

# faith

July and August 2010  
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Editorial

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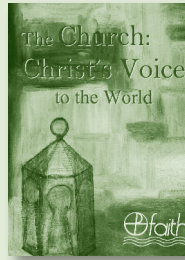
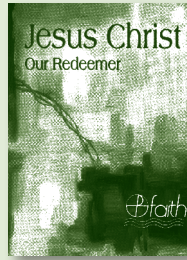
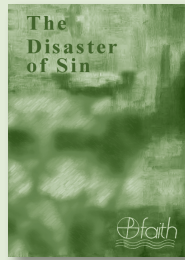
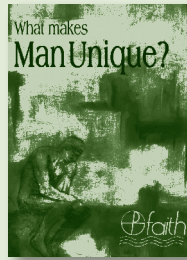
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# Catholicism a New Synthesis

by Edward Holloway

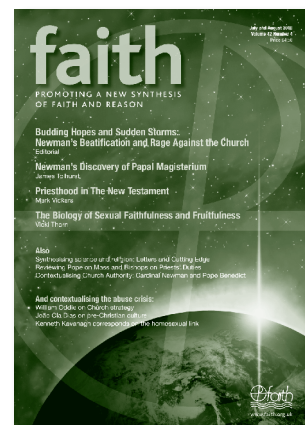
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# faith

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Newman was not ultra-montane. Nor did he believe that Church and Papal authority was a stick with which to beat people about the head – see our Truth Will Set You Free (TF) column. In this regard he was very like Pope Benedict in his recent, balanced appeal to Portuguese culture-formers to pull back from the anti-family precipice towards which, in fulfilment of Newman’s prophecies (see our editorial), they are speeding (see Road from Regensburg, RR, last entry). But Benedict also follows Newman in recognising that divine revelation given through the Church in clear-cut words, though not without the obvious need of interpretation, is the most fundamental need of man and characteristic of true religion (see RR, 1st entry, editorial and TF). Thus, as Fr Tolhurst brings out in this issue, Newman could write in his most influential work of theology “The supremacy of conscience is the essence of natural religion; the supremacy of the Apostle, or Pope, or Church, or Bishop is the essence of revealed religion.” It is this supreme capacity and vocation of words which has been so thoroughly undermined in post-enlightenment culture, seeping relentlessly, it seems, into the Church.

Kenneth Kavanagh suggests an example of the latter phenomenon in his letter in this issue, whilst other letters deepen the theme. In the light of Mgr Joao Cla Dias’s survey of the morality of pagan culture Mr Kavanagh’s survey of recent decades raises the spectre of a return to hedonistic libertarianism. *Humanae Vitae* predicted this. The relentless protest against the encyclical is an example of the dangerous nature of “wild, living intellect” which, as our editorial shows, Newman prophesied would build a radically new and aggressively agnostic society, an important contemporary dimension of which William Oddie meditates upon in this issue. For many years we have been aware that this protest is, in effect, in favour of abortion, due to the discovery of the largely abortifacient nature of the version of the Pill that has become most widely used. Vicki Thorn uses some of the latest scientific discoveries to vindicate further the prophetic nature of *Humanae Vitae* and of the papal magisterium as affirmed by Newman (see fourth entry in TF).

As often in these pages our Cutting Edge and Letters columns highlight approaches to science and religion which we think are at the heart of the modern crisis given the fundamental role of human observation of the physical realm to human thought. Professor Ayala illustrates the very fashionable Catholic diffidence about the import of recent discoveries about the nature of the universe, whilst Clive Copus, who helpfully flags up the dominance of Ayala’s school of thought at the Rome evolution conference last year, proposes the “Intelligent Design” (ID) argument that *some* parts of the universe point to God, and by implication that some don’t do so nearly so well. In our opinion both positions, especially Ayala’s, undermine the rationality of theism because they both lend some credence to the atheistic interpretation of matter, in the ID case with regard to aspects of the physical realm. Therefore we agree with the gist of Dom Aldhelm’s letter.

**Why this tumult among nations, among peoples this useless murmuring? They arise, the kings of the earth, princes plot against the Lord and his Anointed. ‘Come, let us break their fetters, come, let us cast off their yoke’. (Psalm 2)**

## The Papal Visit and Newman’s Prophetic Insight

On 19 September Pope Benedict will beatify John Henry Cardinal Newman during a Mass planned to take place in Birmingham. It will be a unique and significant moment for Catholicism in these islands as the authority of the Apostolic office is invoked on English soil to proclaim the heroic virtue of a truly great Englishman and the fruitfulness of devotion to him.

Over 150 years ago in the chapel at Oscott where the Pope will, God-willing, have his parting colloquium with the Bishops of England and Wales, Newman celebrated the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in this country. It was on that occasion that he preached his famous “Second Spring” sermon. It is easy to forget that this image was not just of joyful return, but also a premonition that it might be an

“... English Spring, an uncertain, anxious time of hope and fear, of joy and suffering, – of bright promise and budding hopes, yet withal, of keen blasts, and cold showers, and sudden storms.”

He warned that

“... in proportion to God’s grace is the fury of His enemies ... [but] the more the enemy rages against us, so much the more will the Saints in Heaven plead for us.”

He would have understood from his deep knowledge of history that the most painful persecutions of the Church come from failures and betrayals within, as Pope Benedict pointedly observed in Fatima recently. Newman would also have understood how eagerly the enemies of truth seize on the sins of Christians and use them as a stick to beat the poor Body of Christ. The precise form of attack is different in every generation however, so we are ever unprepared for the dismay and heartache caused. Yet the grace given to meet each crisis is equally unexpected and even more powerful.

## Anger at The Church and Rage Against God

The media reporting about the scandals afflicting many parts of the Church is not just fuelled by rightful anger at clerical scandals and abuses, but has been “metastasised into a full-scale assault on Catholicism itself” as George Weigel puts it. This is not just a Catholic viewpoint. In April Peter Hitchens spoke of an “ill-informed frenzy of rage against the Roman Catholic Church (to which I don’t belong)”. Ed Koch, the Mayor of New York argued in *The Jerusalem Times* that “the procession of articles on the same events are, in my opinion, no longer intended to inform, but simply to castigate”. And the humanist blogger Brendan O’Neill

# Newman's Beatification and Rage Against the Church *Editorial*

drew attention to the real motivation of some of his fellow atheists:

"Richard Dawkins, author of *The God Delusion*, unwittingly reveals what draws the new atheists towards the Catholic-abuse story: ... 'Odious as the physical abuse of children by priests undoubtedly is, I suspect that it may do them less lasting damage than the mental abuse of bringing them up Catholic in the first place', [<http://richarddawkins.net/articles/118?page=2>]. ... They exaggerate the extent of Catholic sexual abuse in order to strengthen their prejudicial arguments." *www.spiked-online.com*

In a subsequent post he delved a little deeper into the new secularist mindset:

"The contemporary pope-hunting springs from a secularist movement which feels incapable of asserting a sense of purpose or meaning in any positive, human-centred way – as the great atheists of old such as Marx or Darwin might have done – and which instead can only assert itself negatively, in contrast to the 'evil' of religion, by posturing against the alleged wickedness of institutionalised faith. It is the inner emptiness, directionless and soullessness of contemporary secularism ... which has given birth to the bizarre clamour for the pope's head."

## Revelation and Faith at the Heart of Being Human

Edward Holloway commented that "Newman could see where the road would end before others had divined what was around the first corner" (*Faith* editorial March 1988). This came from his grasp of the impact of philosophical scepticism in society and the anti-dogmatic spirit in religion. These insights were in turn based on two key convictions which he held respectively about the nature of man and his fallen state.

First: human nature is constituted in need of revelation as our proper mode of illumination and inner growth to fulfilment.

In August 1816, at the age of 15, Newman fell ill and his father lost his job, which also threatened his own education. A kindly adult lent him some Calvinist books which he read looking for consolation in the midst of that personal crisis. It was then that he began to take his Christian faith seriously, experiencing an inner conviction which allowed him, as he put it at the beginning of his *Apologia*, "to rest in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator." In 1817 he was to describe "the reality of conversion; cutting at the root of doubt, providing a link between God and the soul. I know I am right. How do I know? I know I know."

He "had attained to the certitude he was to analyse one day in the *Grammar of Assent*" as Ian Ker remarks in his biography. In this latter work (1870) he developed his conviction that all certitude rests upon personal and moral evidences, not just the links in a logical chain of reasoning. Faith is not the negation of reason, therefore, but its

fulfilment. Revelation does not oppress the human intellect but illuminates it so as to be able to lay hold of transcendent Truth, which it naturally seeks but can only supernaturally attain. The most personal and most fulfilling knowledge for man comes not from philosophical deduction, always the preserve of the few, but from "obedience to the laws of his nature".

For Newman, all practical reasoning involves a kind of faith.

"... to act you must assume, and that assumption is faith ... [Religion] has ever been synonymous with revelation. It never has been a deduction from what we know; it has ever been an assertion of what we are to believe. It has never lived in a conclusion; it has ever been a message, a history, or a vision." (*Grammar of Assent* c.4)

"social authority must be invoked to enforce the rule of liberalism"

## "The Wild, Living Intellect of Man"

The second conviction that informs Newman's prophetic insight is that since the Fall we have an inveterate tendency to rebel against dogmatic authority. Revelation appears at times as a corrective pedagogy, checking our freedom and limiting our self determination. By 1850 he had noticed this tendency even among Catholic acquaintances of his day, albeit subdued by grace:

"Each mind naturally is self-willed, self-dependent, self-satisfied; and except so far as grace has subdued it, its first impulse is to rebel. Now this tendency, through the influence of grace, is not often exhibited in matters of faith; for it would be incipient heresy, and would be contrary, if knowingly indulged, to the first element of Catholic duty; but in matters of conduct, of ritual, of discipline, of politics, of social life, in the ten thousand questions which the Church has not formally answered, even though she may have intimated her judgment, there is a constant rising of the human mind against the authority of the Church, and of superiors, and that, in proportion as each individual is removed from perfection. ... the human mind ... with every question, and wanders over heaven and earth, except so far as the authority of the Divine Word, as a superincumbent weight, presses it down, and restrains it within limits." (*Difficulties of Anglicans*)

Newman's journey into Catholicism (see James Tolhurst's article later in this issue) involved a deepening recognition of man's need for God's Word of authority, not least to arrest the "wild, living intellect of man ... that universal solvent which is so successfully acting upon religious establishments."

In 1879 he began his speech on receiving the Cardinal's hat by saying,

"For thirty, forty, fifty years I have resisted to the best of my powers the spirit of Liberalism in religion. Never did Holy

# Budding Hopes and Sudden Storms: Newman's Beatification and Rage Against the Church

## continued

Church need champions against it more sorely than now, when alas it is an error overspreading, as a snare, the whole earth."

In this *Biglietto* oration he argued that this erroneous

"... spirit [is] sweeping into its own ranks great numbers of able, earnest, virtuous men ... the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another, and this is the teaching which is gaining substance and force daily. It is inconsistent with any recognition of any religion as *true* ... In my own country ... it threatens to have a formidable success; though it is not easy to see what will be its ultimate issue."

In 1873 at the opening of St Bernard's seminary in Warwickshire, he had warned that this same "spirit of infidelity" would undermine that luminous relationship between the individual and God which he had grasped as a teenager. He saw a society slowly taking shape in which the majority did not give assent to God's existence "absolutely, but as a probability" and he noted ominously that "Christianity has never yet had experience of a world simply irreligious". Although he could not intuit its details, Newman called it a "great apostasy".

### The Great Apostasy

That simply irreligious society is all around us now. As Newman predicted, it is one in which "the Philosophers and Politicians are bent on [maintaining law and order] without the aid of Christianity". Although he did acknowledge that

"... there is much in the liberalistic theory which is good and true; for example, not to say more, the precepts of justice, truthfulness, sobriety, self-command, benevolence, which, as I have already noted, are among its avowed principles ... It is not till we find that this array of principles is intended to supersede, to block out, religion, that we pronounce it to be evil. There never was a device of the Enemy so cleverly framed and with such promise of success." (*Biglietto speech*)

The 'liberal' stance can have a certain appeal, claiming to allow everyone to live as they please so long as no group imposes their will on others. In this light a religion founded on revealed truth and absolute moral values can seem narrow minded and disruptive of the liberal settlement. But this is where relativism begins to contradict itself. In order to be consistent the proposition that 'there is no absolute truth' must itself be held to be absolutely true, and social authority must be invoked to enforce the rule of liberalism. Opinions are increasingly monitored, language is policed, books are banned, thought crimes are prosecuted, movements outlawed – and so 'liberalism' itself becomes authoritarian and proscriptive, only without any transcendent authority to restrain, reform or call it to ultimate judgment.

### What Is Man? The Need for Revelation

We cannot escape the need for Truth. Yet how do we access objective and trustworthy truths adequate to answer the question that is man?

Last May Pope Benedict called for an answer to this and our culture's "scepticism and relativism – or, in simpler, clearer words, the exclusion of the two sources that orient the human journey; ... namely nature and revelation." In a reverberation of the *Grammar of Assent* themes outlined above he argued that we need

"to recover a true concept of Nature as the Creation of God that speaks to us ... and also ... that the book of Creation, in which God gives us our fundamental orientation, is deciphered in Revelation, which is endorsed in cultural and religious history ..." (to the Italian Bishops, see our Road from Regensburg column).

We cannot escape the need for authoritative revelation which speaks clearly across the ages. We can show this even more coherently than in Newman's time, and we need to.

Through trial and error, and much thought, the natural universe has revealed itself to us as an ordered cosmos of interrelated energies and entities. We find it to be woven from top to bottom with truth and purpose. Every material thing finds its identity and its law of life in a relationship of dependence with the environment that is proper to it. Yet we do not find the complete answer to ourselves by reading the book of Nature.

"There never was a device of the enemy so cleverly framed"

What of our own meaning, identity and destiny? What is the environment that is proper to the restless spirit of man? We must look for and expect the answer to that question to come from the one Absolute to which every relativity is relative.

"Since man requires his proper nurture and determination unto fulfilment as much as lesser beings, the control and direction of man by God is a necessity that is of the nature of created being. It must also be the expectation of Science, for everything in the universe is held within the Unity-Law of Control and Direction ... The being of man comes just as rigidly under the Law of relativity unto finality, but man is not relative only to matter, man is relative to God. ... That is why in man, and through man, the Law of Control and Direction ... passes into a new order in which God in Person is the principle of the Law, the centre of the determination to fulfilment. God takes up the Law into Himself, becoming to man the environment, or better the Environer." (Edward Holloway, *Catholicism* p.107)

The relationship in which God reveals himself to humanity in and through all that is human comes to perfection in the Incarnation. So the truth revealed and the law given is

## “human nature is constituted in need of revelation”

actually not an alien imposition but a Word and a Law that perfects and liberates our own nature. “I have come that you may have life and have it to the full” (John 10,1-10); “My yoke is easy, my burden is light” (Matthew 11,30).

Yet due to the disaster and enduring wound of sin, the impact of God upon man will also be an urgent call to choose life not death; it will include stern correction, medicinal grace and redemptive drama. All these aspects of the Divine Enviroing and Authority must be present in the Church that flows from the Incarnation of God among men and they must make their claim upon the consciences of men in every age, including our own. This is the choice, this is the crisis, this is the root cause of the rage and tumult among the nations concerning revealed religion.

“The Church ... extends his [Christ's] personality and his salvific work through time ... If the plenitude of the work of Christ passes over to the apostles ... then the communication to men from the Church of Christ is the fullness and certainty of the intellect of God in Jesus Christ, which is to say the fullness and certainty of infallible truth.”

### Magisterium: The Impact of the Divine

This last quote is from Edward Holloway's editorial article in *Faith* for March 1988 in which he also reviewed Newman's prophetic warning about the spread of intellectual liberalism within the Church. Newman saw that

“... the emphasis upon orthopraxis – good will – and the minimalising of orthodoxy – the rule of faith – was in fact the philosophy of the priority of the will over the intellect and that such a path, without the corrective of an authority and an intellect superior to the will of man, would slowly but surely disintegrate the unity and the fulness of Christian truth. Today we are at the very end of that road of personal opinion and personal interpretation of the Mind of God. It has passed beyond the reliance upon one's own opinion of the meaning and worth of the Bible, whether as book or as a tradition. The very being and Divinity of Christ is now subject to a Christian's own evaluation of who He was, what He was and what is the content of the 'divine' itself.

“Today, in all Christian Communion, the emphasis in pastoral life and equally in the liturgical prayers is upon 'love'; upon love, courage, service and very rarely upon truth as the Light of God. This was not the emphasis of Jesus Christ. It was the Word – the Personal term of the divine Self Knowledge – who was made flesh and was the Light of the world. Before Pilate too, our Lord's answer to 'So you are a King then?' was 'Yes: I am a King, for this was I born, for this I came into the world that I should give witness to the truth; everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice' (John 18.37).

“It is not only in the non-Catholic Churches that this emphasis upon the truth has been deliberately laid aside.

In the pastoral life of the Catholic Church too, there is a weary emphasis upon 'love' without any clear identity of the nature and characteristics of Christian loving. It is the 'Church Horizontal' without any corrective of the 'Church Vertical'. A desert is a horizontal landscape and so is the soul of man without the clear delineation of the truths which alone give form, vigour and beauty to Christian love.”

### Conclusion

The immediate and very necessary concern to purify and reform the Church on the moral, spiritual, juridical and pastoral levels ought not to distract us from the wider battle with the forces of secularism that seek to do away with claims of revelation and divine authority altogether.

The very idea of revelation is seen as offensive because it entails the thought of a transcendent order of good and evil. A society that chooses its own, ultimately arbitrary, standard of good and evil, easily abandons any notion of truth in favour of expediency and intellectual fashion. Such a culture is inevitably alarmed, even threatened, by the thought of a transcendent God, especially of a God who has entered into the most profound personal communion with our world so as to take our very nature to himself.

The Pope is the ultimate and often the most lonely witness to the truth of God Incarnate, our only true Teacher. The Pope and what he represents is a sign of contradiction to a self-sufficient, secularist vision of Man, but the truth to which he witnesses is also our consolation and our source of hope. For that Truth is the very Wisdom of God who is the Light of the World, and, as the Word made Flesh, also the template of our own nature.

We expect the voices of rage and anti-Catholic fury to rise to a new crescendo as the Papal visit approaches, but we should not be afraid to use the occasion to explain to our own people and to a sceptical world the need for Divine Revelation and the meaning of Magisterium as it flows from the mystery of the Incarnation.

Especially in the light of failures among the brethren and of our own sins we will have to explain all this to the world with great humility and with no triumphalism. For it is not our own truth that we proclaim. We are servants and messengers, inadequate vessels of an amazing grace that has been entrusted to us for the sake of others. Yet to fail to proclaim that truth would be an even greater dereliction of duty.

Late on in his life Newman asked, “Are her ministers by their silence to bring upon themselves the Prophet's anathema, 'Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully?'” [*Grammar* 5.2]

# “My Own Bishop Was My Pope...” John Henry Newman on Magisterium by James Tolhurst

Fr James Tolhurst roots Cardinal Newman’s understanding of ecclesial magisterium in Newman’s experiences as a Church of England priest. Fr Tolhurst is the General Editor of the Newman Millennium Edition (Gracewing and Notre Dame).

As Newman is always being quoted as a vindicator of the human conscience, it is instructive to see how he viewed the episcopal authority which was placed over him when he was a member of the Church of England and in particular with reference to the government’s role in the question of the Irish episcopacy and the foundation of a bishopric in Jerusalem. It developed into a recognition of the papal magisterium.

## The Irish Bishops

The Tractarian movement – which could be said to have begun with Keble’s *Assize Sermon* on July 14, 1833 – was prompted by the forthcoming *Irish Temporalities Bill* going through parliament. This aimed to reduce the Protestant Irish sees by ten, and tax the higher income incumbents to pay for the Churches. The Tractarians regarded this as an assault on the episcopacy and indirectly on the concept of apostolic succession. Keble wrote in Tract 4,

“For many years, we have been much in the habit of resting our claim on the general order of submission to authority, of decency, and order, of respecting precedents long established, instead of appealing to that warrant, which makes us exclusively God’s ambassadors.”<sup>1</sup>

The Tractarians elected to ignore the fact that the Protestant hierarchy in Ireland was grossly overmanned – at the expense of the indigenous Catholics. They chose to put the emphasis high-mindedly on the Episcopal structure itself and appealed to scriptural foundation. As Newman put it, “I fear that we have neglected the true ground on which our authority is founded, our apostolical succession.”<sup>2</sup> This was overlaid increasingly by the support of patristical evidence. A writer in *The British Magazine* would appeal to the spirit of St Ambrose :

Oh, for the rod of ancient discipline!  
Unheeded and unheeding o’er the plain  
They wander shepherdless – are caught and slain,  
With none to help! Oh for a sacred sign  
Of pastoral severity benign!  
Spirit of noble Ambrose, wake again!<sup>3</sup>

The choice of Ambrose is significant, as he defied the Arian Emperor Valentinian and his second wife Justina when they demanded the surrender of the Portian basilica of St Victor. Ambrose quoted Naboth (I Kings 21) who shed his blood rather than give up his inheritance, “Shall he refuse his own vineyard and we surrender the Church of Christ ...let the Emperor act as an Emperor; he shall rob me of my life sooner than of my fidelity.”<sup>4</sup>

## Resisting Error

Newman argued for a practical expression of episcopal authority in a revival of the Convocations of York and Canterbury (prorogued since 1717) and of the exercise of excommunication. It was a case that “there should be some

(really working) court of heresy and false doctrine.”<sup>5</sup> The civil authority may seem to be in command but “they will kick the Church for a while and exult over it, but the time will come when it will rouse its sleeping strength – the gift of excommunication will not for ever remain unused. If I were a Bishop, the first thing I should do would be excommunicate Lord Grey and half a dozen more”<sup>6</sup> The Tractarians caught up in their enthusiasm seemed always to trust that the Bishop Proudies who occupied the episcopal bench would somehow be transformed into Ambrose or Athanasius.

When Newman began to research the Fathers of the Church for his book on the Arian crisis, he noted how the early Church dealt with heresy, and in particular the role of Rome. He records of Praxeas, an exponent of Patripassianism, “Meeting there with that determined resistance which honourably distinguishes the primitive Roman Church in its dealings with heresy, he (Praxeas) retired into Africa, and there, as founding no sect, he was soon forgotten.”<sup>7</sup> Newman would like the local bishops to act in the same way, but he was not holding his breath. He would write to Bowden, “As to the state of the Church, I suppose it was in a far worse condition in Arian times, except in one point you mention, that there was the possibility of true-minded men becoming Bishops, which is now almost out of the question. If we had one Athanasius or Basil, we could bear with twenty Eusebiuses, though Eusebius was not at all the worst of the bad.”<sup>8</sup>

## The Jerusalem Bishopric

The problem was brought to a head by the second episcopal crisis in the guise of a Jerusalem Bishopric. This scheme proposed in 1840 by Frederick William IV of Prussia and his minister plenipotentiary in London, Chevalier Bunsen, was for England and Prussia in turn to nominate to the See, with the incumbent subscribing to the Confession of Augsburg. The scheme rapidly gained the support of Palmerston and of Archbishop Howley of Canterbury and Blomfield of London. Gladstone considered that this was an effort on the part of the bishops to counteract the supposed excesses of the Tractarian party by presenting to the public mind a telling idea of catholicity in some other form.”<sup>9</sup>

Newman was horrified. He confided to Pusey, “We have leant on the Bishops, and they have broken under us.”<sup>10</sup> He reflected, later in the *Apologia*, “The Anglican Church might have the Apostolical Succession, as had the Monophysites; but such acts as were in progress led me to the gravest suspicion, not that it would soon cease to be a church, but that, since the sixteenth century it had never been a church all along.”<sup>11</sup> This was from a priest who would say, “A Bishop’s highest word *ex cathedra* is heavy.”<sup>12</sup> Newman would later comment “My own Bishop was my Pope; I knew no other; the successor of the Apostles, the Vicar of Christ.”<sup>13</sup>



## “The supremacy of conscience is the essence of natural religion; the supremacy of the Apostle, or Pope, or Church, or Bishop is the essence of revealed.”

It was a question of having the authority to proclaim the truth and of vigorously resisting liberalism and error. The “shadow” which was the Roman Church began to stretch ever further. At the same time, Newman came across the article in the August 1839 *Dublin Review* on the “Anglican Claim of Apostolical Succession” by Dr Wiseman which drew the parallel with the Donatists, and the phrase of St Augustine, *securus iudicat orbis terrarum* [The universal Church is in its judgments secure of truth]. Newman would write to his sister, “I begin to have serious apprehensions lest any religious body is strong enough to withstand the league of evil but the Roman Church. At the end of the first millenary it withstood the fury of Satan, and now the end of the second is drawing on.”<sup>14</sup> The inevitable conclusion was that “every sort of heresy is tolerated but there is an instinctive shudder at anything Catholic.”<sup>15</sup>

### The Place of Rome

When Newman came to write his *Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, he makes the point that “the absolute need of a spiritual authority is at present the strongest argument in favour of its supply.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, Newman’s high regard for his own bishop is transmuted into a regard for the real authority exercised by the Catholic episcopate, and for the occupant of the Holy See. In his magisterial account of the history of Christianity, Diarmaid MacCulloch balks at the concept of magisterium which he says “had since the nineteenth century stealthily acquired a technical theological meaning as ‘authoritative teaching’, peculiarly thanks to Pius XII’s propensity to deploy it.” In the case of John Paul II, “The Pope was determined to teach Catholics what Catholicism was about and was also determined to stop anyone else telling them something different.”<sup>17</sup>

Behind the argument lies the uncomfortable feeling that there is an authoritative teaching which dares to confront what Newman termed the “wild, living intellect of man” as well as acting against “that universal solvent which is so successfully acting upon religious establishments.”<sup>18</sup> When writing to Henry Wilberforce, Newman would say, “There is a great virtue in a Pope – it is something to fall back on. It is a present avenger of the champions of truth. St Athanasius found it so in his day – and lesser and little men have found it ever since. There was I in the English Church with nothing to support me – no basis. I say I can do anything if I have some authority – give me liturgy, or articles, or Bishop or Caroline Divine, or Canons – but all is against me – but here laity may be secularised and ecclesiastics timid, but there is the *infallible*, keen-sighted, unwearied, undaunted, tribunal in the background, undaunted amid all worldly troubles and reverses, to inspire a salutary awe into the shufflers and to animate Christ’s little ones.”<sup>19</sup>

Much has been made of Newman’s reluctance to an extension of papal infallibility which would exact from all the faithful, “the most unreserved submission to whatever they might decree.”<sup>20</sup> However Newman always considered “If the whole of Christendom is to form one Kingdom, one head is essential; at least this is the experience of eighteen hundred years. As the Church grew into form, so did the power of the Pope develop; and wherever the Pope has been renounced, decay and division

have been the consequence. We know of no other way of preserving the *Sacramentum Unitatis*, but a centre of unity.”<sup>21</sup>

The papacy is the final guarantee as well as the centre of unity within a believing Church preserved in truth. Newman commented to Arnold in 1876, “I think the people are *the matter* and the hierarchy *the form*, and that both together make up the Church. If you object that this virtually throws the initiative and the decision of questions into the hands of the clergy this is but an internal peculiarity of the Catholic religion. The Anglican Church is also made up of a like form and matter; though here in consequence of the genius of Anglicanism, the power of matter predominate.”<sup>22</sup>

It is a question of facing facts, “We must take things as they are; to believe in a Church is to believe in the Pope. And thus this belief in the Pope and in his attributes, which seems so monstrous to Protestants, is bound up with our being Catholics at all.”<sup>23</sup> As far as conscience was concerned, “Revelation consists in the manifestation of the Invisible Divine Power, or in the substitution of the voice of a Lawgiver for the voice of conscience. The supremacy of conscience is the essence of natural religion; the supremacy of the Apostle, or Pope, or Church, or Bishop is the essence of revealed.”<sup>24</sup> Moor and Cross were quite mistaken when they wrote that “one gets the impression that [Newman’s] fundamentalism was in fact symptomatic of a deep-seated craving for the support of an absolute external authority, which, from the beginning and despite all his protests, he was dimly conscious of needing for his faith.”<sup>25</sup> It was an entirely *objective* assessment of the state of affairs that drove Newman to seek that episcopal authority where historically it had existed and where in the present, it could be found exercised. Pope Benedict in his address to the English and Welsh bishops said recently, “It is the truth revealed through Scripture and Tradition and articulated by the Church’s Magisterium that sets us free. Cardinal Newman realised this and he left us an outstanding example of faithfulness to revealed truth by following that ‘kindly light’ wherever it led him, even at considerable personal cost.”<sup>26</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Tract 4 p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Tract 1 p. 2 (by Newman).

<sup>3</sup>“Disciplina Externa” *British Magazine April 1835* p. 406.

<sup>4</sup>*Historical Sketches I* pp. 355-6.

<sup>5</sup>To R H Froude 10 January 1835 (Letters & Diaries = LD) LD V p. 10.

<sup>6</sup>To J W Bowden 20 August 1833 LD IV p. 32.

<sup>7</sup>*Arians of the Fourth Century* p. 117.

<sup>8</sup>To J W Bowden 31 August 1833 LD I p. 33.

<sup>9</sup>Lathbury *Letters on Church and Religion of W.E. Gladstone* Vol 1 p. 229.

<sup>10</sup>Liddon H P *Life of E B Pusey* Vol 2 p. 237.

<sup>11</sup>*Apologia* p. 143.

<sup>12</sup>To Archdeacon Clerke 17 August 1838 LD VI p. 290.

<sup>13</sup>*Apologia* p. 56.

<sup>14</sup>To Mrs J Mozley 25 February 1840 LD VII p. 325.

<sup>15</sup>To E L Badeley 28 August 1844 LD X pp 318-9.

<sup>16</sup>*Essay on The Development of Doctrine* (1846 edition) p. 127.

<sup>17</sup>*A History of Christianity* Allen Lane London 2009 p. 995.

<sup>18</sup>*Apologia* p. 245.

<sup>19</sup>1 January 1849 LD XIII pp 4-5.

<sup>20</sup>T F Knox’s letter in *Dublin Review* 11 pp 315-6.

<sup>21</sup>*Essay on The Development of Doctrine* (1878 edition) pp. 154-5.

<sup>22</sup>3 January 1876 LD XXVIII p. 6.

<sup>23</sup>*Difficulties of Anglicans* Vol 2 p. 208.

<sup>24</sup>*Essay on The Development of Doctrine* (1846 edition) p. 124.

<sup>25</sup>More. P.E and Cross F.L. *Anglicanism* SPCK 1962 p. xxxi.

<sup>26</sup>1st February 2010 Vatican Press Office.

# The Moral World Before Christianity

by João Scognamiglio Clá Dias

The South American Founder of the Heralds of the Gospel, an International Association of Pontifical Right, has written a thorough-going response to the recent media attack upon the Church. Mgr Clá Dias' full text can be seen on their website. Below are extracts on the theme that "it was the Catholic Church that freed the world from immorality". Other parts of the piece argue that "it is because the world is rejecting the Church that it has once again sunk into the mire from which it was rescued."

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## The Pagan World

Before Our Lord Jesus Christ preached the Good News of the Gospel among men, the world was submerged in a prolonged and terrible night, in which moral licentiousness, egoism, cruelty, inhumanity and oppression reigned, as history illustrates.

From this picture, it cannot be surmised that all Romans, Greeks, and "barbarians" were profligates. There were minorities at variance with that situation, and they were prepared to receive the evangelical preaching with the eagerness of a castaway who finds a lifeline. Hence the rapid expansion of the Catholic Church through the Roman world, and, finally, the conversion of the Empire in the year 313 of the Christian era.

[... The Pagan] gods formed a fearful and violent band of miscreants. They were adulterers, liars, thieves, oppressors and murderers guilty of patricide, matricide and fratricide. They were cruel, selfish, treacherous, slothful, false, shameless and incestuous, and included fornicators, degenerates, and paedophiles. Zeus (the Jupiter of the Romans), the chief deity of this crew, was not only a brute who practised cannibalism, devouring one of his daughters and murdering other close relatives, but he was also an uncontrollable adulterer who victimised many single and married "gods", violated his sisters and daughters-in-law, ravished his own daughter and even his mother, and who, moreover, kept a young boy whom he had abducted as a lover.

Accounts of these infamies were retold in texts used for the instruction of children in grammar, rhetoric, and poetry in the schools of that era, as pointed out by Christian apologists in their epoch.

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## Cruelty, Immorality, Oppression

Slavery was such an accepted institution in the ancient world that slaves commonly made up the majority of the population. ...

In Roman law there were clauses concerning slaves that sparked great cruelties. ...

In Antiquity, killing was viewed with indifference, as being a natural happening in the life of peoples. The massacre of a population of a city caused neither surprise nor indignation. ...

In Rome, the spectacle most prized by the people was that of men dying, and the gladiator fights in Rome were occasions of pitiless slaughters. "In the morning, says Seneca, men are thrown to the lions and bears; after mid-day, they are thrown [at will] to the spectators [... which] helps us "to understand the pleasure-seeking ferocity with which the Romans vented themselves in anti-Christian persecutions," observes Daniel-Rops, ... "very rare, were spectators who manifested their disapproval." ...

In that pagan environment, the situation of women was appalling. In general they had almost no rights, and were practically considered slaves of their husbands, that is, when they had the privilege of being married.

The religions themselves, even the most elevated ones, led women – and naturally men as well – into great depravity. That of the Chaldeans, for example, was sinister and corrupt, featuring lubricious practices in the temples. The Phoenician religion also incited the degradation of women.

... Once a year, Athens and other cities held an event in which an enormous phallic sculpture was borne in procession. Men and women went through the streets, singing, leaping and dancing around this idol.

Feminine honour was being damaged by the custom of polygamy which was generalised in many regions, while, in other places, polyandry was in force. Equally degrading was incest, especially common in Persia, but also in Greece.

In India, among the cruel pagan practices spanning millennia, custom demanded that the widow be burned alongside the body of her husband.

... In Athens, to prevent partiality toward daughters in questions of inheritance, the law fell into an even greater aberration in encouraging incest to resolve such problems, even demanding the destruction of two already constituted homes, if need be.

In Rome, during the era in which the Good News of Jesus Christ was being preached, the institution of the family found itself in a grave crisis. Abortion and child abandonment reached shocking proportions. The birth-rate decreased. Wealthy men preferred to remain single and surround themselves with innumerable slave women rather than subject themselves to the inconveniences of marriage.

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## Children Before the All-Powerful State

... The Greco-Roman family was also totalitarian from certain perspectives. Thus, Roman law gave a dictatorial power to the pater familias. In Greece, similar laws were in vigour. The father had the right to reject his newborn son, or to sell him as a slave. He could also condemn his wife, son, daughter, or any other dweller in his house to death – the sentence

## “Any boy could become the target.”

being executed without delay; the State authorities did not interfere.

In Sparta, comments Coulanges, “the State had the right not to tolerate that its citizens be deformed or ill-constituted. It therefore ordered the father to whom such a child was born, to make it die.” According to the same author, this law was equally found in the ancient codes of Rome and even Aristotle and Plato included this practice in their legislative proposals.

In Carthage and Phoenicia, children were offered in sacrifice to the idols; ... “children belong less to their parents than to the city.” [Plato]

What is denominated by today’s press as paedophilia was largely practised in the ancient world, under the protection of law, through the influence of the pagan religions.

In Greece, the sexual corruption of boys, more precisely called pederasty, was carried out as a legalised practice. Every adult male who was not a slave, had the right to practise it. Such was the custom in Persia and in other places, where it was maintained for centuries. Rome also became contaminated by the Grecian evil, to the point that many emperors procured male adolescents as lovers.

Boys who were considered comely, if they had been made prisoners of war, or had been abducted or sold by their parents, were mutilated for the purpose of feeding the trafficking of eunuchs. Not even sons of the nobility escaped.

In Greece – especially Athens – the victims of pederasty were not only prisoners of war, the abducted, or slaves. Any boy could become the target of the infamous desires of adult men, and the custom was to yield. If a father, endowed with a remnant of moral sensibility, desired to spare his sons this tragedy, he had to act before it happened, employing slaves, who would watch over the son like hawks. ... The schools – the highly acclaimed Academies – were places where students, from the age of 12 or even younger, became the prey of the masters. The Athenian laws went so far as to protect and encourage this practice, even regulating flirtation and “love-making” between men and boys.

Greeks such as Solon, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Xenophon, Thucydides, Aeschines and Aristophanes, famous in the world of literature, the arts, philosophy and politics, practised and extolled pederasty.

Greek philosophy reached the point of debating this infamous practice, without ever completely condemning it. Even Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were not exempt from this evil.

... The Greeks stooped to consider the natural relationship between man and woman as inferior to the relationship between man and boy.

... Saint Justin, in his Apologetics, ... vituperates the custom of rejected children – boys and girls – being made slaves for prostitution.

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### The Arrival of Gospel Values

The message of Jesus Christ threw the worm-eaten ancient world off balance. It censured libertinism and cruelty, and upheld the freedom to practice the good, chastity, virginity, innocence, conjugal fidelity, love of enemies, charity, abnegation, goodness toward the weak, and dignity for all human beings, created in the image and likeness of God.

A particular horror of the sin of paedophilia was instilled in souls by our Divine Master, with words of extreme severity: “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depths of the sea” (Mt 18:6).

Paganism could not remain indifferent faced with the sublimity of the Gospel. Only two reactions remained to it: that of becoming enchanted by and submitting to the gentle yoke of God, or of hating and persecuting. Not a few converted. ...

Paganism needed, then, to make use of another weapon to try to reverse the situation: defamation and calumny. As the Christian apologists of those first centuries observe, the pagans began accusing the Christians of the very wrongs committed by paganism.

It is noteworthy that one of the accusations was that of paedophilia aggravated by incest. Saint Justin comments: “The things which you do openly and with applause, ... these you lay to our charge.”

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### A Civilisation Governed by the Gospel

The Catholic Church finally won out, by virtue of the intrinsic strength of the good. And, little by little, aided by divine grace which never fails, she took the Greco-Latin decadents and the Germanic barbarians, converted them and educated them, and inspired the building up of a brilliant civilisation whose apex, hitherto unattained, occurred in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

In this epoch, according to Pope Leo XIII, “States were governed by the philosophy of the Gospel”. Then, “the power and divine virtue of Christian wisdom had diffused itself throughout the laws, institutions, and morals of the people, permeating all ranks and relations of civil society.”

It was during this time that the Church developed scholasticism, built the Gothic cathedrals (with their stained-glass windows and monuments), created the universities and the hospitals, encouraged the sciences and technical progress, perfected international relations between states, abolished slavery, advanced social progress and raised the condition of women, in such a way that, in the fourteenth century, Europe had far surpassed all the other continents.

As a scholar of medieval technical progress of that epoch illustrates, “it was the building, for the first time in history, of a complex civilisation which rested, not on the backs of sweating slaves or coolies, but primarily on non-human power.” ■

# Priesthood in the New Testament

by Mark Vickers

Fr Vickers shows clearly that the Catholic understanding of the priesthood can be traced directly back to Christ and is clearly manifest in the New Testament writings. Fr Vickers is Parish Priest of Hatfield South, and Chaplain to the University of Hertfordshire.

## The Nature of the Priesthood in Catholic Theology

In the years after the Council a certain confusion took root in many quarters regarding the nature of the Catholic priesthood. Doubts were raised concerning whether the New Testament shows Christ instituting the priesthood. If one denies that Jesus founded the priesthood, and denies its foundation in the New Testament, and argues that it is just an administrative convenience developed later by the Church, then it becomes optional or infinitely changeable.

Against such a reductionist vision of the priesthood we can present a magnificent vision of the priesthood rooted in Christ and central to the life of His Church. The Catholic priest has no priesthood of his own: he shares in the one priesthood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ was a priest – was and is *the* Priest – and He willed to share that priesthood with those whom He chooses. That is why the Church has priests, and this understanding of the priesthood can be proved from the New Testament.

## The Letter to the Hebrews<sup>1</sup>

Was Jesus a priest? At first sight, it can seem un-clear. If anything, his contemporaries thought of Him as a prophet, a role distinct from and sometimes critical of priesthood in the Old Testament. Peter correctly identifies Him as the Christ, the Messiah, but he is silent on the question of Christ's priesthood. Jesus never calls Himself a priest.

Priesthood in the Old Testament passed by physical descent. Priests had to be descendants of Aaron, from the tribe of Levi. But Jesus is of the tribe of Judah. Priesthood in the Old Testament had a varied role at different times, but increasingly it focussed on worship, the offering of sacrifice in the Temple of Jerusalem. And Jesus has at best an ambiguous relationship with the Temple cult. He drives out from the Temple the animals required for sacrifice, and He is critical of ritualism and hypocrisy.

In deciding whether to think of Jesus as a priest, the early Christians faced a quandary. Say He was a priest, and they would be accused of returning to the Old Testament ritualism He seemed to reject. Say He was not a priest, and there was a break in continuity between Old and New Testaments where, otherwise, they argued Christ fulfilled and exceeded the Old Covenant. Moreover, there were expectations that the Messiah would be a priest, even a priest-king. God's definitive revelation was to have a priestly aspect. "I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind."<sup>2</sup> Passages like Psalm 110 were taken to refer to the Messiah. "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest for ever."<sup>3</sup> How could that possibly be said to apply to Christ?

Where the rest of the New Testament is virtually silent about the priesthood in relation to Christ, one book makes this its explicit and central message. Time and again, the Letter to the Hebrews insists that in Christ we have "an eminent priest," "a high priest," even "an eminent high priest."<sup>4</sup>

The references are endless, and the author sets out with a vengeance to prove his point.

It is important to realise the Letter to the Hebrews presents no innovation. It is a meditation upon and development of what is contained elsewhere in Scripture.

Referring specifically to His suffering, Hebrews says, Christ "had to be made like to His brethren in all things in order to become high priest."<sup>5</sup> This echoes Christ's words on the road to Emmaus: "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and so enter into His glory?"<sup>6</sup> Hebrews simply concludes this makes Christ a priest, and it gives ample reasons for this conclusion.

The other books of the New Testament never present Christ's Crucifixion as a meaningless judicial punishment imposed on an alleged criminal. As Paul says, "Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed."<sup>7</sup> St. John sees Christ's death as "the expiation for our sins."<sup>8</sup> Though Paul and John talk of Christ's death in terms of a sacrifice, of itself that does not entail that Christ be a priest because a priest offers sacrifice but is distinct from the offering. Yet Christ is presented as more than just a passive victim. John's Gospel: "I lay down My life, that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord."<sup>9</sup> Paul to the Galatians: "He loved me and gave Himself up for me."<sup>10</sup> Paul to the Ephesians: "Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God."<sup>11</sup> Christ is the sacrifice, but He also offers Himself in sacrifice. Even though the term priest is not used Christ's priesthood is implied.

Christ manifests His priesthood as much by what He does as by what He says. All His actions are priestly, concerned with drawing us into communion with God.

The Letter to the Hebrews does not distort the New Testament message; rather it deepens the early Christians' understanding of their faith. Straight away it maintains Christ "made purification for sins"<sup>12</sup> – the action and language of priesthood, which exists to restore relations between men and God by removing the obstacle of sin. Hebrews continues, Christ "had to be made like His brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people."<sup>13</sup> This is presented as the whole purpose of the Incarnation – that Christ might exercise an effective priesthood.

A priest is a mediator, one who goes between God and men – praying and offering sacrifice to God for the remission of

## “A new sacrifice, a priest is needed.”

men’s sins, returning to men with God’s forgiveness and blessing. Mediation aims to restore communion, to bring humanity into a full and personal relationship with God. To be an effective mediator, a true priest, one must be able to identify with both God and men. And that was the problem with the Old Testament priesthood. It was part of God’s providence, it prefigured something greater and better, but by itself it was ineffective.

St. Augustine defines sacrifice as every work done to unite us in communion with God. The Old Testament priesthood was flawed. Due to their sinfulness, its priests were unable to identify with, to be acceptable to, God. Their sacrifice was not found worthy to take away sin. The Book of Maccabees tells of high priests gaining their position through scheming ambition and bribery. Hebrews and the Law itself both recognise Old Testament priests had first to offer sacrifice for their own sin, before they could begin to offer sacrifice for the people. They could not make a worthy offering because their own sin offended God. The entire contention of Hebrews is that a new sacrifice, a new priest, is needed.

Christ is the perfect mediator, the perfect priest, because He is both true God and true man. For the author of the Letter to the Hebrews it is self-evident that Christ is God. Our high priest “has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.” He is “holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens... a Son Who has been made perfect for ever... one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of majesty.”<sup>14</sup>

Christ’s effectiveness as a priest in the presence of God is clearly established. But how can we fallen human beings approach and identify with this perfect priest? That would seem a problem. No, says the Letter to the Hebrews. That is the whole point of the Incarnation. “For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace in time of need.”<sup>15</sup>

The Old Testament priesthood tried to separate itself from sinful humanity through ritual purification. By contrast, Christ voluntarily chose to identify with us, by humbling Himself. Yet can Christ be identified with humanity, and therefore be a successful mediator, if, unlike us, He is without sin? But this is precisely how He identifies with us. Sin is not an essential part of the human condition. It is not how we were created by God in the beginning. Sin is what divides and separates.

It is not sinfulness which establishes Christ’s solidarity with us, but rather His voluntary acceptance of suffering, taking the consequences of sin on our behalf, out of love. Hebrews is clear that it is through His suffering that Christ is consecrated a priest in His humanity. “In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears... He learned obedience through what He suffered; and being made perfect He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, being designated

by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.”<sup>16</sup> “Through His Passion, Christ has been transformed and has *become* high priest in the fullest sense.”<sup>17</sup>

Hebrews maintains the continuity between Old and New Testaments by pointing out both Aaron and Christ owe their priesthood to God’s call; it’s not something they take upon themselves.<sup>18</sup> But if Christ’s priesthood was only the same as that of Aaron, nothing would have been gained. So, immediately the author cleverly and effectively shows the superiority of Christ’s priesthood and meets the potential objection that Christ is not of the physical descent of Aaron, He is not a Levite.

He cites Psalm 110. In the Old Testament God Himself declares that His Messiah will be a priest, but different to the Levitical priests. “*You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*”<sup>19</sup> If the Old Testament priesthood was perfect, why did the Old Testament itself foretell a new type of priesthood? Melchizedek is cited because he is a priest-king, a “priest of the Most High God”<sup>20</sup> who offers a sacrifice of bread and wine. The fact Abraham, the ancestor of Levi, pays Melchizedek tithes, demonstrates his superiority to the Levitical priesthood. His priesthood does not depend on physical descent. His is an eternal priesthood, and it is an image of Christ’s priesthood.

The Old Testament priesthood was inadequate and temporary, it ended with death. Christ’s priesthood is superior because it is an eternal priesthood by virtue of His Resurrection. “He holds His priesthood permanently, because He continues for ever. Consequently He is able *for all time* to save those who draw to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”<sup>21</sup>

The priesthood of Christ is also superior due to the nature of the sacrifice. The Letter to the Hebrews is critical of the fruit and animals offered by the Old Testament priests. “Gifts and sacrifices are offered which have no power to make inwardly perfect the one who performs the worship; as they are based only on food and drink and various ablutions, they are no more than carnal rites which last only until a time of renewal.”<sup>22</sup> By contrast, Christ offered “His own Blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.”<sup>23</sup> He is not offering external objects, but His very life, a gift made freely out of love for us.

As a result of this perfect sacrifice, “Christ has entered into heaven itself, in order to appear now on our behalf before the face of God.”<sup>24</sup> He shows Himself the true priest by opening up for us “this authentic encounter with God by becoming the man of the sanctuary who “stands in the presence of God” (Dt. 18:5).”<sup>25</sup>

Following the Passion and Resurrection of Christ the purpose of the Old Testament priesthood is redundant. It comes as no surprise that, after centuries, the Temple, the Levitical priesthood, the altar and ritual sacrifice are swept away with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies in 70AD. The thousands of priests of the Old Covenant are replaced for ever by the one eternal Priest of the New Covenant, Jesus Christ.

# Priesthood in The New Testament

## continued

### Christ Institutes the Ministerial Priesthood

Although Christ is clearly presented as a priest in Hebrews, still there are those who refuse to admit Jesus founded the ministerial priesthood. They argue there is no Scriptural evidence that Our Lord ordained priests or intended this should happen. John Henry Newman addressed the issue 175 years ago when he noted: “the only question being, whether there is reason for thinking that Christ has, in matter of fact, left representatives behind Him” to exercise His office and authority. Even as an Anglican, Newman concluded firmly, “Scripture enables us to determine” this question “in the affirmative.”<sup>26</sup>

Newman argued Christ’s intention to establish a permanent ministry exercising His own authority is manifest in Scripture. Had He not done so, in some way, Our Lord’s own ministry would have been in vain. It would have benefited those in Palestine 2,000 years ago. But how would anyone subsequently have known His Will, the Will of God the Father? Christ is not so cruel as to deny us anything necessary for our salvation. “Behold, I am with you always, even until the end of time.”<sup>27</sup>

To perpetuate His presence amongst us, Christ commissions the apostles. There are numerous references to their call and commission. “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>28</sup> “And He called to Him His twelve disciples and gave them authority... These Twelve Jesus sent out.”<sup>29</sup> “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.”<sup>30</sup> “Truly, truly I say to you, he who receives any one whom I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him Who sent Me.”<sup>31</sup> “As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you.”<sup>32</sup> We can know what God wants because Jesus is God, because Jesus is sent into the world by the Father. And Jesus shares His authority with His apostles.

The authority of the apostles is unquestionable. Very well, our critics say: the apostles were chosen and commissioned for a preaching ministry, to take the Good News to the nations. That has very little to do with priesthood as understood by Catholics. The apostles were not priests.

What was it the apostles were commissioned to do? They were to be faithful to all they had seen and heard Christ do in the three years they had spent with Him. The apostles were witnesses to the truth, of the Resurrection. Of course, they had a preaching ministry to proclaim the Good News. But that was not all.

Preaching, the prophetic role, is part of the priest’s ministry. But the priest also has a liturgical role, to lead the people in worship, to celebrate the sacraments. And that is what Christ commissioned His apostles to do. The apostles are told to go to all nations, “*baptising* them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>33</sup> Christ shares with His apostles His priestly power of forgiving sin. “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”<sup>34</sup>

The sacrament of anointing is also entrusted to the apostles in Mark, chapter 6.

The priest also has a third role: he is meant to govern God’s holy people – in a spirit of humility and service, certainly; but, nevertheless, governing, building up the Church. Christ gives this to His apostles. Peter asks Jesus, What about us? The response is : “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man shall sit on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”<sup>35</sup> The apostles have a “genuine governing authority, ordered to the unity of God’s people and its faithfulness to His plan.”<sup>36</sup> Christ clearly intends that His apostles are to be priests.

### The Priesthood Instituted at the Last Supper

Nowhere is that intention more obvious than at the moment Christ gives us the priesthood – at the Last Supper. The Last Supper, of course, occurs in the context of the Old Testament Passover, the celebration of God’s freeing the People of Israel from slavery in Egypt. That is marked by the sacrifice of thousands of lambs by the Old Testament priesthood in the Temple. It is a type, a foreshadowing, of the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God by which we are freed from sin. The Last Supper takes place in the context of the Jewish Passover meal, but it is not the Jewish Passover. It is clearly orientated to the sacrifice on Calvary on the following day.

Everything about the Last Supper is priestly. Christ’s discourse in John chapters 14-17 is known as “the High Priestly Prayer.” It is the summit and summary of His priestly ministry in anticipation of the supreme sacrifice which will take place on Good Friday. “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”<sup>37</sup> Christ the High Priest is about to make the perfect offering, the offering of His very life, in obedience and love, for the forgiveness of sin, to bring us into communion with God. The connection of the shedding of Christ’s Blood with the establishment of the New Covenant gives this a definitive sacrificial and priestly meaning.

While the Letter to the Hebrews does not specifically mention the Eucharist, it surely has this in mind in when it states in connection with Christ’s priesthood, “We have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the Blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh.”<sup>38</sup>

And the apostles are associated in this. Christ prays to His Father for them, “For their sake, I consecrate Myself, so that they too may be consecrated in the truth.”<sup>39</sup> They are consecrated as priests of the New Covenant to lead “true worshippers [who] will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”<sup>40</sup> This is the reason for their call. “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and your fruit should abide.”<sup>41</sup>

## “It is no surprise that at the Reformation the Protestants rejected both the Mass and the priesthood.”

The apostles' fruit abides by making present throughout the world and through history the one perfect sacrifice of Christ. At the Last Supper Christ instituted two sacraments, ordered to each other: the Eucharist and the priesthood. The apostles were ordained first and foremost to offer Mass, to bring about, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the living and true presence of Christ. At the Last Supper “Our Lord gave them the power to renew the sacrifice of the Eucharist with the command, “Do this as a memorial of Me” as He blessed the cup.”<sup>42,43</sup> The Council of Trent taught, “As the Church received the sacrament of the Eucharist (at the Last Supper), there must have been a priesthood to offer it from the beginning.”<sup>44</sup> It is no surprise that at the Reformation the Protestants rejected both the Mass and the priesthood – the two are inseparably linked by the command of Christ Himself.

“This is My Body... This is the cup of My Blood... Do this in memory of Me.” That is why the apostles were ordained priests – to continue to offer for all time the Eucharist, “the climax for mankind of the work of the Incarnation.”<sup>45</sup> In the Eucharist we receive Jesus Christ Himself, personally and truly present in what before the words of consecration were bread and wine. And to effect this change, a priest is needed.

In a persecuted Church there was a natural reticence to talk publicly about the “holy mysteries.” These would be explained later to those initiated into the faith. Yet, nevertheless, we can see in the New Testament the centrality of the Eucharist. The description of the life of the very first Christians: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”<sup>46</sup> Paul’s instructions to the Corinthians on the worthy reception of Holy Communion in which he insists he is only passing on the same teaching he himself received from the Lord.<sup>47</sup>

### The Priesthood Perpetuated in the Church

Our Lord commissioned the apostles, and their commissioning was as priests, especially in relation to the Eucharist. So, our critics argue that the role of the apostles was purely personal. It was a unique gift from Christ for themselves alone and, when they died, their function, priestly or otherwise, died with them.

It is not just the Twelve chosen by Christ during His earthly ministry who are called “apostles.” Paul is clear about his claim to the title: “an apostle – not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father.”<sup>48</sup> Again, his authority comes from “God, Who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant.”<sup>49</sup> His office involves for Paul, like the other apostles, a right to support from the community, celibacy, suffering and complete identity with Christ. Others, like Matthias, Barnabas and Silas, are commissioned as apostles or co-operators of the apostles. While not commissioned directly by Christ, they must be commissioned by one or more of the apostles whose

commission does come directly from Christ. Later we see Paul commissioning men like Timothy and Titus, giving them in turn authority to appoint elders in the local church. These men have the same universal powers as the original Twelve.

### Conclusion

Scripture, then, clearly demonstrates Christ is a priest and that He passes His priesthood on to His apostles and that the apostles themselves commission successors. It is beyond the scope of this article to trace the development of ecclesial roles in the sub-apostolic age. We can, however, recognise clearly the origins of the priesthood in the New Testament, in Christ Himself. All priesthood is a participation in the priesthood of Christ. As St. Thomas Aquinas said, “Only Christ is the true priest, the others being only His ministers.”<sup>50</sup>

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup>This exegesis of Hebrews draws on the work of Cardinal Vanhoye cited below which is strongly commended.

<sup>2</sup>1 Sam. 2:35.

<sup>3</sup>Ps. 110:4.

<sup>4</sup>Heb. 10:21; 4:14; 4:15, 8:1.

<sup>5</sup>Heb. 2:17.

<sup>6</sup>Lk. 24:6.

<sup>7</sup>1 Cor. 5:7.

<sup>8</sup>1 Jn. 2:2.

<sup>9</sup>Jn. 10:17-18.

<sup>10</sup>Gal. 2:20.

<sup>11</sup>Eph. 5:2.

<sup>12</sup>Heb. 1:3.

<sup>13</sup>Heb. 2:17.

<sup>14</sup>Heb. 4:14; 7:26, 28; 8:1.

<sup>15</sup>Heb. 4:15-16.

<sup>16</sup>Heb. 5:7-10.

<sup>17</sup>Albert Vanhoye, SJ, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, St. Bede’s Publications, (Petersham, MA, 1986), p. 83.

<sup>18</sup>Heb. 5:4-5.

<sup>19</sup>Heb. 5:6 citing Ps. 110:4.

<sup>20</sup>Heb. 7:1.

<sup>21</sup>Heb. 7:24-25.

<sup>22</sup>Heb. 9:9-10.

<sup>23</sup>Heb. 9:12.

<sup>24</sup>Heb. 9:24.

<sup>25</sup>Vanhoye, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-7.

<sup>26</sup>John Henry Newman, Oxford, 14 December 1834, “The Christian Ministry” in *Parochial & Plain Sermons*.

<sup>27</sup>Mt. 28:20.

<sup>28</sup>Mk. 4:11.

<sup>29</sup>Mt. 10:1, 5.

<sup>30</sup>Mt. 28:18-19a.

<sup>31</sup>Jn. 13:20.

<sup>32</sup>Jn. 20:21.

<sup>33</sup>Mt. 28:19b.

<sup>34</sup>Jn. 20:22-23.

<sup>35</sup>Mt. 19:28.

<sup>36</sup>Aidan Nichols, OP, *Holy Order, Veritas*, (Dublin, 1990), p. 8.

<sup>37</sup>Jn. 15:13.

<sup>38</sup>Heb. 10:19-20.

<sup>39</sup>Jn. 17:19.

<sup>40</sup>Jn. 4:23.

<sup>41</sup>Jn. 15:16.

<sup>42</sup>Lk. 22:19.

<sup>43</sup>Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>44</sup>Council of Trent, Session XXIII.

<sup>45</sup>Fr. Edward Holloway, *Christ our Eucharist*, Faith-Keyway Publications, (Reigate, 2003), p. 10.

<sup>46</sup>Acts 2:42.

<sup>47</sup>1 Cor. 11:23-29.

<sup>48</sup>Gal. 1:1.

<sup>49</sup>2 Cor. 3:5-6.

<sup>50</sup>St. Thomas Aquinas, *Hebr.* 8,4.

# The Biology of Sexual Faithfulness and Fruitfulness *by Vicki Thorn*

Vicki Thorn presents some of the growing body of biological evidence which suggests that sexual relationships which are monogamous and not artificially closed to procreation are the only healthy ones. She is founder of Project Rachel, the main US organisation supporting women who have had abortions.

We live in a world where media serves as a strong teacher; where, since the advent of the sexual revolution, the true meaning of sexual intimacy has been lost. As people of faith, we need to reclaim the truth of our nature.

As the founder of Project Rachel, the post-abortion healing ministry of the Catholic church in the United States and abroad, I stumbled into the biological science of human bonding while trying to find a way to help women who have had abortions to be able to bond with their unborn children in subsequent pregnancies. What I have found flies in the face of the current view that sex is without consequence and has no in-built meaning.

My focus is the human biology of bonding as it concerns man and woman and as it concerns mother and child. The things I will share are all grounded in research. I have put a small selection of online articles at the end. Yet these are facts that are not at all widely known.

## Indicators of Fertility

An important and foundational aspect of human communication is the scent of those hormones which foster affiliation across the animal kingdom, which are called pheromones. About 80% of people perceive them through pits in the septum of the nose which communicate with the terminal nerve. This nerve, discovered within the last few years, sits at the front of our brain, in front of the olfactory nerve, and is very small and fragile. Pheromones communicate information about kin relationships and fertility information. If blindfolded, a mother who has spent time with her baby right after birth, can learn within 24 hours to find her baby by scent. The baby will turn toward a breast pad of her mother and away from that of a stranger. We seem to know the scent of our kin. There is evidence that those who are adopted, or raised in a Kibbutz, learn the scent of the unrelated people who care for them and recognise them as if they were kin.

Women who spend much time together can come to have coinciding fertility cycles because of their shared pheromone information. This might be a survival tactic from long ago, when women lived in groups, caring for children and gathering while men hunted. If the mother of an infant died, the survival of that child was contingent upon another woman in the community with a child the same age who could sustain the child through nursing it. Women who are chemically contracepting do not cycle with other women in their circle. The phenomenon of a "faux pregnancy" prevents this interaction.

## Finding a Fruitful Mate

Women are attracted to a potential mate with whom fertility is a possibility. In this case what is being sensed is the Major Histocompatibility Complex. This is the group of genes which act as the immune system markers on cells, protecting them from being attacked by the system's anti-bodies. The majority

of non-contracepting women will be attracted to a male whose immune system is quite different from theirs, a complement. The contracepting female is attracted to a male whose immune system is more like that of her father or brothers, in other words, much more like hers. Her body may be looking for a protector rather than a mate because it is not fertile.

It is also possible that Mother Nature takes us at our word. When we contracept we are saying no to fertility so perhaps we choose a male who makes that decision more permanent. When this woman stops contracepting and is not pregnant, she will now find his pheromone scent to be unattractive. This may affect marital intimacy in a very serious way.

Additionally, researchers are now concerned that, because so many women around the world use chemical contraceptives prior to marriage, we may have a generation of children who are "autoimmune compromised". Such children have anti-bodies which tend to malfunction and attack their own body. We have seen allergies and autoimmune disorders in children at rates unparalleled in history.

Furthermore the use of chemical contraceptives influences many other systems in the body, changing cervical mucus, and predisposing women to contracting sexually transmitted infections, cancer, blood clotting disorders and cardiovascular illness. In some women it lowers libido as well. Women using chemical contraceptives, shown photos of men, will choose by sight the male with excess testosterone. Anthropologists suggest that such a man is more likely not to be a good mate in the long run, because he will impregnate and abandon. Non-contracepting women choose men with slightly softer faces, with adequate testosterone, but not excessive, who tend to be better life partners.

Men also perceive pheromones, but what is communicated to them is fertility, infertility and pregnancy. In the presence of an ovulating female, the male will usually have a biological response including elevated testosterone and sexual interest. This response can be to any fertile female, not just his wife. Males also perceive infertility. In the most cited experiment a male monkey on an island with several females was faithful to three consorts until they were given chemical contraceptives, when he took up with three other females. When all the females were given contraceptives, his behaviour changed. He no longer had regular intercourse, his sperm count dropped by half, he raped violently and masturbated randomly and excessively. When the contraceptives were removed he reverted to normal and returned to his first three consorts.

Additionally if a woman is pregnant, 60 to 80% of men will recognise the fact by pheromone and experience symptoms with their partner. Before the baby arrives he undergoes hormonal changes that lower his aggression, making him gentler and more protective. When his hormones return to



## “This flies in the face of the current view that sex has no in-built meaning.”

normal, his testosterone remains lower than it was when he was not a father. He is changed forever.

### Beneficial Cell Exchange

In sexual intimacy, the body responds with biological changes, regardless of the intent of the partners.

Whenever two people engage in sexual activity, the body responds in a fashion that bonds the individuals together through hormonal chemistry. There is no way to stop this biological response. Assuming that this is an “unprotected” act of intercourse, the woman’s body responds with an immune system reaction to the sperm of her partner. The sperm carry antigens to set off this reaction. It takes her body six months of exposure to the sperm of her partner for it to recognise that this is her mate and for the immune reaction to disappear.

“We have allergies in children at rates unparalleled in history.”

Additionally the seminal fluid of the male is laden with chemicals, including sugars to nourish the sperm on its journey and products that may enhance the immune system of the woman. Furthermore, there are a number of hormones present including prostaglandins, follicle stimulating hormone and luteneising hormone that may effect changes in the woman’s body. This material is absorbed for 15 hours. Furthermore, the sperm must be chemically enhanced whilst it is in the female body if it is to be able to penetrate the ovum; this process is known as the “acrosome” reaction. Without this change, the sperm will not be able to fertilise the ovum. Research indicates that the hormones that women absorb after intercourse decrease any depression.

Barrier contraceptives interfere with this hormonal exchange and the woman would receive none of the benefits of this intimacy.

In the male body sperm and blood normally never meet. When damage is done to the system through a vasectomy, the two meet and an autoimmune reaction follows due to the antigens on the sperm. Even if the system is repaired a majority of men are now left with antibodies to their own sperm.

Pregnancy changes a woman forever. Women carry cells of the babies they conceive for many years after the pregnancy. It is unknown exactly when the transfer begins but it is early in the pregnancy. The phenomenon is called fetal microchimerism. These cells remain present and biologically active. If the match with the father is one of complementarity, these cells appear to be reparative in the woman’s body. They are found at the sites of organ malfunctions and disorders. An oncologist has shared his research that involved women with cancerous tumours who had the complementary match with their mate. The physicians looked for cells of her male offspring in her body, removed them and injected them into the tumour, with the outcome that the tumour disappeared with no ill effects for the woman. If the woman’s mate is too similar to her immune system, these cells are known to cause autoimmune diseases such as scleroderma. The body has trouble discriminating offspring cells from maternal cells and sets off an autoimmune response.

Let us not overlook an obvious fact which follows from the fact that mothers carry the cells of their children: a woman carries genetic material from her partner or partners as well. Two have truly become one in this miracle. But in the case of someone carrying cells from more than one partner, we do not know what implications that has in terms of the health of the woman or her subsequent children.

### Related Phenomena

The mother also passes cells to her offspring. These cells have been found clustering in sites of anomalies or organ malfunctions such as diabetes, again appearing to try to fix the problem. Maternal cells have been found in individuals 47 years after birth. This is called maternal microchimerism.

The act of breastfeeding, designed by God to sustain new life, imparts protection to the mother from certain types of cancer and other diseases. The breast milk, in addition to being nature’s perfect food, protects the baby from cancer as well as infections. Breast milk has been discovered to have cancer-killing properties against many different types of cancer, in a petri dish and in the human body.

A related phenomenon is the fact that everyone in the world carries the mitochondria of their maternal lineage. Mitochondria are the energy bodies contained in our cells. It is possible to trace the maternal lineage of those of European descent back to seven lines of women, with the implication of an Eve figure. It is also the case that males can trace their paternal lineage through the Y chromosome with equal clarity. In God’s plan our genetic inheritance is traceable and vital. In several places in Scripture, we have the list of who begat whom. Clearly that is important in the history of God’s people.

When we are able to see the incredible intricacy of the act of sexual intimacy, we cannot but stand in awe of how we are made.

As *Humanae Vitae* says:

“To make use of the gift of conjugal love, while respecting the laws of the generative process means to acknowledge oneself not to be the arbiter of the sources of human life, but rather the minister of the design established by the Creator.” (n.13)

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*The research mentioned on maternal line mitochondria and the paternal Y is the work of Bryan Sykes who wrote The Seven Daughters of Eve and Adam’s Curse.*



# Letters to the Editor

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## BRITISH CATHOLIC REALPOLITIK

*Dear Father Editor,*

Thank you for your excellent editorial regarding sex and relationships education in the May/June edition of the magazine. It is very helpful to be reminded of Church teaching in this area, especially in the current political climate.

As Religious Education co-ordinator in a Catholic school, I have encountered a range of views from staff regarding the content of SRE to be taught in our primary school. Clear guidance is desperately needed both at a diocesan and at a national level as there is obviously widespread confusion in this area.

*Name and address supplied*

*Dear Father Editor,*

Your May editorial well argues that the “tear-jerking ... unkindest cut of all” concerning the support of Catholic leaders for the Labour government’s sex education policy is with regard to pupils at non-faith schools. This is because the partial concessions “won” by Catholic negotiators concerning the requirements to “aid and abet” teenage abortion and contraception do not, on anyone’s reckoning, apply to non-faith schools.

In this context the pathos of a November 2009 Catholic Education Service (CESEW) comment is unmistakable: “CESEW does not have authority over pupils at non-Catholic schools, so queries relating to any such schools ought to be directed to” the government (cf John Smeaton’s blog, 22 March).

*Yours faithfully*

*Andrew Levander*

*Hinton Rd, Littledown, Bournemouth*

*Dear Father Editor,*

Your editorial comment on my May letter points out that Peter Tatchell has been prominently campaigning for the easing of restrictions upon “consensual” sex with the young. Such homosexual activism in favour of loosening the legal distinction between adult and adolescent might seem an isolated phenomenon. Indeed the General Secretary of our Bishops’ conference is quoted as saying last April that there is no “empirical data” to support Cardinal Bertone’s comments linking paedophilia and homosexuality. A chorus of secular protesters made similar points.

The General Secretary spoke of a “consensus amongst researchers” but gave no indication of the provenance of the research. In my view this response of the English and Welsh Bishops is precipitate and ill judged. Their advisers have once again allowed themselves to be influenced by a current “consensus” based on secular-liberal ideology rather than evidence and experience.

They were, for instance, similarly influenced by the 1970s “consensus” in England that one should not bring abused children or young persons before the courts as witnesses, and that paedophiles and pederasts could be “cured” by therapy. Judges were persuaded by this “expert opinion” to release offenders for therapy, allowing them to continue to work with children (cf Maureen Mullally, *The Universe*, 4 March 2010).

There is significant evidence in this country and elsewhere to support the idea that there is a link between homosexual culture and paedophile and pederast cultures and that those with homosexual orientations are more prone to seeking sexual partners among children and young persons than heterosexual persons.

The 1992 analysis by Stephen Green (*The Sexual Dead End, Broad View*) indicates that in this country a homosexual male is 23 times more likely to offend against a boy under 16 than a heterosexual male. It does not follow

that all or even most homosexual persons are drawn to children.

The aggressive paedophile movement of the 1970s, which sought to sanitise and decriminalise paedophilia, began within and was fostered by the movements for homosexual equality. The Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) was set up in Scotland in 1974 by two activists of the Scottish Minorities group, which became the Scottish Homosexual Rights group. They identified boys in whom “paedophiles” were interested as being between 8 and 16 years.

In July 1975 PIE moved to London and was accommodated by Release, which in 1980 became one of a group of organisations involved with the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, Gay Switchboard and the Joint Council for Gay Teenagers. Paedophile Action for Liberation grew out of PIE. It was based with the prominent Gay Liberation Front (an early Seventies seedbed of “Outrage”, “Stonewall”, etc.) in the Gay Community Centre at 98 Railton Road, London.

The Albany Trust, described as the charitable arm of the Homosexual Law Reform Society, and later known as the Sexual Law Reform Society, was subsidised by the English Department of Education. The Trust considered paedophilia to be “one shade of the spectrum of human sexuality”. It supplied PIE with a copy of the Dutch Speijer Report, which advocated the abolition of all laws against homosexual activity with minors; this was translated for them by the Sexual Law Reform Society. The Albany Trust later ceased operating but re-emerged as a counselling agency for homosexual persons.

At the conference of the powerful Campaign for Homosexual Equality in 1975, a time when it claimed 5,000 members and 100 local groups, Keith Hose of PIE challenged members of the audience who had no “interest in children” to stand. One third remained seated (*Sheffield Morning Telegraph*, 26 August 1975). The conference refused to agree a lower age limit for membership. At the 1977 conference

## “There is significant evidence to support a link between homosexual and paedophile cultures.”

a Liberal peer said, from the Chair, that the conference expressed its support for objective and rational discussion on paedophilia and child sexuality in general. At the 1978 conference, two representatives of the National Council for Civil Liberties supported a motion proposed by a teacher calling on *Gay News* to give paedophilia more coverage. They did, and subsequently published “contact” advertisements. Two representatives of the Haringey Lesbian and Gay Unit defended PIE as “a sexual minority whose rights were under attack” (*Homosexuality: Power and Politics*, Alison & Busby, p116). Rights to what, one may ask.

The first major survey of homosexuality in America, *The Gay Report* of 1979, remains one of the largest of such surveys and is widely regarded as a benchmark. It commented: “Since the decadent Roman wrote two millennia ago about the attraction of boy-man love, observers have noted the linkages between homosexuality and paedophilia”.

In the 1980s, Operation Circus and Operation Babe, carried out by the Metropolitan Police, showed significant homosexual involvement in the abuse of 500 boys.

To deny that there is an overlap between the homosexual and the paedophile and pederast cultures is false. The paedophile and pederast movements in Britain were launched from within the homosexual movements and fostered by them. It is considered politically incorrect and illiberal in Britain to question “gay opinion” and there is growing evidence from the Christian Institute and the St Thomas More Legal Centre of the Establishment’s intent to censor debate and deny freedom of speech on the issue. No one, least of all bishops, should allow themselves to be swept along by such an ideologically driven consensus rather than being guided by careful research.

*Yours faithfully*  
Kenneth H Kavanagh,  
Byron Crescent, Bedford

### EDITORIAL COMMENT

At a November 1999 Stonewall concert attended by Cherie Blair, Frank Dobson and Simon Hughes, 18- year-old male strippers dressed as boy scouts, who were accompanying Sir Elton John singing “It’s a sin”, stripped off their uniforms to the loud approval of the audience.

### INTELLIGENT DESIGN & EVOLUTION

*Dear Father Editor,*

I was interested to read the article in your “Cutting Edge” section (May/June 2009) on last year’s Vatican conference on evolution, but would like to clarify two aspects of the report.

While it might be true to say that Intelligent Design (ID) was not given much credence by the delegates, it would be quite wrong to draw any conclusions from this regarding the value of ID research. The reason it was not given much credence is that no one supportive of ID was invited to attend. This is surprising, given that Dr Michael Behe, a leading proponent of ID, is a devout Catholic. Is the Pontifical Council for Culture, which organised the conference, unaware of Pope Pius XII’s clear instruction, in his 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis*, that all sides of the creation/evolution debate should be considered?

I should also like to address the assertion that ID is simply a “god of the gaps” argument. This misrepresentation is used by its secular, materialist opponents to discredit ID. However, as Dr Stephen Meyer has pointed out in his recent book, *Signature in the Cell*, ID is simply the inference to the best explanation based on the available evidence. Given that intelligence is the only known source of specified, complex and functional information, it is both reasonable and logical to conclude that it is the source of this type of information in DNA and RNA.

*Yours faithfully*  
Clive Copus,  
Oldridge Road, Balham

### EDITORIAL COMMENT

We think Mr Copus well highlights the lack of balance at the Rome conference. Why indeed invite monist philosophers, even some tending towards process theology, when not inviting those seen as tending towards creationism? However, we do think the ID school belongs in this latter group, notwithstanding its excellent inference from information to intelligence. The creationist tendency flows from its profoundly unscientific claim that the “best explanation based on the available evidence” involves a *division* of the objects of scientific observation into those things which have the “irreducible complexity” that clearly points to mind (such as DNA, the flagellum, the eye, etc) and those things that do not. This mind is very close to a “god of the gaps”. Science involves the gradual charting of the irreducible links and patterns across the whole of the physical universe. This implies that “specified, complex and functional information” is intrinsic to the whole unity of the cosmos, not just parts.

*Dear Father Editor,*

Thank you for the interesting piece on Canon Lemaitre’s scientific insights concerning the universe and its evolution (May/June 2010).

Further to this and James Allen’s letter, I have never really grasped why some intelligent Catholics think that the idea of evolution is incompatible with the Catholic faith. Surely it just shows how wonderfully made the universe and our bodies are. It doesn’t undermine the best strands of traditional arguments for the Creator and the human soul, let alone some of the excellent developments of these arguments offered today in the light of Lemaitre’s and others’ scientific advances. As articles in *L’Osservatore Romano* last year have shown, the Catholic Church has never condemned the generic doctrine of evolution.

*Yours faithfully*  
Fr Aldhelm Cameron-Brown OSB  
Prinknash Abbey, Gloucestershire



# Comment on the Comments

by William Oddie

## Justice for All or None

*The child abuse committed within the Roman Catholic Church and its concealment is deeply shocking and totally unacceptable. I am ashamed of what happened, and understand the outrage and anger it has provoked.*

*That shame and anger centres on the damage done to every single abused child. Abuse damages, often irrevocably, a child's ability to trust another, to fashion stable relationships, to sustain self-esteem. When it is inflicted within a religious context, it damages that child's relationship to God. Today, not for the first time, I express my unreserved shame and sorrow for what has happened to many in the Church.*

Thus, on March 26, Archbishop Vincent Nichols, writing in *The Times* newspaper: but it could have been almost any other Catholic bishop in the English-speaking world. His article was actually a defence of the Pope's central role in the fight against clerical child abuse: but this is the way all statements by Catholic spokesmen on this subject now have to begin. *The Times* gave the article the headline "The Church is not trying to cover anything up" and the standfirst "Catholics are shamed by child abuse allegations. But the Pope has taken strong action".

But do we now need to start saying a lot more than that we are deeply ashamed and that the problem is being confronted? The problem I suspect, more and more, is that every time we repeat this simple (and I agree unavoidable) message, we underline the strong impression that it is only – or at least mainly – the Catholic Church within which this dreadful phenomenon has flourished unchecked, and that it is the Catholic Church which is the archetypal paedophile organisation. The trouble with this is firstly that it is just not true, and secondly that it plays straight into the hands of the Dawkinses and the Christopher Hitchenses of this world, for whom

this is the perfect slur, not simply against Christianity in general (which they despise just as much as they do Catholicism) but against Christianity's most successful and authoritative manifestation: the Catholic Church. Thus, it can be the star indictment on a list of other unchallenged absurdities that the so-called "new atheists" (an unprecedentedly nasty bunch – at least people like Bertrand Russell never descended to crude invective) are now peddling, more or less unchallenged. This is the kind of thing that Dawkins is now writing, and which a supposedly decent newspaper like *The Washington Post* is happy to publish:

Should the pope resign? No. As the College of Cardinals must have recognised when they elected him, he is perfectly – ideally – qualified to lead the Roman Catholic Church. A leering old villain in a frock, who spent decades conspiring behind closed doors for the position he now holds; a man who believes he is infallible and acts the part; a man whose preaching of scientific falsehood is responsible for the deaths of countless AIDS victims in Africa; a man whose first instinct when his priests are caught with their pants down is to cover up the scandal and damn the young victims to silence: in short, exactly the right man for the job. He should not resign, moreover, because he is perfectly positioned to accelerate the downfall of the evil, corrupt organisation whose character he fits like a glove, and of which he is the absolute and historically appropriate monarch.

No, Pope Ratzinger should not resign. He should remain in charge of the whole rotten edifice – the whole profiteering, woman-fearing, guilt-gorging, truth-hating, child-raping institution – while it tumbles, amid a stench of incense and a rain of tourist-kitsch sacred hearts and preposterously crowned virgins, about his ears.

I am not saying we should be impenitent. But it is surely now time that Catholics started to defend the Church against this kind of thing: apart from anything else, we are betraying our priests if we do not. Damian Thompson's comment was 'The article conjures up the image of a nasty old man who's losing his marbles. It's not very nice about the Pope, either': a neat crack, Damian, but we need to say more about Dawkins than that he's losing his marbles: we need to say that he's just wrong on all counts: and we need to say it loud and clear because there are just too many people who think that he is dead right.

About the problem of child abuse in particular, we need to say that this is NOT a specifically Catholic problem, but that it is one, on the contrary, which is characteristic of modern society: our shame is that we are, in this, all too representative of the modern world rather than being, as we should be in this as in all else, a Sign of Contradiction: here if anywhere we are doing what the liberals always say we should be doing, reflecting the Spirit of the Age.

There may be signs that the penny is beginning to drop. An article by Jim Dwyer in, of all places, *The New York Times* reported (April 27) that the New York State legislature is beginning to address the fact that child abuse is not only a problem for the Church, but for the whole of society. "Should it be possible", asked Dwyer

... to sue the city of New York for sexual abuse by public school teachers that happened decades ago? How about doctors or hospital attendants? Police officers? Welfare workers? Playground attendants? For nearly a year, the city has tiptoed around that question, but in the coming months, there may be no ducking it. Legislation in Albany would force public officials to answer for the crimes of earlier generations, just as Catholic bishops have.

What began as an effort by legislators to expand judicial accountability for sexual abuse by Catholic clergy has grown to cover people in every walk of life. One bill would temporarily suspend the statute of limitations, and allow people who say they were abused as children to file lawsuits up to age 58 – that is, 40 years after they turned 18....

The bill ultimately was not voted on last year. It is back again, and no doubt will get fresh life from the continuing stream of revelations about high church officials who covered up abuse.

To date, New York City has been publicly silent on the proposal, but sees the possibility of enormous expenses.

Well, join the club, New York City. As Dwyer's article points out, 'Since 2004, Catholic dioceses nationwide have paid \$1.4 billion to settle claims of abuse, many from acts from the 1970s or earlier.... Yet [he continues] **there is little evidence to show there is more sexual abuse among Catholic priests than among clergy from other denominations, or, for that matter, among people from other walks of life.**'

Well, at last: this obvious fact (obvious surely, to most Catholics, who know their priests and are aware of how unjustly they have suffered from the contemptible lies of the Dawkins/Hitchens lobby and the newspapers who have given them credibility) is beginning, just beginning, to be understood.

An article in *Newsweek* (April 8 – well worth reading in full at <http://www.newsweek.com/id/236096>) – has the facts which every Catholic should have at his or her fingertips; I shall quote it here at length. Its headline is “Mean Men”, and its content is briefly summarised in its standfirst: “The priesthood is being cast as the refuge of pederasts. *In fact, priests seem to abuse children at the same rate as everyone else*”:

The Catholic sex-abuse stories emerging every day suggest that Catholics have a much bigger problem with child molestation than other denominations and the general population. Many point to peculiarities of the Catholic Church (its celibacy rules for priests, its insular hierarchy, its exclusion of women) to infer that there's something particularly pernicious about Catholic clerics that predisposes them to these horrific acts....

Yet experts say there's simply no data to support the claim at all. No formal comparative study has ever broken down child sexual abuse by denomination, and only the Catholic Church has released detailed data about its own. But based on the surveys and studies conducted by different denominations over the past 30 years, experts who study child abuse say they see little reason to conclude that sexual abuse is mostly a Catholic issue. “We don't see the Catholic Church as a hotbed of this or a place that has a bigger problem than anyone else,” said Ernie Allen, president of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

*... the rate of abuse by Catholic priests is not higher than... national estimates.* Priests may... appear more likely to molest children because cases of abuse come to light in huge waves.... Allen suggests a final reason we hear so much more about Catholic abuse than transgressions in other religions: [the Church's] sheer size.... “When you consider the per capita data,” says Allen, “I don't think they have a larger incidence than other faiths.”

Nevertheless, we all know that almost the only institution in society within which paedophilia is ever reported as typical by the Press is the Catholic Church, and that most people do think that this is a specifically Catholic problem. In 2002, a *Wall Street Journal-NBC News* survey found that 64 percent of those queried thought Catholic priests “frequently” abused children. Almost certainly, here and

in the U.S., this perception is still the norm. *And it's not just the Press who are responsible for this belief, it's also our bishops, who in almost everything they say on the subject foster this impression.* If you don't believe me, read the whole article by Archbishop Nichols (google it from Times online) with which I began this article. Not one word in it begins to suggest that this is a problem which exists in society at large: on the contrary, child abuse appears to be considered as a specifically Catholic problem. We need to begin to get real; and to be fair, elsewhere Archbishop Nichols has said rather more, for instance in an interview for *The Times* given just after his translation to Westminster:

The vast majority of abuse in this country happens within the home. This does not mean that all homes are bad. Just one act of abuse is too many but it should be remembered that the priests who have abused are a tiny minority of the total number of priests and the abuse they have carried out is a tiny proportion of all abuse – less than a half of 1%.

Just as it is now normal (and right) for spokesmen for the Church to express our sorrow for the tiny minority of priests who have committed this unspeakable crime, so they should *never* do this without also insisting that this is not *in any way* a specifically Catholic problem but one in which we are all too representative of society as a whole. This is not just a matter of justice for our clergy. Much more importantly, it's one of justice for the great majority of child abuse victims, nearly all of whom are being abused *outside* the Church.



# The Truth Will Set You Free

## Cardinal Newman on Church Authority

The supremacy of conscience is the essence of natural religion; the supremacy of the Apostle, or Pope, or Church, or Bishop is the essence of revealed religion. *Development of Doctrine, 1846*

Three centuries ago, and the Catholic Church, that great creation of God's power [...was] blotted out. ... The vivifying principle of truth, the shadow of St. Peter, the grace of the Redeemer, left it ... Truth was disposed of, and shovelled away, and there was a calm, a silence, a sort of peace. *Second Spring sermon 1852*

There is *the infallible*, keen-sighted, unwearied, undaunted, tribunal in the background, undaunted amid all worldly troubles and reverses, to inspire a salutary awe into the shufflers and to animate Christ's little ones. *An 1847 letter to Henry Wilberforce*

Deeply do I feel, ever will I protest, for I can appeal to the ample testimony of history to bear me out, that, in questions of right and wrong, there is nothing really strong in the whole world, nothing decisive and operative, but the voice of him, to whom have been committed the keys of the kingdom and the oversight of Christ's flock. The voice of Peter is now, as it ever has been, a real authority, infallible when it teaches, prosperous when it commands, ever taking the lead wisely and distinctly in its own province, adding certainty to what is probable, and persuasion to what is certain. Before it speaks, the most saintly may mistake; and after it has spoken, the most gifted must obey. ... If there ever was a power on earth who had an eye for the times, who has confined himself to the practicable, and has been happy in his anticipations, whose words have been deeds, and whose commands prophecies, such is he in the history of ages, who sits from generation to generation in the Chair of the Apostles, as the Vicar of Christ and Doctor of His Church. *Cathedra Sempiterna 1852*

They say, in the words of Chillingworth, "There are popes against popes, councils against councils, some fathers against others, the same fathers against themselves, a consent of fathers of one age against a consent of fathers of another age, the Church of one age against the Church of another age:" ... I shall admit that there are in fact certain apparent variations in its teaching ... I shall attempt to explain them to the exculpation of that teaching in point of unity, directness, and consistency. *Introduction to the Development of Doctrine, 1846*

Every consideration and the fullest time should be given to those who have to make up their minds to hold an article of faith which is new to them. To take up at once such an article, may be the act of a vigorous faith, but it may also be the act of a man who will believe anything because he believes nothing, and is ready to profess whatever his ecclesiastical, that is his political, party requires of him. There are too many high ecclesiastics in Italy and England, who think that to believe is as easy as to obey – that is, they talk as if they did not know what an act of faith is. A German who hesitates may have more of the real spirit of faith than an Italian who swallows. I have never

myself had a difficulty about the Pope's Infallibility, but that is no reason why I should forget Luke xvii. 1. *Letter shortly after 1870 Vatican I definition of Papal Infallibility*

The sense of the faithful is not left out of the question by the Holy See among the preliminary acts of defining a doctrine. ... And when, before the formal definition, [the Pope] enumerates the various witnesses to the apostolicity of the doctrine ... the Church teaching and the Church taught are put together as one twofold testimony, illustrating each other, and never to be divided. ... when she cuts off the faithful from the study of her divine doctrines and the sympathy of her divine contemplations, and requires from them *fides implicita* in her word, [this] in the educated classes will terminate in indifference, and in the poorer in superstition. *On Consulting the Faithful in matters of Doctrine, 1859*

Unless a man is able to say to himself, as in the Presence of God, that he must not, and dare not, act upon the Papal injunction, he is bound to obey it, and would commit a great sin in disobeying it. *Primâ facie* it is his bounden duty, even from a sentiment of loyalty, to believe the Pope right and to act accordingly. ... He must have no wilful determination to exercise a right of thinking, saying, doing just what he pleases. *1874 Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*

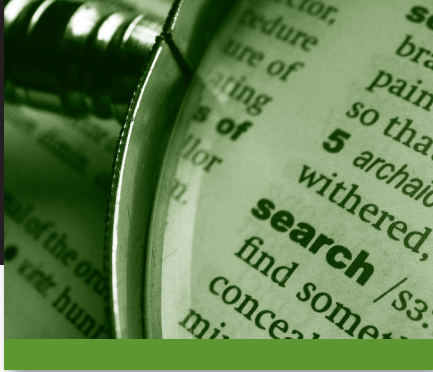
The freedom of the human mind ... meddles with every question, and wanders over heaven and earth, except so far as the authority of the Divine Word, as a superincumbent weight, presses it down, and restrains it within limits. *Difficulties of Anglicans, 1850*

If it is the duty of the Church to act as "the pillar and ground of the Truth," she is manifestly obliged from time to time, and to the end of time, to denounce opinions incompatible with that truth, whenever able and subtle minds in her communion venture to publish such opinions. ... In a Catholic's mind ... to believe in her word is virtually to believe in them all. Even what he cannot understand ... he believes it to be true because he believes in the Church. *Grammar of Assent, 1870, Ch. 5 sec. 3*

Shall the Church of God [... forget] "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel"? Are her ministers by their silence to bring upon themselves the Prophet's anathema, "Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully"? *Grammar of Assent 1870, Ch. 5 sec. 2*

And I hold in veneration, for the love of him alone, Holy Church as his creation, and her teachings as his own.

*Fourth verse of the hymn "Firmly I believe and truly", from the 1865 poem "Dream of Gerontius" – this verse is expunged from the version printed in the official breviary for Australia, Ireland, England and Wales. Collins, 1974, hymn no. 37*



# The Road From Regensburg

## Papal dialogue in search of a new apologetic

### Recovering Insight That Man is Made for Revelation

*Pope to the Italian bishops' plenary assembly last May, concerning the crisis in education:*

A first point seems to me to be this: to overcome [the] false idea of man's autonomy as an "I" complete in himself, whereas the "I" is fulfilled in the encounter with the "you" and "we" ... It is fundamental to recover a true concept of Nature as the Creation of God that speaks to us ... and also of Revelation: recognising that the book of Creation, in which God gives us our fundamental orientation, is deciphered in Revelation, which is endorsed in cultural and religious history, not without mistakes, but in a substantially valid manner, to be further developed and purified anew [... fostering] openness of the "I" to the "you", to the "we" and to the "You" of God.

### Chancellor Follows Papal Logic

*At last May's Ecumenical Church Congress ("Kirchentag") the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, drew upon the same German legal philosopher, Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, who influenced the fruitful 2004 discussion between the then Cardinal Ratzinger and the non-Christian Jürgen Habermas.*

Our society lives on premises that it cannot create by itself. Without a doubt, one of these very important premises is Christianity. Christianity has shaped our country ... we came to our values system through Christianity. That means we know that freedom does not mean freedom from something, but it means freedom given by God through His Creation to commit oneself to help others and stand up for causes. This may be the most important source of social cohesion.

### POPE IN PORTUGAL MAY 2010

#### Faithful Engagement with Culture

*To The Bishops*

In truth, the times in which we live demand a new missionary vigour ... sensitive to the complex

transformations taking place in our world. Authentic witnesses to Jesus Christ are needed, above all ... among politicians, intellectuals, communications professionals who promote ... disdain for the religious and contemplative dimension of life. In such circles are found some believers who are ashamed of their beliefs and who even give a helping hand to this type of secularism, ...

*To Social Pastoral Care Organisations*

History presently offers us a scenario of socio-economic, cultural and spiritual crisis, which highlights the need for a discernment guided by a creative proposal of the Church's social message.

### The Portuguese Contradiction

*To The World Of Culture*

... The dynamic movement of society gives absolute value to the present, isolating it from the cultural legacy of the past, without attempting to trace a path for the future. This emphasis on the "present" as a source of inspiration for the meaning of life, both individual and social, nonetheless clashes with the powerful cultural tradition of the Portuguese people, deeply marked by the millenary influence of Christianity and by a sense of global responsibility. This came to the fore in the adventure of the discoveries and in the missionary zeal which shared the gift of faith with other peoples. ... Portugal has always sought to establish relations with the rest of the world.

... Society continues to respect and appreciate the Church's service to the common good but distances itself from that "wisdom" which is part of her legacy.

This "conflict" between tradition and the present finds expression in the crisis of truth, yet only truth can provide direction and trace the path of a fulfilled existence both for individuals and for a people. Indeed, a people no longer conscious of its own truth ends up by being lost in the maze of time and history, deprived of clearly defined values and lacking great and clearly formulated goals.

### New Attitude of the Church

Dear friends, much still needs to be learned about the form in which the Church takes her place in the world, helping society to understand that the proclamation of truth is a service which she offers to society, and opening new horizons for the future, horizons of grandeur and dignity. ... the search for truth apart from Christ proves dramatic. ...

The Church, in her adherence to the eternal character of truth, is in the process of learning how to live with respect for other "truths" and for the truth of others. Through this respect, open to dialogue, new doors can be opened to the transmission of truth.

... Dialogue, without ambiguity and marked by respect for those taking part, is a priority in today's world, and the Church does not intend to withdraw from it. A testimony to this is the Holy See's presence in several international organisations, ... and respectful of religious beliefs. Given the reality of cultural diversity, people need not only to accept the existence of the culture of others, but also to aspire to be enriched by it and to offer to it whatever they possess that is good, true and beautiful.

### New Vision

Ours is a time which calls for the best of our efforts, prophetic courage and a renewed capacity to "point out new worlds to the world", to use the words of your national poet. ...

Precisely so as "to place the modern world in contact with the life-giving and perennial energies of the Gospel" (John XXIII, *Humanae Salutis*, 3), the Second Vatican Council was convened. [... it] laid the foundation for an authentic Catholic renewal and for a new civilisation.

The Church considers that her most important mission in today's culture is to keep alive the search for truth, and consequently for God; to bring people to look beyond penultimate realities and to seek those that are ultimate. I invite you to deepen your knowledge of God as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ for our complete fulfilment. Produce beautiful things, but above all make your lives places of beauty.



# Book Reviews

## Behold the Lamb of God

By Pope Benedict XVI, Family Publications, 112pp, £8.95

This selection of Pope Benedict's reflections on the Eucharist, ranges from 2005 to 2009. It contains various homilies and addresses and concludes with extracts from the Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis* (2007)

The meaty part is in the homilies. Because the Eucharist is a fact that the priest lives with, it is helpful to be reminded that "The purpose of this partaking is the assimilation of my life with his, my transformation and conformation into the one who is living Love." (p.11) "We cannot live without joining together on Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist ... How will we be able to live without him?" (pp 13.17) "We need this Bread to face the fatigue and weariness of our journey." (p.14)

There are also his scriptural/theological insights. He explains that the Last Supper was celebrated in accordance with the Qumran calendar the day before the Temple Passover, "Jesus celebrated the Passover without a lamb – no, not without a lamb: instead of the Lamb he gave himself." (p.26) He points out that the Eucharist can never be a private event, "The Eucharist is a public devotion that has nothing esoteric or exclusive about it. Here too, this evening we did not choose to meet one another, we came and find ourselves next to one another, brought together by faith and called to become one body, sharing the one Bread which is Christ. We are united over and above our differences of nationality, profession, social class,

political ideas: we open ourselves to one another to become one in him." (p. 34)

He reminds the Canadians that we must not trivialise the Eucharist because "It is not a meal with friends. It is the mystery of a covenant." At the same time, "It can never be just a liturgical action. The liturgy does not belong to us. It is the Church's treasure. (pp.41.49.39)

As in the Gospel there will be those who cannot accept such a great mystery, "One might say that basically people do not want to have God so close, to be so easily within reach or to share so deeply in the events of their daily life." (p.15) He adds, "Today we run the risk of secularisation creeping into the Church." (p.61) It is because of this that he emphasises that we should "shun idols, guard our eyes from 'vanities/nothings' (pp44.48) so that we can "adore the God of Jesus Christ who out of love made himself bread broken, the most effective and radical remedy against the idolatry of the past and of the present." (p.36)

This short book reminds us once again of the breadth of scholarship displayed by Pope Benedict which reminds us of the great gift of Jesus, our food of Life for the journey which we all hope to accomplish in and with Him.

**James Tolhurst**  
Chislehurst, Kent

## Directory on the Canonical Status of the Clergy : Rights, Obligations and Procedures.

*Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 96pp, £6.95*

For those who find themselves in unfamiliar territory ploughing through the Code of Canon Law, the idea of being able to access the relevant canons with ease is no doubt an attractive one. The *Directory on the Canonical Status of the Clergy* has been produced for that very purpose. A project of the English and Welsh Bishops, the Directory was first published in 2009, and then a

Scottish version was issued by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland later on that same year. Apart from the introductory section (by Archbishop Smith in the English & Welsh version, and by Bishop Logan in the Scottish version), there is little difference between the two documents. This review is of the text of the original version issued by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

The Directory is divided into two main parts. In Part One, the 'Canonical Provisions Concerning Clerics' are set forth under such headings as *Incardination, Rights of the Clergy, Obligations of the Clergy, Financial Provision, Absence, Appointment to and Resignation from Ecclesiastical Office*. In essence, the first part sets out the place of the priest in relation to his Diocese and his Bishop as well as the obligations rising from his role as pastor. In Part Two, a rather technical section entitled 'Processes' explains the canonical procedures to be followed in questions relating to the life and ministry of priests. A first Appendix defines terms used in the Directory and a second Appendix gives a helpful list of topics that should be included in a Diocesan Handbook.

It is not clear why such a Directory has been issued only now, more than 26 years after the promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law. It may be that, in the light of modern-day questions about the relationship between a priest and his bishop, it was felt that a clearer definition of that relationship was needed. Indeed, section 1.5 reminds us that it is not a relationship comparable to that between an employer and employee. Of course, the relationship between a priest and his bishop cannot be defined solely in juridical terms, as the Directory reminds us; it must be understood in the light of theology and spirituality.

Archbishop Smith's introduction quotes a unanimous resolution of the Bishops which hails the Directory as a "clear statement of the canonical norms regarding the rights and obligations of clergy." Having read through the Directory with the eye of a canon



## “there is no reference to the obligation to seek holiness through the celebration of daily Mass and frequent confession”

lawyer, I am not sure that the document lives up to that acclamation.

One of the great drawbacks of the Directory is that canons from the Code are never cited in their entirety in the text. They are only footnoted where considered relevant. As a result, any reading of the Directory without reference to the Code itself may lead to a skewed or partial understanding of what the canons cited actually mean. A caveat is given in the first section which makes the Code the sole reference point for any action or interpretation of the Directory. Point 1.3 states, “... if there is any conflict between the contents of this Directory and the canons of the Code, the Code always prevails.” One would assume that if the Directory were a “clear statement” concerning the rights and obligations of the clergy, there would be no conflict! In any case, it is important to remember that the Code of Canon Law is indeed the sole point of reference for understanding the Directory and that the Code itself, rather than being a dry juridical text, was written using theological language, borrowing directly from the documents of Vatican II.

Although entitled a ‘*Directory on the Canonical Status of the Clergy*’, the document focuses on the canonical status of the priest. It doesn’t say much about the status of the bishop or of deacons. In order to understand a deacon or priest’s relationship to his bishop, one must first know something about the rights and obligations of the bishop himself. Little is said about this. (Canons 381-402 set out what we need to know.) Ignatius of Antioch is quoted at the beginning of Part One, urging that “*your conduct and practices ... correspond closely with the mind of the bishop.*” Of course, St. Ignatius’ letter to the Ephesians was addressed, not just to the clergy, but to all the faithful of Ephesus, clergy included. Later in that letter, he goes on to say, “*take the tone all together from God*” indicating that the unity and harmony of the faithful depends on more than their minds corresponding to that of their bishop, for the guarantor of unity and communion is that the bishop too take his lead from a higher authority.

A Catholic bishop exercises his ministry in communion with the Roman Pontiff (c.375§2) and this relationship expresses itself concretely in that, according to c.392§1, a bishop “*is bound to promote the common discipline of the whole Church and therefore to urge the observance of ecclesiastical laws.*” These two canons, which are important in understanding the role of the bishop and his own duty of safeguarding the communion of the whole Church, are unfortunately not referred to in the Directory. Neither is the second paragraph of canon 392 (c.392) which urges bishops to “*exercise vigilance so that abuses do not creep into ecclesiastical discipline, especially regarding the ministry of the word, the celebration of the sacraments ... the worship of God...*” Although the Second Vatican Council restored to bishops a greater measure of legitimate authority in their own dioceses, it did not liberate them from applying the “common discipline” as promulgated by the Church’s Supreme Legislator, the Holy Father. In the light of some of the disputes over the application of *Summorum Pontificum*, it is useful to remember that a bishop’s power to overrule or edit legislation from a superior legislator is limited. Likewise, neither can a priest ignore the legitimate demands of his bishop in areas reserved to him. In section five, c.273 is quoted, reminding all clerics that they have an obligation to “*show reverence and obedience to the Supreme Pontiff and their own ordinary.*” In that order, of course.

In the sections covering the Rights and Obligations of the Clergy, there are also some interesting omissions. When dealing with the issue of Rights, the Code begins with a section that refers to the rights of all of Christ’s Faithful (cc.208-223). Only then does it go on to explain the specific rights pertaining to clergy and then those of the laity. I note that the Directory makes no mention of the provisions of c.214 (the right to worship according to the provisions of their own rite and to follow their own form of spiritual life) and c.215 (the right to establish and direct associations

which foster the Christian vocation in the world). Given the importance of the new movements and the involvement of priests, it is a pity that this right was omitted. No mention is made, either in section three or section four, of the cleric’s right to request excommunication – for his own good, or that of a particular Church (c.270).

Similarly, in section five, covering the obligations of clergy, there are interesting omissions. The presentation of the cleric’s obligations is made in a very vague way; the text of the Code is far more specific. Canons 273-289 make interesting reading and, perhaps, a good examination of conscience! In the Directory, there is no reference to the obligation to seek holiness through the celebration of daily Mass and frequent confession (c.276§2). Moreover, it would have been useful to see a presentation of the specific obligations of Parish Priests as set forth in cc.515-539. Canons 528§1 and 529§1 provide a full presentation of what is expected of Parish Priests.

The publication of a Directory on the Canonical Status of the Clergy is a praiseworthy idea and should be of great help to those priests and deacons not familiar with the details of the Code of Canon Law. However, this Directory has a number of unfortunate shortcomings. While not contradicting the Code, it is certainly far from being a “clear statement” of the rights and obligations of the clergy. As it stands, it should only be used in conjunction with the original text of the Code and never read on its own. Its usefulness is limited by the fact that its presentation of the canons of the Code is more generalised and selective than one would have hoped for. However, it is a step in the right direction in encouraging Dioceses to produce Diocesan Handbooks in which the universal and particular laws of the Church may find concrete expression in directing the pastoral ministry of the clergy.

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## Book Reviews continued

### Marthe Robin and the Foyers of Charity

*Martin Blake, Theotokos Books,  
157 pp, £7.95*

It is difficult reading about the life of a mystic. In fact I tend to resist doing so – lots of information about visions, and ecstasies, and hours spent in prayer, often written in a very sentimental style, can be rather irritating.

So, although I knew something of the story of Marthe Robin, and knew she was the inspiration behind a significant new movement in the Church, the *Foyers de Charité*, I opened this book with some reluctance.

But in fact it is an unsentimental and interesting book, which sets out the facts of this unusual story very well. Marthe Robin was a young Frenchwoman, born in 1902, who contracted an illness while in her late teens, and eventually became an invalid, living in a darkened room because any light caused her intense pain, but writing and speaking in an ordinary way and revealing extraordinary wisdom, faith, and knowledge of spiritual things all conveyed with kindness and affection to her many visitors.

Put like that, it all sounds rather simple – and indeed in a strange way it was. Her illness began with unexplained headaches and lapses into unconsciousness. She was a matter-of-fact young woman from a farming family, and not one to seek attention or be encouraged in doing so. She sought medical help but found no relief. Gradually she came to understand that her physical sufferings – which increased and became very severe – were part of a deep spiritual reality and that God was asking great things of her.

Through Marthe's friendship with a priest, Father Finet, the Foyers of Charity came into existence. Marthe explained how it would all be: there were to be groups of people gathered for silent retreats. She explained the sort of programme they should have,

and emphasised that these retreats were specifically for lay people, and that all of this was in due course to be something important for the Church in France and in the world. All of this, and much more, was revealed to her as she lay in bed and experienced visions and locutions from Christ and from Our Lady. It seems strange to think of an ill Frenchwoman lying in the dark and instructing a priest to run a retreat for a large group of people whom she had never met and who would be gathered together by unknown means. But that is what happened. He believed that this was a project he should undertake – and he went away and obeyed her instructions, finding that it all came together just as she had said it would. Something quite unusual was occurring – and it still goes on.

The first Foyer retreat proved inspirational, and would be followed by others. From these, communities were founded which today run retreat-centres and also schools. In a time of turmoil in the Church, the Foyers have indeed proved to be crucial and in France have been centres of joyful faith, prayer, devotion and doctrinal orthodoxy. They are often hailed as being an authentic example of what the Second Vatican Council really wanted to achieve, in terms of an active and informed laity working to pass on the Faith and to bring it alive in the hearts of those to whom the Church had seemed remote and boring.

Marthe gained nothing, humanly speaking, from her life as a bedridden invalid. Her family was of very modest means, and her physical sufferings were very considerable. But all her visitors spoke of her cheerfulness, her attention to others' needs rather than her own, her common sense and kindness. She never courted any sort of public acknowledgement. Her life of prayer was something between her and God – but she did know that she was meant to pass on certain information, such as that concerning the work that was to become the Foyers. However, as her reputation as a mystic grew, visitors came, and people would ask

her to pray about their problems and difficulties, and also to seek her advice.

This book is written with affection by some one who obviously found the whole story a very powerful one. It is undeniable that Marthe Robin's extraordinary life produced a whole new movement in the Church, and that this was achieved without her ever leaving her sickbed. It is a tale that could belong in the distant past, and has echoes of the lives of other mystics whose lives have illuminated the Church. But this is France in the 20th century, and the work begun by Marthe is flourishing and growing all the time.

Marthe took a great interest in all the details of the retreats run by the Foyers. On one occasion a priest was giving her details of the simple meals that were being provided, and she asked what the retreatants were being given for the cheese course – “et pour le fromage?” She was insistent that the food should be good, and all the Foyers simply but pleasantly furnished. She also supervised the sending of large numbers of parcels to poor families, initiating a massive work of charity – today Foyer members send parcels to, among others, people in prison, with gifts of chocolate, soap, Bibles, rosaries, and religious literature.

The life of a Foyer is centred on the Eucharist, with Adoration as a central part of the programme of all retreats. There is great devotion to the Rosary. At the heart of each Foyer is a community of people who have chosen to give their lives to this vocation. Some Foyers run schools, all run retreat centres, most have an apostolate to the homeless and run projects for the young.

Many vocations to the priesthood or religious life in France have begun at a Foyer retreat. The Foyers are also associated with producing and publicising good devotional and catechetical materials.

And at the core of all this is the life of a mystic who suffered, prayed, and gave herself wholly to God. Marthe Robin's

## “It has become socially acceptable to denounce the Catholic Church.”

cause for beatification has been introduced, so we will all be hearing more about her in the years to come. This readable paperback is an excellent introduction. And it made me think that it would be rather good to have a Foyer in Britain.

**Joanna Bogle**  
New Malden  
Surrey

### **The Pope in Britain – preparing for the visit with prayers and devotions**

*Catholic Truth Society, 60pp, £1.95*

The Papal visit of 2010 somehow began in the wrong way – it was unofficially announced by the then Prime Minister in what appeared to be an attempt to improve his own status on the international stage: he let it be known that an invitation had been issued and that this would be a state visit. The Bishops of England and Wales were put in an awkward position, as indeed was Rome. When the latter announced that the Holy Father would indeed visit Britain, there was almost a sense of anti-climax.

But ordinary Catholics did begin to get interested and even excited about the visit. Then, this spring, came a systematic series of attacks on the Church – given massive force by the Internet – with co-ordinated media stories purporting to show the Holy Father’s failure to grapple with the problem of sexual abuse by the clergy, and across websites and blogs, and leader articles and opinion-columns, came calls for his resignation. Crude cartoons, vile innuendo, slander, and malevolent distortions of news and information abounded, so that Holy Week and Easter of this year saw the Church and the successor of St Peter assailed from every side. It was horrible – and looks set to be repeated this summer as his visit to Britain draws nearer and those who loathe the Church attempt another wave of hate-filled denigration.

It is not easy to fight this: the internet is a powerful weapon in the hands of those spreading untruths: snappy nasty material offering a salacious read beats accurate, detailed ripostes especially where the topic concerns the Church and sexual morality. Catholic bloggers, more at home with discussing vestments and liturgy, reeled in the face of savage fast-paced journalism and things looked bleak. Thank God for some courageous Papal defenders schooled in real-time media work and with a zest for truth, among them George Weigel and John Allen (the former’s ripping-apart of Hans Kung’s nasty attack on the Holy. Father remains a classic read).

What we need to do is pray. The Papal visit could yet prove to be something great and useful in the hands of God – so let our prayers be part of this, and offered generously and insistently in these next weeks. The CTS has been first to produce a prayer-book specifically designed for the Papal visit. It includes basic prayers – the Rosary, the Memorare, the Angelus. But it also has beautiful meditations, drawn from the Holy Father’s own writings, for a Holy Hour, and for a special Novena of Faith, Hope and Love. This last really is excellent, and could be used by groups and individuals to great effect.

The booklet is well-presented, convenient to use and attractive. It includes information on “Who the Pope is and what he does”, taken from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It would be a most useful booklet to issue to all Catholics at the present time – parish priests might find it helpful to order a bulk supply and simply distribute them after Mass, with a box for donations to defray the cost. Senior pupils in Catholic schools could similarly be given copies, and Catholic organisations might consider raising funds to make this possible on a local level.

These are tough times for Catholics. Central Christian moral teachings, especially those on love, marriage, and family life, are under constant attack and recent court cases in Britain have established that it is increasingly difficult for Christians to live and work according to their consciences. It has become socially acceptable to denounce the Catholic Church even in savage, vulgar, and offensive terms, and all this is occurring against a backdrop of low standards in education and increasing violence and drunkenness in our towns and cities. We are living in a rather frightening era, and the continuing breakdown of family structures means that the number of angry, disaffected, confused and unhappy young people will rise and rise. To bring the love of God, and faith in him, and hope in the salvation he offers, is the great task that Catholics have – as we have always had – and to do so in Britain in 2010 will require courage.

Pope Benedict XVI does not lack that virtue. “Pray for me, that I may not flee for fear of the wolves” he begged us in his inaugural sermon. Pray for him, and with him, that when he visits our country great things may be achieved, even in the face of great difficulties.

**Joanna Bogle**  
New Malden  
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# Notes From Across the Atlantic

by Joseph Bottum



## **BAN LIFTED**

On 1st April, Governor Ted Kulongoski of Oregon, a Democrat, signed a bill that repealed a law that banned teachers in public schools from wearing any religious clothing. Under the old law, Jewish teachers couldn't wear yarmulkes, Sikhs couldn't wear turbans and Muslim women couldn't wear head scarves. Groups as diverse as the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, the American Islamic Congress, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, the Sikh American Legal Defence and Education Fund and the Anti-Defamation League supported repealing the law. Nebraska and Pennsylvania remain the only two states in the nation that still have a similar law.

The Oregon state legislature passed the original law in 1923, during a wave of Nativist sentiment fuelled by the Ku Klux Klan and other groups. The purpose of the law was to keep Catholic priests and nuns from teaching in public schools. The law was one of several Nativist measures, aimed at Catholics and immigrants, that the state legislature passed at the time. Other laws required immigrants who owned businesses to display signs indicating their national origin and banned Japanese immigrants from owning property.

The Oregon chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union supported maintaining the ban on religious clothing in public schools, arguing that it protected students from improper religious influence.

Once again, the ACLU supported a law that was passed as an explicitly discriminatory measure. In recent years the ACLU also has championed the "Blaine Amendments" that were added to many state constitutions in the nineteenth century. The Blaine Amendments, which also were initiated by Nativists fearful of Catholicism and which remain in place in many states, ban any state aid to private, religious schools.

Eric Rassbach, the Becket Fund's national litigation director, hopes Nebraska and Pennsylvania eventually will follow Oregon in repealing the religious clothing ban in their public schools. "Anti-Catholic laws like these are Jim Crow's lesser-known cousins, and they make everyone, not just Catholics, less free," Rassbach says.

## **ALL IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS**

Machiavelli may have been right to claim that we judge more from appearance than from reality, but the difference between the two sometimes may be deeper than we think. On 5th October 2009, President Obama held a photo-op speech on the White House lawn. Standing with him were 150 physicians who supported the president's plan for health-care reform. The doctors invited to the event had been told to bring along white lab coats (just in case they should need to examine a patient or two along the way, of course). Inevitably, a few docs forgot to bring their coats and, at the event, as cameras whirred, Obama staffers could be seen handing White House-issued white coats to *les médecins sans manteaux*.

As Obama addressed the uniformed group, he asserted that "Nobody has more credibility with the American people on this issue than you do". There are two ways to interpret this flattering line: either it was genuine, and Obama will follow the lead of the doctors' credible voices, or it is disingenuous and patronising.

Unfortunately, neither possibility works in Obama's favour. A poll conducted in 2009 by *Investor's Business Daily* and TechnoMetrica Market Intelligence suggested that physicians are not nearly as uniform in their approval as Obama would like us to think. The poll found that more than two-thirds of doctors opposed Obama's health-care plan, and 45 percent would consider leaving medicine altogether or taking early retirement if the proposed plan were to become a reality. Aside from the usual politics of appearances, this also makes us wonder: if Obama held a photo-op with General Motors employees, would he give them coveralls and welding guns? Better yet, how would he dress up the "religious right" if they came for a visit?

## **WHEN LIFE IS CHEAP**

Seeking to expand its business abroad, the Virginia-based Genetics and IVF Institute held a rather unconventional raffle in March, during a free promotional seminar in London. According to news reports, one seminar attendee won the chance to select her "ideal donor egg based on its mother's profession, ethnic background, hair colour, qualifications and upbringing". Silly us, worried about the commodification of human life.

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# Cutting Edge

## Science and Religion News

### Templeton Prize Winner Falls Short of Synthesis

The prominent Catholic scientist Professor Francisco Ayala of the University of California/Irvine has won the 2010 Templeton Prize. Professor Ayala, who simultaneously holds professorships in that university in both evolutionary biology and philosophy, will use the £1m prize money to support graduate studies. Born in Spain, Professor Ayala was encouraged by priest-teachers to study science. He was a prominent contributor to the interdisciplinary conference on Darwinian evolution held at the Gregorian University in March 2009 (see our first-hand report in the May 2009 Cutting Edge).

Alongside his 50 years of research into evolution, Professor Ayala has long been a champion of the interdisciplinary questions of faith and science, arguing repeatedly against both creationist/intelligent design and atheist approaches to the origins of life.

In his prize-winning statement Professor Ayala says, for example, that “once science has its say, there remains much about reality that is of interest: questions of value, meaning, and purpose that are beyond science’s scope”. But most forcefully in his statement he asserts that: “Scientific knowledge, the theory of evolution in particular, is consistent with a religious belief in God, whereas the tenets of Creationism and the so-called Intelligent Design are not. The point should be valid for those people of faith who believe in a personal God who is omniscient, omnipotent, and benevolent, as Christians, Muslims and Jews do believe.”

Yet his justification for these excellent conclusions would seem to be very shaky, and in fact points to something less than omniscient and omnipotent God. He argues that evolution’s “clumsy ways” can take the blame away from God for all the “misery, cruelty, and destruction” in the natural world. The Intelligent Design school cannot, apparently, deal with the problem of evil.

Yet he doesn’t deal with the fairly obvious response to this that the omnipotent, omniscient God made these clumsy processes, leaving us back where we started philosophically. As regular readers of this magazine will know we think we need a developed version of the traditional Catholic answer based upon original sin and the distinction of matter and spirit – see for instance our Truth Will Set You Free column of last March.

Similarly, in a June piece in *Standpoint*, Ayala raises the key question concerning how, in the light of evolution, humans are uniquely in the image of God. But he responds only by telling us that a 19th-century theologian “explained that humans’ brutish ancestry is not incompatible with their excelling status.”

Ayala goes on to argue that “science and religious beliefs need not be in contradiction because science and religion concern different matters”, respectively “the composition of matter” etc, and “the meaning and purpose of human life” etc. The fact that, given that we are made of matter, there is a massive overlap here is not acknowledged, and so the main engine of materialism ignored.

### Artificial Creation of Life and Transcendent Mind

Craig Venter made history in June 2000 when he and Francis Collins, leading different research teams, jointly announced the results of their projects to sequence the human genome. This May he may have made history again by announcing that he has created an organism whose genetic sequence has been generated entirely artificially. His research team, the J. Craig Venter Institute, described their achievement as “the first self-replicating synthetic bacterial cell”. In a work published in the online version of *Science* magazine in May 2010, whose authors were Daniel Gibson et al., they describe the synthetic assembly of the genome needed to create the bacterium *Mycoplasma mycoides*. The JCVI website states: “The 1.08 million base pair synthetic *M. mycoides* genome is the largest chemically defined structure ever synthesised in the laboratory.”

This result marks the culmination of 15 years work by Venter and colleagues to perfect their techniques. They built up the synthetic genome from 1078 units of approximately 1000 base pairs, assembling them into larger and larger units by a factor of ten each time, until they created the complete genome of about 1.08 million base pairs after three such stages. Having implanted this genome into the nucleus of another sort of *Mycoplasma* bacterium, the original species was clearly seen to have been destroyed, and only *M. mycoides* remained to replicate, proving that the synthetic bacterium had truly been created correctly. Their technique relied on an entirely synthesised genome. As one of the contributing researchers said: “To me the most remarkable thing about our synthetic cell is that its genome was designed in the computer and brought to life through chemical synthesis, without using any pieces of natural DNA.”

One of the consequences of their work is stated in their press release: “With this first synthetic bacterial cell and the new tools and technologies we developed to successfully complete this project, we now have the means to dissect the genetic instruction set of a bacterial cell to see and understand how it really works.” In other words, they now have total control over that genome and can examine the function of every gene, seeing if each part of the genome serves a biological function or is redundant. In this way they will better understand how cells work.

This work confirms that the key to the formal integrity of life is its mathematically describable organisation, or “design”, as intelligible to the mind of man. At the same time such a living unity has a concrete environmental functionality, harmonising lower-level functionalities. This is further evidence for the organisation of the universe by a transcendent mind.

More on the work of Venter’s research group – and on this latest research success – can be found at [www.jcvi.org](http://www.jcvi.org).

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

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