampered with,” I was told by one who had been initiated into the Fatimist ideas. It’s all grist to their mill: papers kept by Masonic clergy, popes obliged to lie, and then there’s the Great and Terrible Secret Which They Won’t Tell Us.

### **The Conversion of Russia?**

The reality is being played out, in the dramatic events of John Paul’s reign, in the renewed Catholic/Orthodox friendships, in the conversion of Russia that is happening before the eyes of the world (including the eyes of this writer, who visited the former USSR in the 1990s and then again, more recently). The Fatima drama, with its spiritual insights into the great and tragic events of the 20th century, in the end rests on something of universal importance: prayer and penance. This was what Cardinal Ratzinger, as he was then, emphasised when the final Fatima secret was revealed as the 21st century opened: he explained that the vision revealed a message which in the end is about loving and trusting in God, about hope conquering despair and anger and confusion. It’s a message for us all. ☩



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# Rereading *Dei Verbum* in Context

By Canon Luiz Ruscillo

Canon Luiz Ruscillo is Director of Education for Lancaster Diocese and a graduate of Rome's Pontifical Biblical Institute. In this lengthy but rewarding article he offers a fascinating and synthetic overview of the scholarly context of one of Vatican II's most influential documents, *Dei Verbum*.

In November 1965 Pope Paul VI promulgated *Dei Verbum*. This document, one of the fruits of the Second Vatican Council, presented to the modern world the Catholic Church's understanding of how God reveals himself to humanity. The Bible is the written document that records God's self-revelation and so *Dei Verbum* is concerned with the Bible. Too often *Dei Verbum*'s promulgation is caricatured as the moment Catholics began again to read the Bible, after centuries of it being a closed book for them. This is yet another instance of that lazy approach which understands the Second Vatican Council as an absolute novelty, an approach described by Benedict XVI as "a hermeneutic of discontinuity".

It is true that the Catholic Church has been extremely attentive to the way Christians have approached the Bible; and those in authority have been extremely protective. We witness this as early as AD150 with Marcion, a heretical bishop in the early Church, who rejected the Old Testament and Judaism as well as large parts of the New Testament

The Church had to oppose him and promulgate an orthodox New Testament canon. Such sensitivity and reverence for the Scriptures and the accompanying harshness towards those who in some way threaten them is understandable if we take the Bible seriously as the Word of God. In Marcion's case the Church acted correctly to protect the integrity of the teaching of the Apostles and the faith of the people.

It requires the wisdom of Solomon to guide the faithful in their reading of the Scriptures. And this has been especially the case through the period of rationalism and the Enlightenment up to the modern day, during which we have seen the birth of critical studies and the historical-critical method. From our present vantage point, looking over the most recent centuries of scripture scholarship, the long view taken by the teaching authority of the Church seems to have been vindicated. It is only within this context that one can rightly appreciate the full import of *Dei Verbum*.

## The Bible, Interpretation and the Wider Context of Revelation

It has always been understood from the earliest times, even before Christianity, that the Bible is not a homogeneous text. Within the Scriptures themselves, both the Old and the New Testaments, we see ample evidence of new interpretations and rereading of the more ancient texts, recognition of different forms and styles, even a retelling of the same events in a different way. In other words, the practice of *interpretation* of the biblical text already occurs within the Bible itself.

Furthermore, neither Judaism nor Christianity can be described as "religions of the book". Ancient Judaism had a concept of *the unwritten Torah*, similar to Christianity's *Tradition*. This is to be expected, since a set of experiences regarded as the deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt, the promise of a land and their election as a people joined to God in a covenant gave them their identity before any written accounts. Similarly, the Christian *kerygma*, the preaching of the Gospel, came before any written Gospels. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, grew out of a living faith community and are owned by that community.

Consequently, although four of the six chapters (3-6) that make up *Dei Verbum*, the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, concentrate on the Scriptures, the document begins (chapters 1-2) by setting the Bible in the context of God revealing Himself to man in the history of salvation, in Christ who is the fullness of Revelation, and in the life of the Church through which Revelation is transmitted. The Bible cannot be read, understood or interpreted outside the community of the Church. An approach of *sola scriptura* makes neither historical nor theological sense.

*Hence there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, while sacred tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently, it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence. (DV 9)*

Having described the place of the Scriptures in the life and tradition of the Church, *Dei Verbum* succinctly lays down wise principles for interpreting and understanding them. These are the fruit of considered reflection by the Church on the developments of modern methods of exegesis using twenty centuries of lived wisdom. Hence, if one is to grasp the full import of *Dei Verbum* an overview of both the Church's approach to Scripture and the document's immediate scholarly context is required.



## “It requires the wisdom of Solomon to guide the faithful in their reading of the Scriptures”

### The Church and the Bible

The Church has always had a care to guide the faithful and preserve the Scriptures, especially in times of doubts and uncertainties. The Council of Trent (1545-63) dispelled anxieties with its resolution to decree the list of the inspired books of the Canon of Scripture. In doing so it adopted the same Canon that had already been listed in the Council of Florence (1438-45), which in turn is identical to that of the Council of Hippo (393); and that Council used the list found in a letter regarding the Canon sent by Pope Innocent I in 405 to Exuperius, Bishop of Toulouse. Similarly, there have always been scholars within the Church, of the highest quality and integrity, who have used the critical tools available to them at the time in their biblical studies. Among the greatest would be Origen (185-254), who began textual criticism with his *Hexapla*; Eusebius (260-340), who researched the formation of the New Testament; and Augustine (354-430), who laid down principles for comparison of the Synoptics.

Scholars of the Middle Ages also had a fine-tuned methodology in their exegesis, expressed as *the four senses of Scripture*. The method gave rise to the couplet: *Literata docet, Quid credas allegoria / Moralis quid agas, Quotendas anagogia* (which freely translates as: “The literal teaches what God and our ancestors did; the allegory is where our faith and belief is hid / The moral meaning gives us the rule of daily life; the anagogy [or mystical interpretation] shows us where we end our strife”). But with the coming of the age of the Enlightenment in the 18th century the Church was faced with a whole new way of approaching the Scriptures, which now we describe as modern biblical criticism. It was a development which could not be ignored and needed to be engaged with.

An Oratory priest, Richard Simon (1638-1712), with his work *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (1678), began the era of modern criticism. He concluded that Moses was not the only author of the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, and proposed that the ancient texts had unwritten traditions at their base. His work was translated into English and later German, but it was also put on the Church’s index of forbidden books. Another Catholic, Jean Astruc, observed in his work *Conjectures* (1753) that there is a variation in the divine name in Genesis and proposed that this was due to the use of two distinct sources. Another Catholic, Alexander Geddes, commented on the same thing at the beginning of the 19th century.

### The Rise of the Historical-Critical Method

Although these Catholic scholars recognised that historical circumstances are important for understanding the text, it was among the Protestants that the historical-critical method would be developed. The great intellectual currents of the 17th and 18th centuries inevitably influenced the direction of biblical studies deeply. The shift of emphasis from metaphysics to epistemology and so to rationalism and

empiricism would greatly affect the presuppositions which underpinned approaches to interpretation. With the age of the Enlightenment, rationalism culminated in a complete rejection of the supernatural, and extreme empiricism led to scepticism and subjectivism. The philosophy of Hegel, and then evolutionary theory, became the great and defining influences on biblical historical studies.

As a result, the great figures in biblical scholarship leading up to the beginning of the 20th century have at the heart of their work certain philosophical presuppositions born out of the Enlightenment:

- That claims to historicity must be treated with scepticism;
- That ancient culture and religion evolve gradually from the primitive;
- That all supernatural elements are to be rejected.

These principles influenced the great Protestant scriptural scholars such as Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), Bernhard Duhm (1847-1928), Ferdinand Christian Bauer (1792-1860) and David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874). Nor were Catholics completely absent from the scene: the Dominican Marie-Joseph Lagrange (1855-1938) argued that the exegete could hold to the immutability of truth and, at the same time, take seriously the growth of doctrine within Scripture. Albin van Hoonacker (1857-1933) was another Catholic of the same mind who worked with the new methodology while not advocating the relativist philosophical presumptions.

It was in this period that Vatican I (1869-1870) reaffirmed that the books of the Bible are sacred and canonical because, “having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author”. It is also in this period that Leo XIII issued *Providentissimus Deus* (1893). This encyclical presented a plan for Catholic biblical studies. In the guidance and recommendations we find the following:

- Students should be trained in methods of interpretation;
- Although the Vulgate is to be the official text of the Bible, ancient manuscripts must not be neglected;
- A text cannot be interpreted against a dogma of the Church;
- The art of criticism and oriental languages should be studied;
- God spoke to human beings in a way that they could understand and the sacred authors used terms common at the time. They did not formally intend to teach natural science and history.

Since this period is marked by vicious polemics against the faith it is significant that the reaction of the Magisterium was not defensive, but encouraged the development of genuine scientific expertise while rejecting the preconceived opinions inimical to the faith.

### The 20th Century and Form Criticism

Moving into the 20th century, Herman Gunkel (1862-1932) developed a method of the study of the Old Testament described as *form criticism*, which looked for the original data that gave rise to the secondary context of the written form. He had eminent followers such as Gerhard von Rad (1901-1971) and Martin Noth (1902-1968). Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) was the most influential New Testament scholar. He looked to get behind the written documents to the period between the events of Jesus' life and the written accounts. This is an important and fruitful venture both for the Old and New Testaments, but when it is undertaken within a context formed by the philosophical presuppositions outlined above, its dangers are evident. The most damaging are the presumptions that historicity is absent in the biblical text and that any reference to the supernatural must be by myth.

### The Church's Reaction

At the same time the Modernist crisis was at its height. Pius X decided his priority was to protect the faithful, even at the temporary expense of continued Catholic development in scripture studies. In *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907), the Pope rebutted the modernists on the origin and nature of the sacred books, on inspiration, on the distinction between the purely human Jesus of history and the divine Christ of faith. The Pontifical Biblical Commission issued decrees between 1905 and 1915 which were cautionary and defensive. They were cleverly phrased and nuanced, which did give room for scholarly investigation, but the message was clear: the findings of modernist scripture scholarship have no place in the Church.

While Benedict XV in *Spiritus Paraclitus* (1920) briefly commends those who dedicate themselves to the study of the Bible and the use of modern critical methods, it is Pius XII who reinvigorates Catholic biblical scholarship with *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943). This encyclical commemorated the 50th anniversary of *Providentissimus Deus* and developed further many of its teachings. *Divino Afflante Spiritu* affirms the need for textual criticism; for study of oriental languages; and for an examination of the character and circumstances of the sacred writer, the time in which he lived, the written and oral sources he used and his forms of expression. History, archaeology and other sciences are to be employed as well as the study of the literary forms. Catholic scholars were encouraged to address themselves, in service of the Church, even to the difficult problems – and not to shy away from, or ignore, them.

A Catholic principle becomes ever clearer at this time, and Pius XII expressed it in these words: “Just as the substantial Word of God became like men in every respect except sin, so too the words of God, expressed in human languages, became like human language in every respect except error.” (*Divino Afflante Spiritu*, 37). This describes the strict

relationship uniting the inspired biblical texts with the mystery of the Incarnation. Here we find the best hermeneutical key for all study of the Bible.

### The Incarnational Principal

A first step towards the Incarnation of the Word of God was the inspired act of putting God's words into writing. These written words became an abiding means of communication and communion between the chosen people and their Lord. They also looked to a future fulfilment, so that their fullest meaning was only completely recognised when the Word became flesh in Jesus Christ. After the coming of the Word, the written words of the New Testament attest to His presence and teaching. The written text grew out of the community of Israel and then that of the Church. This context of faith cannot be ignored in the interpretation of the text.

The Bible also has its own consistency as human literature. While God is absolute, it is not the case that each of His words in Scripture has an absolute value in itself. Since we believe that God, in the Bible, expresses Himself in human language, it is not the case that each phrase of the Bible has a uniform significance. Real human language and literature has possible nuances and flexibilities as well as limitations. Since we take seriously the realism of the Incarnation, we also take seriously the humanity of the text.

To be true to the *Incarnational Principle* expressed by Pius XII we must seek to understand the meaning of the texts in their historical, cultural context. The historical-critical method is an essential and useful tool for the Catholic exegete when freed from those philosophical presuppositions alien to the Bible and the Judeo-Christian religion.

“Just as the substantial Word of God became like men in every respect except sin, so too the words of God, expressed in human languages, became like human language in every respect except error”

With the renewed confidence brought about by *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, the secretary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission issued a clarification in 1955 regarding the Commission's statements earlier in the century, indicating that the interpreter of Sacred Scripture can pursue scientific investigations with full liberty provided that he respects the teaching authority of the Church.

### *Dei Verbum*

This is the context of *Dei Verbum*. It is not a bolt from the blue, a moment of rare liberation for Catholic biblical scholars. It is, rather, the fruit of the wise deliberations of the Church over the last century in the face of extraordinary developments in philosophy, theology, history, archaeology

## “An approach of *sola scriptura* makes neither historical nor theological sense”

and philology. This document confidently expresses the characteristics of Catholic exegesis. Since the document itself is concerned with Revelation, it is presupposed that the Bible is part of God’s self-revelation which begins in creation, through the calling of Abraham and the election of Israel, and culminates in the Incarnation. The Bible is also the “Book of the Church” and, with Tradition, flows from the one “divine wellspring” who is Christ, merges with Tradition and has the same purpose. Catholic exegesis, then, deliberately places itself within the living Tradition of the Church.

At the heart of this document the Incarnational principle is enshrined as that principle that guides and governs the Church’s understanding of the Scriptures. In Chapter 3 we read that the Sacred books have “God as their author” (DV, 11). In composing them God “chose men and while employed by Him they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted” (DV, 11).

“In the 18th century the Church was faced with a whole new way of approaching the Scriptures, which now we describe as modern biblical criticism”

To search out what God intended to express to us in the Scriptures we must search out the intention and meaning of the human author. All necessary tools can and should be employed in this endeavour. At the same time, it is to be borne in mind that “[since] everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation” (DV, 11).

Also, since the Scriptures have one single Divine Author, they have an inner unity within themselves and within the life the Church. No authentic interpretation can ignore the place that a given text has in the Scriptures as a whole, and in the Tradition.

Chapter 5, although short, as is the whole document, is crammed with a wisdom gained over centuries of reflection, including the insights developed over the painful decades of the first half of the 20th century. It concentrates on the four Gospels and again expresses the Incarnational Principle: the Gospels have a Divine Author and human authors; and they are formed from, and can only be understood within, the community of faith. Article 19 bears quoting in full:

*Holy Mother Church has firmly and with absolute constancy held, and continues to hold, that the four*

*Gospels just named, whose historical character the Church unhesitatingly asserts, faithfully hand on what Jesus Christ, while living among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation until the day He was taken up into heaven (see Acts 1:1). Indeed, after the Ascension of the Lord the Apostles handed on to their hearers what He had said and done. This they did with that clearer understanding which they enjoyed after they had been instructed by the glorious events of Christ’s life and taught by the light of the Spirit of truth. The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explaining some things in view of the situation of their churches and preserving the form of proclamation but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus. For their intention in writing was that either from their own memory and recollections, or from the witness of those who “themselves from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word” we might know “the truth” concerning those matters about which we have been instructed (see Luke 1:2-4). (DV, 19)*

Note first that the historicity of the Gospels is affirmed, based on the assurance that the Apostles were eyewitnesses to Christ’s ministry. Note also that the Holy Spirit gave the Apostles and the sacred authors insight and clearer understanding, and thus there is a Divine guarantee of the reliability of the Gospels. The action of the Holy Spirit does not, however, overwhelm the humanity of the sacred authors, who actively engage their human faculties to co-operate with His promptings.

The authors used their skills as human writers, choosing and selecting, synthesising and explaining, always within their communities and in the context of the *kerygma*, the preaching of the Gospel of salvation. Thus *Dei Verbum* is asserting both human and divine elements that are really distinct but also united in the production of the books of the Gospel. We see then that the written texts of the Gospels can analogously be compared to the person of Jesus in whom divinity and humanity are united but unconfused. This is the Incarnational principle.

*Dei Verbum* is the fruit of a process that began long before the calling of the Second Vatican Council. It is also an extraordinary document. It achieves what only the Church could achieve: the preservation of reverence for the Bible as the “Word of God in words of men”, a recognition of its place within the community of faith and it gives the freedom for scientific study which can only come from such a secure philosophical and theological foundation within the Church.

*The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures ... inspired by God and committed once and for all to writing, they impart the word of God Himself without change, and make the voice of the Holy Spirit resound in the words of the prophets and Apostles. (DV, 21) ☩*





# Comment on the Comments

by William Oddie

## Pope Francis and the Devil

In my last article for *Faith* magazine, I reported the alacrity with which traditional enemies of the Church had pounced, only days after the election of Pope Francis, on a new scandal for a new Pope. “Argentina ‘Dirty War’ accusations haunt Pope Francis” announced the BBC website (with barely disguised satisfaction) two days after his election as Pope.

Even the BBC, however, had to report the words of the Argentine Nobel Peace prize winner, Adolfo Perez Esquivel (who was himself imprisoned and tortured), who told the BBC World Service: “There were some bishops who were in collusion with the military, but Bergoglio [was] not one of them.”

I predicted then that the secular media now had a new bone between its teeth and would hang on to this slur as a way of discrediting the new Pope; but it turned out that I was wrong: the “Dirty War” story proved not to have what journalists call “legs”, and it soon fizzled out. But they were, of course, on the lookout for something else, though the new Pope’s unexpected popularity wasn’t making it easy for them. After three months, the media got to the 100-day mark at which some kind of assessment is usually produced; and Pope Francis really didn’t seem to be giving them much to go on.

Some insiders, including Vaticanologists like Sandro Magister, were more critical, pointing out that Francis’s pontificate, so far, had had almost no doctrinal or political substance, in the sense of a positioning of the Church vis-à-vis the surrounding culture and unfolding events. This, they pointed out, was a deliberate policy. The recent case, for instance, of the assumption by the Catholic Church, and in particular by the admirable Cardinal Archbishop Vingt-Trois of Paris, of the leadership

of an impressive national coalition of intellectuals and political leaders of different (and by no means all Catholic) views, against the looming threat of the legalisation of homosexual marriage (now unhappily achieved, as it has been here, though without any semblance in England of such a feisty archiepiscopal struggle against it), is a notable example of Francis’s papal leadership policy.

He was expected to say something in support of the action of the Church in France, but even when on 15 June he received at the Vatican French MPs belonging to the “Group of friendship France-Holy See”, he said nothing at all about it, even in passing. The previous November, Pope Benedict had made his views on the position of the French Catholic Church regarding the threatened new legislation absolutely clear.

But Francis has made a point of not intervening to support national Churches in their local political struggles. “It is to be expected,” commented Sandro Magister, “that in the future Francis will continue to adhere to this reserve of his on questions that concern the political sphere.

“There is much that is risky,” continued Magister, “in this delegation, given the pessimistic judgment that Bergoglio has on the average quality of the bishops of the world.... But it is a risk that Francis is not afraid to face, convinced as he is – he has said so – that if the bishop is unsure, ‘the flock itself has the scent in finding the way’.”

The trouble is that when there is no episcopal leadership, the flock looks to the Pope for leadership. And the danger surely is that there is, at least for the moment, the appearance that a cognitive dissonance may be developing between the doctrinal and

the pastoral functions of the Holy See. But we shall see: it is early days.

And certainly, pastorally everything looks fine. John L Allen, often an acute observer, writes: “Around the world there are anecdotal accounts of spikes in Mass attendance and demand for Confession, which many attribute to a “Francis effect”. Polls, such as a mid-April survey in the United States by the Pew Forum, show overwhelming approval ratings, and the global media remains fascinated well beyond the customary honeymoon period.... In other words, Vaticanology and the vox populi are at odds.”

The Vaticanologists concur. The continuing secular popularity of Pope Francis, thought Sandro Magister, had a good reason, which “explains better than any other the benevolence of worldwide secular public opinion toward Francis... [and that is] his silence in the political camp, especially on the minefield that sees the greatest opposition between the Catholic Church and the dominant culture. Abortion, euthanasia, homosexual marriage are terms that the preaching of Francis has so far (he was writing in July) deliberately avoided pronouncing.”

There was, however, one thing the secular media thought peculiar, and definitely promising as a source of anti-papal copy, and they dived in, as some Christian observers – not necessarily Catholics – noted with some annoyance.

“The mainstream media is at it again,” wrote one Bethany Blankley in the (Protestant) *Christian Post Opinion* website: “‘The Pope And The Devil: Is Francis an Exorcist?’ an Associated Press (AP) headline reads.” Ms Blankley’s own headline expressed well the obvious rebuttal: “No, Pope Francis

## “The reform of the Roman Curia isn’t just a matter of cleaning up its functional disorganisation – it’s a matter of driving out actual evil”

is not ‘Obsessed with Satan’, He’s Just a Christian who Believes in the Devil”.

And indeed, belief in Satan, for Catholics certainly, is not an optional extra, as we can see from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (articles 391 and 392). Back to Sandro Magister again, since quite a few writers spotted and quoted from a piece on his website entitled “Francis and the Devil”, which begins: “He refers to him continually. He combats him without respite. He does not believe him to be a myth, but a real person, the most insidious enemy of the Church.”

Magister went on to point out how rarely we hear of the subject, despite its centrality to the biblical witness: “In the preaching of Pope Francis,” he wrote, “there is one subject that returns with surprising frequency: the devil. It is a frequency on a par with that with which the same subject recurs in the New Testament.”

In early July, in what was surely a striking and dramatic papal act, Pope Francis positioned one of his most important priorities as Pope – the reform of the Roman Curia – directly in the context of this unremitting combat against the Devil. He placed the Vatican City state and all who live and work there under the protection of the Holy Archangel Michael.

This is part of what he said (my italics): “Michael – which means ‘Who is like God?’ – is the champion of the primacy of God, of His transcendence and power. Michael struggles to restore divine justice and defends the People of God from his enemies, above all from the enemy par excellence, the devil. And St Michael wins because in him, it is God who acts .... In consecrating Vatican City State to St Michael the Archangel, *I ask him to defend us from the evil one and banish him.*”

For the Pope to place the Vatican City itself under the protection of the Holy Archangel, and to pray that he will

banish the evil one from its purlieu, is an act, surely, of immense significance given his personal beliefs. Pope Francis sees that there is, unfolding in that place, an intense struggle between good and evil. As he put it himself: “... it is difficult. In the Curia, there are also holy people; really, there are holy people. But there also is a stream of corruption; there is that as well, it is true... The ‘gay lobby’ is mentioned, and it is true, it is there... We need to see what we can do....”

“We need to see what we can do.” The Holy Father clearly does see the banishment of the evil one from his little kingdom as a major priority. That reminds us that one of the eight Cardinals the Pope has chosen to help him in the reformation of the Roman Curia, the only one actually resident in Rome, is Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello, governor of the Vatican City State; and it should remind us, too, that the reform of the Roman Curia isn’t just a matter of cleaning up its functional disorganisation: it’s a matter of driving out actual evil, the “stream of corruption” which in the end overwhelmed the pontificate of Pope Benedict.

Pope Francis also prayed, in dedicating the Vatican City State to St Michael’s protection, that the Holy Archangel would intercede to help “make us victorious over the temptations of power, riches and sensuality” and keep Vatican employees strong in “the good fight of the faith”.

It is clear that this pope sees the corruption that has infiltrated his administration as inspired by the evil one: and now, in consecrating the Vatican to the Holy Archangel’s protection and in asking him “to defend us from the evil one and banish him”, he has invoked, on the entire process of Curial reform, the archangel’s active and by no means necessarily peaceable help.

For the fact is that this is going to – needs to – get rough. Heads need to roll. The Pope speaks of a “stream of

corruption” and of a “gay lobby”: and these people are it seems already fighting back. Who can the Holy Father trust? As part of an attempt to clean up the Institute for the Works of Religion, the Vatican bank, he appointed a new papal representative or “prelate” to the bank, only to discover that he had been misinformed about the character of the man he had appointed, who turned out to be, precisely, a member of the “gay lobby” he had been told about, a man whose CV had been cleaned up precisely in order to deceive him into making this appointment.

The Pope has now been undeceived, and the new man at the Vatican Bank removed: but how often is this going to happen? What the Pope needs is someone who knows the Roman Curia but is not of it, preferably an Italian, someone committed to reform, someone who can actually sweep the place clean.

We need a Godly hit man. That “gay lobby” for instance: someone must know who these people are: why can’t they just be fired? The trouble seems to be that there is nobody on the spot with the authority, the knowledge and the will actually to do so.

The obvious person to do all this on the Pope’s behalf is his Secretary of State. The present incumbent, Tarcisio Bertone, is generally thought to be a part of the problem, and is on his way out. Who will replace him? It will be a key decision in all this, perhaps *the* key decision: and perhaps, by the time these words are in print it will have been made.

One name being bandied about as I write is that of Cardinal Angelo Scola, who was supposed to be the papabile the Curial Cardinals least wanted to be elected Pope, precisely because of his apparently rather fierce views on Curial reform. Whoever is appointed will be central to the Holy Father’s struggle. May he, in particular, be protected and helped by the Holy Archangel Michael: he is going to need it.



# Letters to the Editor

The Editor, St Mary's and St David's, 15 Buccleuch Street,  
Hawick TD9 0HH, editor@faith.org.uk

## VON BALTHASAR AND THE CHURCH'S MARIAN PROFILE

Dear Father Editor,

How refreshing to read in Fr Ross Campbell's article (*Balthasar and the Rediscovery of the Marian Profile of the Church*, May/June 2013) that "the Church should not be thought of purely as an organisation or as an institution. The Church is not a 'something', neither is the Church an 'it'. The Church is a person. She is a somebody."

With all the endless commentary and chatter about the need for the institutional Church to be restructured, renewed, reformed or "re" whatever, it is always good to be reminded of the essentially mystical quality of the Church and of her integral part to the plan of creation and the Incarnation. Perhaps this is what Pope Francis is getting at when he says that the Church must not become too "self-referential" or "navel-gazing" while insisting that "you cannot understand the Church without her motherhood" (Vatican City, 8 May, address to plenary assembly of the International Union of Superiors General). In any case, Balthasar's orthodox but speculative theology helps raise the mind and heart to a more breathtaking and beautiful vision of Christ, the Church and the pivotal role of Mary in the response to salvation. All credit to Fr Campbell for his exposition.

Nevertheless, the speculative and non-systematic nature of Balthasar's theology does leave some ambiguities – ambiguities which are presumably rooted in the overlapping and necessarily exhaustible analogies of the Church as both "body of Christ" and "bride of Christ". What does Balthasar mean, for example, when he says that the Church is a collective subject who has a single consciousness in Christ (analogy of the "body of Christ") and at the same time says that in the *fiat* of Mary the Church receives "her fundamental and constitutive

feminine dimension" (Fr Campbell's words)? Which way round is it? Do we primarily participate in the mind or collective consciousness of Christ as members of his body (the masculine/bridegroom dimension) or is our participation more akin to the fundamental and constitutive feminine dimension in the role of Mary (or bride dimension)?

Presumably, in some mystical sense, we straddle both. Balthasar obviously argues for an analogical, archetypal and ontological priority of the Marian dimension. But if so, how can she be primarily the presence of Christ in the world – the continuation of the Incarnation (the body of Christ) upon earth? Surely the constitutive element of the Church must be the presence of Christ under his initiative and not the free, albeit grace-inspired, response of "the bride".

Yours faithfully,

Father MJ Galbraith, HMP Addiewell

## FATHER CAMPBELL REPLIES

Father Galbraith is quite right to point out that the speculative and non-systematic nature of Balthasar's theology does lead to some apparent ambiguities and difficulties in interpretation. However, for Balthasar the Marian character of the Church is everywhere. This character moulds the Church both in terms of her being as such and also in terms of the life of her members, and is rooted in Mary's yes in the chamber of Nazareth (Annunciation).

For Balthasar the purpose of the Church is to enable the believer, through grace, to participate in her normative subject, Christ, the centre of consciousness and entry point into the divine. We do this as a collectivity of subjects (the Bride of Christ).

Fr Galbraith is right to assert that the constitutive element of the Church must be the presence of Christ under his own divine initiative. But even for Balthasar this element cannot be separated from the fundamental Marian theme. For Balthasar, just as God-made-man dwelled in and came forth from the womb of Mary, so He now dwells in and

comes forth from the womb of the Church. The feminine/Marian Church is the environment from which Christ chooses to remain present in the world. This presence of Christ in history, through the Church, takes place pre-eminently through the concrete Christological constellation of theological persons that Christ forms. At the apex of this constellation is Mary.

"The Marian *fiat*, in its truly unlimited availability, is, by grace, the bridal womb, *matrix and mater*, through which the Son of God becomes man, and thus it is by this *fiat* that he also forms the truly universal Church" (Office of Peter, 206-207).

## THE CURIA

Dear Father Editor,

Your editorial (July/August 2013) makes the valid point that we must not allow a reformist agenda to masquerade as a subtle attack on the papacy and the essential truths of the faith.

It is further argued that obstructing the work of the Curia could be interpreted as an act of disloyalty to the Pope. I would hope that diocesan clergy would not accuse a fellow priest of disloyalty to his bishop if he criticised his financial secretary. Obviously the Roman Curia bears a heavier responsibility because, as Pope Paul VI stated: "It is that instrument needed by the Pope for the fulfilment of his mission." But instruments that have been honed over the years take on a life of their own; unlike UK civil servants they have a much more ancient lineage. They can enhance the authority of the Pope even as they enhance their own (Pope Francis has spoken about careerism), or they can argue that "things are done this way". Today's Curia is a much larger animal than before. The number of members has risen from 185 in 1900, to 1,322 in 1967, to 3,146 in 1977.

The Pope has to dominate the Curia in the same way that a minister must command his department. As the Curia has multiplied this has obviously become a problem. The role of the department of



## “Constructive criticism is surely good, but there is a distinction to be made between criticism and ‘obstructing the work of the Curia’ ”

the Secretary of State needs to be examined as it is the largest, and exercises control over other dicasteries. A certain independence between departments is necessary, with co-ordination provided perhaps by a committee of Cardinals, such as those established by Pope Francis.

This would tighten curial discipline and put a stop to the squabbling and an end to the aura of financial chicanery (an investigation is already under way). It would also provide a better liaison between Rome and diocesan bishops, supporting their efforts and strengthening them in their communion with the universal Church under the successor of St Peter.

*Yours faithfully,  
Father J Tolhurst, Chislehurst*

### EDITOR'S REPLY

We thank Father Tolhurst for his letter and agree with the concerns he raises: the appearance of “squabbling” and “the aura of financial chicanery”. Regarding the reforms necessary to deal with these issues we stand by the text of our editorial: “The details of any such reform should be left to those with sufficient experience and the requisite competence.” Father Tolhurst also raises the issue of criticism of the Curia. Constructive criticism is surely good, and if it is offered in a spirit of real charity the individual concerned will be able to discern the best forum for airing it.

However, we do think there is a distinction to be made between criticism and “obstructing the work of the Curia” – the phrase we used in our editorial. We would also go further. One must of course be realistic about the human dimension of the Church, but to nurture an antagonism towards “that instrument needed by the Pope for the fulfilment of his mission” must in the end be subtly detrimental to one’s faith.

Even if one does not actually obstruct the Curia’s work we would question how up-building it is to one’s own faith (and how helpful it is to those who have been entrusted to our pastoral care) to greet

every initiative or document coming out of the Curia with instant suspicion.

### A POOR CHURCH

Dear Father Editor,  
The clarion call of Pope Francis since his election has been “a poor Church of the poor”. But what exactly does this mean? And is this phrase more than a mere tautology like survival of the fittest?

Archbishop Nicholas at a recent conference of Caritas Social Action Network (June 2013) threw his mitre into the mix and says that we should embrace Pope Francis’s poor Church. But who are the poor and what is a poor Church? Does it mean that we should become Catholic puritans and throw away all the gold and silver chalices and ciboria? Or does it have a deeper spiritual sense?

For St Francis of Assisi, it seems clear that the Church of the poor, or poor Church, did not mean melting down chalices and ciboria. St Francis was told to rebuild the church not throw the baby out with the bath water. Indeed, St Francis saw no problem with the Blessed Sacrament being held in the richest material that human hands could accord the sacred true presence of Christ.

He would be aghast at the corruption of his words today, which suggest that the Blessed Sacrament should routinely be housed in poorly made or enhanced tabernacles (often hidden from view), or in wooden or ceramic ciboria or monstrances. Yes, the true richness of the Church is found in that sublime gift of Christ, Himself that He gives to us. Any desecration through act or omission, or any lack of respect such as a failure to genuflect, caused St Francis immense pain and fired his zeal in reforming those who would disrespect the True Presence.

So material richness when used to display the richness of the true presence of Christ is not a problem. The Gospels appear to prioritise the salvation of the poor over the rich. The Church, after all, exists solely to lead humanity to

salvation. If we can help the material comfort of people on the way, so much the better. But as the final canon of the Code of Canon law confirms, the salvation of souls is the prime law of the Church. Indeed, the so-called wealth of the Church is geared to providing the social and health care and education of millions around the world, especially in the developing world. It could not do that if had no temporal resources to call upon.

I think it’s important to apply Catholic social teaching, but not to allow it to be rendered meaningless through tautologies such as a poor Church of the poor. As Mother Teresa stated when she visited western countries, although we may have immense wealth there is deep spiritual poverty. The Gospels tell us that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

Perhaps Pope Francis is calling us to rediscover the beatitudes, particularly “Blessed are the Poor in Spirit for they will inherit the earth”. We are all essentially poor as without Christ we have no wealth. We should avoid mottos and tautologies and instead we should strive for the salvation of all, rich and poor alike.

*Yours faithfully,  
Christopher Keeffe, West Harrow*

### EDITOR'S REPLY

We would simply note that at a question and answer session with representatives of the new movements held at Pentecost Pope Francis made the following comment, which seems to dovetail with the emphasis Mr Keeffe places on devotion to the Real Presence:

*For us Christians, poverty is not a sociological, philosophical or cultural category. No, it is a theological category. I would say, perhaps the first category, because God, the Son of God, abased Himself, made Himself poor to walk with us on the road. And this is our poverty: the poverty of the flesh of Christ, the poverty that the Son of God brought us with His Incarnation. A poor Church for the poor begins by going to the flesh of Christ.*

# Notes From Across the Atlantic

by David Mills, executive editor of *First Things*



## Alien Life

A friend, having attended a lecture on exoplanets (planets circling stars not our own) at the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington, reported that the lecturers were quite concerned with, nay excited by, the possibility that some of these planets might contain life. It's an interesting question why the search for alien life so animates so many people in the sciences, and so many of the people we might call "sciencey".

The American Museum of Natural History here in New York had an exhibit last year called "Beyond Planet Earth" and almost every part of it was directed, in slightly breathless prose, to the possible discovery of a microbe here or there. Whoever wrote the exhibit seemed to think that the main purpose of exploring space was to find life, even if all we find is a germ deep beneath the ice of one of Jupiter's moons.

But where does this get us? It's a lot of money to spend to find a microbe. Why not just go exploring because that's what man does or because we might find things we need out there? Landing on Mars is cool enough even if it's a completely dead planet.

We suspect that this search for alien life is driven not so much by intellectual curiosity as by the desire to feel that we're not alone in the universe. The religious believer knows we're not alone, even if man is the only sentient species on all the millions of planets that probably exist.

And if God didn't exist, the fact that somewhere out there are other beings in the same situation we're in wouldn't really be comforting. We'd still be alone in the universe.

## Luther Socks

Some clever German entrepreneur is selling "Luther Socks" in anticipation of the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in 2017. On them appear the words "Here I stand".

## Fr Francis Duffy

The northern part of Times Square is officially named "Duffy Square" after Fr Francis Duffy, who as a chaplain in the First World War would go out under fire to help his men and became the most highly decorated cleric in army history, winning the French Republic's Croix de Guerre to boot. He was played by Pat O'Brien in the movie *The Fighting 69th*, a regiment still based, as it happens, in the Lexington Avenue Armory nearby.

A statue of him in army uniform standing before a large stone Celtic cross sits in Times Square in front of the TKTS booth. Duffy died in 1932. Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia unveiled the statue and dedicated the Square in 1937.

## Dan Brown

An easy target but it may amuse some of you: a writer in *The Daily Telegraph* pretends to be Dan Brown thinking about his critics as his book *Inferno* appeared.

The critic said his writing was clumsy, ungrammatical, repetitive and repetitive. They said it was full of unnecessary tautology. They said his prose was swamped in a sea of mixed metaphors. For some reason they found something funny in sentences such as: "His eyes went white, like a shark about to attack." They even say my books are packed with banal and superfluous description, thought the 5ft 9in man. He particularly hated it when they said his imagery was nonsensical. It made his insect eyes flash like a rocket.

Another writer in *The Telegraph* offers the eight worst lines from the book. This one, for example, from chapter five: "Emerging from the darkness, a scene began to take shape ... the interior of a cave ... or a giant chamber of some sort. The floor of the cavern was water, like an underground lake."

He responds: "A giant chamber – perhaps like a cave! And a giant cave with a watery floor – why, you're right, that is like an underground lake. Uncannily so, in fact."

## The Ancientness of the Mass

*The New Yorker* staff writer Joseph Mitchell often went to church in Catholic churches. As he writes in an excerpt from a memoir recently published in *The New Yorker*, he began to be haunted by the thought of "the ancientness of the Mass – that it and its antecedents very likely go farther back into the human past than any other existing ceremony.... I began to feel that the Mass gave me a living connection with my ancestors in England and Scotland before the Reformation and with other ancestors thousands of years earlier than that, in the woods and in the caves on the mudflats of Europe.

"This was deeply satisfying to me ... and I began to develop a respect for the Mass that has little or nothing to do with how I may happen to feel one way or another about organised religion."

Not quite the attitude we'd hope for, but maybe a man who felt closer to his ancestors through their religion might eventually come to accept that religion. Mitchell's essays, mostly reporting, are collected in *Up In the Old Hotel*, and much recommended. As are, while I'm at it, those of his *New Yorker* colleague St Clair McKelway, many of which are collected in *Reporting at Wit's End*.

# Cutting Edge

## Science and Religion News

By Dr Gregory Farrelly

### Three-Parent IVF

Splashed across the media pages recently has been the news that the UK is to allow the creation of babies using DNA from three people, a procedure that could be offered within two years. Experts say that “three-person IVF” could eliminate debilitating and potentially fatal mitochondrial diseases that are passed on from mother to child, affecting one in every 6,500 babies. This can leave them starved of energy, resulting in muscle weakness, blindness, heart failure and death in the most extreme cases.

Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) was mentioned in this column in the May/June issue. It is the DNA located in biological structures called mitochondria, not the DNA contained within the cell nucleus which we normally think of when we refer to “my DNA”. The purpose of mtDNA is to convert chemical energy from food into a form that the cell can use.

In the technique under discussion, sperm from the father, an egg from the mother and an egg from a female donor are used to produce embryos, using IVF techniques. The cell nuclei are removed from both sets of embryonic cells, as shown in the diagram, the donor’s nuclei and the remains of the parents’

embryo are destroyed and the parents’ nuclei are then inserted into the donor or “host” embryo, still containing its healthy mitochondria. The resulting embryo is implanted and a healthy baby (at least as regards mitochondrial diseases) should be born.

Marcy Darnovsky, executive director of the Centre for Genetics and Society in Berkeley, California, has written in *Nature* magazine (Vol 499, Issue 7457), that this crosses “...a legal and ethical line on this issue that has been observed by the entire international community. This consensus holds that genetic-engineering tools ... should not be used to modify gametes or early embryos and so manipulate the characteristics of future children.”

Defenders of the technique argue that these concerns do not apply to modifications of mitochondrial DNA, described as an insignificant part of the human genome that does not affect a person’s identity. However, Darnovsky points out that the genes involved affect development and metabolism – very much linked to personal identity. She further notes that the HFEA has not been honest in stating that a public consultation showed “broad support” for the technique; in fact, a majority were opposed to it.

To set this in context, only about 10 couples a year would benefit from the

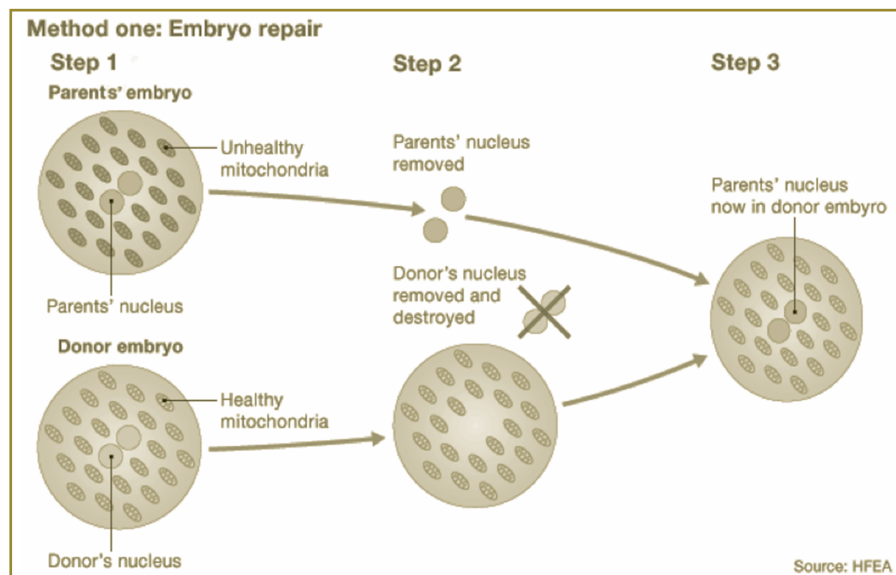
treatment, and this technique does nothing to help existing patients with mitochondrial conditions. However, it opens the door still further to a eugenic approach to the selection of embryonic characteristics.

Pro-life activists are often dismissed for, among other things, “scaremongering”, but the HFEA has a record of producing reassuring statements indicating that future unethical procedures will not take place, only for them to be approved. An article in *The Telegraph* (16 July 2013) informs us that Stephen Wilkinson, professor of bioethics at Lancaster, has produced a report that found “no reason to expect harm to future children or wider society if these techniques were made available for ‘social’ reasons ... We didn’t find any ethical arguments sufficient to justify a blanket ban on ... sex selection.”

As has often been argued in this column and elsewhere, we cannot treat scientific thought and research as somehow isolated from our faith. Our faith in Christ is not “merely” a personal choice but also an assertion with metaphysical importance. For us, Christ is the Master-Key of all creation, linking all being, material and spiritual, as its Logos or *raison d’être*: the universe is for Christ – nothing is “neutral” to God.

The scientists involved in this technique are, no doubt, acting mostly from good motives, to improve the health of future generations, yet the ends never justify the means. The ethical framework for biological science must be based on the same principles of truth and meaning by which we as Christians judge all things, material and spiritual. The Faith movement holds that there is an all-pervasive Meaning within the material universe; nothing is arbitrary or expedient, but purposeful and life-affirming.

It is easy to feel passive in the face of the relentless advance of morally repugnant scientific techniques, but we must “stand up and be counted”, protesting strongly and rationally about what we know to be wrong.







# Book Reviews

## Adam and Eve after the Pill: Paradoxes of the Sexual Revolution

By Mary Eberstadt, Ignatius Press, 178pp,  
£14.99, available from Gracening

Few would disagree that the invention of the Pill and its dissemination over the last 50 years or so represents a milestone of human history. By severing the link between fertility and procreation, the Pill was among the drivers of the sexual revolution of the 1960s and the resultant shift in popular attitudes to sex. It is from this premise that Mary Eberstadt sets out to explore how the widespread availability of cheap and effective contraception has changed society.

In a series of short essays originally published in *First Things* and *Policy Review*, Eberstadt examines the effects these changed attitudes have had on women, men, young people and children. She paints a vivid picture of women both more privileged and less happy than at any time in history and of men absolved of all responsibility by the sexual revolution but also stunted, trapped in a perpetual adolescence. She observes, unsurprisingly, that the burden of social and sexual revolution has disproportionately fallen on those most vulnerable, particularly children and women.

Later, two especially interesting essays dwell upon contemporary attitudes to food and pornography and what Eberstadt describes as the “transvaluation of values”. Eberstadt posits that there has been a reversal of thought on food and sex and that the two have effectively switched places in the moral consciousness, with food now

considered a realm in which absolute moral judgements can and indeed must be made, and sex deemed to be merely a matter of personal choice and individual taste. She draws similar parallels between pornography and tobacco, comparing current, often laissez faire, views on pornography to those before the groundswell of opinion and medical evidence that began to change attitudes to tobacco in the middle of the 20th century.

In the final essay, entitled “The Vindication of *Humanae Vitae*”, the author shows that the predictions of that encyclical have been more than borne out with time, despite the scorn heaped upon Pope Paul VI and those Catholics, priests and lay faithful, who have held firm to its teachings. This tallies nicely with a thread that runs throughout the volume – that of the “will to disbelieve”, a determination to ignore and deny all empirical evidence (and there is a great deal) that suggests sexual liberation has perhaps not been the beneficent force many would claim.

As always, Eberstadt's writing is accessible and engaging while surrendering neither force nor depth. The collection is meticulously researched, and the author brings a wide range of sources, both academic and popular, to bear in support of her position. Given Eberstadt's reputation it is a shame that this book, coming from a Catholic publishing house, is unlikely to be read by many who are not already convinced of the case she lays out. It is nonetheless a worthwhile and extremely readable book and will be of interest to anyone who wants to understand the often complex social effects of our contraceptive culture.

**Amanda Brennan**

## Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity

By Robin M Jensen, Baker Academic,  
xviii + 238pp, available through  
*Amazon*

The subtitle of this very impressive book, “Ritual, Visual and Theological

Dimensions”, corrects the false impression that it is mainly concerned with art. It is true that there are many useful illustrations, but the main thrust of the book is the light that is shed on baptismal liturgy and theology by Christian writers of the first four centuries AD.

After a short introduction there are five chapters: 1) Baptism as Cleansing from Sin and Sickness; 2) Incorporation into the Community; 3) Baptism as Sanctifying and Illuminative; 4) Baptism as Dying and Rising; 5) Baptism as the Beginning of the New Creation. Oddly enough, even in the discussion of infant baptism there is no mention of original sin, and this despite the fact that the author is well acquainted with the writings of Augustine.

Adam and Eve are discussed but without mention of the primal sin. Perhaps one should remember that infant baptism was not very common in the early church. Augustine himself was only baptised by Ambrose at Easter 387 aged 32. Ambrose himself was a catechumen when he was elected bishop of Milan around 372.

What is particularly illuminating about this book is the way in which the author has illustrated the sacramental character of baptism by relating it to the Old Testament anticipation of the sacrament: Noah, the Crossing of the Red Sea and the River Jordan as the river in which Christ himself was baptised. Particularly attractive was the use made in this connection of a sermon of Gregory of Nyssa, *In Diem Luminum*, delivered on the feast of the Epiphany 383. The fact that this is not a particularly well known work of Gregory made Jensen's use of it very instructive.

By baptism we become citizens of heaven, adopted heirs. Christ, mystically understood, is the great fish (the Greek word for fish is ΙΧΘΥΣ, an acronym which translates as Jesus Son of God, Saviour); and we, like him, are fish in the water of baptism as we accompany our master (see Augustine's *The City of God*, Book XVIII, Chapter 23).

## “Eberstadt paints a vivid picture of women who are both more privileged and less happy than at any time in history”

One of the most important aspects of this very instructive book is that it underlines the many elements in the sacrament. It makes us members of a new family, a new creation and a new country. In the past baptism was administered to nude bodies, and after that the newly baptised put on white garments to symbolise their bodily and spiritual cleanness. Baptism is also a form of rebirth and therefore of resurrection.

All in all this is a remarkable and valuable book, not only for the illustrations it offers of ancient rites, but also for the accurate accounts it offers of the way in which baptism was addressed by early Christian writers from the New Testament to the fourth century, making great use of Cyril of Jerusalem and John Chrysostom in the east and Ambrose and Augustine in the west.

**Anthony Meredith, SJ**

### Catholic Social Conscience

*Edited by Keith Chappell and Francis Davis, Gracewing, 267pp, £12.99*

Anyone who has ever tried to promote Catholic social teaching (CST) knows the feeling of frustration. The official documents are superb, but interest among Catholics is no better than intermittent, and elsewhere indifference is almost universal. Worse, when Catholics are interested, it often seems that they do not really want to be guided or challenged by CST; they merely search for confirmation of their existing prejudices, whether about the contemporary welfare state or about libertarian economics. Illuminating concepts – human dignity, solidarity, the common good, the preferential option for the poor and subsidiarity – are lost to view.

Any effort to bring CST to life is welcome, and the editors of *Catholic Social Conscience*, a collection of papers presented at a 2010 conference in Oxford, deserve thanks. The collection tries to bring out what is good and universal in CST. Overall, it succeeds

quite well. The collection of essays covers many topics, including the fundamental ideas of CST, the current situation in the formerly communist countries of Central Europe and the state of social teaching in the contemporary English Church.

The contributions from Ukraine, Poland and Hungary are particularly welcome, as most English-speakers are woefully ignorant of Catholic life in these countries.

Jolanta Babiuch explains part of the intellectual tradition from which Pope John Paul II emerged, the pre-War dialogue between Marxists and personalist philosophy. She persuasively argues that the late Pope’s approach to modern society relied on both “Marxism’s critical theory of capitalism as a socio-economic system based on injustices, and Personalism’s espousal of the uniqueness and dignity of every human being”.

If her call for a renewal of the respectful dialogue between believers and well-intentioned secularists were taken seriously, CST could bring the insights of John Paul II into a universally needed “critical analysis of the current capitalist system”.

Lazlo Lukacs presents a harsh critique of both Communism and Capitalism in his native Hungary. He lists seven principles of CST, with brief descriptions of how each of the two ideologies violates them. He offers Benedict XVI’s description of an economy based on solidarity and charity – the “service of love” – as the only good alternative to these two failed approaches.

If any readers are tempted to think that post-Communist nations have a natural affinity for CST, Jonathan Luxmoore’s excellent essay on the lack of social concern in the Polish church is sobering. The homeland of John Paul II seems to have all but ignored the national hero’s commitment to social justice. Luxmoore may be too harsh on the enthusiasm of the liberated Polish church for large buildings and statues, but it is hard to

argue with his demand that the bishops “ask searching questions about how exhaustively and insistently it [the Church] has championed the criteria of the common good...”.

The same question may be asked of other societies and national Churches. The UK receives special attention. Stephen Morgan makes a particularly challenging claim: “The combination of technology, a dogmatic secularist view of morality and a conception of the state as all-encompassing has created what is, in fact, tantamount to a totalitarian view of the state.” The T-word is perhaps a bit extreme, but he makes a persuasive case for seeing the British government as fundamentally opposed to the charitable mission of the Catholic Church, a mission which is central to CST.

Francis Davis, one of the editors, summarises several surveys which show the gaps in the English Church, between words and deeds in the hierarchy and between bishops and parishioners. The results suggest that the government will find the Church to be a strong opponent.

**Edward Hadas**

### Eucharistic Adoration

*By Charles E. Murphy, Ave Maria Press Notre Dame, IN, USA, 112pp, £8.99, also available via Amazon*

Many of us priests have tried a good number of ways to help in the restoration and building up of faith, only to find that frequently things have not worked out as well as we had hoped. Perhaps because of that, not a few of us are now turning more to encouraging Eucharistic Adoration. After all, the Saviour gave us this astonishingly amazing, supportive Bread of Life. We all need to grow in sincerity to have more impact; all who try to follow the Lord need more Eucharistic faith.

That great contemporary exponent of growth in Eucharistic devotion, the late Father Tadeusz Dajczer, rightly underlines that there is no better book



## Book Reviews continued

on the Eucharist than the Eucharist Itself. By this he means that sheer waiting in the presence of the Bread of Life, with increasing attention, nourishes and educates us enormously. That said, most of us need the help of those who have learnt and grown from Adoration.

Monsignor Charles Murphy is no mean contributor in aiding us to build up Eucharistic Adoration. That is his aim. His book is a dynamic and provocative stimulation in the vital field of increasing faith, especially during this Year of Faith. Currently director of the permanent diaconate for the diocese of Portland, Maine, in the US, he is a graduate of the Gregorian and Harvard Universities and a consultant in catechetics and global warming. He has also worked in the editorial team under Cardinal Ratzinger on the final draft of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Yet mindful of Thomas à Kempis's words that it is better to be a devoted servant of God than somebody who can discourse wisely, I was delighted to learn the revealing information that the former parish priest of four US parishes has as heroes inspiring men and women of God: Simone Weil, Edith Stein (St Teresa of the Cross), Dorothy Day, Blessed John XXIII, Blessed John Paul II, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta and St Margaret Mary Alacoque. From each of these, there are inspiring words to help us.

The meditations are based on what have become known as the Seven Last Words of the Saviour: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"; "Father forgive them for they know not what they do"; "Today you will be with me in paradise"; "Father into your hands I commend my spirit"; "Woman, this is your son. Son, this is your mother"; "I thirst"; and "It is finished".

Each meditation is accompanied by points for dialogue and conversation with our Eucharistic Lord plus energising prayers. Before several pages of notes and handy references at the end of the book, there are some well-known Passion and Eucharistic hymns. The book is well supported in a foreword by

Cardinal Levada and warmly recommended. Our thoughts and meditations are richly blessed by such writings, which help us to build a stronger union with God, through which we can find new energy, strength and peace and a cure for faith fatigue.

**Fr Bryan Storey**

### **The Freedom of Love**

*By Rafael de Santiago, Gracewing,  
139pp, £9.99*

This book aims to provide the reader with a clear understanding of what true love is, and to show how it is related to freedom. The author explores the notions of feelings, virtue, shame, loyalty and forgiveness, as well as the gift of self and the meaning of the body. The writing itself appears simple at first, before becoming more philosophical in the later chapters.

In an exploration of the meaning of love, De Santiago states that true love is to willingly seek the good of another. He acknowledges that feelings are subjective and that when we experience strong feelings, our perceptions of reality can be distorted. He states that true love means we must have control over our feelings, and that eros can only be raised to a gift of self if a man respects the dignity of woman.

Virtue is considered as the stable disposition to do good. A training in virtue is necessary for personal development. Fortitude helps us to endure personal difficulties. Temperance allows us to bring our appetites into order.

The author then considers what it means to give oneself completely. The key to giving of oneself is not the limitation of our freedom, but the positive element of uniting our will with the will of a beloved. With the language of the body, this giving is determined by the way we talk, laugh, dress, walk and behave. When the language of the body does not fit reality, we are lying. The nuptial meaning of the body is the capacity of the body

to show, in a physical way, the completeness of the inner self. The ability to realise the needs of those around us is very important; without it we are unable to forget our own needs so as to give of ourselves. Not being able to see the needs of those closest to us leaves us only with acquaintances and not true friends. The habit of thinking of others can only be developed through daily practice.

De Santiago considers the meaning of shame as a reaction that protects us from lust, so that our respect for the human person is enhanced and we can value the nuptial meaning of the body.

Modesty acknowledges that we are able to make a complete gift of self and that we are all worthy of dignity. The author sees loyalty when every aspect of one's life is raised to the level of the complete gift of one's self while freedom is described as the capacity to choose what is right.

The appendix looks specifically at the beauty of fertility and Natural Family Planning. This model refers to the practice of achieving or avoiding pregnancies according to an informed awareness of the woman's fertility. The author highlights the effectiveness of NFP, in particular the sympto-thermal method. He also discusses how NFP can relate to sexual compatibility and improve intimacy between couples at all levels of communication.

Rafael de Santiago's book provides a quick summary of many of the key themes of John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*. However, it does not reflect deeply on the meaning and purpose of love but rather provides generalisations and catchphrases, and I would not really recommend the book apart from perhaps as a quick and simple introduction to those interested in the Church's teaching on love and sexuality. The content suffers from an arid and inaccessible style of writing, which could be supplemented by pastoral experience and examples to bring the book to life.

**Robert Colquhoun**



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